

Exhortation #3: Perfection

by Stephen Kaung

Perfection means maturity and growing up spiritually, and it is achieved by experientially knowing Christ more abundantly and experiencing Him more.

Duration: 1:12:58

Scripture: Hebrews 6:1-2, Hebrews 6:14, Hebrews 6:17-19

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not giving up or going back when faced with obstacles or setbacks in our spiritual journey. He uses the analogy of falling while walking and encourages believers to get up and continue moving forward. The foundation of our faith in Christ is crucial, and once we have it, we belong to the Lord. However, we must not remain stagnant but press on towards perfection, leaving behind the beginning and moving towards the future. The speaker also warns against becoming complacent or hardened in our hearts, urging listeners to allow the Holy Spirit to motivate and guide them towards growth and maturity in their faith.

Transcript

Hard to be interpreted in speaking of it, since ye have become dull in hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have again need that one should teach you what are the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God, and are become such as of need of milk and not of solid food. For every one that partakes of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

But solid food belongs to full-grown men who on account of habit have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil. Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us go on to what belongs to full growth or perfection, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and faith in God, of the doctrine of washings and of imposition of hands, and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.

For it is impossible to renew again to repentance those who once enlightened and who have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the works of power of the age to come and have fallen away, crucifying for themselves as they do the Son of God and making a show of Him. For ground which drinks the rain which comes often upon it and produces useful herbs for those for whose sake also it is killed partake of blessing from God. For bringing forth thorns and briars it is found worthless and nigh to a curse whose end is to be burned.

But we are persuaded concerning you, brethren, beloved, better things, and connected with salvation even if we speak thus. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye have shown to His name, having ministered to the saints and still ministering. But we desire earnestly that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end that ye be not sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and patience have been inheritors of the promises.

Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank Thee for Thy precious word. We just ask Thee to bless Thy word breathe upon it by Thy Holy Spirit and make Thy word living and operative to each one of us and to Thee be all the glory in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

We mentioned before that the book of Hebrews is a book of exhortation because in chapter 13, verse 22 the writer tells us very clearly the reason why he wrote this book. It is for the sake of exhortation. In this letter we find at least five distinctive exhortations and by exhortation it means a call, attention to, to encourage and also to warn against something.

There are all together five distinctive exhortations in this letter of Hebrews. The first one, the first exhortation is centered upon this matter of so great salvation. Now dear brothers and sisters, the salvation that we receive, the salvation that we have heard from our Lord Jesus and then from the apostles and from those who receive from them.

This salvation that we have heard is so great salvation. It is not something small. It is great and it is so great that you cannot describe it.

So the author just says so great salvation. And this salvation has something to do not only with our sins forgiven, receiving eternal life, going to heaven, now these are great, but this so great salvation has something to do with glory. That the only begotten Son of God shall come into this world to accomplish such a great salvation that he who is the only begotten has now become the firstborn among many brethren and he is to bring many sons who are conformed to his image into glory.

Now this is so great salvation. And because salvation is such a great salvation, therefore we need to take heed abundantly to pay very close attention to what we have heard, lest it slips away from us or we drift away from it. Through negligence we may lose it and what a loss it will be.

So that is the first exhortation. You'll find that in chapter one and chapter two of the book of Hebrews. Then we find the second exhortation.

The second exhortation is centered upon this matter of the heavenly calling. We have a heavenly calling. We are called to be the house of God, that God may dwell among us.

And what a holy house it must be. We are called to be the companions of Christ, the partakers of Christ. And we are called to enter into his rest, that we may rest in his rest.

Now this is our heavenly calling. And because the calling is so heavenly, we are encouraged to consider him, who is the great apostle of our confession. Our Lord Jesus is the apostle of our confession.

God has sent him into this world to accomplish such a great work. And he has gone before as a forerunner into the very heaven itself. Therefore we need to consider him, to obey him, to listen to him, and to follow him.

And we need to encourage one another as long as it is today. Because today is the day of salvation. We need to encourage one another.

We need to have a holy fear, lest we miss it, lest we do not fulfill our calling. And we need to use diligence to enter into that rest. The warning against us is that lest we have a wicked heart of unbelief.

The heart is the most important thing in our relationship with God. If our heart is deceived by sin, then our heart can get so hardened that we cease to believe in God and believe in what he can do for and in us. And because of this heart of unbelief, we may fall away from the living God.

So this is the second exhortation. Now this morning we would like to enter into the third exhortation. Now you will find that in chapter five, chapter six, and chapter seven.

The third exhortation is centered upon this matter of perfection. Now in chapter six, verse one, it is said, Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us go on to what belongs to full growth. Now in some version you will find let us go on to perfection.

Now whether you find your version is full growth or perfection, in the Greek original it is the same word. The word perfection means completeness, fulfillment, actual achievement of the end in view. Therefore it means full growth or maturity.

You know, among God's people, roughly speaking, there are two different stages in our Christian life. One stage is babyhood, and the other stage is manhood or womanhood. When we first believe in the Lord Jesus, we become babes in Christ.

We are born again, we are born with a new life, we are born into the family of God, but even though we are born from above, and we are born into God's family, but at that time we are just babes. I think everybody loves baby. But babyhood is just the first stage of life.

It is beautiful within its time, but when it is time for us to grow up and to outgrow babyhood into manhood or womanhood, and yet we do not grow, then it becomes the most ugly thing in life, because a life is born, and yet the life is never able to arrive its end. It is a waste. Instead of fulfilling its purpose.

Therefore we find that after a baby is born, we nourish that baby, we cherish that baby, we help that baby to grow, and one day when that baby grows into manhood or womanhood, then the purpose of that life in that soul is fulfilled. Now the same thing is true in the spiritual realm. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, we are born again, we become babes in Christ.

Now what are the marks of babyhood? Number one, a baby needs milk. A baby is not able to consume solid food. He needs milk.

Now what is milk? Milk is pre-digested food. Somebody has digested the food for you. Your mother has digested the food, and the food has transformed into milk, and so she is able to feed you with milk.

You cannot digest yourself, so somebody else has digested it for you, and you just receive the nutrition out of it. Now that's milk. It also means, spiritually, the beginning of the oracles of God, or the beginning of the word of Christ.

Milk is that which nourishes us in giving us the knowledge of initial salvation. It tells us Christ, His divinity, His humanity, that He is the Son of God, who has become the Son of Man. It tells us of how He died on

the cross, He has borne our sins upon Him, and He died for us.

It tells us how He is raised from the dead. It tells us how He is now in heaven. Now all these, the beginning of the word of Christ, the first element of the gospel, now these are milk.

Now a baby can only consume milk. He is not able to take in solid food. He is not ready for it.

Number two, a baby is not skilled in the word of righteousness, as we find in Hebrews chapter five. For everyone that partakes of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby. He is not skillful in the word of righteousness.

In other words, what he knows is the word of grace. All he desires is grace. Give me this and give me that.

That is why the baby is crying out. But he has no knowledge. He is unskilled in the word of righteousness.

In other words, how should I be right? How should I live rightly before God? What should be my rightful relationship with God, with my brothers and sisters, and with one another? He is not skilled in the word of righteousness. Not only he is not skilled, but he is scared of the word of righteousness, because he thinks it is hard words, too much for him. He is not ready for it.

Not a baby. According to 1 Corinthians 3.1, Paul said, I wrote you before, and I treated you as babes, as fleshy. Now, in your Bible you may find sometimes translated carnal.

And yet you find in 1 Corinthians 3.1 and 3, you have the word carnal, or fleshly. But in the original, there is a little variation. In 3.1 of 1 Corinthians, And I, brethren, have not been able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ.

Now, the word fleshly, or carnal there, in the original, is sakinos. Which means, fleshy. F-L-E-S-H-Y.

Fleshy. That means, the material you are made with. When you are a babe, that's what you are.

You are just flesh. That's what you are made with. You know? But then, in the third verse, Indeed, ye are not able, for ye are yet carnal.

Now, that word carnal, or fleshly, is fleshy. Sakinos. It means, not only the material you are made of, but a moral condition that goes with it.

Dear brothers and sisters, when we are babes, we are fleshy. Will you forgive me if I say this? Because we find that all the babies are so innocent, so beautiful, so lovely, but do you know that the babes are most fleshy? It's all flesh. So self-centered.

A babe never cares whether it is day or night. If he is hungry, it is hungry, he cries. No matter whether you are ready or not ready for him, he is ready.

And that's all that matters. He is fleshy. But, dear brothers and sisters, even though he is fleshy, he is innocent.

And that's the reason why we bear with it. And we even love it. But, if that baby should never grow up, according to the time, he should be man, or she should be woman.

And yet, she or he still acts as if he is a babe. This, in the scripture, called fleshly. There is a moral condition attaching to it, which is not very pleasing.

So, dear brothers and sisters, a babe in Christ is fleshly. But that is just for a period. It should not continue.

If it should continue long, it becomes a serious problem. And that's the reason why a child has to be disciplined that fleshly has to be broken, so that he or she may grow up into maturity. Now, number four.

The mark of a babe is that he will act, walk according to man. Now, even though he is a believer, and yet when a believer is in the baby stage, really, the way that he lives, the way that he walks, the way even he talks, you find he is according to man. He is not very different from what the people around him are.

And sometimes you wonder whether he is saved. Well, he is saved, but he is still a baby. He hasn't grown up yet.

And then finally, the mark of a babe, as we find in Ephesians chapter four, a babe is one who is easily tossed to and fro by every wing of doctrine according to the system of man. In other words, a babe can be easily swayed. When he hears one thing, he falls to it.

When he hears another thing, he falls to it. You find he is changing all the time. There is not that stability, that establishing in his life.

Well, that shows he is just a babe. He is so exposed to every influence, every wind. When the wind blows this way, he goes this way.

When it blows that way, he goes that way. And these are the marks of babyhood. It is the will of God.

That we should outgrow that babyhood. That we should grow into perfection. We should grow into maturity.

Now, of course, there is a slight difference when you compare the physical and the spiritual. In the physical, you begin as a babe, and if everything goes alright, then maybe after 20 years, you grow into manhood, or womanhood. Now, in China, we often say, you have to wait until you are 30 years old.

Then you are established. Maybe in this country, it is earlier. But somehow, you find that you need a certain time, and after certain years have passed, then it seems almost naturally, you enter into maturity.

Into full growth. But in the spiritual realm, there is a little difference. It is true that years should mantle a person.

That we do need time to grow. Now, that is true. But this is not proportionally true.

In other words, someone can grow out of babyhood into manhood quicker than some other people. It is not as in the natural life that it has to be 20 years, or 30 years. Some people may grow faster.

Other people may grow slower. And the reason is, it has to do something with our heart, condition, and desire. If we desire to grow, if we seek for perfection, then you'll find there is chance for you to grow faster and earlier.

But if you are dull and sluggish, you are so contented to be a babe, isn't that strange? That you should be contented to be a babe. I wonder if any baby is contented to be a baby. I think the desire of the baby that

the baby may grow.

They don't want to remain as babes, or how they long that they may grow up. You know, I have a sister, of course, at that time she is the youngest sister, and she is only a few years old, and one day she and my cousin, another sister of her age, and two of them were sitting on the stairway, and they were talking to each other, and they were complaining, and people overheard them, and what they heard was, these two little girls were complaining to each other that they are the youngest of the family, and they are not happy with it, because they see these big sisters and big brothers, and how they want to grow to be like the big sister and big brothers, and being so small, they are in a disadvantaged position. They are not happy with it.

Now, isn't it strange? Children like to grow, but grown-up like to become children. We don't want to grow. We don't want to grow.

We want to remain as babes. Now, what is perfection? The word perfection, in the New Testament, does not speak of seamless perfect. There is only one man, in the whole world, who is seamless perfect, or perfection in the absolute sense, and that is our Lord Jesus.

He is the only one who is seamless perfect. And even He who is so perfect, in the book of Hebrews, chapter 5, it says, even He, the Son, has to learn obedience through the things which He has suffered. And after He has been perfected, then He becomes the author of our eternal salvation.

Now, brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus is perfect. So far as Himself is concerned, He is perfect in the absolute sense. And yet He has to learn obedience.

Why? Because as the Son of God, He knows, as the Son of God, He is God. And as God, how can He know obedience? God owns. God is the authority.

And therefore you will find, when the Lord Jesus came into this world, there is something He had to learn. He had to learn obedience. Obedience to His Heavenly Father.

And He learned obedience through the things which He has suffered. And thus He is perfected to be the author of our eternal salvation. In other words, He has accomplished the goal.

He is able to, through His obedience, through His suffering, He is able to accomplish the work of redemption that He is sent for. And thus He becomes the author of our eternal salvation. Now this is about the Lord Jesus.

Now how about us? We are not seamless perfect. We never will be. Until we are enclosed with this old tabernacle.

And we are closed with a new building, that is a spiritual body. And only then and there we will not sing anymore. So dear brothers and sisters, perfection, according to the New Testament, when it applies to believers, it means maturity.

Growing up. Full growth. We need to grow up.

We need to mature. We should not remain as babes in Christ. Now what is growing up? What is maturity? Now it doesn't mean that after we believe in the Lord Jesus, maybe 3 years, 5 years, and during these 3 or 5 years, we grow in the knowledge of the Word.

Now thank God we need to grow in the knowledge of the Word. Or we grow in the times of our fellowship, that we come together, we need to do that. But strictly speaking, growing up, maturity, simply means the life of Christ, or the measure of Christ, is increased in us.

Now that is growth. In other words, it is not just a growth in our mind. After we believe in the Lord Jesus, we may attend services every Sunday, and we have heard many sermons, many messages, so our mind is stocked with many messages, many teachings, many doctrines, and we think we grow.

Well, no, that is not the meaning of growth here. That is not perfection. Growth doesn't mean that you become very active in the church.

Now, we need to be active in the church. Every member of the body of Christ has to be active. If a member is not active, sooner or later it will be paralyzed.

Would you rather be a paralyzed member in the body of Christ, or you want to be an active member of the body of Christ? Now, being an active member, sometimes you have to be disciplined. Now that's true. If you are paralyzed, it's beyond discipline.

But, whether you want to be an active member of the body of Christ or not, I think we need to be active. But, it doesn't mean that after you have believed in the Lord Jesus, and you have engaged in many so-called Christian activities, therefore you have grown. Not at all.

Not at all. The point is, whether Christ has increased in you. When you believe in Him, you know Him as your Savior.

Now, whether your knowledge of Christ, your knowing Him, that is experientially, not mentally, but experientially. Have you experienced Christ in an increasing additional degree? More abundantly. You remember Paul said to know Him.

Now, Paul already knew Him. He met Him on the road of Damascus. And Paul has served the Lord for many years.

He was now in prison in Rome, for the gospel's sake. And yet his cry is still to know Him. Oh, that I may know Him.

To know the power of His resurrection. To have fellowship with His suffering. To be conformed to His death.

That I may arrive at the resurrection, select resurrection, out of death. This is full growth, maturity. Oh, that we may continue to know Him.

We may continue to grow in His life. That His life may be formed, that He may be formed in us. And we may be fully conformed to His image.

Now, that is maturity. And this is something that we must press on. We must.

If we are contented with the little of Christ that we know, thank God the little we know, so far as itself is concerned, is great. Why? Because we know Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as Christ. We know Him as our personal Savior.

Now, that's great. But if we are just contented with the little that we know of Christ, and we refuse to press on to know Him more, to experience Him more, brothers and sisters, we will remain as babes. And we will be a sorrow to God.

Not to say to ourselves. Some people do not want to grow. Because with growth there is responsibility.

We want to be babes. Let other people take responsibility for us. We give them problems and let them bear the responsibilities.

And you know, among believers, there are believers like that. They don't want to take any responsibility. So they don't want to grow.

And with responsibility, of course, there has to be suffering. Suffering goes with responsibility. And they are afraid of suffering.

Afraid to pay the cost. And because of that they stay in babyhood. Dear brothers and sisters, what is the will of God for His people? The will of God for His people is that we may grow up into sonship.

In John 1, verse 12, anyone who believes Him, who receives Him, that is, believes in His name, he is given authority to become a child of God. Thank God for that. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, we become children of God.

We become little children, babes in Christ. Thank God for that. But what is the purpose of God in saving us? What is the purpose of God concerning us? He does not want just babies.

He is not open a nursery. He wants grown-up sons. People who can share responsibility with Him.

That is God's purpose. God's purpose concerning you is sonship. In Galatians, chapter 4, we are told, in the fullness of time, when God sent His Son into this world, born of women, born under the law, that He may deliver us from the curse of law, that we may receive sonship.

That's what God wants. He wants you to be sons and daughters. He wants you to grow up.

Now, if this is God's will for you, do you think you can sit back and say, I'm quite happy just to be babes. You may be happy now, but one day you will be sorrowful. And not to say, your Heavenly Father is sorrowful all the time.

So here you will find there is a very important thing before us. God's will is that we go on to full growth. He doesn't want any one of us to remain as babes.

You have believed in the Lord how many years? You know, Paul, when he wrote to the Corinthians, he was in Corinth for a year and a half, he left them for a few years, and he wrote this first letter to the Corinthians, and he said, according to this time, you should be teachers. You shouldn't be babes anymore. I should be able to share with you meat, but I'm not able to.

Why? You are still carnal. You haven't grown. And the same thing you'll find in the letter to the Hebrews.

According to the time, we do not know how many years have passed, I wonder, probably it won't be too many years. Now, according to the time, you should be teachers. You should be able to teach others.

But unfortunately you are still babes. You are not able to consume solid food. You are still looking for milk, and nothing but milk.

Isn't that a sad thing? Are we so dull in our hearing? Are we so sluggish? Have we become so lazy? So indifferent, so careless, that we cease to grow? Dear brothers and sisters, do you know, the only safety for us is to... If you stand put, you do not stand put, you go backward. If you slow down, you not only stop, but you go back. The only way for us is to go on.

So, here you'll find in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 1, he said, Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us go on, or let us press on to... The exhortation is to press on. Leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ. Now, the word of the beginning of the Christ, or the word of the foundation.

In other words, these are foundation truths. What are the beginning, the word of the beginning of Christ? You'll find in verse 2, starting from verse 1, Not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith in God. Here you'll find three sets of teachings, of doctrines.

The first set is repentance of from dead works and faith in God. Now, we need to repent from dead works. Now, it doesn't say repentance from sins.

Now, we all know we need to repent of our sins. But it says repent from dead works. And the dead works here are good works.

You know, when we first realize that we have sinned, you know what we do? We try to do some good works to cover up our sins, or to substitute our sins, or to redeem our sins. Now, these are dead works. Why? Because these are works done by the dead man.

Good works, but come out of the dead man. Dead in sins and transgressions. And dear brothers and sisters, you know, unless the Holy Spirit shows you you need to repent of that, most people depend on that.

Most people depend on their good works. When they realize that they have sinned, they try to depend on their good works to go to God. But one day the Holy Spirit will show you that your works are dead.

You need to repent from your dead works. That is, you should see that it is utterly undependable. Just like the fig leaves that Adam and Eve made to put on themselves an apron.

They think that this will cover their nakedness. But the wind blows. Dear brothers and sisters, we need to repent from dead works.

And only when we repent from dead works, then we have our faith in God. In other words, we cease to believe in ourselves anymore. There is nothing to trust.

We believe in God and in what He has provided for us. So, this is the first set. It is the past.

We have repented. We have believed. Now, the second set is of the doctrine of washing and of imposition of hands.

Now, notice it is not washing. It is the doctrine of washing. In other words, you find here there are two sets of teachings.

One teaching is concerning washing, or baptism. The other is concerning imposition of hands, laying on of hands. Now, these two teachings are also foundation teachings.

Why? Because the teaching of baptism is union with Christ. We who are baptized are baptized unto Christ. We who are baptized are baptized unto Christ.

We are baptized with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. So, the teaching of baptism is the teaching of the union with Christ. Thank God for this union.

And what is the teaching of the laying on of hands? It is the union of the body. In other words, we, through the laying on of hands, we are identified with one another. And that's the reason why you'll find Ananias came to Paul and put his hand upon Paul and said, Brother, God opened your eyes.

In other words, here you'll find Ananias identified himself with Paul. And through the laying on of hands, Paul was identified with Ananias. Into the body of Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the present. We are united with Christ and we are united with one another in the body of Christ. And then the third set of the foundation truth is resurrection of the dead and of eternal punishment, judgment.

This is the future. In the future, there will be the resurrection of the dead. And those who believe in the Lord Jesus, we will be resurrected from the dead, we will put on a spiritual body and enter into life.

And those who are not of the Lord, they too will be resurrected a thousand years later, but they will appear before the great white throne and be judged unto eternal death. So here you'll find resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment that concerns the future. So brothers and sisters, here you'll find these three sets of teachings are the beginning word of the beginning of Christ.

These are the foundation truth. And thank God, we must have that foundation. If you do not have that foundation, you are not the Lord's.

You do not belong to the Lord. But if you have the foundation, then you belong to the Lord. You are the Lord's.

Now thank God, the foundation is already laid. But after the foundation is laid, then what? So the Bible says, leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us press on to perfection, not laying again the foundation. Now this is not in contradiction to chapter three, verse fourteen.

For we are become companions of the Christ, it indeed would hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the end. Here you'll find we have to hold the beginning firm to the end. And here in chapter six you'll find leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ.

Now is there any contradiction? No. So far as the beginning is the root out of which we grow, we never leave it. It is always there.

The foundation is always there. In other words, you don't leave off the foundation. It is there.

It is there. And out of that, you grow up. But so far as the beginning is just a commencement of something for the future, then you have to leave the commencement and go ahead.

Otherwise, you are just circling around the foundation and you never move forward. You know, you will be like the children of Israel. They were saved, delivered out of Egypt, and they were supposed to go into the promised land.

But somehow you'll find they wander in the wilderness, making circle in the wilderness, never outgrow it. Dear brothers and sisters, you have been saved for three years now. Maybe five years, maybe ten years, maybe more.

Where are you now? Are you growing up in Christ? Are you still in babyhood? All these mocks of babyhood still characterize your life? Or is it Christ has begun to be formed in you that He may be seen and heard by other people? That you may be a blessing to other people? Or have you pressed on? You know, pressing on needs a little effort. Now, if you don't exert any effort, take it easy. You drift.

You have to apply yourself to what God is calling you. You have to set your heart upon Him. You have to desire to know Him.

You have to be willing to suffer and to pay the cost. Dear brothers and sisters, only when you press on, then there will be full growth. It is not automatic.

After twenty years you are automatically a man. No. It has to depend on how you respond, how you desire, how you press on.

So we need to leave the beginning behind. That doesn't mean that you leave off the foundation. The foundation is already there.

If the foundation is not there, then you need to lay the foundation. But if the foundation is already there, there is no way to relay it. That is what is said here.

There is no way to relay it. For it is impossible to renew again to repentance. Those once enlightened and who have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the works of the power of the age to come.

It is impossible to renew again. Now the word renew in the original means entirely new. It is not just remodeling.

You know, renovate. No. It means start all over again.

Make it entirely new. A fresh start. He said, if you have already been enlightened.

Now you have been enlightened. The Holy Spirit has convicted you of your sins. And you have repented and believed in the Lord Jesus.

And who have tasted of the heavenly gift. The heavenly gift is Christ. The bread of life.

He is our life. That is the heavenly gift. Eternal life.

And made partakers of the Holy Spirit. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells in you. You have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.

And have tasted the good word of God. The word tasted here doesn't mean that you have heard only. Doesn't mean that you have only understand it in your mind.

No. The word tasted means that you have tasted it. You have enjoyed it.

You have experienced it. That it is real. It is very real and enjoyable.

Now you have enjoyed the word of God. Thank God if you are saved. You love the word of God.

You enjoy it. You taste it. It's sweeter than honeycomb.

And then you have tasted the words of the power of the age to come. That is the power of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit.

You have tasted that. Now in other words, here you find a person who is saved. Soundly saved.

The foundation is already laid. Now for such a person it is impossible to relay the foundation. Why? Because the foundation is already there.

And for him to have fallen away if he has fallen away. Now what is falling away? Falling away is falling away from the goal. There is a goal.

And the goal is perfection. Full growth. And if you fall away from the goal and if you can relay the foundation that means if you can really really repent as if you have never believed in the Lord Jesus it will be like crucifying the Son of God the second time.

It is impossible. So dear brothers and sisters once you are enlightened once you have received the new life once you have received the Holy Spirit once you have tasted the good word of God once you have tasted the works of the power of God in other words you have the foundation in your life remember this foundation can never be relayed. It is there.

If you fall away if you fall away from the goal of perfection if you become dull become sluggish stand back do not grow what happens? Well, it is true. Falling away is a serious thing. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 we are told if anyone thinks that he stands take care lest he fall.

The same word. The children of Israel they fall and fall and fall until finally at Cadiz Bernia they fell again and there was no point of return. But dear brothers and sisters who are we to say to anyone you are beyond repentance that you are finished.

Because you have fallen away you are finished. Now the writer of the Hebrew said but we think better things about you even though I am talking this way but you are better than that. You haven't fallen away to the point of no return.

That's apostasy. You have fallen away because you become dull. Because you become sluggish.

Because you are not diligent. That's why you have fallen away. So if that is the reason what should you do? If you realize that you have fallen away what should you do? You cannot go back to the very beginning before you are saved and be saved again and lay the foundation.

You cannot do that. Then what do you do? Get up and go ahead. That's what you do.

Suppose I come to this place from my home and I am walking. In the midway I fall. Now what do I do? Do I roll back to my home then get up and start walking again? Nonsense.

If I fall down I got up and walk forward until I arrive here. Dear brothers and sisters this is what the scripture is trying to tell us. Suppose there is one who has fallen away.

You cannot start from the very beginning because the foundation is there. There is no way to do it again. Now what do you do? Get up.

Go on. That's what you do. For ground which drinks the rain which comes often upon it and produces useful herbs for those for whose sakes also it is killed partakers of blessings from God but bringing forth thorns and briars it is found worthless and nigh to a curse whose end is to be burned.

It is like a ground that receives rain from above. You know the seed is already there and the rain comes upon it and the rain should bring forth the herbs for those who kill it that is to say for God. God has put the seed in you the life in you and He is raining His blessing from above upon you in order that you may produce fruit for His pleasure.

Now that's what it should be but if you do not produce the herbs for His purpose instead you wasted all the blessings of God in your life and you produce thorns and briars. Now what are thorns and briars? We are told that thorns are aborted fruit. They're thorny.

In other words, instead of bearing fruit for God you live according to the flesh. You just want to do what you want to do you don't care about God and if you go on like that you waste the grace of God you produce thorns and briars and what will happen? You will become worthless to God. You're worthless to God.

And nigh to a curse. Underline the word nigh. It's not curse, but nigh to a curse.

Very close. Whose end is to be burned. Now what is burned? The thorns and briars are burned.

The ground cannot be burned. In other words, the foundation is Christ. He can never be burned.

But what you build upon that foundation will all be burned. And this is 1 Corinthians 3. But thank God, the writer said but we are persuaded concerning you beloved better things. You're better than that.

You're not that bad yet. You're very helpful. So brothers and sisters take heart and if we have fallen away if we have become dull in hearing if we become sluggish if our hearts become hardened if we have fallen away dear brothers and sisters may the Spirit of God speak to you and get you up and push you on that you may press on to perfection.

There is still time for that. We do not have much more time. But there is still time.

I often thank God for today. Because as long as there is today there is opportunity. Let us press on to perfection.

But we desire earnestly that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end that ye be not sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and patience have been inheritors of the promises. Dear brothers and sisters what is perfection? Perfection of full growth is to inherit the promises of God. Not just to inherit one promise but to inherit all the promises of God.

In other words in this section of the book of Hebrews you'll find what we need to consider is to consider Jesus as the High Priest of our Confession. In the second exhortation we need to consider Christ as the

Apostle of our Confession. Because it is connected with the calling.

But in this matter of perfection we need to consider Jesus as the High Priest of our Confession. He is our High Priest. Not according to the order of Aaron that he did when he died on the cross and when he offered himself and brought that blood to heaven.

But after he is seated at the right hand of the Father he is our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Dear brothers and sisters to know Christ as our Savior is milk. To know Christ as our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek is solid food.

How can we grow unless we know Him as our High Priest? You remember where Abraham came back from the battle? Melchizedek? The High Priest met him and gave him bread and wine and blessed him strengthened him. Dear brothers and sisters this is a picture of Christ our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. We have received His life in us.

But how can we live upon this earth a heavenly life? Where comes the power of living a heavenly life? Where comes the power of overcoming temptations? Where comes the power of reaching the goal that God has set before us? Unless we know Him as our High Priest. You know He is our High Priest. He is the mediator of the New Covenant.

In other words, God has given us the New Covenant. In the New Covenant you have all the promises of God. And Christ as our High Priest is to mediate the New Covenant.

That is to say, to bring the blessings of the New Covenant to us. And that is why He intercedes for us. At the right hand of the Father they lay for us.

And as He intercedes the Holy Spirit in us begins to work in every one of us. And the Holy Spirit is working to bring us into all the fullness of the promises of God. That we may inherit the promises of God.

Now that's what it is. If you do not depend upon Christ as your High Priest whom are you depending upon for your daily life? You depend on yourself? You try to live a Christian life? You try to live a victorious life? You try to live a heavenly life but you find you're bound for it? You cannot do it. But thank God if you depend on Him who is now at the right hand of God making intercession for you then you'll find through the supply of the Holy Spirit you will be able to experience the power of that heavenly life and to inherit all the promises of God.

Now, this is the way the secret into perfection. May I put it this way without Christ as your High Priest perfection is impossible. But with Christ as our High Priest perfection is yours.

But the promises of God are not automatically coming upon you. Not because God has a promise. Therefore, automatically you inherit it now.

All the promises of God depend on your response to the working of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit works in you you'll respond with faith and patience. Then you'll inherit.

But if you do not respond with faith and you're impatient you don't inherit. And that's the reason why in the last part of chapter six you'll find an example is given, Abraham. Abraham inherits the promise of God.

Why? Because he believed and he was patient. Dear brothers and sisters thank God for all His promises. Through the precious promises we may grow into sonship.

The promises are all there. Given to you through these promises you may live a godly life. You may enter into perfection.

But how are you to inherit all these promises? Faith. You must believe. When the Holy Spirit brings God's promise to your attention believe it.

And not only believe it patiently wait for it. Abraham God called him out of Ur of Chaldea and God promised him or how he waited patiently believing until he got the promise. So may the Lord help us.

Brothers and sisters again let us conclude by saying perfection full growth sonship is God's purpose for every child of God. This is what you need to aim at. Never be contented to remain as babes in Christ.

Press on to perfection. Do not be sluggish and dull. Be diligent knowing Christ as your High Priest.

After the order of Melchizedek that means after the power of indissoluble life and by faith and patience inherit the promise like our father of belief Abraham. So may the Lord help us. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father do you impress upon our hearts that it is thy will for us to grow into perfection.

Do not allow us to remain as babes. But Lord we pray that thou will create such a longing for thyself that we may press on to know thee and to full growth. And our Father we do acknowledge that by ourselves we cannot make it.

But we know that thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ is now seated at thy right hand as our High Priest interceding for us that he may save us to the uttermost of all who approach him approach thee through him. So Father we just ask thee to open our eyes to see Christ as our High Priest that we may daily depend upon him and through the working of the Holy Spirit by faith and patience inherit the inheritance. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen.

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