



## Are You Ready To Run? The Race Marked Out

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20  
**BASIC TRAINING**  
October 12, 2014

### **MEMORY VERSE:**

*"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,"* (Hebrews 6:19, NIV84)

### **OVERVIEW**

The writer of Hebrews believes his congregation is up for the race (cf. 6:9). They have shown great promise. All that is needed is diligence, perseverance. Now is not the time to become lazy. However, there is a problem among the hearers of this message. They are slow to respond; they lack motivation. They must decide whether they are going to run the race. If they are, they need to get on with their training.

### **NEXT WEEK:**

Read Hebrews 7:1 - 10:18

There is a thematic unity in these chapters; the writer of Hebrews never wavers from his assigned topic of Jesus as "the great high priest." Indeed, chapters 7–10 seem to constitute yet another "sermon-within-a-sermon" (like 3:7–4:13), this time one in which the writer chases the idea of Jesus' priestly ministry through three key Old Testament texts: Psalm 110:4; Jeremiah 31:31–34; and Psalm 40:6–8

## **SERMON NOTES: Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20**

**Question: How can we know that we are on the path to maturity?**

### **THE PATH TO MATURITY IS NOT JUST ABOUT RIGHT ANSWERS**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, <sup>2</sup> instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And God permitting, we will do so.

- **True faith is not static.**

<sup>4</sup> **It is impossible** for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, <sup>6</sup> if they fall away, **to be brought back to repentance**, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

- **True faith is more than talking a good game.** (Cf. Hebrews 3:7-12)

### **THE PATH TO MATURITY MOVES FROM RIGHT ANSWERS TO RIGHT LIVING**

<sup>7</sup> Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that **produces a crop useful** to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. <sup>8</sup> But land that **produces thorns and thistles** is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

<sup>9</sup> Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case—things that accompany salvation. <sup>10</sup> God is not unjust; he will not forget **your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.**

- **True faith produces good fruit** (Cf. James 2:14; Matthew 7:15-23)

<sup>11</sup> **We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.** <sup>12</sup> We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

- **True faith perseveres to the end** (cf. Heb.3:6 ,14; Heb. 4:1 – 2; Heb. 6:11)

## **THE PATH TO MATURITY HOLDS TENACIOUSLY TO GOD'S PROMISE**

<sup>13</sup> When **God made his promise** to Abraham, since there was **no one greater for him to swear by**, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." <sup>15</sup> And so after **waiting patiently**, Abraham received what was promised.

<sup>16</sup> Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. <sup>17</sup> Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. <sup>18</sup> God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. <sup>19</sup> **We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.** It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup> where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

- **God is able to keep his promise**
- **God is willing to keep his promise**

How can we know that we are on the path to maturity?; when we see faith moving from our head, to our heart, and to our hands; when we discover encouragement and security in God's promises.

## **SERMON NOTES: Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20**

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(Cf. Hebrews 3:7-12)

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- God \_\_\_\_\_ to keep his promise
- God \_\_\_\_\_ to keep his promise

How can we know that we are on the path to maturity?; when we see faith moving \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_, and to \_\_\_\_\_; when we discover \_\_\_\_\_ in God's promises.

## **CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: Hebrews 5:11 - 6:20**

### **OPENING**

- Can you think of a time when someone used reverse psychology on you? What did you wind up doing? Or, what did you refuse to do?
- *(Window into Scott's life: As is the case with all parents, there are times when it is difficult to get kids to eat what they're supposed to. Some of you may not know it, but I'm a triplet and you can only imagine how difficult it was for my parents to get all three of us to eat our food at times. So my parents when we were little would use reverse psychology to get us to eat our food. They'd say with a playful, half-smile, "Don't you eat that! ...Don't you EAT that!" And when we'd eat it with rebellious glee they'd respond with such dramatic, sarcastic, playful disappointment, which only fueled our desire to eat the food.)*
- *(Bruce's point here is that the writer of Hebrews is about to play a little reverse psychology with his audience to help them see the vanity of a faith that has no correspondence to life. He's going to play the game of saying, "You need milk, not solid food" when in reality they would, of course, want solid food. But what the writer will reveal is that solid food is for the mature, those who would put the teachings of Christ into practice through persevering obedience.)*

### **GOING DEEPER**

- What do you see as the prevailing language used to describe faith? Is it descriptions geared toward content? Do you sense that the prevailing descriptors of faith lack an emphasis on works?
- *(Leader's reflection: Faith is often seen as a personal preference or opinion meant to keep to oneself, that faith is merely a private matter. It is widely accepted that personal beliefs should not be imposed on anyone else, nor should anyone try to convert others. This is a fundamental misunderstanding about faith. Faith is not merely private. To have any merit at all, it must be evidenced in public. There absolutely cannot be any separation between faith and life, because what one ultimately believes will manifest itself in a corresponding lifestyle. For example: if someone says "I love my spouse," and truly think they believe that statement. But if he or she is caught cheating on their spouse over and over, what evidence is there of genuine*

*love for their spouse? In reality, the act of cheating reveals an underlying lack of love. What they might think is true, is not true in reality. Faith is intricately tied with trust. To trust is to actively place the weight of one's confidence upon a person or an object. If I trust a chair, I'll actively place myself, and all my weight, on that chair, believing that it will hold me. The same is true of our trust, our faith in God. Genuine faith must have a corresponding lifestyle of faith.)*

- *(Leader's note: Having said this, the prevailing thought is that faith is a matter of intellectual content, without necessarily tying it to action. In fact, the Evangelical world has such a hesitation with talking about "works," in order to avoid any hints of "earning" one's salvation, that it has left little room for the critical nature of faith manifested by a corresponding lifestyle, "works." James says, "Faith without works is dead," and we'd be wise to think this truth through. We are not saved by our works, but works evidence genuine faith in the One who has saved us.)*
- Additional question: The writer of Hebrews rebuked his audience for not maturing in their faith the way they need to. He calls them infants feeding on milk, not solid food. What does he say brings maturity to faith? (hint: 5:14)
- *(Leader note: Being as mature as they need to be in their faith, and challenged them with a picture of what it means to be mature when he wrote, "solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." This "constant use" is what trains believers in maturity. What the writer is urging his readers to understand is that faith must be accompanied by training, the continual "use" of putting the truth we hear into practice.)*
- Additional question: How does this "constant use" relate to the land that "produces" a useful crop in 6:7?
- *(Leader note: Only the crop that is "fruitful" is useful...or mature. In other words, the land that has really accepted the rain [God's grace and offer of salvation] will be evidenced by the fruit of repentance [a life lived in obedience to God's commands].)*
- Salvation in the New Testament has a past, present, and future tense. In the past we have been saved from the penalty of sin; presently we are being

saved from the power of sin — its rule over us has been broken; in the future we will be saved from the presence of sin.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, we all too often speak of our “conversion” experience as a past experience, as being saved. However, we have been saved *from* something to something. We have been saved *from sin* and we are saved *to pursue Jesus and His righteousness*. Pastor Bruce shared that we are to move from a faith that moves from *right answers* to *right living*. This right living is to be evidenced by good fruit and perseverance to the end. How does this affect your daily walk with Jesus? What does this infer about being a disciple?

- *(Leader note: The writer of Hebrews wants his Hebrews audience to know that he has seen their faith in the way they love each other and take care of each other. He then encourages them to continue in this “show this same diligence to the very end,” and that when they do they’ll experience an higher level of assurance in their hope (6:11). Why is this? When we live as Jesus lived, when we walk in obedience, we develop a deeper relationship with Christ and we begin to know Him as He intended for us to know Him (see John 15 in “abiding” in the vine, which is Christ). Jesus said that those who choose to follow Him must “take up their cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34). This involves committed, persevering action that corresponds to stated faith. He also said that those who follow Him will be known by their “fruit,” actions evidencing genuine faith in Him (Matt 7:20).*
- *(Leader question: Feel free to ask the group what difference serving others has made for their faith. Ask them what serving others did for how they love others? Jesus said that “whatever you did for the least of one of these...you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). Ask them if they ever shared their faith with others or had to stand up for what they believe, and what difference it made for their faith.)*

## CHALLENGE

- Many of us have friends or family members who have walked away from their faith, and their church community. As you absorbed the teaching in Hebrews 6, what did you learn that may help you to reach out to them?

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<sup>1</sup> Guthrie, G. H. *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews 6:4 – 12*.

- *(Leader note: No one responds positively to those who do not substantiate their words with a corresponding lifestyle. It's hypocritical. An obese nutritionist does not have much credibility, nor does a Christian who shares truth without obeying it. Our society has largely identified Christians as hypocritical people, and what is all too sad is that many professing Christians have given them plenty of evidence to substantiate their claims. No one is perfect; there is no doubt. But we have an opportunity to turn the tide of people's opinions about Christ by the way we live—"let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Let's substantiate the message of the gospel by lifestyle's that so reflect Christ's grace and love that people will be anxiously asking us, "Please tell me by what name you do these things!" to which we can only answer as Peter did in Acts 4:12, Jesus Christ: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.")*