

Don't Walk Away  
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Hebrews 6:1-8

- Opening discussion: **Name something you are PASSIONATE about! (Could be a hobby; a sport; a ministry project; etc.)**
- Here's an observation: *Passion for anything begins with the basics, but never ends there!*
- **What do you think I mean by that?** Let me repeat it: *"Passion for anything begins with the basics, but never ends there."*
- Imagine you heard I was passionate about baseball so you engaged me in a conversation about it. As we talked it became clear all I knew about baseball was four things: You throw the ball; you hit the ball; you catch the ball; you run the bases. That's it!
- What if I said I was passionate about cooking but all I can do is boil an egg and make toast?
- If I said I was fluent in Spanish but it was clear all I know is "buenos dias" and "adios", you'd question both my passion AND my knowledge.
- One of the things I love about Susan is when she becomes passionate about a subject she gets busy and learns everything she can about it.
- Again: *Passion for anything begins with the basics, but never ends there!*
- If I'm passionate about something I want to learn MORE, I want to get DEEPER into it.
- What about the Christian life? If I'm a follower of Christ, I shouldn't be stuck in the basics. I should be growing in my knowledge of God's word and my relationship with Christ every day.

Big Idea #1: Staying in elementary school when it comes to Spiritual things indicates one of two things: Either a lack of passion for Spiritual growth, or worse yet, an absence of salvation.

Big idea #2: Willfully turning away from Jesus Christ as Savior doesn't mean you lose your salvation, it means you never had it to begin with.

Hebrews 6:1-3 (ESV)

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.

- The wording in verse one could be confusing. **What do you think the first few words mean?**
- The New Living Translation renders verse one this way:

So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds\* and placing our faith in God.

- **Is the writer of Hebrews suggesting we should forget about "repenting of sin and placing our faith in God?" What IS he saying?**
- **When you build a building, what is the most important first step?** Do you stop after that?
- Imagine the conversation if you stopped building your house at the foundation. "How do you like my new house?" "Seems pretty short!" "But it's got a great foundation!" "What about walls and a roof? What will you do when it rains?" "I don't know about that but it's got a great foundation!"

- We don't abandon the foundational things of being a Christian. We BUILD on them!
- Remember: A passion for anything begins with the basics, but never ends there.
- Verses one and two give us a list of some fundamentals of the Christian faith.
- **Let's observe and list what they are. We just said the first two. What are they?**
- **What are the other four fundamentals in verse two? What do you think they mean?**
- Remember, Hebrews is written to Jews who had professed faith in Christ but were sliding back into the "comfort zone" of relying on Judaism for their salvation instead of Christ.
- Because the Christian faith is rooted in the Jewish faith, there were similarities between what they had been taught as a Jew and what Jesus taught:
  - Jews practiced repentance and faith; so do Christians.
  - Jews practiced ceremonial washing/cleansing; Christians practice baptism in water.
  - Jews practiced laying on of hands in sacrifice and blessing; Christians when someone is ordained; blessed; or dedicated to Christ.
- Jews (most of them) believed in resurrection and a judgment for those who reject God.
- Both sound similar. So why why not just keep being a practicing Jew? **What's missing?**
- **If someone claimed that whole list of beliefs without Jesus what are they?**
- Remember: Staying in elementary school when it comes to Spiritual things indicates one of two things: Either a lack of passion for Spiritual growth, or worse yet, an absence of salvation. At the risk of being simplistic, you can't be a Christian without Christ! You can't be saved without the Savior! How many people today are "religious" but have no use for Jesus?
- **Re-read verse one. What is the message for those who ARE followers of Christ?**
- Verse three makes an important point. Maturing, growing deeper, in our Christian life requires action from us, but God does the work through his Holy Spirit living in us.
- Now on to our second big idea: Willfully turning away from Jesus Christ as savior doesn't mean you lose your salvation, it means you never had it to begin with.

6:4-6

4 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

- Here we have a statement that contains several "clauses" or descriptions. To get to the basic statement about them, take the first few words of verse four: "It is impossible..." and the words of verse six: "...then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance." So, once these people have fallen away it is impossible to restore them to repentance.
- These verses are some of the most controversial and often debated in the New Testament.
- One commentator said if Satan were preaching a sermon to make you doubt your salvation, he might use these verses. Those who say you can lose your salvation point to these verses.
- The writer describes someone who has "tasted the heavenly gift," "shared in the Holy Spirit," "tasted the goodness of the word of God," "the powers of the age to come," yet has "fallen away." And it's impossible to restore them. Are they saved, unsaved, formerly saved?
- There are many arguments about who the writer was describing. Here are a few:
  - Some say this is describing people who were never saved to begin with.
  - Some say it describes people who were saved but became apostates...abandoned Christ.
  - Some say it's a "hypothetical" argument to warn these Jews about the danger of "falling away."
- How can we reconcile all these opinions about what these verses mean? Any thoughts? Scared to say anything? Why don't we stick to what we DO know?

- I don't believe this means a true follower of Christ can lose their salvation. **Any idea why your teacher would say it's not possible to lose your salvation if you were really saved?** (See: John 10:27-29; see also Rom. 8:35-39; Phil. 1:6; and 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
- We know for certain, Only God can say with certainty who is or is not truly saved.
- In this regard, Jesus taught that there would be some who claim to follow Him as Lord but in reality do not belong to Him (see Matt. 7:21-23).
- Here's an interesting theory from several commentators about what the writer may have been saying. Look back at verse six. It says these people who appear to have all the characteristics of a Christian have "fallen away" and are "crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.
- That would make them just like the people who yelled "crucify him!" at Calvary.
- Another things we know: You can't hold Jesus in "contempt" and be restored to repentance.

Warren Wiersbe put it this way:

*The writer did not say that these people could never be brought to repentance. He said that they could not be brought to repentance while they were treating Jesus Christ in such a shameful way. Once they stop disgracing Jesus Christ in this way, they can be brought to repentance and renew their fellowship with God.*

- Only God knows if someone was ever really saved or just a Christian in name only.
- But this we know for sure: You can't be a Christian without Christ. You can't be saved without a Savior. And you can't live in Heaven for eternity if you aren't saved.
- Only God knows, but there IS an indication of where someone stands. Verses 7&8:

7 For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. 8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

- A genuine Christian will bear some kind of fruit. You and I may not bear as much "fruit" as other Christians, but it's not a competition! The question is are you bearing any fruit.
- What does fruit look like? Check out Galatians 5:22-26:

So, What's the Takeaway from this controversial passage?

- We'll never solve the debates about this passage in a Sunday School lesson, so let's stick to what we know for sure.
- *Passion for anything begins with the basics, but never ends there!*
- If I'm passionate about something I want to learn MORE, I want to get DEEPER into it.
- That applies to the Christian life. If I'm a follower of Christ, I shouldn't be stuck in the basics. I should be growing in my knowledge of God's word and my relationship with Christ every day.
- If I don't have a desire to grow deeper and closer with Christ, Jesus and I need to talk!
- Scripture indicates that if we're really saved, we can't lose our salvation.
- Willfully turning away from Jesus Christ as savior doesn't mean you lose your salvation, it means you never had it to begin with.
- Two action steps this week:
- Christians, ask God to give you the desire to grow deeper and closer with Christ.
- And if there's any shadow of a doubt where you stand with Christ, you can remove it today!