

(Through the Bible) Hebrews 5-6

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes Jesus as our Great High Priest, highlighting His unique role, the importance of obedience, and the need for spiritual maturity among believers.

Duration: 1:19:16

Scripture: Genesis 2:16-17, Psalm 91:11-12, Matthew 4:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 5:11-14, Hebrews 10:23

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Faith Development"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses a group of believers who have not progressed in their spiritual growth. He emphasizes that they should have been at a stage where they could teach others, but instead, they still need to be taught the basic principles of God's word. The speaker warns against arrested spiritual development, which is a common issue in the church. He encourages the listeners to have faith and patience in order to receive the promises of God. The sermon also mentions the significance of taking an oath to end strife and confirms that the speaker will continue discussing this topic in the next chapter.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Hebrews chapter 5? At the end of chapter 4, the author of Hebrews introduced the idea of Jesus being our Great High Priest. Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest that is passed into heavens, the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. That would be our profession of faith.

For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted, like as we are, and yet without sin, or tempted apart from sin. Let us therefore come boldly under the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help. We can come boldly to the throne of grace because we have a Great High Priest.

You see, the mission of the priest was twofold. He was to go before God to represent the people before God. Here is a holy righteous God, here is a sinful people.

A sinful person could not approach the holy righteous God. So the priest would take the sacrifice and he would go before God for the person, make the way. And he would represent that person before God.

Then as he came out from the offering of the sacrifice, he would then represent God to the people. So he was a mediator, he was a go-between between God and man. Now, we have a Great High Priest.

This was so, of course, instilled in the Jewish mind. They would not dare to try to approach God apart from the sacrifices and the priest. That has changed today.

It has changed radically. For the Jews today feel that they have direct access to God and that they need no mediator. That is why they do not believe that they need Jesus Christ, that they say, we go directly to God.

And so the whole mental concept has been changed through the years. But at the time that Paul was writing, the mind frame of the Jew was how God was so totally unapproachable by sinful man that he would not dare to approach God. And so he felt his only approach to God was through the priest, which was correct.

Through the offering of the sacrifice and the priest coming before God for him. Now, with the coming of a faith in Jesus Christ, there was this mental problem subconsciously of I don't have a priest now representing me before God. And so Paul, the writer of Hebrews, is going to point out that we do have a superior representative.

Jesus, He is our Great High Priest. And that through Him, we have an approach to God whereby we can come boldly now seeing we have this Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. Now, in the Jewish mind, there would be an immediate objection.

How could Jesus be our High Priest when He is from the tribe of Judah? And we know that the tribe of Levi was to be the priestly tribe. And so, the author answers that question or begins to answer it in chapter 5. And then he takes up the same subject again in chapter 7. And amplifies it even more in chapter 7. The High Priesthood of Jesus Christ and comparing the priesthood of Jesus Christ with the Levitical priesthood. Now, the priesthoods were known as orders.

The Levitical order. But there was another order of priesthood in the Old Testament. And that was the Melchizedek order.

And so, the author of Hebrews is going to show that Jesus is our High Priest. He is not after the Levitical order. Not of the tribe of Levi.

But He is after the Melchizedek order. And in, again, chapter 7, He'll be showing the superiority of the Melchizedek order over the Levitical order of priesthood. So, chapter 5 then.

For every priest, High Priest, that is taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God. And that's what I said. The High Priest, you see, represented the people before God.

That was His duty. I could not come directly to God. I would have to come to the priest with my offering.

And I would have to lay my hands upon the head of my sacrifice and confess unto the head of the ox or the lamb all of my sin. And then the priest would kill the ox or the lamb. And He would take and offer it as a sacrifice unto God for me.

So, the High Priest was ordained for men. He was taken from among men. But He was ordained to come before God.

That He may offer both the gifts and the sacrifices for sins. That was His duty. Now, this man needed to have compassion on the ignorant.

And on them that are out of the way. For that He Himself also is compassed with weaknesses. So, because He was taken from among men, He understood the weakness of man.

And so He would be compassionate towards the penitent or towards the sinner. For He Himself was guilty of sin. And it is interesting that before He could actually offer any sacrifice for my sins, He had to first of all offer sacrifices for His own sins.

I mean, He didn't even have the direct approach. He had to first of all take care of Himself and then He would come and take care of me. And by reason hereof, He ought as for the people also for Himself to offer for sins.

He had not only to make the sacrifice or bring the sacrifice for me, but He had to do it for Himself. He was a man and as a man a sinner. And as a sinner needed to have sacrifices for His own sins.

So, He had to offer first for Himself. And no man would take this honor unto Himself, but He that is called of God as was Aaron. It's not something that you just say, well, I'm going to be the high priest.

It's an honor that a man didn't just take upon himself. It was something that was ordained or appointed of God. Now, unfortunately in time it became more or less of a political position and a political appointment.

But that was only an indictment against the lack of spirituality that the whole system had gradually degraded into. As so often man's organizations setting up of the hierarchy and all degrades into something less than what it originally was. Into a political institution rather than a spiritual organism.

One of the problems with most of the major denominational churches today is that they've become political systems rather than spiritual organisms. So, the high priest was taken from among man to offer the gifts and the sacrifices for man. But he had to have compassion and this he possessed because he also was a man and familiar with the weaknesses of man.

And so, because he himself was a man and a sinner, he had to offer sacrifices for himself. It's a position that was ordained of God. A man didn't take it unto himself.

Even as today, the ministry is not something that a man just takes up as a profession. It's a calling. It is something that God ordains a man to the ministry.

No amount of education can make you a minister. That is something that God ordains a man to be. And no man can ordain another man to the ministry.

Having the bishop lay hands on me does not ordain me to the ministry. It is God who ordains a man to the ministry. It's an honor a person doesn't take upon themselves.

It is something that is ordained of God for them. Now, also Christ glorified not himself. He didn't take on this position as our great high priest on his own.

That is, making himself the high priest. But he that said unto him, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee, Psalm 2, also said in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, Psalm 110. So, God who said, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee, also said to him, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

And so, speaking of Jesus, who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying, and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. Now, this is a reference to Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane. When he wept before God, prayed, he offered up prayers, supplications with strong crying, and tears unto him that was able to save him.

He said, Now is my soul heavy. The hour has come. What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

But, he said, it was for this hour that I came into the world. Father, glorify thy name. But there in the garden, sweat as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground as he prayed, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.

Jesus, at this point, desired to back away from the cross. The cross of Jesus Christ is an offense to many people. Because the cross of Jesus Christ declares to all man that there is only one way to God.

That prayer of Jesus, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. If what is possible? If the redemption of man is possible by any other way than the cross, let this cup pass from me. Father, if we can redeem man any other way, if man can be redeemed by works, by his efforts, by being good, by being righteous, by keeping the law, by being sincere, let this cup pass from me.

The fact that the cup did not pass from him, but that he went ahead and drank the cup, indicates that there is only one way by which salvation or redemption for man is possible, and that's through the cross of Jesus Christ. And so the cross actually declares one way only by which a man can come to God. If there were any other way, then he would not have gone to the cross.

He was praying. He was crying before the Father. For the Father was able to save him from this death.

And he was heard. The Father heard him. Heard his prayers.

And yet, he ended his prayer, nevertheless, not what I will, but thy will be done. So, he learned obedience through this suffering. In going to the cross, he was submitting to the will of the Father.

I think that that's an important thing to note. Because so often, we picture God as filled with wrath and judgment and ready to strike us dead, and Jesus is saying, oh no, no, please Father, don't. Not so.

It was the Father that initiated the plan of salvation. It was the Father who sent His only begotten Son. It was the Father that held firm when the Son was ready to back out.

And in submitting to the will of the Father, nevertheless, not what I will, and the will of Christ at that point was, let's forget it. Not what I will, but thy will be done. And so, we see God not as angry and vengeful and ready to cast fire and brimstone upon us, but we see God as a loving Father, willing to make the supreme sacrifice of allowing His own Son to go through the ignominy of death and to take our sins upon Himself, that the Father might, through the Son, be able to grant us pardon and forgiveness and receive us and fellowship with us, because that's what God wants more than anything else, is just to fellowship with you.

He wants you to become one with Him. So, the Father heard Him. He was heard.

But, the prayer was not answered as He desired it to be answered, but through prayer and through the suffering, He learned obedience, that is, the submission to the will of God. Now, that is something that prayer should always teach us. Prayer is not an instrument by which we can accomplish our wills upon the

earth.

God never intended that prayer be the medium by which you can do anything you want to do, have anything you want to have. And yet, unfortunately, so many people look at prayer like that. Like it's something where I can just come to God and ask anything I want.

And you say, well, didn't Jesus say, ask what ye will and it shall be done? Who did He say it to? Did He say that to the multitudes? No. He said it to His disciples. And what constitutes being a disciple? If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Now, when you read, and whatsoever you desire when you pray, believe that you receive and you have it, put over the top of that, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me. You see, that's who He is giving this broad promise to. And if I have indeed denied Myself to take up the cross and to follow Him, then I'm not going to be seeking those things for My own glory and for My own flesh or whatever, but I'm only going to be seeking those things that would please the Father.

And in prayer is where we so often learn submission to the will of God. Prayer does change things, but prayer changes me more than it changes God. I cannot believe that God is changed by prayer.

And if you think that prayer is a way by which you can snow God and get Him to see your point of view, you're wrong. You can get God to acquiesce if you just talk fast enough and smile enough and throw in enough hallelujahs. Well, surely God will see it your way and you can, you know, get what you want.

Not so. I am convinced that every right thing I have ever prayed for, God intended to give it to me before I ever prayed. And if I pray for something that is wrong, God is too good and too loving to give it to me.

Though I cry and carry on and threaten and stomp out and everything else, He still loves me too much. He's not going to destroy me. Nor is He going to change.

He said, Behold, I am the Lord God. I change not. But I am changed so often in prayer.

Things that I go, oh, I've got to have that, you know, and I pray, and oh, Lord, please, you know. But as I am praying, the Spirit of God changes me. I realize, hey, I really don't need it, Lord.

Your will be done. And you learn submission. And so Jesus, it says, even though He were a Son, yet He learned obedience.

It was obedience to the Father in going to the cross. Submitting now unto the will of the Father. And He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

He had to go through that suffering. The path of the cross is a path of suffering. Paul the Apostle, in writing to the Philippians, said, Oh, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.

Oh, yes, Paul. Yea, yea, I'm with you. I want to know Him and I want to know power.

But Paul went on to say, and the fellowship of His sufferings. Oh, no, Paul, I don't want that. I want the power.

I want the glory. I want to ride the gravy train. But, fellowship of suffering? No, no, no.

Being made conformable unto His death. Even the death of the cross. Oh, no, no, no.

I don't want the cross. I don't want suffering. But that's where He learned obedience.

The submitting of my life to God. The learning to yield my life to Him. I learn it more in suffering than any other place.

That's where I learn obedience. When I endure suffering as a good soldier. When I accept this by just committing my life to God and saying, well, Lord, my life is Yours.

Peter said, he who suffers according to the will of God. Let him commit himself unto God as a faithful Creator. God, You know I don't like to suffer.

You know I don't like to feel this pain. Emotional or physical. But God, You know what I need and You know what's best for me.

And so, Lord, my life is Yours and I submit to You. That takes much greater faith than saying, God, I command You to take this pain away. Or I'm demanding or commanding God to follow my orders.

I don't learn anything that way. Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered. And being made perfect, complete, He became the author of eternal salvation.

Now we are told also in Hebrews that He is the author and the finisher of our faith. Now He is the author of our eternal salvation. He has made salvation possible for us because He went to the cross.

Because He was obedient to the will of the Father. Because He learned this obedience and submitted to the Father, He was then able to bring to us eternal salvation. He could not have brought it to us had He not gone to the cross.

But now it's complete. Our salvation is complete. And so He was called of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have many things to say or of which we have many things to say which are hard to be uttered seeing you're dull of hearing.

Now these people were on the fence. They had come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ from their Judaistic backgrounds. They had this deep ingrained traditions of their fathers.

All their lives they were accustomed to going to the temple, participating in the temple worship. Very moving, very dramatic, deeply instilled. And now they saw a better way.

Now they came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And some of them were on the fence. They didn't know if they wanted to go all the way with Jesus or whether or not they wanted to go back to the temple worship, go back to the high priest, take my sacrifice again back to the priest that He might offer it for me.

And so they're dull of hearing. Paul said, I'd like to talk to you more about this. He will talk more about it in the seventh chapter.

I have a lot more to say on this, but they're hard things to utter because you're dull of hearing. For 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. And you've become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat.

Now, they've been around. They'd heard. They needed to be going on.

But they needed to have the first principles rehearsed over again. They should have been at the stage where they could go out and teach others. But they had need that He just go back and give them the bottle again.

You're not ready to take the meat yet. Though the time has come, you should be able to digest some meat by now. But there was an arrested spiritual development.

Oh, watch out for that. That's one of the most common diseases within the church. Arrested spiritual development.

Person comes to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Whee! No glory. Then they hit a plateau.

And they just hang there. They never go on. They're always on the same level.

You talk to them today and they're talking about the same things they were talking about 25 years ago. Arrested spiritual development. They're no further along in their spiritual maturity than they were 25 years ago.

You see them and they're still drinking the bottles. Entertain us. Do a dance.

Do a jig. Sing a song. Play a harp.

Do something to entertain me, you know. And they can't take the strong meat. But you know what? You folks are spoiled.

Because once you've developed a taste for strong meat, you'll never be satisfied with a bottle again. And you know some of the people who go back out to get some of the excitement of the bottle experiences they used to have as a babe. They find out that it doesn't satisfy anymore.

Once you get a taste of the strong meat of the Word, I'll tell you, it spoils you for anything else. So you're spoiled. You just can't go back to that old routine anymore.

You've been spoiled. And you try to go back and you just say, Wow, you know, did I used to engage in that? Everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. Paul in the Corinthian epistle talked about carnal Christianity.

He said they were babes in Christ. Arrested spiritual development. Common ailment within the church.

But strong meat belongs to them that are mature. Even those who by reason of the youth have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The Word of God growing in the Word.

It gives you discernment. And you can immediately begin to discern some of these milky little scintillating kind of doctrinal trivias. And you say, Hey, you know, froth, whipped cream, not nourishing.

And the guy next to you is getting blessed out of his socks, you know. And say, Oh, isn't that wonderful? Isn't that marvelous? Nothing there. It's cotton candy.

You know, it just tastes sweet, but it dissolves. There's no substance. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, that is, the primaries, the word of the beginning of the gospel of Christ, let us go on to maturity.

Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God and the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands and the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. Now, let's leave these basic principles, doctrines of salvation and redemption.

Let's go on into a maturity. Let's go on into a mature experience with God. Let's develop in our walk with the Lord.

Let's mature. Let's grow up. Now, for years in my ministry, I sought to be a preacher.

I was a preacher. And I sought to be an evangelist. And just about every message that I preached was evangelistic.

Because within the denomination where I was serving, evangelism was the big thing. First thing on my report, I had to put how many people were saved. And if you don't have some in that box, then you're not going to look good to the bishop.

So, I sought to be an evangelist. I preached the Gospel. But I came to the realization after years of frustration that preaching is for the unconverted.

What the converted needs are teaching. Now, God had called me to be a teacher. I was seeking to be a preacher.

And as I preached, the church never developed. It never matured. The people didn't mature.

I kept them in a state of spiritual arrested development. All they knew was the doctrine of salvation. They knew it well.

They knew they had to be born again. They knew they had to repent from their sins. They knew they had to be baptized because that's all they ever heard.

And we never took them beyond that state of spiritual infancy until we began to teach the Word of God. Leaving these first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Going on into the full maturity.

Not going back over and over and over again the foundations of faith. But building now upon that foundation the whole knowledge of God through the Word. Now, the author here says something that is difficult to understand.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to open shame. I know that this is a passage of Scripture that Satan loves to use. Satan loves to use Scripture.

He came to Eve with Scripture. Hath God said, you can eat of any of the trees? He came to Jesus with Scriptures. It is written.

He will give His angels charge over thee to carry thee in all thy ways, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone. He came to Jesus with Scriptures. But what Jesus then did was balance Scripture with Scripture.

Taking a Scripture out of its context, you can make it mean something else. Taking Scripture and isolating it, you can make it mean something else. We must compare Scriptures with Scriptures.

What do we know that the Scripture teaches? That a man may fail. That a man may even blaspheme and still find forgiveness. For we remember that Jesus said to Peter before the cock crows, you're going to deny Me three times.

And Peter said, if they would kill me, I would never deny you. And after the cock crowed twice, Jesus turned over and looked at Peter. Peter realized that He had denied him three times.

The last time was blasphemy. Saying, I don't know the man. And he went out and he wept bitterly.

But Peter found forgiveness. He found restoration. And he became one of the pillars of the early church.

The Apostle. A leader of men. So, it doesn't mean that if I falter or if I fall or if I fail, that I'm out.

That God puts me out and I have no hope of redemption. It's impossible that I might be renewed unto repentance. We know that God is gracious.

We know that God is merciful. We know that God is long-suffering. We know that He is patient.

And He has not rewarded us according to our iniquities, but as high as the heaven is above the earth, so high is the mercy of God towards those that fear Him. So Satan often uses this verse to a person who has backslidden. And says, Man, you are out! Do you see what it says here in Hebrews? You've had it! That was the unpardonable sin that you committed and there's no way to renew you to repentance.

You are out of the game. And this is one of those Scriptures that we have to deal with often as a pastor as people come and you can see it in their eyes and they'll say, I think I committed the unpardonable sin. We even have them calling on the phone long distance.

I believe I've committed the unpardonable sin. And I always tell them, I know you haven't. How do you know? Because you called.

If you had committed the unpardonable sin, you wouldn't care. The Holy Spirit wouldn't be dealing with you at all. You'd be so cold and calloused and indifferent that you wouldn't even care if you did.

The fact that you're concerned and care is the sign that you haven't. God's Spirit is still dealing with you. But Satan loves to use this as a club over people's head.

And he beats them to death with it. There are those who suggest that he is writing to Jews who have been enlightened with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but who halted short of a full faith in Christ. And halting short of the full faith in Christ went back to the practices of Judaism.

And thus it was impossible to renew them unto repentance because they crucified the Son of God afresh, putting Him to open shame. I cannot accept that position totally. It seems to me where he refers to being enlightened and tasting of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, it sounds to me like they'd had a pretty good dose.

Now, we do know that Jesus taught that the seed fell on different kinds of soil. Some of the seed fell by the wayside. Some of it fell on stony ground.

While others fell among the thorns. And some fell on good ground. That which was sown by the wayside, immediately Satan came along and plucked it up.

The birds came and ate it up and it never took root. It never developed. And we have met people that have no response or reaction to the Word of God.

It doesn't penetrate. Then, that which fell on the stony ground, are they who hear the Word with gladness. There's a quick spurt.

Comes up fast because there's not much dirt there. It's nice and warm because of the rocks. But as soon as the sun is out and all, because there's no root, there's no depth, it withers and dies.

I believe that this is the class that is being referred to here. You know, you come, you get that shot, you get excited. There's a lot of enthusiasm and zeal over the things of the Lord, but no depth.

No root. No root system. And so the moment the storm comes, the sun, little problem, they're gone.

Now, the biggest problem I have with this, because I can understand it because I have seen that experience. And it is confirmed by the words of Jesus. Of course, there is that among thorns.

It grows up, but it is choked and never bears fruit. And I've seen a lot of Christians that don't bear fruit. You know, there's the growth there.

I mean, they're there, but there's just no fruit coming forth from their lives. The difficulty that I have with the passage is this impossibility of renewing them again under repentance. And I will frankly confess to you, I don't understand what it means.

I'm sorry. I cannot give to you some glorious revelation that I have. And this is what the text is saying.

Because I do know that Jesus said, whoever will come unto me, I will in no wise cast out. And I know tonight that no matter what your background may be, what exposure you may have had to the Gospel in the past, or what you've done in the past, I do know that if you will just come to Jesus Christ, He will in no wise cast you out. And so, this verse would not then be applicable to you.

But if you say, well, I don't want to come and I won't come, then it probably does apply to you. There is no place for repentance. Impossible to renew you.

And you have that hardened heart. And if a person has that kind of heart, saying, hey, I want nothing to do with it, I know, I've been there. Man, I used to go and sing and I used to sit there.

No man, I don't want anything to do with it. Then you may have a case. You may have met one that fits here.

But if there is any yearning in your heart for God and the things of God and that desire to come back and get right, then this does not apply to you. So we don't have to worry about it. Unless your heart is completely callous to the things of God tonight, then you have a real concern.

For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes often upon it and brings forth the vegetables that are fit for them by whom it is dressed, or for the people who planted the vegetables, the people who took care of the garden, receiveth the blessing from God. But that which bears thorns and briars is rejected and is nigh

unto cursing whose end is to be burned. So, there is again the idea, and he goes right back to the parable of the sower and the seeds, there are those seeds that bring forth vegetables, brings forth the fruit for those, and it's blessed.

They are blessed. The earth is blessed. The good ground that brings forth the vegetables for the person who has dressed the garden or planted the garden.

But the thorns and the briars, they're a curse and they're going to be gathered and burned. But beloved, and now here Paul, the writer is saying, obviously I believe that Paul is the writer. The writer is saying, but beloved, we're persuaded better things of you.

In other words, this doesn't really apply to you. We're persuaded better things of you. So, he doesn't seek to make a personal application to them of this particular curse that he is talking about.

And things that accompany salvation though we thus speak, it's important that I give this warning, but I'm persuaded better things of you. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have showed toward His name and that you have ministered to the saints and do minister. God won't forget you.

You're His child. You may be failing. You may be a babe.

You may have arrested spiritual development. You may have slipped and fallen, but God won't forget you. He remembers you in that work of love.

And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. Be diligent in the things of the Lord that you might have the full assurance of the hope. Now, this full assurance is a glorious thing.

I have full assurance in my hope of salvation. I have no questions, no qualms, no doubts. I am fully assured that I am eternally secure in the arms of Jesus.

I have not even the slightest qualm that I will not be with the Lord in His glorious kingdom. I have the full assurance of that hope of eternal salvation. Now I thank God for it.

I didn't always have it, you see. And so it means a lot more to me having it now when I didn't have it for so many years. Because I was depending for many years upon myself and my own works and my own efforts.

And as long as I was depending upon myself, I never had the full assurance of the hope. You say, oh, you mean that you can't be lost? Of course I can't because I'm never going to turn away from Jesus Christ. I have no intention.

That doesn't even enter my mind. It's the furthest thing from my mind. I'm going to walk with Him and stay with Him to the end.

You know, after all, we've come this far. There's no turning back. Not even the... The thought isn't even there.

The concept isn't even there. And that's why I have that full assurance of the hope to the end. Alright.

So be not slothful. Now you see, this doesn't create a slothfulness in me, but even a greater determination to give of myself completely and fully for the things of the Lord. Be not slothful, but be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Now God has given to us His Word that He will do just about anything for us that we might need or desire or want. How many rich and precious promises. You probably all of you have a little promise box somewhere around the house.

You go and pick out a promise. And that's great. I love it.

The Spirit can minister to us as we read the promises of God. And I think that we need to be reminded of the promises of God. We love to put them on the walls of our house.

For years in our little daughter's bedroom we had the promise written on the wall. Fear not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.

I will help thee, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my power. What a great thing to have on the wall of a little girl who gets scared at night. There on the wall.

Be not afraid, for I am with you. Glorious promise. Now, there are promises that God has given that we have not entered into.

Remember back in chapter 4, let us beware lest a promise having given to us of rest that we should fail from entering into it. There are many promises that God has given to us that we haven't really laid claim to. And so we live in fear.

We live in anxiety. Though there is a promise that we could take. And we could just accept that promise of God and say, well, God, You've promised.

I like it when Jacob... Man, talk about a stressful situation. He had left his uncle Laban with the two daughters and all of the cattle and the sheep that he had gathered during his time of service there. Unbeknownst to him, his wife Rachel had taken some of the father's little gods.

And so Laban got a bunch of fellows and they came pursuing after Jacob, ready to wipe him out. But the night before he got up to him, the Lord spoke to Laban and He said, you don't touch that man or you're in big trouble. So Laban is wanting to wipe him out, but he's fearful of God who has said, don't you touch him.

But he at least is going to get his word in. So he catches up with Jacob and he really tells him off. You know, you've ripped me off! Jacob said, what do you mean ripped you off? I labored for 17 years and you changed my wages 10 times.

God's blessed me. Don't tell me I ripped you off. Well, He said, you not only took my daughters, you didn't even let them kiss their grandpa goodbye.

And you've taken off all the cattle and sheep and everything. And you even stole my gods. Tragic to have gods that can be stolen, isn't it? So there was this big tense scene.

And of course, if you've ever been over there and see the way these people talk when they're excited like this, just tension fills the air. You'd think that at any moment they're going to pull back their robe and pull

out the dagger. Go at it.

Oh, they really get into it. So you can picture the scene of Jacob and Laban. Tough day, emotions drained.

And as Laban takes off, a messenger comes up and said, your brother Esau is coming to meet you. And he has 200 men with him. The last time he saw Esau, Esau was saying, I'm going to kill you.

As soon as dad is dead, you're dead, man. I'm going to kill you. And so here he's coming back.

He just had the big blowout with Laban. And now word is Esau is coming. He's got 200 men with him.

And oh Jacob, really under stress. And he did the wisest thing you can do when you're under stress. He said, oh Lord, you told me to come back and that you would be with me.

He reminded God. I'm in this predicament, Lord, because you told me to come back. But you promised that you'd be with me.

Now I know I am not worthy the least of your mercies. I don't deserve anything. I mean, I know that God.

But I'm here because you told me to be here. And you promised that you would do well by me. So he's reminding God of the promise.

When you're under stress, when the pressure is on, when tomorrow is going to be one rough day because your brother who was mad enough to kill you is on his way with 200 men and all looks hopeless, it's good to just remind yourself of the promises of God. Lord, you promised that it would be well with me. The resting in the promises.

Now, the two things. Faith and patience. These are the two things necessary in order to receive the promises of God.

He that comes to God must believe that He is and a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. I must have faith in God's Word. Faith in God.

Faith in the abilities of God. Faith to know that God is able to do that which He has promised. That which He has promised, He is able also to perform.

The second thing I must have is patience. Because God doesn't always respond to my prayer the minute I pray. God allows many times the test of my faith and a period of time between my prayer and the answer to that prayer.

That patience in which faith is tested. And so, let us be followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promise. Believe the promise and then just wait patiently for God to keep His Word.

But, in the meantime, you flee into that promise. You hold on to that promise. You don't let it go.

Now, the promises of God are something that you can trust and rely upon. When God made the promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no higher or greater, He swore by Himself, saying, surely blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee. So, God made a promise to Abraham and then He confirmed the promise with an oath.

So, after Abraham patiently endured, he obtained the promise. How long did he patiently endure? Over 35 years. Oh God, I don't have that much time left.

We are so impatient, aren't we? I mean, we want God to do it right now. We want immediate results. And usually we have a time limit set at the most a week for God to work.

But after he waited patiently, he obtained the promise. God did give to Sarah a son as He promised He would, even when the likelihood of having a son became humanly totally impossible. Impossible is a word that we can use and talk about because we face it all the time.

With our human limitations, we are always running up against impossible situations. But, when you introduce God into the factor, the moment God is introduced into the factor, then you have to eliminate the word impossible because there is nothing impossible with God. In fact, I'll tell you, there is nothing hard for God.

There's nothing that puts God under pressure or strains Him in the least. So, when God is introduced, the word impossibility has to be deleted. Difficulty must always be measured by the capacity of the agent that's doing the work.

Well, let's get out and build the church of Jesus Christ. Yes, oh, that's difficult. It may even be impossible.

But Jesus said, upon this rock I will build my church. No strain. He's able to do it.

So, difficulty measured by the capacity of the agent doing the work. Who's doing the work? Is God doing the work? Then, you've got to throw away the word difficult. If it's up to me, oh yes, it's difficult.

It may be even impossible. That's why I dare not trust in myself or rely upon myself or my own resources or my own talents or capacities. I dare not trust in that.

I must just trust in the Lord because then I can eliminate difficult and impossible and these kind of things. God's able. Able to what? Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think.

So, Abraham endured patiently. The impossible became the reality. God did what was impossible.

You know, there have been so many situations that I have said, well, that's impossible. And yet, God did it. There have been people that I said, oh, they're impossible.

Them say, no way, man. That, you know, that's impossible. And God did it.

When you have God as the agent doing the work, impossibility disappears, difficulty disappears. Now, men take an oath by something that is greater and the purpose of an oath is to confirm what is said and it is intended to end all strife. Here I'm saying, well, I'm going to do it for you.

How do I know you're going to do it? Well, I'm going to do it. I promise you I'll do it. How do I know? Well, I'm just telling you I'm going to and here we're striving about whether or not I'm going to do it.

Finally, I say, man, I swear in the Bible I'm going to do it. Well, all right, good. Ends the strife.

That's the purpose of taking an oath. End the strife in an argument. No, I didn't.

Yes, you did. No, I didn't. Yes, you did.

No, I didn't. Swear in the Bible I didn't do it. All right, thought you did.

So, the taking of the oath, you take the oath by something greater than you. As I said this morning, you don't... I swear by my cat, you know, that I'm going to be there tonight. That's something lesser.

You don't swear by something. You swear by something greater. During the time of Jesus, they had a big thing on swearing.

Taking oaths. And which of the oaths were binding and which were not. Now, if you swear by, you know, the altar, that's not binding.

But if you swear by the gold that's on the altar, ho, ho, ho, you've got to keep it, man. It's binding, you know. And they were all into this, you know, taking these oaths.

I swear, and of course you'd try and be tricky that way. I swear by the altar, I'll do it. Ho, ho, ho, I'm free, you know.

Because I didn't say the gold on the altar. And so, Jesus addressed the issue of this thing of taking oaths, of swearing. And people have carried that too far too.

People are concerned, you know, if I have to go to court and witness, and do I swear before God, I'm going to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. When Jesus said, swear not at all, you know, can I as a Christian then swear by God, I'm going to tell the truth. When Jesus said, swear not at all, in the context He was saying, let your yes be a yes, let your no be a no.

Be a man of your word so that you don't have to take an oath to prove to a person that what you're saying is true. If you say yes, then let it be yes. If you say no, then let it be no.

Be a person of your word. But the purpose of the oath was to bring an end to the strife. Fighting over this thing, take an oath, that ends the strife.

Alright, that settles it. Now, God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, how God is unchanging, how He will not change. He will not say something and then renege on it.

He will not make a promise to you and then back down on it. And God wants to abundantly assure you of this. Willing more abundantly to assure you of this unchanging character and nature of God.

The immutability of God. And of His counsels. His counsels are His words, His promises.

He confirms with an oath. And so there are two unchanging things in which it was impossible for God to lie. So, the two unchanging things.

God's word, it doesn't change. The word of God is forever established and settled in heaven. Heaven and earth will pass away.

God's word cannot pass away. Will not pass away. The oath then, the second thing, when God made the oath to confirm the word and His counsels.

Now you have two unchanging things. Having made an oath you can't change. You've got to go by it now.

You cannot renege. You've sworn that you're going to do it. You've taken an oath to do it.

And you cannot back away. Now God has declared to you what He will do for you and then He took an oath saying, I will. Swearing by no greater.

He has nothing greater to swear by. He swears by Himself. Promising to do it.

You've got two unchanging things. And we know that it's impossible for God to lie. Therefore, the result is that we have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us.

What great comfort we have. What great confidence we have. What a strong consolation we have.

When I can just take the Word of God and say, here, God has said it, and that settles it. It's going to be. Here is the Word of God and the promise of God.

And I flee to this refuge. It becomes a place for me to flee when the enemy would come and say, well, what are you going to do? You know they're going to be coming around next week and they're going to be looking for their rent. What are you going to do? Hey, my God shall supply all of my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

It will be here. Strong consolation. Flee to the Word.

I flee to the Scripture. I read it over and I read it over and I read it over as I find my place of refuge in this promise of God to me that is applicable to this current situation that I am facing. Whenever you run up against a difficult problem, go to the Word of God.

Find a promise of God that is applying to you and to that situation and then just flee as a refuge to that promise every time the enemy would hassle you. Every time you'd become upset. Flee for refuge to that hope that is set before us.

Which hope we have as an anchor to our souls. My soul is anchored in this. I cannot be moved.

I cannot be swayed. My soul is anchored in this hope that is both sure and steadfast. That glorious hymn of the church, we have an anchor that keeps our souls steadfast and sure, though the billows roll.

Anchored to the rock that cannot move. Founded firm and deep in my Savior's love. Oh, the anchor for our soul.

I don't get tossed by the storm. I don't get wrecked by the storm. My soul is anchored in the promises of God and which entereth into that within the veil.

I come right into God's presence. Again, back to coming boldly to the throne of grace that we might find mercy and grace in our time of need. Within the veil.

I can come right into the Father because Jesus has made the way. My great high priest has entered into heaven for me. And by Him and through Him, I can come boldly now.

Right to the Father. Within the veil. Stand upon the Word.

Whether the forerunner is for us entered, that is Jesus, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. And next week as we go into chapter 7, we will really get into this order of

Melchizedek in comparison with that of Levi and showing the complete superiority of our high priest and the priesthood of Jesus over that of the Levitical order. And that goes on in the next couple of chapters.

In fact, it goes on to chapter 10. Next week, chapters 7 and 8. Is your soul anchored in the Word of God tonight and in the promises of God to you? Is that your place of refuge? Do you have that strong consolation, comfort, assurance? Hey, God's going to do it. He's promised.

He's given me His Word. How grateful we are and should be for Jesus Christ who has made us the heirs of the promises. Who has made it possible for us to lay hold on these glorious promises of God.

Becoming a child through our faith in Him. May the Lord bless you and may you just grow and develop into a full maturity in your walk and in your relationship with Him. May there be that work of the Spirit within your life this week and in the maturing processes as you grow up in all things in Christ.

Into the full assurance of the faith. Rooted and grounded in His Word and in His love. May you begin to comprehend the length, the breadth, the depth, the height of God's love and the commitment that God has made to you of His resources and of Himself.

That you may abound in all things through Christ Jesus. God bless you.

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