

Chapter Six - Making Spiritual Progress

Hebrews 5:11-6:20

Introduction: No chapter in the Bible has disturbed people more than has Heb. 6. It is unfortunate that even sincere believers have “fallen out” over the doctrine of “falling away”! I believe this was written to believers, but that this chapter does not describe a sin that results in “losing salvation.” The main lessons are repentance and assurance.

1. An **APPEAL** (6:1-3)

The writer has severely scolded his readers because of their spiritual dullness (5:11-14); now he urges them to go on to maturity (“perfection”). The appeal “*Let us go on*” is not talking about self-effort; he is appealing to the readers to yield themselves to the power of God. How can we fall when God is holding us up?

However, facing persecution, these Hebrew Christians had already slipped back into “babyhood” (5:11-14), prone to go back to Judaism, thus laying again the *foundation* that had prepared the way for Christ. They had repented from dead works under the law (9:14). They had shown faith toward God. They believed the doctrine of baptisms (Levitical washings-Mark 7:4). Laying on of hands refers to the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16:21; and every true Jew held to a future resurrection and judgment (Acts 24:14-15). If they did not move forward, they would be forsaking Christianity for Judaism.

2. An **ARGUMENT** (6:4-8)

The issue here is *repentance, not salvation*: “For it is impossible...to renew them unto repentance” (vv. 4, 6). The two key words in v. 6 are “fall away” and “crucify.” “Fall away” describes believers in danger of divine chastening (Heb. 12:5-13) and of becoming castaways (1 Cor. 9:24-27), which results in loss of *reward* and *divine disapproval*, but not loss of salvation. The phrase “seeing they crucify” (v. 6) means that they cannot be brought to repentance while they continue to sin and put Christ to shame.

So, the whole message of this difficult passage is this: *Christians can go backward in their spiritual lives and bring shame to Christ. While they are living in sin, they cannot be brought to repentance, and they are in danger of divine chastening. If they persist, they will bear no lasting fruit, and they will “suffer loss” at the judgment seat of Christ.*

3. An **ASSURANCE** (6:9-20)

Here is assurance... these are true Christians (vs. 9-12). Abraham is then used as an illustration that they need only exercise faith and patience to receive the blessing. Certainly Abraham sinned—yet God kept His promises to him. After all, *the covenants of God do not depend on the faith of the saints for their certainty; they depend only on the faithfulness of God*. Verse 17 says that God did all this that the “heirs” might know the dependability of God. Who are these heirs? All true believers are heirs (Gal. 3:29).

Then, there are “*two immutable things*” that give us assurance:

1) God’s P _____ (God Cannot Lie) **2) God’s O** _____ (God Cannot Change).

We have an Anchor; and we have a “Forerunner” (Christ) who has opened the way for us and will see to it that we one day shall join Him in glory. Instead of frightening saints into thinking they are lost, this wonderful chapter warns against unbelief and an unrepentant heart and also assures us that we are anchored in eternity.

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