

Jesus Brings a Better Promise

Regarding the security of our salvation, Jesus will never forget us, never lie to us, and never break His promise. Therefore, we must remain steadfast in our faith and service to Christ until we see Him face-to-face.

Hebrews 6:9-20

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 6:9-20 NKJV] 9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God [is] not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, [in that] you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation [is] for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed [it] by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it [is] impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before [us]. 19 This [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the [Presence] behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, [even] Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 6:9-11 NKJV] 9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

INTRO

Last week we dove into what is arguably one of the more difficult and controversial passages in the New Testament but came out the better for it. The author is calling his audience, and subsequently us, to full and complete faith in Christ for salvation. He issued a stern and fearful warning about the dangers of drifting and slipping off the path of complete trust in Jesus. Simply being around Christianity, or even benefiting from it, doesn't qualify you for salvation. But Paul doesn't leave us on a fearful note but utilizes the rest of the chapter to encourage us about the sure and steadfast security of those who enter into a relationship with God through fully and solely trusting in Jesus.

A pep talk from my water polo coach in high school – this team will destroy you, but you guys are ready!

Yes, Paul presents a foreboding warning, but he also is a cheerleader, “You guys are going to make it, because if you stick with Jesus, there's no way you can fail, and he'll see to it that you make it to the end.”

APPLICATION

In the remainder of this passage, Paul lists four things God has done to ensure us of salvation through Christ and four ways we should respond to those things.

1

God will not forget, so we must not forsake

BIBLE VERSE

10 For God [is] not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

BEING FORGOTTEN

There's a clinical term of a condition I came across that I think most human beings have.

Athaza-gora-phobia

This condition in laymen's terms means, "The fear of being forgotten."

I think we all ask ourselves the questions at times, "Is it worth it? Am I making an impact? Will my sacrifices and efforts be remembered or valued?"

I think one of the greatest things that can discourage people, and even lead them on a potential path of apostasy, is wondering if any of it really matters in the end? Certainly, Paul's audience was experiencing great loss, suffering, and persecution for their commitment to Jesus. Was it really worth it if God wasn't watching, didn't care, or worse yet, if Jesus wasn't really the answer?

APPLICATION

Paul issues some strong statements in this passage that are designed to assure us that our commitment to Christ here and now IS worth it.

- In this passage, Paul tells us three things God will never do. I move in reverse order: One, he will not and cannot lie. Two, he will not and cannot break a promise. Three, He will not and cannot forget what you and I do for Him and His people.

God doesn't forget because...

A.) It would compromise His justice— *For God is not unjust to forget...*

- God is a just God. Revelation 15 tells us that "all the ways of God are just and true."
- God could never do anything to compromise his justice.
- And God makes it a point to remind us that if he forgot, didn't see, or took for granted anything that we ever did for him; it would make him an unjust God. So apparently, remembering and rewarding our service to him is a matter of justice to God.
- 8 times in the OT God tells his people, "I will remember..." In 6 of those times, He reminds them that He will remember them and His covenant to them. Twice He uses the phrase, "I will remember your sins no more." God doesn't say I forgot. In Christ, God doesn't forget, He

chooses not to remember. He chooses not to remember the things that make us guilty, but he always remembers the things that we do for Him.

B.) It would compromise His nature – work and labor of love – God is LOVE. Whoever loves is born of God and knows God.

- God isn't interested in ministry motivated by duty, guilt, or obligation. Service motivated by an authentic love for others is the only kind of service that will ultimately accurately reflect the heart of God.
- This has been a big one for me as a Pastor. I admit that there are times I do things strictly out of obedience, but my prayer is that I would do something out of love.
 - Years back, I was struggling with a growing church. I am naturally an introvert. I was having trouble keeping up with everyone's name, story, struggles, and needs. I couldn't keep up with the hospital visits, counseling calls, dinners, morning coffees, etc. I went before the Lord and asked, "How can I love all these people?" I believe He answered me, "You love them every time you spend time, energy, and effort to study my word and deliver it week after week."
 - Since then, in my prayer and preparation time, I always ask, "Lord let this be a labor of love. Help me see and feel about these people the way you do. Help me understand and deliver the Word in such a way that shows genuine care for their souls and lives."
- I'll tell you what, some of the most excellent maturity will take place within you when ministry is not about you. It's not about you fulfilling your destiny or calling. But, when it becomes about you, using what God has given you, to bless and demonstrate love to His people, you will grow leaps and bounds in your relationship with God.
- **C.) It would compromise His character – God cares about His people. When you care about them, you are displaying His character.**
- Whatever you do to or for God's people, you do to and for God. God identifies with his people. When I love you, God sees it as an act of love towards Him.
- **[Mat 25:35-40 NKJV] 35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 'I [was] naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed [You], or thirsty and give [You] drink? 38 'When did we see You a stranger and take [You] in, or naked and clothe [You]? 39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'**

40 “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did [it] to one of the least of these My brethren, you did [it] to Me.’

So what should our response be to this incredible promise?

BIBLE VERSE

11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

Because God sees, hears, remembers, and will reward everything you do, keep doing until you experience the full assurance of your hope, that is heaven.

QUOTE

“Don’t stop running the race until you cross the finish line and receive the prize.”

Pastor Josh,

APPLICATION

- **Don’t quit on Jesus, and don’t give up on what He has called you to do!**
- So that person wounded you, give it to God and keep loving and serving.
- So you were burned in ministry. Get back up, dust off your feet, and get back in the game. There are still broken people that need to be loved.
- So you were disappointed that life or ministry didn’t turn out as you hoped. YOu feel like the Lord let you down. Friend, God didn’t let you down, He died for you, forgave you of your sin, and saved your soul from hell. So life didn’t turn out as planned, get up and start serving someone again. God sees, God will remember, God will reward.

Diligence – To earnestly strive after something with haste.

- It describes what our actions and attitudes should look like toward the things God calls us to do.

- The diehard Chiefs fan programs reminders in their schedule for game time, the ESPN app on the front screen of their phone, has tickets purchased in advance for games, orders all of the newest merch, goes snack shopping for game day, has their invite list of other like-minded fans to invite over to watch the game, and has plenty of free time tonight ;-).
- The point here is that we all understand the term diligence because there are things we all care about, passionately strive for, prioritize, and dedicate ourselves to.
- Paul is stating that we should be showing that same diligence (even greater) to the things of God's kingdom, serving others, pursuing and growing in Christ.
 - WHY? Becasue who won the Superbowl will eventually be forgotten, but who serves the Lord will never be forgotten.

BIBLE VERSE

[Rom 12:9-18 NKJV] 9 [Let] love [be] without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 [Be] kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

2

God made a promise, so we must be patient

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 6:12-15 NKJV] 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

APPLICATION

In the Bible, there seems to be a direct correlation between believing God's promises and displaying that faith through patience and diligence.

Paul introduces both a negative and positive action:

- Negative action – **Don't become sluggish** – acknowledges the natural human tendency to slack off in the realms of faith and service to God.
 - The same word used in 5:11 – dull of hearing. Sluggish in the ears.
 - Here it indicates a lackadaisical attitude toward Christ. Let's not become those who say, "Well, Jesus hasn't come back yet, it's been a while. We can put our faith on the shelf and focus on other more important things."
 - Spiritual apathy, lethargy, and indifference is something that will set in if we are not actively aware of it, and resisting it.

BIBLE VERSE

[Luk 12:42-47 NKJV] 42 And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom [his] master will make ruler over his household, to give [them their] portion of food in due season? 43 "Blessed [is] that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. 45 "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, 46 "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him], and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the unbelievers. 47 "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare [himself] or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many [stripes].

POSITIVE ACTION - IMITATE THE FAITH AND PATIENCE OF THOSE WHO INHERITED THE PROMISES

Here, Paul uses Abraham as an example of someone who was promised something seemingly impossible by God, and despite going years and years without seeing the promise, never waived in His faith. He patiently waited for the Lord's timing. He overcame his natural doubts and fears and never allowed them to turn His heart away from trusting God.

- Abraham waited 25 years, at the end of his life, to receive the beginning of God's promise. His son Isaac was a test of Abraham's faith and patience. Abraham failed along the way. He made mistakes and bad decisions. But he never stopped believing God's Word and his life reflected that.
- Even after Isaac was born and grew up, Abraham took him to the mountain to sacrifice him at the Lord's command, believing until the very last moment that God would not forsake His promise.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Not the word AFTER – that's really a word we don't like. AFTER intimates waiting, process, patience, and endurance.

FAITH AND PATIENCE

When it comes to our Christian life, the Bible never allows the separation of faith and patience. They are intertwined and both feed off of each other.

- Faith is the ability to believe God's Word and act on that belief. But effective faith is not a momentary faith. In order for faith to bear fruit and get us to the fulfillment of God's promise, it must be a continuous faith... and this is where patience comes in.

ILLUSTRATION

I love a good, real fire in my fireplace. There's nothing quite like it to make a dreary, frigid day cozy. When you're making a fire from scratch you have kindling, paper, and small sticks that get the fire going. But kindling can never keep a fire going. you need larger and larger pieces of wood that retain the heat and burn long and slow.

- To have fiery faith without patience means that your faith will be like paper and kindling. It might start with a bang of excitement and belief. You see God doing something and you emotionally jump toward it. Your faith is bright and hot. But without the patience to go through God's process of refinement and building, it will burn out quickly and be a small pile of ash.
- But you might also have patience, but never have the faith to truly believe and trust God. You have the giant logs ready, but no fire ever touches them. You wait and wait on God, but are

always too afraid to act, move, and take a step of faith and obedience.

If you want your Christian life to be a fire that burns hot and long, you need to put the kindling of faith on the logs of patience!

APPLICATION

Faith and patient endurance is not maintaining the status quo.

Faith and patient endurance is not doing only the things that are small enough for me to wrap my mind around.

Faith and patient endurance is not giving up at the first sign of failure or discouragement.

Faith and patient endurance is not staying inside a boat when Jesus has called you to walk on water.

Faith and patient endurance is not cowardly shrinking back in the face of persecution and sacrifice.

BIBLE VERSE

[Jas 5:7-11 NKJV] 7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! 10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

3

God made a covenant, so we can have comfort

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 6:16-18 NKJV] 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

ILLUSTRATION

In ancient times, an oath between parties was the equivalent of signing a binding contract. It committed the parties to the terms agreed upon. To solidify and seal an oath beyond a reasonable doubt, you didn't merely swear on your own name, you have someone greater than you back it up. This was to give confidence to the other party that if you weren't able to pay, someone wealthier or more powerful than you had you back and would cover your debts.

ILLUSTRATION

It's one thing if I went in to purchase a new Lamborghini and said, "Don't worry about the money, I'm good for it." One peek at my bank account would get me kicked out of that dealership real quick. But if I said, "Donald Trump has given me his word that whatever I buy, he will pay for," well, they would laugh at me... but if the payment went through with his signature, they might not be laughing.

God made a promise. That would be enough seeing he cannot lie. But just to make sure no one could cause him of fraud or over drafting his account, he backed up his promise with an oath. Well, who does God use as collateral? Who does God swear by? There is no one greater than him, so he swore by himself.

- Not only did God make the promise, but he also paid the price himself.

APPLICATION

In Genesis 15, after God made his promises to Abraham regarding his seed and that nation that would arise from him, God sealed the promise with an oath (or covenant).

- In antiquity, two parties would cut animals as sacrifices and walk together between them to seal the promises they made.

- God has Abraham prepare the animals, but when it comes time to seal the deal, God puts Abraham out cold, and walks between the animals alone, with himself.
- God was saying, “Abraham, this covenant is not going to be dependant on your best efforts, but on my commitment to My word and My glory.”
- In the same way, the oath He swore by himself was in His own blood. He went to the cross alone. He bore my sins upon himself. He paid the price while I was a sinner and unworthy.

TWO IMMUTABLE ELEMENTS

18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

Immutable – Unchanging – unable to be changed. The immutability of his council (17) is his unchanging will.

There are two unchanging realities that we can count on regarding God’s promises and salvation:

1. **God’s Word – The promise He made. (promises)**
2. **God’s Oath – That He sealed with His own blood. (covenant)**

STRONG CONSOLATION

παράκλησιν – paraklēsis – (The Holy Spirit is the comforter) – to call alongside with encouragement.

- everyone is looking for consolation. They want to be comforted in their fears and uncertainties.
- But the Christian’s comfort comes when we look at all that Jesus has done for us. He made us the promise that he will never leave us or forsake us. He sealed the promise with the oath of His own sacrifice.
- Now, whatever life might throw my way, don’t merely have some comfort, I have strong comfort; confidence that He will work things out as they should be as I patiently endure.

FLED FOR REFUGE

It's a desperate term – the picture is one of running for dear life to a place that can keep you safe from impending doom!

- Under the OT Jewish law, there were 6 cities of refuge. Under the law, justice ran on the principle “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” If you killed my brother, purposefully or accidentally, I could exact justice upon you.
- But what about involuntary manslaughter (accidental deaths)? The accused could run to a city of refuge, and as long as they stayed within those borders, they were untouchable until their case could be legally tried.
- This is the picture the author gives of Jesus. We are all guilty sinners, even when we weren't intentionally sinning! But we run to Jesus we are safe. Safe from judgment, safe from the world, and safe from our spiritual adversary the devil.

Are you looking for refuge? Are you at the end of yourself? Are you afraid of what's happening in your life, and in the world? Flee for your life to Jesus!

4

God made a way so we must not waiver

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 6:19-20 NKJV] 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

APPLICATION

What an appropriate way to close a chapter focused on the dangers of spiritually drifting from Christ. An anchor prohibits drifting. The hope of heaven that we have through the promise and oath of God keeps our souls anchored.

- **Sure – it won't fail and can be trusted.**
- **Steadfast – it never waivers or changes.**

Our hope is anchored in the presence of God in Jesus, Who cannot change, cannot lie, and cannot fail!

ILLUSTRATION

I grew up going fishing and going to the lake. I've learned something valuable about anchors. An anchor that you can see isn't doing its job. Only when the anchor is hidden, secure on the seafloor, can it be effective to hold you in place.

- We can't see Jesus, but through eyes of faith and experience, we are confident that he is holding us fast, deep in the heavenly places, in the presence of God.

Jesus is our anchor who is sure and steadfast, forever in the presence of God. But faith is the line that attaches us to the anchor. If we cut the line and tie it to a buoy that floating on the sea of this world, we will simply drift in whatever direction the world is drifting; friend, the world is drifting toward destruction!

APPLICATION

Have you noticed what God is doing right now? He's reminding the Christian of the 21st century not to anchor too deeply into a world that is on quicksand and is easily moved into dangerous and stormy waters.

- Russia's on the verge of war with the world.
- A bag of grapes costs \$12.
- Inflation is through the roof.
- Our politicians are utterly failing.
- Homelessness is on the rise.
- Our secular solutions can't deal with addictions, suicides, and mental health travesties.

Are you really going to place your hope and trust in an anchor that doesn't have the strength to steady you?

Think about it, if the church can't anchor themselves in Jesus, how will we ever be a light and example of hope and strength to the unbelieving world when everything falls apart?

FORERUNNER BEHIND THE VEIL

Old Covenant – you couldn't simply run into the tabernacle or the temple whenever you felt like it to take a personal tour of the holiest place. **The veil of the temple represented the separation that existed between a holy God defiled people.** In a sense, it represented the doorway into heaven, the direct presence and throne room of God. The human high priest could barely enter himself and expect to come out alive, much less create a path for anyone to enter.

But Jesus entered into the holy of holies in heaven itself. When he died on the cross, the physical veil of the temple was torn in two. This represented two things:

1. **Physically**, the presence and glory of God would not be confined to a space in the temple, but now would be within His people.
2. **Spiritually**, Jesus took away the dividing wall that kept us from God. He has opened the doorway to heaven. He has become our high priest and by His righteousness, we can enter behind the veil and have access to His grace.

ILLUSTRATION

Driving through the northern California mountains. Imagining what it must have been like for the Donner party with no roads over deadly terrain that I can drive through on a flat, smooth road in less than an hour!

- Jesus has paved the way through impossible territory. We could never get there on our own. The way into God's favor is not through striving to forge our own path, but by clinging to Christ who has already blazed the trail.

CONCLUSION

Now, we will talk about good ole Mel next week.

- But let's allow this passage to really sink in. Yes, drifting from faith in Christ has severe consequences, but resting in Christ offers irreplaceable security.
 - **Jesus will always remember us**; what we've done for Him, and how we've loved His people. Therefore, we must not forsake Him, but be even more diligent as His return draws near.

- **God made a promise to lead us into eternal life**, but the full inheritance of that promise requires faith and patience.
- **God made an oath**; a covenant that he sealed by His own blood. Because of this, we can be comforted and encouraged that He will follow through on every promise He has made.
- **Jesus made the way, into heaven behind the veil** and has become the anchor for our souls. We must not waiver or cut the timeline of faith lest we drift with the current of the world.
- Let's hold tightly to these truths and ask the Holy Spirit to enable and strengthen us to hold tightly, and even tighter, to Jesus Christ.

QUOTE

In Christ alone, my hope is found. He is my light, my strength, my song.

This Cornerstone, this solid Ground. Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace. When fears are stilled, when strivings cease

My Comforter, my All in All. Here in the love of Christ, I stand.