

Introduction

- Story about Benner warning elementary kids not to play near construction ditches.
- Our heavenly Father loves us, offers escalating warnings when we are in danger.
- The love of God beckons us to heed these warnings - faith fueled transformation.
- Today's passage = easier to skip. Says hard things. *Benefits of preaching books.*
- Before we dive in, let's review the landscape we're in.

1. Chapter 5:1-10 - Jesus = source of eternal salvation- His nature: Son of God, eternal
2. Chapter 5:11-14 - concern: unwilling to learn and to mature. They are babies
3. Today, 6:1-8: drills down deeper into this problem of immaturity. More severe warning

Hebrews 6:1-3

1 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.

1. We need to **Pursue Maturity**

- A. Author: Some of you aren't transforming and this concerns me.
- B. You keep trying to question and reinvent the basics of what we believe.
 - 1) "Laying again a foundation of repentance": You keep asking how to be saved.
 - 2) "Instruction about washings, the laying on of hands": Jewish ceremonies – You keep asking why aren't we still doing those!?
 - 3) "The resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment": You keep asking will there be a resurrection and is there an afterlife?
- C. He's not saying to never talk about these things or teach them. He's saying **stop trying to change foundational truths** to fit your past religious worldview.
- D. All of this stuff is established; the foundation has been clearly laid out by the apostles and Scripture. LEAVE IT ALONE and build on it: **Maturity= becoming like Jesus**
 - 1) Stop superimposing *ceremonies* and *traditions* of Judaism onto your Christianity.
 - 2) They served their purpose: to point to JESUS!
 - a. But He's here now! Those were copies and shadows (8:5)
 - b. Like the booster rockets for space shuttles.
 - (1) The shuttle is the mission! "What about the booster rockets?"
 - (2) They served their purpose and are no longer part of the mission.
 - 3) In the same way, the Old Testament ceremonies carried the message of Jesus.
 - 4) Propelled the message of Jesus. But Jesus is here. Jesus is the mission!
 - 5) Verses 1-3: challenge to let the copies and shadows go. Transform=Jesus

6) Conversation with Michael: "**Following Jesus isn't difficult. It's costly**"

2. This next section is the part that would be easier to skip.
 - A. Godly, brilliant men have disagreed over this passage for 100s of years.
 - B. I won't pretend I've solved it. I'm going to give you the best I have.
 - 1) What I say is **one possible meaning**, derived from personal study and input of trusted sources
 - 2) Everyone ask me this question: Travis, are you sure you're right? **NO!!!!**
 - C. Several possibilities for meaning, SAME practical WARNING
 - D. Back up to 5:9. Set some boundaries for what it CAN'T mean.

Hebrews 5:9

*And being made perfect [idea of being tested and proven]], He [Jesus] became the source of **eternal** salvation to all who obey Him [Hebrews 3:6 obey=holding fast to our faith in Jesus].*

- E. What is the nature of the salvation Jesus offers? **ETERNAL**
- F. **These following verses CANNOT mean**, by the author's own definition of salvation, **that a truly saved person can become unsaved.**

Hebrews 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.*

- G. Surface reading: it's impossible for a true Christian who has fallen away to repent
- H. But this is not what it means for two reasons
 - 1) The author described a true believer: as one that **perseveres unswervingly** in his trust in Jesus (Hebrews 3:6) and has been **given eternal salvation** (Hebrews 5:9)
 - a. In this authors mind, a true believer will *never* reject Jesus.
 - b. Struggle? Yes. Have doubts? Yes. Sin? Yes. Reject and walk away? Never
 - 2) Words he uses for this fallen away person's experience of God: *tentative, sampling*. All of these words are less than full surrender.
 - a. *Enlightenment* is not faith in Jesus.
 - b. *Tasting* is just a sampling.
 - c. *Sharing* is less than a whole commitment.
- I. Here's what I *think* this might mean:
 - 1) A person can be part of the church community, sharing closely in all of its blessings, receiving overwhelming evidence of Jesus' lordship and the Holy Spirit's power, seeing clearly and incontrovertibly the truth of Who Jesus is.
 - 2) But this same person can, in spite of all this, never surrender to Jesus because of pride and hard heartedness. And this person can harden their heart to such a severe degree, that they might at some point deeply, publicly, thoroughly and

- irreversibly repudiate Jesus to the point at which repentance is virtually impossible.
- J. There is one other biblical precedent for this: Matthew 12
 - 1) Jesus had cast out a demon from a man.
 - 2) The Pharisees say it's by the power of Satan.
 - a. It so obviously can't be.
 - b. John 3, Nicodemus a Pharisee: "We know You come from God."
 - c. The evidence was overwhelming and they **knew Who Jesus was**
 - 3) But they were so opposed to Jesus, even though they KNEW He was the messiah, that they were willing to publicly, and audaciously reject Him and lie about Him and eventually orchestrate His murder.
 - 4) Responding to their indictment of Him, Jesus says, ""Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven." Matthew 12:31
 - K. All things considered, **this is about having an UNBELIEVING HEART** (Hebrews 3:12, 10:26, 12:25)
 - L. Maybe this is what it means. But let me warn you: this passage is a set of spectacles that are only meant to look at YOURSELF with.
 - 1) Even if a person CAN harden their heart irreversibly, that is not for you to judge.
 - 2) We serve a Father about Whom the Bible says, with God, ALL things are possible.
 - 3) We NEVER give up on ANYONE.
 - 4) And my reading of this may be incorrect anyway!
 - M. No matter what these verses mean, the warning is the same and it is serious:

3. DON'T FALL AWAY

- A. Here's the dire warning: **You can live your whole life *in* the church but not be *in* Christ.**
- B. Effects of this warning
 - 1) Believer: complete prevention. There are warnings in the Bible that, when in contact with the heart of a true believer in Jesus, prevent what the warning threatens.
 - 2) Unbeliever: this warning is a call to WAKE UP! This might be the moment that some of us realize that we've never *surrendered to Jesus*. Oh how I beg you: don't let pride keep you there.

Hebrews 6:7-8

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. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

- C. This is an illustration of what the author just said.
 - 1) In the church, right next to each other, true Christians and false Christians receive the blessings of God together just like adjacent parcels of land receive the same life-giving rain together.

- 2) **The evidence of a true relationship with Christ is fruit: *what your life produces.***
 - 3) The good fruit that is evidence of true faith, or the thorns and thistles that are the evidence of unbelief.
- D. The evidence of not being in Christ: Receiving all the benefits of God's truth but never becoming like Jesus.
- 1) Do you find yourself growing in anger, hate, complaining, judging, lack of love?
 - 2) This passage may be a warning to you that you're not in Christ. That you're fooling yourself and lulling yourself into a sense of false confidence because you are in the church among other parcels of land that ARE bearing fruit.
 - 3) A true believer WILL produce fruit. Period.
 - 4) Remember, **following Jesus isn't difficult. It's costly**
- E. How can I be assured that I am in Christ?
1. Come next week :-)
 2. But I will give you a hint: Keep reading the following verses, 9-12
 3. What you'll see there is that the evidence of a person who truly loves Jesus and is *in* Jesus is a life of ***faithful, fruitful LOVE.***
- F. How can I respond today: Trust Jesus! If you haven't yet surrendered your life to Jesus, come forward to side.