

# Let Us Go on - Part 1

by Roy Hession

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of moving from the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ to maturity and perfection in our faith, and the need for careful study of the Word and revelation from the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible.*

**Duration:** 45:58

**Scripture:** Hebrews 2:1

**Topics:** "Perfection"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of believers progressing from their initial conversion to maturity in their faith. He emphasizes that it is not enough to continually dwell on the basics of their faith, but rather they should strive to see Jesus in a deeper and more profound way. The speaker also highlights the consequences of not progressing in one's faith, such as compromising with sin and missing out on God's plan. Throughout the sermon, the speaker intertwines words of warning and exhortation, urging believers to hold fast to their confidence in Christ until the end.

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## Transcript

God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, or the ages, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 2 verse 1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. Revised version has it more accurately, I believe, lest at any time we should drift away from them.

For if the word spoken by angels in the Old Testament was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing the witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according unto his will. 3 verse 7 From which verse we take just one word, wherefore. Because there's brackets after that.

We go on to the end of the brackets. Wherefore, in view of all that. Verse 12 Wherefore, take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily while it is called to day.

Lest any of you be harmed through the deceitfulness of sin, for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. 4 verse 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

6 verse 1 Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, the elements, the elementary principles, let us go on unto perfection. The revised version puts it, maturity, full growth. The thought is not that of sinless perfection, and whenever this word is used in the New Testament has the thought of maturity.

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, the previous verses said you're still like babes, you still need milk, you can't yet take the strong meat of the word. Therefore, leaving the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, unto maturity, 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, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will be due if God permits.

Well, there's just selected reading, which are certainly linked as regards their thought, which give us a little peep into the line on which this epistle is going. Well, I do hope that you have read the epistle to the Hebrews. I hope you've read it many times.

And if you haven't read it, well, why not start going through it in your own personal devotions this week. Maybe you don't want to forsake your Scripture Union portion, well then, don't necessarily follow my suggestion, but it is a suggestion, and I think we might get all the more profit from our Bible readings together. Now, I would like to put across these five Bible readings the words of chapter 6, verse 1. I'd like to pick out those words, let us go on.

And I think that's the end result of the exhortation contained in this epistle, let us go on. What we've got to go on from, we will see morning by morning. What we've got to go on unto, we shall also see morning by morning.

There's a very definite going on from something to a definite going on to something or to someone, but we shall take that morning by morning. But this morning, we must look at the epistle of the whole and get our eye in, so to speak, or get our ear attuned to the accent that is given us here. We do need Bible reading.

We need careful study of the Word. You can't expect to pick up the Bible and understand it like you understand the newspaper. It's dealing with invisible, eternal realities.

We need revelation, and it's couched in a special language. When we've had all our new translations, it's still a special language, because it's dealing with a special subject. If you pick up a garden in Brooklyn, I'm completely defeated because I was never very good at Latin.

The names of the plants are in Latin. You almost need a glossary of terms. And I think it's the same with the Bible.

I'm not very bothered about the Bible being in Elizabethan English, for when you put it in modern English, you still don't understand it, apart from the Holy Ghost. And if the Holy Ghost reveals to you its meaning, he reveals to you the meaning of Elizabethan English as much as in modern English. I don't mean to depreciate our modern translations, but let us not think that once you've got a copy of the New English Bible, you've got the key to the whole scriptures.

You haven't. In fact, you might find in some places it confuses you. It does me.

I think I prefer to go back to my old authorized version. But I also have, I've got three versions upstairs. I look at them and find help from them.

But when all's said and done, it's only the dear Holy Spirit himself that can give us revelation and understanding from heaven. And as we read our Bible, let's expect it. And I like a phrase somewhere, in one of the Church of England prayers, about the patient study of the scriptures.

If you're going to understand your Bible, and it's got to be your lifelong study from the day of your conversion to the day of your entrance to glory, there's got to be a patient study. Go at it continually. Go at it slowly.

It's got to be a patient study. It doesn't yield its treasures in five minutes. But what treasures there are.

And so we're going to look, and this morning, we're going to try and get our ear attuned to the special accent and emphasis of this writing. Now, first of all, I want to say a word on the subject as to who wrote this epistle. Now, this isn't merely a matter of academic interest.

As we shall see in a moment, it helps us very much to understand the meaning of what is written here. Because, there's no doubt, there are some puzzling passages. Now, if you turn to the first chapter in your Bible, in your authorized version, you will read the epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.

And if you turn to the last chapter, there's a little footnote written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy. That doesn't mean that Timothy was the author, but he was the amanuensis, that is, the fellow who took it down from Paul's mouth. Now, those two things I've read are, of course, not in the original manuscript.

They are put there by editors, which editors put them there centuries ago, and, by tradition, it's always been believed that Paul was the writer of this epistle. You say, well, why question it? Well, for the simple reason, in the epistle itself, there is no mention as to who is writing. It's anonymous.

But all the most ancient manuscripts, every manuscript says the epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews. In other words, we have to admit it is indeed a fact, it is tradition, ancient tradition, which has held and believed that Paul was the writer of this epistle. Now, just because his name doesn't appear in the script, scholars have had a lovely game.

They've enjoyed themselves immensely, spending years of their lives and tons of paper discussing who wrote the epistle. And they've tried to assess the difference of style between Paul's writings here and the writing here, and so on. And they all seem to think that it wasn't Paul.

Well, of course, we aren't very interested in what the scholars think because we have the Holy Ghost. And he will show us what we need to know. But it's all got us a bit rattled when it comes to the Hebrews.

In fact, you'll nearly always hear people like ourselves, not just as old-fashioned and orthodox as we are, we're still a little bit rattled because we say the writer to the Hebrews. And we don't like to say Paul said this and Paul said that because of this great discussion that's been going on for years as to whether it was Paul or somebody else who wrote it. But I think, as I say, it's not a mere academic interest, but it's going to throw, I think, real light on the epistle itself if we can come to some conclusion as to the writer.

I can only tell you that my very strong feeling is that tradition was right. I looked up a book a little while ago and I saw that the tradition began what was at least current 70 years after Paul's death. And what was current then obviously was held way back and there's good reason for believing that the church of the early days accepted this epistle as written by Paul at least 10 years after his death.

And I don't see any reason why what was currently believed wasn't actually true. Then, too, there's a very interesting reference in Peter that seems to substantiate that, though we can't take it as ultimate proof. The second epistle of Peter, chapter 3, verse 14.

To Peter 3.14, Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless, and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you. Now, Peter was writing to the Jews of the dispersion. He was the apostle to the Hebrews and his two epistles, as he says himself, were written to the Hebrews scattered throughout Asia Minor.

And here he says that Paul has written unto you. Apparently, there was a writing from the apostle Paul especially addressed to Hebrew believers. Of course, that doesn't say that this particular writing was the writing, but there was such one, and I don't see why.

What with tradition and this oblique reference, we shouldn't be assured that this was indeed written to the Hebrew Christians by the apostle Paul. And, of course, I have accompanied with Paul for 35 years since the day I came to know the Lord when I was 18. I've loved, as every believer does, the epistles of the apostle Paul.

I've gone over it, I've poured over his epistles, as many of us have. And I do claim some acquaintance with the apostle. I know his style, I know his thought.

At least, I'm sure, I think I do. And I find the same style, the same thought, and the same message in the epistle to the Hebrews as in anywhere else. And so, we're going to assume that our dear, our beloved brother Paul was indeed the writer of this amazing scripture.

Now, that reference at the end said he wrote it from Rome. And this is where the practical import of all this comes in. Do you know how he got to Rome? He got to Rome because he was harried there by the Jews.

The people that dogs Paul's steps, from whom he suffered most, who persecuted him, who opposed his work, who had tried to destroy his church, and who ultimately had him arrested, which then led him to Rome, where his own pharaoh captured him. As we were hearing last night, they had a zeal of God but not according to knowledge. And they were quite convinced that what Paul was preaching was going to be destructive of their religion and of their nation.

They were quite convinced that this was a heretic. And all along, it was from the Jews he had his worst opposition. They arose against him.

You remember that riot in Jerusalem? He was taken prisoner by the Romans as much for his own protection as for anything else. He was brought before Felix and Festus and the gripper. And the Jews were always accusing him.

And he realized he would never get justice while he remained in the land of the Jews. And therefore he appealed unto Caesar. And so he was sent to Rome to have his trial there.

And at last, after that long eventful journey, he gets to Rome. Isn't it natural that having arrived at Rome, he should look back to his beloved country and those countrymen of his for whom he had such a burden? In his epistle to the Romans, he tells them in chapter 9, I say the truth in Christ, I lie not. My conscience also bear in me witness in the Holy Ghost that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelite.

He longed for their salvation. He longed that they should be able to recognize the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, that they should see that he had fulfilled all the types and shadows of their law, and superseded them. What more natural thing that in spite of all that he suffered at the hands of his fellow countrymen, having now got to Rome, he should send this letter back.

And how reasonable it should be that he should not append his name. That would finish it straight away in the eyes of many of them. There was no man, there were more prejudices, whom they hated more than Paul.

And he wanted to give them a message without intruding his own name. He wanted to give them the facts. And so that to me is the reason why Paul sent it without his own name on it, that it might get real circulation and people should be enabled to see the Lord Jesus as the end of their mosaic law, the one who fulfilled every type and shadow, and who was all they needed.

I suppose Paul's two greatest writings are obviously the epistle to the Romans and the epistle to the Hebrews. One epistle to the Gentile world, the other epistle to the Hebrew world, the race that God had chosen. He wrote the epistle to the Romans before he ever got to Rome.

He said he hoped to get to them one day. He little knew how he would get there. He didn't know he'd get there at the expense of the Roman government.

And he wrote the epistle to the Hebrews after he got to Rome. So I think then that has something of real practical bearing on the message of this epistle. Now a word as to whom it was written.

There are some passages that have puzzled us over the years in this epistle, and I think we are helped to understand it more if we understand the people to whom he wrote and the spiritual position in which they were. It may not be our spiritual position. And for that reason, not everything that Paul says to the people in their position will necessarily apply to us if we're not in exactly the same position.

But every bit is full of meaning and profit for us nonetheless. Well now, turn to Acts chapter 6, and we will see the position of these Hebrews. Now this epistle wasn't written to ordinary Jews just because they were Jews.

It was written to Jews who had professed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Or who were very nearly doing so. Or who had definitely done so.

Acts chapter 6, verse 7. And the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. That's interesting. Not rank and file Hebrews, but priests.

Functioning in the temple. Offering the sacrifices. Did they see the full implication of the Lord Jesus, and of their faith in him? Did they go on offering the sacrifices? Or did they quit straight away? I think there's reason to believe they didn't see clearly.

A great multitude of people turned to the Lord Jesus in these big crusades we had. Do they all see Jesus clearly? Do they all understand the implications? I don't suppose they do, no more than these do. And it's quite likely that when these people, these priests, believed on the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, they didn't see the completeness of himself and of his work, and were still in measure depending on the Mosaic sacrifices which they were offering.

They were in a very special state of need. Acts 15 verse 5. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. Certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed.

Pharisees, zealous of the law. All the jots and trittles of it, and they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Did they cease to be Pharisees? Did they really get as far as Paul got, who was a Pharisee? But what things were gained to him, those he counted lost for Christ, that he might be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, but that which was counted to a sinner from God, who believed? Did they? I don't think they did.

Because here they are, they're still saying, it's all right for these people to be converted to belief, but they've got to keep the Mosaic law, they've got to be circumcised. And if you've got to be circumcised, what else have you got to be? And those poor Gentile believers saw all the whole list of Mosaic commandments binding upon them, and they wondered if they ever get through. And if their peace with God was dependent on the law, well, would they ever get peace with God? No wonder that Paul contended with them.

The whole gospel was at stake, and it was put at stake by believers, professed believers. They were in a funny, muddled position. And then in Acts 21.20, this is when Paul gets to Jerusalem for that terribly important time when the beginning of the end began to come.

Peter is saying to Paul, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they're all zealous of the law. But now, as we understand the gospel, men are not justified by the deeds of the law, but by faith in Christ. Well, did these people see it? I don't think they did.

They were in a very difficult position. Maybe up to their life they'd seen Jesus as Messiah, and it seems they'd had experience of that effusion of the Spirit which was granted in the Acts of the Apostles. Maybe they'd seen gifts of healing, might have even possessed them.

Maybe they'd spoken in praise to God in other tongues. They might have done it themselves, but even so they weren't clear. The possession of spiritual gifts doesn't mean very much.

It doesn't mean either holiness or a real apprehension of the Lord Jesus Christ. That was true here, and from my observation up and down this country and other countries, it's true today. The possession of Pentecostal gifts means very, very little as regards holiness and life, and very, very little as regards deep understanding of the gospel of grace.

I don't profess to understand it all, why it should be. But here, this was the Pentecostal church, but they weren't all clear on the message. They were torn in two ways.

They had tasted of the good word to come. They'd felt the powers of the world to come, but they hadn't got right through to Christ. They were in a position of extreme danger, and they themselves were facing an agonizing choice.

Until Paul came on the scene, it didn't seem to be agonizing. Jesus Christ was the flower of the Jewish religion as they saw now, the culmination of all their prophecies, and they felt that they were the true Jews who believed on him, which of course is a fact. The others who refused him weren't true Jews.

They were refusing their own Messiah. They felt they were the true Jews, and they felt that it gave meaning to everything else they were doing. And so they were happy to continue in the temple as Jews, in Judaism and its ritual, but believing on the Lord Jesus.

Then Paul comes with the real message, which makes nothing of man and his deeds and his merits and his personal righteousness, which exalts Jesus in his blood alone as the sinner's peace. And this got known. And of course the unconverted Jews were wild.

He's challenging their whole national life. He's laying borrowed hands on their whole mosaic superstructure as they thought. Now these people felt with both.

They acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ, but they wanted to hold on to Judaism. The presence of Paul put them in an awful position, and they had an agonizing choice. Would they hold on to Judaism? Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast-wind it in either direction. Would they hold on to Judaism? Or would they hold on to Jesus? Maybe under Peter's ministry the issue wasn't so acute. They managed to hang on to both, but not when Paul came.

Not that he did a lot of preaching, but just being what he was. Having done what God had done through him amongst the Gentile world, it was known they had to make a choice. And I believe many of them made the wrong choice.

Thousands of these Jews of the league were none of them involved in that crime that set away with him. It isn't fit that he should dwell. I believe some of them were.

I tell you it was a state of great confusion. And Paul had such a burden for them. Such a burden for them.

Whether they were saved? Well, I don't know. Would they be saved? Would they be born again? I don't know. Which isn't right to say.

I meet some people who profess to love the Lord, but they haven't got a testimony to grace, very clear. They're still awfully muddled. Still hanging on to churchianity.

And the ritual, or the means of grace, so important. That's the thing. You really can't have peace with God without adhering to this, that.

Are they saved? I don't know. I prefer to let them tell me. And they do.

And the Holy Ghost comes. Many people who pass to say they discover they weren't saved at all. There have been missionaries who stood on this platform from time to time and told how they went out to the mission field, good church people, even having in some measure professed some sort of a conversion.

But when the searchlight of God came, they found they hadn't really been to a place called Calvary. They'd known the Lord Jesus only as a friend, and not as a saviour. It's not enough to know him only as your friend.

You can learn as your friend and go to hell. A friend deals with your troubles. A saviour deals with your sins.

And there's no reconciliation to God except we come as sinners. And then it is. We see the meaning of that cross on that hill, and of the blood that flowed from it.

If the cross of Jesus isn't clear to you, if you don't understand this joyful reference to the blood of Jesus, it probably means you're not born again. You've only known him as a friend who helps you and answers your prayers. That does nothing to remove the barrier between man and God's sin.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Don't worry about your troubles, come with us in.

And it won't be very long before you're broken down at the foot of this cross, saying, bless Christ, bless Sepulchre, blessed rather be the man that there was put to shame for me, and you will lose that burden which has been on your heart for so long. You won't know, we won't know, how great a burden we've been carrying until you lose it. You don't think you've got a burden when you lose it.

I never knew how much I was burdened. That accusing conscience, those vain struggles to be acceptable with God, that hope that one day I'd get peace with God, trying and never getting it. So it may be that some of us may be well in the position, at one degree or another, of the Hebrews.

But I expect some of them were born again. But they still needed the message that Paul had to send to them. Now the theme.

Who it was written by, to whom it was written, now the theme. Now those of you who have some familiarity with this great writing, will know that there seem to be two themes, intertwined. The main theme, it would seem to be, is to show to the Jews and to us, how the Lord Jesus is the complete fulfillment of every Old Testament ritual and type.

In particular, he is the great high priest who supersedes the earthly high priesthood of Aaron. In particular, his sacrifice is the ultimate sacrifice that supersedes all the sacrifices of bulls and goats. His sacrifice was himself on the cross of Calvary.

Jesus, my great high priest, offered his blood and died. My guilty conscience seeks no sacrifice besides. Now, that seems to be the main theme of this epistle.

Many chapters, a good proportion of the chapters are devoted to this. But every now and then, another theme keeps coming in. It's a disturbing theme.

Every now and then, the apostle breaks off from talking about Jesus and his high priesthood and how it fulfills the Old Testament law, to give us very serious and solemn words of warning and exaltation. Indeed, this epistle contains some of the most solemn and soul-shaking words of warning in the whole Bible. There are actually five warning passages that interleave with the other.

If you're interested, the first is in chapter 2, 1 to 4. I'm doing this for you if you want to jot it down, but if you're not, no point in turning to it. The second, chapter 3, 7 to 4, 13. The third, chapter 5, 11 to 6, 20.

The fourth, chapter 10, 26 to 29. And the fifth, chapter 12, 14 to 29. And they don't seem to fit at first sight.

And it is these warning passages that have puzzled us. I'm sure they have puzzled me. But when recently going through this epistle, I feel the Lord gave me some new light on this matter.

And once again, this isn't merely academic. This does give us some clue to the meaning. Will you turn to chapter 13, verse 22? And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exaltation, for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

Thirteen chapters. Short letter. Well, I suppose it was a short one compared with what he could have written and compared with what he'd like to have written.

He called the whole epistle a whirl of exaltation. We Bible students say we can see two parts to it. There's the doctrinal part and the practical exaltation part.

And you know, we're all rather inclined to concentrate on the doctrinal part and miss out the exaltation. But in any case, we've got it as two just woven in. Paul didn't.

He said, I've sent to you a whirl of exaltation. The main burden, as I see it now, of this epistle, is it's a whirl of exaltation. It's a whirl of warning.

It's a very practical word. And the doctrinal portion, about Christ being what he is, coming in order to enforce the exaltation and give us infinite encouragement to obey. In other words, the apostle Paul wasn't concerned to write to them something academic.

He wasn't really concerned to write something that, in Bible schools and textbooks, we can have nice, neat analysis put up on the blackboard. That's helpful, but that wasn't the purpose. He was burdened.

He was deeply concerned about their position, the place in between. And he had a whirl of warning and exaltation. And in order to show them how and why they should obey what he had in his heart, he brings in this glorious picture of the Lord Jesus Christ as fulfilling all their law and being to them all that they need.

As we look through this epistle, you will find, on the one hand, these solemn warnings. Lest we should presume, lest we should think we can pay with sin and get away with it. On the other hand, you have amazing encouragement to serve.

What a contrast. There's no more encouraging scriptures in the Bible addressed to failings, to feeble Christians, even to sinning saints, to give them hope again than what's found in you. But you have the two.

There's that to warn us lest we should presume. There's that infinite to encourage us lest we should despair. This very same epistle, on the one hand, opens heaven to our gaze and shows that the feeblest of us have liberty to enter into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus.

But the very epistle that opens heaven opens hell. So that's something of a little survey such as it is. Now, for the last minutes, I want you to look at chapter 6. And here we have the sentence which we want to underline and make the title to link our studies together.

Let us go on. Now, that is the great word of exhortation that Paul has for them. It's not merely to give them doctrine.

He wants them to go on from where they are, in their uncertain position, in their defeated condition, betwixt one and the other. Let us go on unto maturity. He doesn't want them always going over their conversion merely.

Those elementary steps, he wants them to go on to maturity, to see the Lord Jesus to be much more than they've ever seen him to be before. And the urgency is linked with that desire that he should go on, because it seems as if he would say to them, if you don't go on, you're going to go back. And you can go back very, very, very far and ruin everything.

And isn't that the Christian life? If you don't go on, you go back. The Christian life is like riding a bicycle. If you don't go on, you fall off.

There's no standing still on the bicycle. And here were these people in grave danger. If they didn't go on, as Paul thought, they were in imminent peril of apostatizing, turning completely away, dropping everything, saying, we're going to get persecuted.

If we make this agonizing choice, and take our stand where Paul's taken his stand, we'll get the same treatment that Paul got. And either they're going to go on and be willing for that, or else they were going to quit everything, and completely apostatize. That was the peril.

In the first four chapters, there are four less. And they do indicate the progress of this possible apostasy which Paul feared less. Four times it occurs.

The first is in chapter two, verse one. Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard less. Happily, revised version, we drift away from it.

Oh, he says there's a terrible peril. You may not begin by deliberately turning your back on the Lord Jesus, but you can drift. A gradual, imperceptible drift.

At the seaside, when we take a boat out, very often, we're warned against drifting by the boat. The tide, the currents, the offshore wind. You can get in the boat and have a nice happy time, and for a time, you're quite near the shore, but every quarter of an hour it takes you further away.

Next quarter of an hour, further away. But so slowly, you hardly realize it, until the end of two hours, the boat that was so near at hand is a little speck out to sea. And then it only needs the weather to change, and the storm to arise, and some holidaymakers have lost their lives.

Not by rowing out to sea, but by gradually drifting. Oh, he says, I'm concerned lest you drift. If you're not going to go on, you think you're going to stand still, you're not.

If nothing else happens, it'll be drift, and it'll always be in the other direction. And it can be, for some of us, we've drifted. Things of God that were of acute interest to us before, are not, we've drifted.

We never came to a meeting, but we felt convicted. And God spoke to us. Maybe it's a long time since he spoke to you.

You've drifted. Almost out of the ocean. Drifted.

Bit by bit, one thing after another. Sin, compromise, so on. Drifted.

Perhaps we've been going to places and doing things, which, a few years ago, we never would have done. Not as a believer. But you've been doing it, and you haven't felt bad about it.

Can't you see how far you may have drifted? That's the first lest. The second lest, not taken quite in the order, is in 3.13. Exhort one another while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. All sin is deceitful.

It deceives you. Oh, it's all right, don't worry. Don't bother to repent.

Or do it now, you can always repent later on. There's no harm in it. We can play with sin, and sin deceives us and tells us it isn't very bad.

And in that way we get hardened to the voice of God. Or, says Paul, I'm concerned if you don't go on, you'll come to the second step of possible apostasy, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Verse 12, the third step.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Doubt will come in, and an unwillingness to obey, and there will be a definite departing from the living God. Now, there are various words in this epistle for slipping away and falling away and so on, but this is the strongest.

It isn't backsliding. Oh, no, this is something more. When a man denounces, I'm through.

I'm certainly with the whole thing, and I don't want Christ, and I don't want salvation, and I don't want heaven. In fact, I don't believe there is a heaven. Could someone get to that place? They could.

They could, and it begins only with drifting, not repenting of the thing God's shown you about. This has scared me. God's been showing me things in my own life, and this passage has shown me, if I don't get right what could happen, I could become an utter apostate, one thing leading to another.

I've known such. I've known one who's been here to Abigail, even given a testament, that I'm through with the whole thing. Don't want.

Is that one saved? Well, I can only accept his testimony. I know I said that, but I wasn't ready to say it. All right, then, that's it.

Don't look like it at the time. This doesn't touch for a moment the question of the eternal security of the believer. The soul that on Jesus a belief will oppose.

He'll never, no, never desert to its foes. But if a man rejects outright and completely the Lord Jesus Christ, then I can only accept his testimony. I expect to get the glory.

Because God will persevere in grace, he'll cause me to persevere in holiness. He won't let me down. And yet, and yet, there are just these indications.

You can't afford to play with sin. One thing can get to another until you finish with Christ and salvation and everything. What a terrible possibility.

If we don't go on, then this might happen. It isn't that God says, I'm finishing with you. Oh, he never says that.

But you can say you'll finish with him. But never let, never get the idea that that means that you couldn't come back. There's only one unforgivable sin in the world.

And that's a sin you won't repent of and confess. That's the only unforgivable sin, the sin you won't confess. And that opulence is always there.

But oh, what a terrible possibility we get in this place. And the fourth lest is chapter 4, verse 1. Let us fear, therefore, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Any of you should seem to come short of it.

And God had a wonderful plan for our lives, of blessing and of rest and of service and of achievement. A promise was left. But because we didn't go on, because we played with sin, because we compromised, because we wouldn't listen to the voice of God when he said drop that, quit it, give this up, give that to the other, that wonderful plan of God goes dead.

Oh yes, this has a very solemn worth. But my last thought is this. What's the answer? We're going to achieve the wonderful encouragement.

To the feeblest of us to go on. Our great high priest who knows how to stretch a hand out from the holy of holies to help the feeblest who knows their feebleness. We're going to see much of that in our coming mornings.

But just this thought as we close. Verse 14, 3-14. We are made partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

How do I become and continue to be a partaker of the life and nature and salvation and fullness of the Lord Jesus if I hold fast the beginning of my confidence steadfast to the end? In other words, it's got to be all in the present tense. The only safe thing is to be going on now, not to this now or the next now. If things go wrong then I can put them right with the Lord and avail myself of the ministrations of my high priest and his blood.

Everything in the present tense, now. We are made, we are made partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. But this is what's come to me and has been a help to me.

It doesn't say if you hold fast your resolution to the end. If you hold fast your determination to the end. If you grit your teeth and hold on.

It doesn't say that. I'd be finished before I started if that was the condition. It says if you will hold fast your confidence in the grace and mercy and tenderness of your heavenly sympathizing high priest who's not against the failure but for it.

That's what you've got to hold fast. Not your determination. You've got to be confident that though I am a feeble one, though sometimes I fail, I've got a great high priest whose name is love.

Whoever lives and prays above, my name is graven on his hands. My name is graven on his heart. I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart.

That's what you've got to hold fast. It's easy. It's easy to feeble eye to one who is the sinner's friend.

The fail is helpful. Just to be one who keeps coming to that one who's anticipated the worst about you and even the least bit shocked. He's got it all arranged and settled.

The sin was settled before you ever committed it. It's all finished. And to hold fast, I've got a high priest like that.

That's the way to go on. I once asked Dan Wegmuller in California, tell me Dan, in the hearing of my friend here, without a moment's thought, what is the secret, would you say, the inwardness of the revival movement in which you yourself have been so blessed out in East Africa? And I said, don't think this fellow's arguing a bit. I want you to give it right off the record.

Tell me what is it. My friend who was arguing for me was walking in the light. He thought it was a special form of fellowship, sort of forever doing this or doing something else.

I said, don't think you've got it right, brother. Dan, without a moment's thought, tell us what the answer is. And Dan, without a moment's thought, he said, it is living with Jesus in the now.

That's what God wants. That's going on. If I don't live with Jesus in the now, I may go back further than I've ever thought possible.

But I needn't. For this Jesus is the friend of people like us. Living with Jesus in the now.

God helps us do it this day. Let us pray. Now, Lord Jesus, we do thank Thee.

We are so feeble. We have within us the seeds of terrible things. But Thou has become our Saviour.

But has brought us to Thyself. And Thou has presented Thyself to us as all we need. We thank Thee we have this High Priest.

We have Thee. So sympathetic, so ready to forgive, so immediate to send help from the sanctuary, life from above. And, O Lord, we ask that our heart shall this day be turning to Thee for cleansing, for life, for joy, handing over everything as it comes.

So shall we, even today, learn to live with Thee in the now. We ask it in Thy name. Amen.

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