

Hebrews 6

- Today we study the third warning
 - It begins similar to the second warning
 - The writer is engaged in a difficult line of analysis – exposition
 - The writer is prepared to draw a point from a historical figure taken from their OT
 - But before he does, he pauses to address a shortcoming in the readers
 - Last time, the shortcoming was that there might be those among the group who have failed to trust in God in the first place
 - This time the issue is different

[Heb. 5:11](#) ¶ Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

[Heb. 5:12](#) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

[Heb. 5:13](#) For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

[Heb. 5:14](#) But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

- Another detour away from his topic
 - He returns to it at it 6:20
- Concerning him
 - Concerning Mel
 - We have much to say (we have much to talk about)
 - It is hard to explain
 - Why?
 - Because they are dull of hearing

- Nothros = sluggish, slothful, lazy
- They weren't doing the hard work of studying and learning what God had provided for them in His word
 - In this case, it would be the background of what had been what was written concerning the priesthood
 - And Abraham and Lot in Genesis
 - And what David wrote in the Psalms
- Because any understanding of who Mel was is predicated upon the student have a solid understanding of a minimum degree of Biblical truth
- Which explains why the writer assumed they would have this trouble
 - Presumably because of their ongoing mistakes in practice and thought
 - They were confused over whether to follow the teachings of angels or Jesus
 - They weren't sure whether Moses was the right messenger or Jesus
 - They didn't know whether to seek intercession from the earthly HP or Jesus
 - They were unable to accept and live out even the most basic principles of their faith
- The most convicting part of the writer's statement comes at the beginning of verse 12
 - By now
 - The writer is suggesting that the readers have had enough time
 - They are not baby Christians
 - Their degree of immaturity is disproportionate to their time in the faith
 - And the measure the writer uses for that maturity is the ability to be teaching others

- They should have been teachers now
 - This is not a reference to the spiritual gift of teaching
 - You don't have to have the gift of teaching to teach
 - You don't even have to be teaching
- But every Christian should make it their goal to be able to teach
 - God has appointed some as teachers so that they might have a special calling to build others up in the knowledge of scripture
 - But often look upon teachers instead as those who are simply called to have a knowledge of scripture
 - In other words, every Christian should have the same goal as any teacher would have:
 - To know the scriptures
 - And to mature in their knowledge at a rate consistent with their opportunity to know the Lord
 - A baby Christian is expected to know little more than basic principles of their faith but still be able to share them with others
 - A more experienced Christian should have made progress into understanding important church doctrines and church history and apologetics and be able to share those things with others
 - A seasoned and mature Christian should have an understanding of the rich and rewarding studies of scripture like the prophets and eschatology, election and predestination, the history of Israel, etc. and share them
 - Every Christian is called to learn the word of God for themselves and to do seriously
 - And without ever reaching a stopping point

- Rather than having enough knowledge to be teaching, these Christians were still in need for someone to teach them the elementary principles of the oracles of God (word of God)
 - They needed milk, and not meat
 - The writer's imagery is very purposeful and full of meaning

[1Cor. 3:1](#) ¶ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

[1Cor. 3:2](#) I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,

[1Cor. 3:3](#) for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

- That like an infant they need to return to living on milk rather than solid food
 - If you were to take an infant and feed it solid food before it was ready, you would kill it
 - It would choke on it or it's digestive tract would not be able to process the food and it would starve
 - It must have something easy to digest, something simply, yet something nourishing. So for an infant, milk is the perfect food.
 - But at some point, the child's body reaches its limit on milk
 - It can't grow further without more complex foods
 - The food that sustained it in its early years can't continue to fuel its growth to maturity...it needs solid food...meat
 - On the other hand, if instead of solid food that child was to continue to be fed milk, the body would begin to grow anemic.
 - What was once the perfect food would now become completely useless for the growth and maturing of that body.
 - In fact, taken long enough, the milk becomes the death of the child. Growth will cease, strength will fade, sight grows dim, life is extinguished
- That's the writer's concern for this Hebrew church.

- They received the essential teachings of the church, they received their milk, but when the time for maturing came they never progressed to solid food
 - They remain stunted. They continue to feed on the elementary teachings.
 - In fact, they've now even left those aside, which is why the writer says that they now again have need to repeat those teachings
 - By perpetually subsisting on milk, they have stunted their growth and their very existence as a church is in question
- In verse 13, the writer says that those who are habitual drinkers of milk are not accustomed (experienced) to the word of righteousness
 - Those who continue to subsist on weak, watered-down teaching as their main course week after week are not experienced with God's word
 - I think the writer is saying this
 - Once a Christian experiences the meat of God's word
 - They won't be happy with the milk any longer
 - They can't survive on it any longer
 - So when someone is content with watered-down teaching that barely scratches the surface of the Bible, then they are infants
 - Christians who have never explored the depths and riches of God's word and so don't know what they're missing
- And what are they missing?
 - Verse 14 says that the mature Christian who feeds on the meat of God's word regularly can depend on having their senses trained
 - And with that training they can discern good from evil
 - The study of God's word will bring with it the wisdom to know right from wrong
 - The ability to make the right choice and decisions

- The ability to filter out false teaching and false experience
- All of this comes from a patient, dedicated study of God's word at a deep level
 - Not at a superficial level
- But let me point you to the key word in verse 14
 - Practice
 - You gain these benefits from practice
 - The practice of study
 - It is continuous and repetitive
 - Combine that with what the writer said earlier
 - That they ought by now
 - And they have need again
 - This is a group that has heard it all before but didn't practice it and so they lost it
 - And now they're back to square one

Wiersbe:

"One of the first symptoms of spiritual regression, or backsliding, is a dullness toward the Bible. Sunday School class is dull, the preaching is dull, anything spiritual is dull. The problem is usually not with the Sunday School teacher or the pastor, but with the believer himself."

- And just what are these elementary principles? What is the milk that every Christian needs at first?
 - Elementary means beginning...the foundation ideas of the faith

[Heb. 6:1](#) ¶ Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,
[Heb. 6:2](#) of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

- If you were wondering what it meant to remain in milk, here's a list of milk
 - First, the need to repent from dead works and show faith toward God - the gospel message
 - Salvation
 - As a new Christian enters into their faith, it's important to teach them how that change occurred
 - Of how the Holy Spirit changed them and what grace by faith means
 - Then of how works fit into the life of a Christian
 - Being a response to salvation rather than the means of salvation
 - That we can't add anything to our own righteousness, since Christ has already achieved perfection on our behalf
 - Secondly, teachings on washings and the laying on of hands
 - Baptism and anointings and giftings
 - The works of the Holy Spirit, in order words.
 - Teaching the meaning of baptism
 - That it is a symbol not a sacrament
 - That it represent a changed heart but does not effect a changed heart
 - Or anointings or spiritual giftings
 - How they are given and to whom and what they mean
 - Third, the resurrection of the dead
 - An understanding of our future when we will be resurrected in bodily form
 - That we will reign with Christ on earth for a thousands years
 - Finally, eternal judgment

- The teaching from scripture that all unbelievers will likewise be resurrected into a new body so that they may be judged and suffer the penalty for their sin in the Lake of Fire
- The writer says these teachings are milk, something even the newest Christian should be taught and understand
 - Isn't this sobering for us all?
 - How many of us can honestly say that we have a good working knowledge of these areas of scripture and doctrine?
 - And this is milk
 - Imagine what the solid food is
 - How many of our brothers and sisters remain utterly confused on what the Bible says concerning salvation and the purpose of works
 - On spiritual giftings,
 - On the purpose and meaning of baptism
 - On the role and function of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Body of Christ
 - On death and the after life
- And yet, consider how often these topics form the basis for the message from the pulpit each Sunday?
 - Here's the irony
 - The writer says that the readers had regressed to the point where they actually needed these teachings again
 - And they needed them, because they had never matured and progressed past them
 - So in other words, if you don't press on and mature in your understanding, you lose even what you had
 - You regress
 - So as churches continue to teach milk, they actually make the problem worse because the more you teach milk, the more people regress

- Like the young boy still being fed milk
 - He grows anemic
- So when churches say that they must teach milk because their congregations are able to handle meat
 - They have not only diagnosed the illness, they have also identified the cause
 - There must be a challenge to press on to maturity followed by a teaching through the meat of the word
- Now the writer throws out a challenge

[Heb. 6:3](#) And this we will do, if God permits.

- Let's parse the sentence
 - And this
 - This...meaning press on to maturity
 - We
 - Christians
 - If
 - Conditional
 - God permits
 - God must permit our maturing
 - We don't mature as a Christian except that God permits it
 - And based on verse 3, God may not permit it
- The writer goes on to explain...

- Moves to the 3rd person in the narrative here

[Heb. 6:4](#) For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, [Heb. 6:5](#) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, [Heb. 6:6](#) and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

- Look at the first word in verse 4
 - For...an explanation of verse 3
 - In the case of those who share in these five characteristics:
 - All are expressed in the aorist tense
 - Completed and continuing actions
 - Enlightened – photizo
 - To receive light

[John 1:9](#) ¶ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, **enlightens** every man.

- Tasted the heavenly gift
 - The heavenly gift is Christ Himself
 - Taste is a Greek word for consuming something (geuo)
 - It does not mean a partial or incomplete experience as some have tried to suggest

[Heb. 2:9](#) But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might **taste** death for everyone.

- Obviously, Jesus didn't die a partial death
- Made partakers of the Holy Spirit
 - Made indicates an external determination
 - Partakers = companions

[Heb. 3:14](#) For we have become **partakers** of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

- Of the Holy Spirit
 - God has made them companions with the Holy Spirit (permanent)
- Tasted the good word of God
 - They had heard and consumed (or benefited from) the word of God
 - This is important because it confirms the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

[1Cor. 1:18](#) ¶ For the word of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

[1Cor. 2:14](#) ¶ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are **foolishness** to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- If the readers had tasted the good word of God, then they heard and understood and received it joyfully
 - This would require the Spirit of God to communicate it to them
 - They were no longer natural men
- And the powers of the age to come
 - They had tasted (implied) the powers of the kingdom age
 - Powers is dunamis

[Acts 1:7](#) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

[Acts 1:8](#) but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

- The power of the Holy Spirit expressed through believers is a form of the power that is to come completely in the new age
- All of these characteristics are aorist tense
 - Clearly, this is a list of the things a believer experiences
 - None of these things are common to unbelievers
 - If they have these things and fall away (unique word – parapipto)
 - So in context, this means a retreat from the walk of maturity
 - The opposite of pressing on to maturity
- What's the consequence?
 - Impossible to renew them again to repentance
 - Repentance can be Big R or Little R
 - Little r

[Luke 17:3](#) "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

[Luke 17:4](#) "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

- Big R

[Luke 5:31](#) And Jesus answered and said to them, "*It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.*

[Luke 5:32](#) "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

[Acts 20:20](#) how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

[Acts 20:21](#) solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

[2Tim. 2:24](#) The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

[2Tim. 2:25](#) with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

[2Tim. 2:26](#) and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

- Then there is the word for renew

[Titus 3:5](#) He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and **renewing** by the Holy Spirit,

[Titus 3:6](#) whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [Titus 3:7](#) so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

- So there is a renewing by the Holy Spirit associated with salvation
 - This is the spiritual renewal that effects salvation
 - The baptism of the Holy Spirit poured our upon us

[2Cor. 4:16](#) ¶ Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being **renewed** day by day.

[Col. 3:10](#) and have put on the new self who is being **renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—

- So there is also a renewing that is daily following salvation
 - This is the renewal of sanctification
 - This is also the way we increase in spiritual maturity
- So we have two repentances in scripture with two associated renewals
 - Repentance and renewal accompanying salvation
 - Repentance and renewal accompanying sanctification
 - Which one is the writer describing here?
 - Let's look at the reason given
 - They again crucify to themselves the Son of God

[Heb. 6:4](#) ¶ For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became companions with the Holy Spirit, [Heb. 6:5](#) tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age, [Heb. 6:6](#) and who have fallen away, because to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt.

- The concern is that it is to their own harm that they are continuing to appear to restart their Christian walk, almost as if to recrucify Christ
 - In other words, to sin on Saturday and go to church on Sunday
 - To flirt with the prospect of leaving Christianity under the assumption that they can come back later when it's more convenient
 - And in doing so, they shame Christ and hold Him up to contempt
 - Hurting the team
- Secondly, consider the reason for the warning
 - Not pressing on to maturity in their walk
 - They were regressing because they had not pressed forward
- Third, consider where the writer goes next

[Heb. 6:7](#) For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

[Heb. 6:8](#) but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

- The ground that drinks the rain that often falls...

[Matt. 5:44](#) "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

[Matt. 5:45](#) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

- Rain is a picture of God's mercy and love and grace

- The ground then are the people receiving God's grace
 - In this case, the analogy must be a picture of the group described in the earlier verses in Heb 6 (believers)
 - So it's a comparison between believer and unbeliever
- In the one case, the ground receives the mercy and grace and produces useful vegetation (Fruit)
 - For whose sake it is also tilled (conviction of the Spirit, trials)
 - And receives a blessing (eternal reward, temporal blessings)
- In the other case, it yields thorns and thistles
 - Worthless – worth nothing to God
 - Close to being cursed
 - Burned

[1Cor. 3:11](#) For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

[1Cor. 3:12](#) Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

[1Cor. 3:13](#) each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

[1Cor. 3:14](#) If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

[1Cor. 3:15](#) If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Fill in chart
 - The point is to warn believers against backsliding and testing God to withdraw His permission for maturing
 - Bench you rather than leave you in the game
 - Suffer loss of eternal reward

- Moves back to the 1st person

[Heb. 6:9](#) ¶ But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

[Heb. 6:10](#) For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

[Heb. 6:11](#) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,

[Heb. 6:12](#) so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.