

"The Need for Spiritual Growth"

Part 2

Hebrews 5:11-14

Introduction: Last week in our study of Hebrews we were in the middle of the 3rd warning which the writer issued to the Hebrew believers. Again I remind you that this letter is for the purpose encouraging these believers to press forward in their faith. They were contemplating going back to Judaism which would have taken them back to the Old Testament sacrificial system which was all shadows and types of Jesus Christ.

To press forward would not be easy as they faced the persecution but God expected them to press forward and to grow in their faith.

Application:

I want to take a few moments before we get back to our study in Hebrews to make an application here. God requires the same from you and me also. He desires for us to grow in our faith. He desires for us to press forward even through the midst of the storms of life. No matter how difficult the path becomes God wants us to continue to walk by faith. Notice what the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 11.

Hebrews 11:1-6, 39

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

² *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

³ *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

⁴ *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

⁵ *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

⁶ *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

³⁹ *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

Now there are times when to live by faith alone is very difficult. The path can often be very dark and in the darkness life can become very lonely. But let me show you what God said about the times of darkness when He spoke through Isaiah concerning Cyrus.

Isaiah 45:3

³ *And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

The words recorded by Isaiah under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit here are absolutely amazing! God told Cyrus there would be treasures in the darkness and there would be riches in the secret places meaning in the places that were only known of by God. This could be applied to our lives as the storms of life. In the times when we cannot see beyond the moment we are in God tells us there are treasures. That means if we refuse to press forward in the dark times we may never experience the "treasures of darkness". Our perseverance is so very important.

Many of the Hebrew believers had a divided allegiance and therefore it was impacting their spiritual walk and their spiritual growth. Let us get back to where we left off last week.

I. The Warning to the Readers

Part 2

Notice Hebrews 5:10-11

Here in verse 11 we see the first consequence of divided allegiance.

1. They had become dull of hearing.

These Hebrew believers were divided between serving Christ and stepping back into Judaism and this double mindedness was keep them from grasping the deeper Truths of God's Word. The writer desired to take them into a deeper study of Melchisedec but they HAD BECOME dull of hearing which means they were sluggish of hearing. This was the result of divided allegiance.

Notice Hebrews 5:12

2. They were not growing spiritually.

Here we see that at the time this letter was written these people had been saved long enough they should have been teaching others. Therefore their divided allegiance had completely hindered their spiritual growth.

This was where we stopped last week. Before we move on I want to remind you that God has ordained the church to be our means of spiritual growth and when we allow something to take us away from that which God ordained then it is really going to hinder our spiritual lives. We cannot allow a divided allegiance in our lives.

Let us remember that the divided allegiance in the lives of these believers was keeping them from gathering together with the body of Christ. We see the problem in Hebrews 10.

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

²⁴ *And let us consider [observe] one another to provoke[incite one another] unto love and to good works:*

²⁵ **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Last week we also looked at how God has set gifted people within the body of Christ to teach the Word so as to strengthen His children. There is no short cut to spiritual growth.

Ephesians 4:11-12

¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Now we come to where we stopped last week.

3. They were not fit for battle.

Notice Hebrews 5:13

Here in this verse we see that because they had not grown in their spiritual walk they were still "babes" in Christ and therefore were "unskillful" in the Word of righteousness.

The word "unskillful" simply means they were "without experience". So here is the point that we need to see, they were unable to defend themselves in the midst of the battle they were in.

When Paul talks about the believer's armor in Ephesians he says something very interesting.

Ephesians 6:14-17

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

The Bible is the Sword of the Spirit and therefore the Hebrew believers were unable to handle the Sword so they were unfit for the battle. "What battle", you ask? Let me show you.

Ephesians 6:12

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

So let me pull this together. Because they had this divided allegiance they were unlearned in the Word and therefore they were spiritual weak and they were unable to defend themselves with the Word of God in the midst of the spiritual battle they were in. So they became easy targets for the enemy and they were unable to defend against his attacks and in their weakness they were retreating back into their old way of life.

Application:

This is exactly what happens to believers today who are double minded. When a believer allows themselves to drift away from a steady diet of the Word of God and to also drift away from the church, which is what God ordained to be the barracks to train His soldiers,

then there will be weakness and the inability to handle the Sword of the Spirit. So when the trials of life come and the attacks from the enemy they become an easy target.

I just want to remind you of the need for strong believers within the church today. We are seeing a greater influx of demonic influence do to the direction our nation is headed and because this world is moving toward the kingdom of the Anti-christ.

Revelation 7:9-14

⁹ After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

¹⁰ And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

¹¹ And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

¹² Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

¹³ And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

¹⁴ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Here we see that there will be killed during the tribulation more believers than a man could count. This tells us the direction our world is going.

Therefore, the greatest need in the midst of all of this is for believers to grow into spiritual maturity. The darker it becomes you are going to need to know how to use the Sword of the Spirit and you will need to be strong in your faith to be able to stand. If you are a dad I will remind you that you need to be strong in your faith to lead your family and you must be able to handle the Word to fight against the enemy and to instruct your family. If you don't then no one else will!

The next result of their divided allegiance will really magnify the need for spiritual maturity.

4. They could not discern between good and evil.

Notice Hebrews 5:14

The writer tells us here that as believers exercise their spiritual senses they then develop the ability to discern between good and evil. To exercise your spiritual senses is to sit under the Word and then apply the Word in your life. These people were not doing this and because they were not mature in their faith they struggled to discern between good and evil.

Application:

We live in a society today where everything has gotten turned upside down. What used to be considered evil is now called good and what used to be called good is now referred to as evil. So in order to stand for God in the midst of this old world today we need to have our senses exercised frequently so that we can discern between good and evil.

Conclusion:

Now I want to go back to something I said before and I want to back it up with this verse.

I told you that God's blueprint for spiritual learning and growth is the church. I also told you there is no short cut. Here in Hebrews 5:14 we see that when there is no growth toward maturity there is a lack of discernment to distinguish between good and evil. Now let me show you again the words of Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:11-14

¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Ephesians 4:14 reinforces Hebrews 5:14.

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AM Service