

Let Us Go On

by Bill McLeod

The sermon calls believers to let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance and faith, and to be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Duration: 33:15

Scripture: Hebrews 5:12

Topics: "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of Christians who have not progressed in their faith and still need to be taught the basic principles of the word of God. The writer expresses disappointment in their lack of growth and urges them to show diligence and faith in order to inherit the promises of God. The sermon emphasizes the brevity of life and the need to use our time and strength to glorify God. It encourages listeners to lay aside sin and distractions, and to run the race of faith with patience, keeping their focus on Jesus. The sermon concludes by urging individuals to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God, as a reasonable response to the mercy shown through the cross of Calvary.

Transcript

You will find my text in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 1, where the writer says, Let us go on unto perfection. Let us go on. Becoming a Christian is the end of something.

It's the end of my quest for truth and my search for God. But it's also the beginning of something else. It's not just an end.

It's the beginning of a walk with God that lasts forever. The Bible calls this sanctification relative to the human scene. The very God of peace, Paul prayed, the very God of peace, sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful is he that calls you who also will do it. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, Jesus prayed in John 17, sanctify them through your truth. Your word is truth.

So it's a beginning of a walk with God. If we live in the Spirit, Galatians 5, Paul said, if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. And it means step by step with the Spirit of God.

If I'm born again, I'm no longer living in the flesh, I'm now living in the Spirit, according to Romans 8. But I may be living in the Spirit and not really walking in the Spirit, and that's what seemed to concern Paul certainly in that text in Galatians chapter 5. Let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permit. One of the frightening things about the Christian life is the way in which it seems to be so easy to slow down, to cool off, to go back instead of ahead.

Now we sometimes think it's happening today and maybe it didn't happen this way a thousand years ago, but the New Testament forbids such a view. While at least John the Apostle was still alive, five of the seven churches in Asia were backslidden in some respects, and some of them were terribly backslidden, even to the point where teachers were teaching the people of God to commit fornication and to sacrifice unto idols. And even the great church at Ephesus was accused of having left its first love.

And as I said, it's frightening to see how quickly earnest Christians can become less at earnest, and people who were to use the phrase, hot for God, become hot for Satan herself, cold towards God. It's frightening to watch, but it's nothing new. It's been happening all down through the centuries.

For example, here in Hebrews 5, when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God. Now these people, whom this man was writing, had been Christians long enough and had heard enough that they now should have been teaching the word of God, but they were not doing that. They had to be taught again what the first principles of the oracles of God really were.

And you can sense the disappointment in the writer's heart by what he's saying in Hebrews 5 and Hebrews 6. He said in Hebrews chapter 6, we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. He was afraid that these believers were growing lazy, slothful, sluggish, slaw, lazy in spiritual matters. Paul said in writing to the churches in Galatia, you did run well, what happened? You did run well, who has hindered you that you should not obey the truth, what's happened? He was concerned.

And Paul, speaking to Peter in front of the church at Antioch, he said, Peter, if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. I hear sometimes of Christians who destroyed certain things, then years later began to rethink what they had done and went back to those things they had given up. And that's what we're concerned about.

It happens, it happens easily, it's probably happened to some people that are here tonight and we're here to help. Why is it so easy, so hard to live for God, so easy to live for self? Jesus Christ said, the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

The spirit truly is willing or ready, but the flesh, the flesh is weak, and the flesh is weak. The law is spiritual, Paul said, but I am carnal, sold under sin. The law, the commandment is holy and just and good, and there's the word spiritual again, but what the law could not do in that it was weak to the flesh.

The flesh is an ally to Satan, and the flesh is the factory that manufactures the sin in the garden. Christ had to say, what? Could you not watch with me one hour? And they didn't know what to say because their eyes were heavy with sleep, and they never did get out of it. And finally he came and said, sleep on now,

take your rest, the hour is at hand, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Then they leaped to their feet and Peter began swinging his sword. It was too late. The flesh, and then of course Satan's malignant power, be sober, be watchful, be vigilant, your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

In Revelation chapter 12 it ends by saying that the dragon, that Satan, he was angry with the woman Israel, and he went forth to make war with the remnant of her seed. And there is a spiritual Israel, the New Testament makes that very clear, he is not a Jew which there is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly. And Paul writing to a Gentile church says, we are the circumcision, the true circumcision of God, if you be Christ then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

And so to God's people, Satan was angry with the woman Israel. With the people of God. And he went out it says to make war with those that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, that's you if you're a Christian, that's me.

So Satan is constantly warring against the believer and he'll take advantage of the natural inertia of the flesh, the sluggishness of the flesh. I know Paul said that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I do not find. And there wouldn't be any hope but for a simple statement in Philippians, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, hence Paul's prayer in Ephesians, the third chapter.

He prayed that God would strengthen us with power by his spirit in the inner man. And we all need that. And we constantly need that.

Let us go on, let's not stop, let's not go back. Let's go ahead, let's grow in grace, 2 Peter 3.18, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So Peter talked about some Christians who are blind, he that lacks these things is blind and cannot see afar off and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

He is ground to a halt, now he is sliding back slowly. Israel slides back as a backsliding heifer, it said in the Old Testament. And often we are no different in the new.

My backsliding may be more polite because of the restraints that family and friends and society put on me, I will not go back maybe to carnal open things. But my heart may be cold, my walk with God just not there at all. Here in Hebrews 5, he says you are dull of hearing, you are dull of hearing, Christ said take heed how you hear.

So we as Christians may be hard of hearing, blind insofar as our sight is concerned, cold in our love toward God, turning back to weak and beggarly elements as Paul accused some people, running well but not now, Satan, the flesh, you know it well, we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places. That's why he says therefore take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. But you know what some Christians say? They shrug their shoulders and they say, why bother? I've got my ticket to heaven, I'm

going to make it to the glory land, I may not have many rewards and I'm not too sure about having a crown, but I'll have a home in heaven, why bother? Christ said, you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.

Are you a friend to Christ in that sense, that you seek to obey and to do everything he asks you to do? Well that's important. Why bother because God told us we should, let us go on unto perfection, that's from God, let's not stop here, let's no longer be hard of hearing or blind, cold or dead, let's repent of that, let's go on unto perfection. Another reason, because as Paul told us so beautifully in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, he asked the question, what he said? Know you not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you're not your own for you're bought with a price? Therefore, because you're not your own, therefore, because you're bought with a price and you belong to God, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.

You are not your own. Don't ever think you're your own. If you're born again you're the child of God's.

You're a servant of God. Glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's. Babylon glorified herself, the Bible says.

Belshazzar Daniel said, the God in whose hand is your breath and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified. You've been weighed in the balances and found wanting. And that night, Belshazzar died.

He didn't glorify God. Babylon was worse. She glorified herself.

And so much she glorified herself, God said, so much torment and sorrow give her. That's the penalty. Glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.

Then, because life at best is very brief, like the falling of a leaf, like the binding of a sheath, be in time for one of the old songs. Life at best is very brief and death is as certain as the rising of the sun tomorrow morning for all of us. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.

You must die and so must I. So in Ecclesiastes we read this thought. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might. That is with all the power you've got.

For there's no work nor device nor wisdom nor knowledge in the grave where you're going. It's rather blunt. You might even call it crude, but it sure gets the message across.

As Billy Sunday used to say, we're all going to wind up in the bone basket. Let's give our lives completely to God. While we have strength, let's give it to God.

Glorify God. Remember how brief life is. Just ask any person past 50, past 60, past 70.

Ask them how quickly life has gone and they'll tell you and it'll be the same for you whatever your age. So whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your power. There's no work, no device, no wisdom, no knowledge in the grave where you're going.

The grave cannot praise God. Death can't celebrate God. The living, the living, he shall praise God.

Do it with your might while you can. Here's a better reason. 1 Corinthians 15, 58, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15, that's the great resurrection chapter. There he establishes the truth forever of the resurrection of Christ, which establishes the fact that we'll be raised from the dead ourselves also, or if we're living, when Christ returns. We'll miss death.

We'll be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Translated in a moment, he said, in the twinkling of an eye. But none of us can guarantee that we'll be living when Christ comes.

Dr. Philpott was a very well-known Canadian preacher many years ago. Philpott Tabernacle, Hamilton, Ontario. He once made the statement that God had shown him that he was going to live till Jesus came.

He was going to live till Jesus came. He's been dead now for many years. He was mistaken, as all have been who've made statements like that.

We do not know when our Savior will come, but it is appointed unto men once to die. What he's saying in 1 Corinthians 15 is this. Because of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the consequent advent or coming of the Spirit of God, your labor is never in vain in God.

It's never in vain. Now, the Old Testament appeal was, Brother, you're going to wind up in the coffin. You better do all you can while you can.

The New Testament doesn't appeal that way. It says, Because Christ was raised from the dead, his resurrection was sure, the Spirit of God has come, because the Spirit could not come until Christ was gone back to heaven. If I depart, I will send him unto you, he said, and so he did.

Brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. No room in that text for backsliding or coldness or dilly-dallying in the work of God. Give yourselves wholly to these things, the Bible says, that your profiting may appear to all.

Take heed to yourself and unto the doctrine continuing them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. No room in the Bible for coldness, wasting of time, rather it says, redeeming the time because the days are evil. And then here's another reason why bother.

Because there is the danger spelled out in Revelation 3 of losing my crown. He said, Take heed that no man take your crown. Wouldn't it be awful to be in heaven and then to have to realize that somebody else has a crown God intended for you because you didn't care enough? You never gave yourself completely to God in the measure you should have as a Christian believer.

Somebody else got the crown you should have. Is that possible? Oh yes. Read Revelation 3. It's very possible.

It's not the way God would want it to be, but it's inevitable. If God can't get me to do it, God will have to get someone else to do it. He'll get it done.

Whether you do it or not, He'll get it done. If He has to move heaven and earth, He'll get it done. Known unto God are all His works and the foundation of the world.

Isaiah heard the glorious Trinity talking. Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? And he volunteered. He said, Lord, here am I. Send me.

God was looking for volunteers. He may sometimes conscript us, but even then He can't conscript us against our will. So He doesn't really do that.

He's looking for volunteers, those that will freely and willingly give to God all they have. That brings us to another important point. Why bother? Romans 12, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.

You could live in Bangladesh, 89 million people jammed into an area, 40,000 square miles in extent, but you live in Saskatchewan, 250,000 square miles, about a million people. They have 89 million people in a little postage stamp. You could stick in the corner of Saskatchewan and lose it.

Eighty percent of the people in the country of India have never heard the gospel, and there's almost 800 million people in that country. You could have been born there in darkness and died in darkness. You could have lived on the other side of the cross before Christ came.

There's a lot of things that might have been, but that were not. You were born in a country, perhaps, most of us were born in Canada. If you were not born here, you're living here.

You have the opportunity of hearing the Word of God anytime you want. Radio, TV, books, magazines, tracts, Bible, church, and whom God has committed much of Him, He will require them more. The mercies of God that you heard the gospel, the mercies of God that I heard the gospel, present your body, He says, in consequence of this, present your body a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

It's the only reasonable thing to do in the light of the cross of Calvary, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. The Lord has done great things for us. We're off.

We are glad. Am I glad enough for those great things that I will present my body a living sacrifice to God? I read things like this in Belgium. Belgium has around 10 million people in Europe.

Belgium has 140 towns of 10,000 or more population that do not have a gospel witness at all. You have 6,000 people here in Winkler, so I understand. A hundred and forty towns of 10,000 or more with no gospel witness.

Or Austria, slightly smaller. Austria has 4,000 towns and villages. Only a hundred and sixty of them have a gospel testimony, that's all.

What are we doing sitting here in Canada? Christian parents, you ought to be praying your children into the harvest field. Most of us are too selfish for that. We want our children all around us so that when we get older they can kind of look after us and so on.

We want to have fellowship with our children, forgetting we're going to have a far deeper and sweeter, more meaningful fellowship in heaven forever and ever and ever. So your kids go to the mission field, you only see them once every four years, is it all that bad? I was reading a book a while ago on missions, the early days in China, the China Inland Mission. There's a cemetery way up in the mountains, northern China somewhere.

There are 28 missionary babies buried in that cemetery. That's the price that people paid in earlier times to make sure that the lost heard the gospel. And many of us as Christian believers can go a lifetime.

We never shed a tear for the lost anywhere. We never stretch out a hand to try and win a person to Christ anywhere, at any time. Dear people, God is asking the question, what's hindering you? Why are you blind? Why are you so deaf? Why is your heart so cold? Why is your love so weak? Why do you care so little? Why did somebody have to say in Bible times that millions could say today, no man cared for my soul? Do you know something? I've been offered gospel tracks since I became a Christian or had somebody witness to me several times, but never in Canada, never in North America.

It happened in Argentina. It happened in other countries. You know what I read somewhere recently? If you're in South Korea and you're in a bus depot waiting for a bus and you're there 20 minutes, it'll be a very strange thing if six people don't ask you if you're a Christian.

You could sit in a bus depot for 50 years in Canada and nobody would ever ask you if you're a Christian. That's how cold we are. That's how cold we are.

But we just don't recognize the problem. And you know, dear people, many times we don't want to recognize it. We don't want to hear about it.

We've got our ticket for heaven. That's our major concern. How can I live selfishly when Christ lived unselfishly? Someone said the first article of the gospel is this.

Jesus said, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and look at the word daily and follow me. It's costly. But oh, people, it means so much to God and so much to others that you care enough to pray, to give, to go, to live for God's glory.

Let us go on wherever you're at now tonight. Let's go on from there. There's so much more.

The Bible uses a peculiar phrase about the house of Israel possessing its possessions. There's many things God has offered to us. There are possessions, but they don't become ours until by faith we make them our own.

And we step ahead. We walk ahead. So let's go on to perfection.

Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of resurrection of the dead. That's the second coming of Christ, laying on of hands, eternal judgment. These are baby doctrines and they were necessary at one time.

Don't forget them. Don't deny them. But go on from there.

Let's go on to perfection. And then I want to conclude with an appeal to Hebrews chapter 12. Seeing we also are surrounded about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race.

And too often we spend our time, we waste our time, would be a better way of putting it, watching the other Christian, especially the ones that aren't doing so well. Because if we're doing a little better, then we feel better. Because somebody's doing more poorly than we are.

When they said to Jesus, Lord, what shall this man do? What did he say? If I will that he tarry till I come, what business is that of yours? Follow thou me! That's what he said. And that's what he's saying to us today. You're looking at a cold Christian stumbling and falling and priding yourself you're better than that? God says, follow thou me.

If I will that he does this or that, you leave him alone, you follow me. Lay aside every weight. And there are many things that may be in themselves good, but they are weights that slow us down.

There's things I used to do that I do not do today. Nobody would condemn me for doing them if I told you what they were. But God said it's a weight, it's slowing you down.

So I gladly put it aside. Not in every case without a struggle, I must admit. But when I look back today, I say to myself, how could I have bothered knowing the reality of things eternal? How could I have wasted my time and my money with those things? God forgive me.

Lay aside every weight in the sin which does so easily beset us. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me.

And then, if we confess our sins, he is safe and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lay aside every weight in the sin which does so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that's set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Are you doing that? Do you want to do that? Maybe tonight, for some, will be the beginning of a new walk with God.

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