

Hebrews 6:1-15 From "Milk to Meat"

Proposition: Nothing can pluck us out of God's hand but we can jump.

One of the things in our church that I get to hear quite a lot and really enjoy hearing is when someone comes to fellowship with us who hasn't been in church for such a long time. They drifted off, they got distracted or upset with someone and did their own thing for a while then one of you loved them back into fellowship. Inevitably they will say in those first few weeks; it feels like I have come home, I had forgotten how it feels when the Holy Spirit is moving in worship or how encouraged I am just to be around other Christians. They forget what fellowship is like because they got drawn away by business or sport or offence.

The writer to this Hebrew church of young Christians that we are studying currently is concerned. He can see the way that the old lifestyle tugs at the hearts of these young believers and he passionately warns them not to give up and not to go back. Keep your focus on Jesus because He is the complete revelation, the perfect revelation of God's message. Hebrews 6 is a bit of a wakeup call to any Christian who is getting comfortable in life and starting to drift back to the old way of doing things. They are slipping back into the party scene or the drinking scene, or the workaholic scene or the porn scene or the sport scene or the Reiki scene or the horoscope scene where the focus is way off Jesus and their passions are for something else. These young Christians that this letter was being addressed to were tempted to go back to religion and ritual and routine and turn their backs on grace alone through Jesus Christ. In this passage they get, and maybe today a few of us need to get a stern warning from the Lord.

Now as we get to this passage can I just point out that vs 4-6 are three verses that satan has used to divide the church for centuries. And believe you me satan knows God's word. In the garden of Eden he casts doubt on God's word. In Matthew 4 as Jesus is tempted by satan in the desert satan twists God's words to try to get Jesus to sin. And yet I think if we study Hebrews 6 as it links in with Hebrews 5 it's not complicated and controversial.

Hebrews 5:11-13

¹¹Much more could be said about this subject. But it is hard to explain, and all of you are slow to understand. ¹²By now you should have been teachers, but once again you need to be taught the simplest things about what God has said. You need milk instead of solid food. ¹³People who live on milk are like babies who don't really know what is right.

These Christians are called slow to understand. The phrase comes from the base word ignorant. They are still drinking milk, needing the basics taught to them because they are ignorant. Now this type of ignorance is not "Ignorant" because they haven't heard but it's

the sort of ignorance a person has when they have heard lots of truth and revelation but just don't get it. They are ignorant, they are slow to understand and so they are stuck in the new entrant's stage of Christianity. They were ignorant, that is they had ignored what had already been given to them and so they could not progress on.

Sometimes you will have people come to you with a similar problem. They will say to you, sister/ brother I don't get anything out of church anymore, I don't get anything out of bible study. When I read the word its just like looking at ink on paper. I think the most common cause of that happening in the life of a believer is that they are ignorant of what God has already said: i.e. at some point God said, forgive your sister, or God said, start ministry now don't make excuses, or God said I want you to help that family and when God said it they ignored it. They thought, no, not me, not now, I am not sure if I want to do that. They ignored what God had said and God still wants them to get step 1 before He can give them step 2 and so they get stuck and get dry. If someone says to you, God is not speaking to me, Christianity is boring. Ask them, when He spoke last what did he tell you to do? Then have you done it?

These people were still on milk, and had not moved onto step 2 because they were ignoring the revelations that God had already given them. It's about what He has done, grace, relationship not bells and smells and trumpets and priestly gowns. It's just Jesus. Now he lists in our passage today what the basics, what Christianity 101 looks like. This is the milk, the abc's of faith that they should have got sorted in the first few months of being a Christian so they could mature and become teachers of the word themselves.

¹We must try to become mature and start thinking about more than just the basic things we were taught about Christ. We shouldn't need to keep talking about why we ought to turn from deeds that bring death and why we ought to have faith in God. ²And we shouldn't need to keep teaching about baptisms or about the laying on of hands or about people being raised from death and the future judgment. ³Let's grow up, if God is willing.

This list of 6 basic doctrines is the new entrants teaching of the Bible, they are Christianity 101. The kinds of things you want your kids to learn. The kinds of things we make an effort to help a new Christian understand as soon as they come to faith. They are the milk, the sort of teaching that every new believer needs. What are they?

THE MILK: CHRISTIANITY 101

- 1. Repent from a works based idea of salvation.** Virtually everyone that seeks after God believes that they need to be good enough and do enough good things to earn their salvation. Error. Not true. No one is good enough. Only Jesus. Repent from a works based idea of salvation.
- 2. Faith towards God.**

3. **The doctrine of baptisms.** That is as soon as someone comes to faith they need to understand that they need to be baptized under water as believers and also to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon their lives.
4. **The laying on of hands. That is finding what your Spiritual gifts are and to be empowered for service.**
5. **The resurrection of the dead.** People need to know that the end times will come and what will happen. What is the rapture etc.
6. **Eternal judgement.** That there really is a heaven and a hell and your response to Jesus today will have eternal consequences.

That is Christianity 101 and if you haven't got these things sorted, even if you have been going to church for 100 years you are still drinking milk, going over the basics when you need to get these things sorted quickly and be able to teach these things and move on to maturity. That's the milk. Now here is the controversy that has divided Christians unnecessarily for centuries. I see it as a loving warning.

THE CONTROVERSY: ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED OR NOT

⁴⁻⁶But what about people who turn away after they have already seen the light and have received the gift from heaven and have shared in the Holy Spirit? What about those who turn away after they have received the good message of God and the powers of the future world? There is no way to bring them back. What they are doing is the same as nailing the Son of God to a cross and insulting him in public!

Who are the people who have received revelation, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, received the good news, know of end time prophecy?

Some people argue that they are the ones who go to church and sometimes to a bible study and give God a try but they never really repent and believe in their hearts.

Others say that people like this are just hypothetical people. In other words no one who receives the Holy Spirit and the Word would ever go back to the old way of life, it's just hypothetical.

If we let the Word speak for itself it doesn't leave any space for either of those two options. If someone has received revelation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit then they are Christians, the real deal. But Russell does that mean if I fall off the rails and go back to partying, or drinking or being obsessed with something other than God that there is no way back for me, I can't come to him and ask for mercy again? Yes. It is humanly impossible for you to be put right with God again if you have turned you back on such great a salvation.

Now before you run out the door crying heretic let me remind you of a conversation Jesus had which will help us understand what is going on here.

Do you remember Jesus one day was met by a rich young ruler, this guy had the jewellery, the cars, he was famous, and he had political power? The guy had it all in the world's eyes and he was only a young man. He came to Jesus one day and said Lord I have all the stuff and the fame but Lord my life feels empty and hollow what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus then rattled off a few of the 10 commandments and the man said yes he kept them all. Then Jesus recognising that he had a passion that was greater than his passion for God, an idol in his life said, "go sell all your stuff and come follow me". The young man walked away very sad. He couldn't do it. It was too tough, too hard.

His idol was money, for some it might be sex or popularity or stuff, or sport or music but for him, his idol was money and Jesus just wanted him to be free.

Well the disciples say.

If he can't get into the kingdom of God and be saved can anyone.

Jesus then said "with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Now let us go back to our text. Can a person who once was born again, who received the Holy Spirit and revelation and the Word who goes back to ritual (as these people were tempted to) or to partying or to sexual immorality or to Reiki or to horoscopes and self serving, can a person who has walked away from God ever put themselves right with God again. The answer is no they can't for man it is impossible. Those behaviours are serious and an offence to God and no man can restore them to God. For man it is impossible, but for God Nothing is impossible.

I believe as the once saved always saved people do that once my life is in His hands nothing can pluck me out of his hands. John 10 and Romans 8 talk about that. But I also believe:

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹Don't you know that evil people won't have a share in the blessings of God's kingdom? Don't fool yourselves! No one who is immoral or worships idols or is unfaithful in marriage or is a pervert or behaves like a homosexual ¹⁰will share in God's kingdom. Neither will any thief or greedy person or drunkard or anyone who curses and cheats others.

So I believe that God keeps his sheep in the palm of His hand and no one or nothing can pluck them out (John 10). I believe that no power, person, thing or demon can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8) but I also believe that someone who is practising sin who knows God is in really big trouble and is putting their salvation at risk.

If I met someone who used to worship with us down Swanson Road drunk and they greeted me, "Russell, how are you? I know I have drunk too much but you baptised me once and I am saved, God loves me it will be ok". I would tell them to stop drinking; you will have no place in the kingdom of God, stop it now repent. "But I feel ok about my drinking, I feel ok about my cheating, I think you Christians need to lighten up a little".

When you are lying down if I were to place a 50kg weight on your chest it would put pressure on you and you would want to get rid of it. If however I went down to Morrison's funeral home and put a 50kg weight on the chest of one of the corpses down there, you know what they wouldn't mind it would be ok. They would be just as happy and peaceful with the weight or without the weight. And if I got to speak to this guy when he was sober and he said Russell it is ok I would say no it is not. The fact that it feels ok to you suggests to me that you are dead spiritually, you have begun the process of hardening your heart towards God and its really dangerous. No one can pluck you out of the hand of God but you are in the process of jumping, so sharpen up and turn around. I would rebuke an unrepentant back slider but ...

If someone comes to you and I sorry for their sin confessing the struggle that they are facing, determined to get free and give up the sin, and they asked you or I "can I come back to God?" I would say to them the fact that you are here, you are seeking Him, you are listening to his voice tells me that you are still in His hand and with God all things are possible. Friend let me encourage you, keep up the good fight and you will find that He will strengthen you and in 6 months you will be amazed at how much freer you have become.

Now I haven't got a dollar each way, supporting both sides of the debate. I am certain that no one can pluck you out of the hand of God and that nothing can separate you from His love but I am also certain that God will never remove free choice from you and if you reject Him often enough you can jump from that hand yourself.

I believe that it is possible that if a man or woman who continues to reject God will possibly come to a day when like the rich young ruler they say I just can't do it, the jobs too demanding, the movies or the porn are too enticing, the guy or the girl is too handsome, the bottle or drugs are too comforting. Then they are really in trouble.

To the repentant person the scriptures offer comfort. To the comfortable sinner the scriptures offer a blunt warning.

You can't lose your salvation but you can leave it biblically.

We have looked at the milk, the controversy, and now we look at the consequences of our response to the Word.

THE CONSEQUENCES

⁷A field is useful to farmers, if there is enough rain to make good crops grow. In fact, God will bless that field. ⁸But land that produces only thornbushes is worthless. It is likely to fall under God's curse, and in the end it will be set on fire.

God's word will fall like rain on all people. For some they respond to it with humility and faith and they will be fruitful or productive for the kingdom and receive the king's blessing.

Others will hear the word and say, rubbish, whatever, I have my own religion, I am doing my own thing and for them that reject the same word it will become for them like a curse. It will bring judgement.

One receives the Word; the rain with faith and they receive blessing. The other receives the same Word and rejects it and they become like gorse in the eyes of God and come under a curse and judgement.

Finally let us look at the goal

THE MATURE CHRISTIAN

We don't want to be baby Christians needing milk all the time we want to move on from Christianity 101 and mature and get the meat of the Word, meaty revelations from God in heaven. What does that look like?

⁹My friends, we are talking this way. But we are sure that you are doing those really good things that people do when they are being saved. ¹⁰God is always fair. He will remember how you helped his people in the past and how you are still helping them. You belong to God, and he won't forget the love you have shown his people. ¹¹We wish that each of you would always be eager to show how strong and lasting your hope really is. ¹²Then you would never be lazy. You would be following the example of those who had faith and were patient until God kept his promise to them. ¹³No one is greater than God. So he made a promise in his own name when he said to Abraham, ¹⁴"I, the Lord, will bless you with many descendants!" ¹⁵Then after Abraham had been very patient, he was given what God had promised.

- 1. Mature Christians keep on faithfully serving.** As James described it they have faith that works. Real faith will result in us serving God and serving others without looking for thanks or earthly rewards. Real faith works. It produces a serving life style. So mature Christians keep on serving whether times are tough or easy.
- 2. Mature Christians exercise faith and patience.**
Caleb and Joshua were given the promise of Canaan the promised land by God and unlike the other Israelites they believed that God would honour His promises and they had patience to trust and wait for them to be fulfilled about 38 years of patience in fact.

Abraham gained God's blessing of a son at a really old age by believing in God's goodness that he would be faithful to his promises and by patiently waiting for them to be fulfilled.

Some of you have been waiting for God to come through on His promise to you about your kids or your relationship or a ministry.

What should you do? The promise was given to you a year, 10 years, and 30 years ago. Do this. Keep serving Him faithfully by loving His people, when they are nice and when they are horrible. Have faith that God will come through for you and be patient. God's ways and timing often don't make sense to us because He is God, we are specks and He loves us, He holds us, we can trust Him.