

(Hebrews) ch.5:7-6:15

by Zac Poonen

Jesus' High Priesthood is significant because He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without committing sin, and He learned obedience by denying His own will and obeying the Father's will.

Duration: 1:20:56

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-45, Romans 8:13, Hebrews 2:17, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 5:6-7, Hebrews 6:20

Topics: "Jesus As Priest", "Prayer And Temptation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Jesus as a man who experienced temptation and fear of falling into sin. He emphasizes that Jesus, as our high priest, was tempted in every way just like us, yet he did not commit sin. The preacher highlights Jesus' prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, where he prayed with strong crying and tears, showing his godly fear and dependence on God. The necessity for Jesus to pray in such a manner was to be saved from the death that is the wages of sin. Through his prayers, Jesus was heard and saved from spiritual death.

Transcript

God has appointed Jesus to be our High Priest, one who has been tempted, we are told in chapter 4 verse 15, in every point like as we are, yet without committing sin. And thereby he has been taken through his humanity just like we have to go through it, and he has become a High Priest equipped to meet our need, we are told that in chapter 2 verse 17 as well, that he is a faithful High Priest, verse 18, who has suffered being tempted, we are told in chapter 4 verse 15, he is a High Priest who has been tempted in all points like as we are. And again in chapter 5 verse 6 and 7 we are told similar words, that he is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, who in the days of his flesh had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him who was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared.

Now all these passages refer to Jesus as a man who had emptied himself of his privileges and prerogatives as God when he came to earth, became one like unto us that he might be the captain of our salvation, that he might be our forerunner, as we are told in chapter 6 verse 20, a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek who is our forerunner. And we are told here too that when he came here to earth in the days of his flesh, he prayed with strong crying and tears. Now what was the necessity for him to pray with strong crying and tears? We are told in verse 7 that he prayed to him who was able to save him from death and we are told that he was heard, his prayers were heard and he was saved from death.

Now the only death that Jesus was saved from was spiritual death, not physical death, for he went through physical death and he came out triumphant. What was the death that he feared to fall into? It was the death which is the wages of sin. He who lives after the flesh shall die.

And that law applied to Jesus as much as to any other man, for Jesus lived on earth as other men and he so feared God as we are told in this verse, he feared, he had a godly fear about him that gave him a dread of falling into sin. And so as a man he cried out for help that God his father would keep him in temptation from falling. We are told in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus went to pray, he called three of his disciples and he told them in Matthew 26 verse 36 to 45.

We are told that he called Peter, James and John and he told them to pray with him. In verse 38 he said, my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death, tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed.

And there again he prayed with strong crying and tears. We are told in Luke's gospel that those, that agony was so great that his sweat was like great drops of blood. And he came back and found the disciples sleeping and he said to them in verse 41, watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, that spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Now Jesus was telling his disciples that because the flesh is weak, they had to watch and pray otherwise they would fall in the hour of temptation. And that law applied to him too for he was a man too like them, he had come as a man like them. And he said that this law that applies to you, he implied applies to himself too.

That he had to watch and pray and that is why he had to go and pray. Three times we are told in the garden of Gethsemane he went and prayed. We do not know all the agony that went through Jesus' soul at that time.

But we know that because he watched and prayed he never sinned. And that applied not only to that hour in the garden of Gethsemane but right through his life. We are told in Hebrews 5.7, in the days of his flesh he prayed with strong crying and tears.

We read in Luke 6 in verse 12 that once he went into a mountain and prayed for the whole night. We read in Luke 5 verse 16 that he often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Now as God there was no necessity for him to pray.

But as a man come in our flesh there was a necessity for him to pray so that he would not fall. And he prayed with strong crying and tears unto him who was able to save him from death. And was heard in that he feared because of his godly fear.

As a man he walked on earth like all other men should walk in the fear of God. And thereby he has given us an example as to how we are to walk. For we are told in 1 John chapter 2 in verse 6 that he who says he abides in him must walk even as Jesus walked.

And so Jesus has given us an example and that's why he's called our forerunner. Hebrews 6.20, one who has gone ahead of us, run the same race and who looks back over his shoulder and says to us follow me walking the same road that I walk or running the same race that I run. We're told in Hebrews 12 verse 1 and 2 let us run the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross.

Jesus is our example as we run this race. And he has given us an example as to how we are to face temptation. We're told in Hebrews 4.15 he was tempted in all points like as we are.

But we so often fail and fall, he never fell. What was the difference? The difference was here that he so feared his father that he dreaded to commit sin. That he prayed with strong crying and tears that he might not sin.

That he might not enter into spiritual death in any area and thereby he was kept. God alone could keep him and God alone can keep us. We cannot keep ourselves as human beings in the hour of temptation.

It's God's power that can keep us and that power can come to us only as we pray. If we do not pray we do not have that power to be kept in the moment of temptation. And when Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are he too had to pray and he was kept because he feared God so much that he dreaded to commit sin.

And thereby we have an example for ourselves dear friend. In the moment of temptation if we fear God like Jesus did if we fear God so much that we dread to commit sin in thought or word or deed or attitude or motive or in any area then we shall find that the power of God keeps us. If we cry out to God for help we looked at that passage in Hebrews 4.16 where we are told to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find grace to help us in time of need.

And we saw that the time of our need is the time when we are tempted so strongly that we fear lest we may fall. And when we so fear God that we do not want to fall into any sin in any area of our life we don't want spiritual death to touch us in any area then we shall cry out for God's help to keep us from falling to keep us from sinning to keep us from the smell of spiritual death and then we shall be kept. And this is what Jesus himself did in the days of his flesh when he was here on earth as a man like us he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him who was able to save him from death and he was heard his prayer was answered and he was kept and the reason is he feared and he is our example in this area.

We were looking at Hebrews 5 verse 7 last week and we saw concerning Jesus our forerunner who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him who was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared.

Now one would think that because Jesus is the son of God when he came to earth as a man God the father would exempt him from many things that we have to go through and that his experience would be different from what ours is that is our natural human reasoning and it is to answer that question that we read in verse 8 although he was a son yet he had to learn obedience through the things which he suffered now as God Jesus does not have to learn anything he is complete completely complete as God but we are told in Philippians 2 verses 5 to 8 that when Jesus came to earth he emptied himself not of his person as God he was God when he walked on this earth and so he could forgive the sins of people he received worship from people because he was God but nevertheless he emptied himself of

privileges and rights that he had as God and he allowed himself to be tempted which is a thing that God can never happen to God he allowed himself to be tempted we are told in Hebrews 12 verse 4 that he strove against sin because he emptied himself and came to earth as a man this is a great mystery we are told in 1 Timothy 3.16 great is the mystery of godliness God was manifest in the flesh we cannot fully understand it and certainly our finite minds and our human logic fail when it comes to understanding this

great mystery of God becoming flesh like us and yet the word of God says it is true and so we have to bow to the teaching of God's word not try to analyze it or reason it out with human logic we are told although he was a son he learnt obedience through the things which he suffered

now the only way that Jesus could have learnt anything was as a man not as God and so this must be referring to his experience as a man and we are told that this is so very clearly in verse 7 in the days of his flesh when he came in flesh like ours he learnt obedience this does not mean that in any time he disobeyed what it means is that God the father gave him opportunities to obey and he obeyed in those occasions he denied his own human will and did the father's will this is what is meant in Hebrews 5.8 when we are told he learnt obedience Jesus himself said in John's gospel in chapter 5 and verse 30 the middle of that verse I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me and John 6 verse 38 he again said I came from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me

and we are told in Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 7 concerning Jesus lo I come to do thy will O God and so we find again in the garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26 lo I come to do your will not my will but thy will be done O God and this was characteristic of Jesus right through his life he did not do his own will but he did the father's will he did not please himself we are told in Romans 15 in verse 3 but he always pleased the father we are told in John 8 verse 29 and this was the way that Jesus walked on earth he denied his own will consistently his own human will and he did the father's will and thereby he has become our forerunner this is the way in which we are told to follow him this is the meaning of taking up the cross and following Jesus Jesus said no to his own will and he said

yes to his father's will and we are to follow Jesus in saying no to our own will and saying yes to the father's will thereby we can follow in his footsteps and because Jesus right through his life said no to his own human will and yes to the father's will continuously, consistently perfectly and joyfully we are told in Hebrews 5.8 he learned obedience that is active obedience by the things which he suffered how did he suffer? he suffered when being tempted we are told in Hebrews 2.18 he suffered being tempted and that suffering lay in the denial of his own will that he might do his father's will we are told in 1 Peter and chapter 4 and verse 1 for as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh arm yourselves likewise with the same mind that is with the same attitude of suffering

in the flesh for we are told when we take that attitude and we suffer in the flesh we cease from sin and no longer live the rest of our life in the flesh to the lust of men but to the will of God and there we are shown in 1 Peter 4.1 and 2 what it means to suffer in the flesh that means we no longer live to the lust of men but to do the will of God to suffer in the flesh means to deny our own will so that we might do the will of the father and then we cease from sin if that is our attitude we cannot sin we sin when we do our own will the root of all sin is doing our own will and the root of holiness is doing the father's will Adam sinned because he did his own will we sin when we do our own will Jesus never sinned because he never did his own will he did the father's will and therefore he

never sinned and we are told in 1 Peter 4.1 that as Jesus has suffered in the flesh denying his own pleasure and doing the will of the father we too are to have the same mind denying our own pleasure denying our own will denying that which pleases us continuously so that we might live to do the will of God verse 2 then we cease from sin for to sin is the opposite of doing the will of God so we are told in Hebrews 5.8 he learnt obedience by the things which he suffered in the flesh he denied his own will therefore he obeyed the father continuously and thus his human experience was complete as a man he walked the way we have to walk and he overcame in a flesh like ours tempted in all points like as we are tempted to do his

own will and to please himself he overcame and he did the will of

the father and thus we are told in verse 9 being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him as he himself obeyed verse 8 of eternal salvation to all those who obey him he obeyed the father and we are to obey him for he is the mediator between God and men and we are told here that salvation comes eternal salvation to those who obey him now what does salvation mean? salvation is not just being saved from hell unfortunately so many believers think of being saved from hell but here he is talking about being saved from sin which is being saved from doing our own will and Jesus has given us an example there as he denied himself and did the father's will as we deny ourselves and do the father's will we too can be saved Zach Ponan we turn now to Hebrews 5 and

verse 8 where we are told concerning the human experience of the Lord Jesus though he were a son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered and being made perfect that is complete he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him and we saw last week that the salvation spoken of here is the salvation from sin and sin we saw was the doing of our own will we are saved from sin from doing our own will when we follow in the footsteps of Jesus and obey like Jesus obeyed God and thus we find eternal salvation the angel came to Joseph we are told in Matthew chapter 1 and told him to call the son that Mary was going to have Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin it is from sin that Jesus has come to save us from our sin from falling continuously into sin

Jesus has come to save us from that not just from the judgment of God that is going to come upon mankind for their sins but also from our sins themselves from doing our own will from displeasing God Jesus has come to save us from that and so the salvation that Jesus brings us is a salvation that leads us to obedience he is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him now this is not contradictory to the teaching of Paul in Romans where he says that salvation is by faith not at all for faith and obedience are two sides of the same coin you cannot have one without the other as we sing in that hymn trust and obey for there is no other way either to be happy in Jesus or to be saved salvation is through faith that leads to obedience this is what James makes clear in chapter 2 of

his letter where he says that faith without works that is works of obedience is dead that is an intellectual type of faith which he says even the devil has that doesn't save the devil and it won't save anybody else so the faith that the Bible speaks of is an active faith not a passive faith that one believes certain things in one's mind but an active faith that leads one to obedience and what James is trying to emphasize in his letter is that if you have a faith which does not lead you to obedience then it's a spurious faith it's a counterfeit faith it's not the real thing this is the way that we can test whether our faith is genuine or not the Bible speaks of the trial of our faith and how is our faith tested just like Abraham's faith was tested when God asked him to offer up his only

son and he offered up his only son and thereby he proved that his faith was genuine and so there is no contradiction when the New Testament speaks of salvation by faith and salvation by obedience for they are exactly the same thing two sides of one door two sides of one door by which we enter in to be saved and so we are told Jesus has become the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him it is through obedience that we are saved as much as through faith and here in this area of obedience Jesus himself has become the example for us for we are told in verse 8 he himself in the days of his flesh obeyed he obeyed God's word denied his own will never sinned and obeyed the father in everything and thus he was made perfect now what the apostle is leading on to you find in chapter 6

verse 1 he says let us also go on to perfection we are also to be perfect we are to go on to perfection and not remain as babes this is what he comes to in verse 12 of chapter 5 12 13 and 14 he says you Hebrew Christians are still babies you shouldn't be babies you should be going on to perfection you should be following in the footsteps of Jesus who was made perfect chapter 5 verse 9 and let us also chapter 6 verse 1 go on to the same perfection that Jesus had how is this possible only as we make him our forerunner chapter 6 verse 20 he has gone ahead run the race ahead of us and our forerunner means that we are to run behind him the same way that he ran we are to run that's why we told in chapter 5 verse 8 that Jesus obeyed chapter 5 verse 9 we are also to obey like he obeyed we are to

obey following in his footsteps this is our calling then we shall also be made complete like Jesus was made complete Paul says in Philippians chapter 3 and verse 12 he says not as though I had already attained either were already perfect but I follow after to lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus he says I haven't yet laid hold of it but one thing I do I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus what is that high calling that high calling is the calling of being made perfect and we are to press towards that mark of being made perfect in Christ it doesn't come by sitting back waiting for God to do everything it comes by forgetting the things that are behind forgetting how much we have accomplished forgetting our failures too and

pressing toward the mark Jesus ran the race and Paul is saying in Philippians 3 I am running the race too behind Jesus as Jesus obeyed in everything and has become my example as a man I also want to obey in everything we are told very clearly that the way that Jesus was made perfect was by obedience he obeyed in every area denied his will and thus was made perfect and if we are to go on to perfection if we are to run the race looking unto Jesus who endured the cross then we have to endure the cross too we have to deny our own will we have to give up every sin and not only every sin every weight a weight is those things which are legitimate but which are still a hindrance to the race and we are to run this race looking unto Jesus our example our forerunner the author and the finisher of

our faith who himself endured the cross and thus came to the right hand of the throne of God and who seeks to lead us the same way for he says where I am there shall my servant also be and so if we follow in the footsteps of Jesus we can reach the right hand of the throne of God but those footsteps are marked out for us in Hebrews 5 verse 7 8 and 9 we are told that he feared God in Hebrews 5 7 he feared he lived before the face of his father he did not just live a holy life when men saw him he lived a holy life when no one was looking he feared God so much that he dreaded to commit sin in any area and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom the first step to perfection is to fear God if we fear God like Jesus did then we shall also be kept from falling into sin if we fear like he

feared and we are also told that he suffered Jesus suffered he denied his own will and we are to deny our own will this is the way of perfection and we are also told that Jesus obeyed and we are to obey the commands that Jesus has given us in his word Jesus told his disciples to go and teach all men to do all the things that he had commanded us and we are to walk the way of obedience it's the man who obeys who can say he loves Jesus the one who obeys God's commands loves him and Jesus prayed with great longing to be kept from the smell of spiritual death and ultimately it is God's power that keeps us we cannot keep ourselves but if we cry out to God he will keep us and so if we fear God if we deny our own will and obey calling out to God for help and for grace then we shall walk in the

footsteps of Jesus and be made perfect in that day when he comes back to receive us to himself we turn now to Hebrews 5 and verse 10 this is the concluding sentence of what begins in verse 7 where we are

told of Jesus in the days of his flesh being made perfect verse 9 and thus becoming the captain of our salvation or the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him and we are told therefore he's called of God and high priest after the order of Melchizedek we were told earlier in verse 1 that every high priest is taken from among men and so Jesus too had to go through the experience of a human being in order to be our high priest this is the argument of this section and having become our high priest tempted in all points like as we are suffering the same thing that we suffer made

in all things like unto his brethren being our forerunner in every way overcoming sin living that perfect life and being made complete in his experience of the human being is called of God to be our high priest and we are priests following in the footsteps of this our high priest and we are told in verse 11 concerning him concerning Jesus is our high priest after the order of Melchizedek the Apostle says we have many things to say but they are hard to be uttered seeing that you are dull of hearing what he means is that if I say these things to you concerning Jesus and our high priest you can't understand them fully because you are still a babe now in what way were they babes they had received the forgiveness of sins they'd been baptized in the Holy Spirit they had taken water baptism and

they had understood many things about the elementary teachings of the Christian faith we're told in chapter 6 verse 1 and 2 what those elementary teachings are but they were still babes because they were without experience verse 13 in the word of righteousness now the word Melchizedek we are told in chapter 7 and verse 2 means king of righteousness and Jesus being our high priest after the order of Melchizedek is a high priest of righteousness the Holy Spirit we are told in Joel 2 25 in the margin is the teacher of righteousness and the new covenant is a ministry of righteousness into which we are brought in righteousness is the distinctive feature of the new covenant we are told in Matthew 633 we are to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness in Romans 14 and verse 17 we're told

that the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit and so it is progress and experience in righteousness that makes us mature not the exercise of spiritual gifts not the baptism in the Holy Spirit not the anointing of the Spirit none of these things but experience in righteousness makes us mature we should never make a mistake in this some people think they are mature because they have more understanding of Scripture that is merely a matter of intellectual ability some people do not have as much intellectual ability as others but spiritual maturity comes through walking the way of righteousness and obedience and in the measure in which we have walked in the way of obedience to Jesus command obedience to the Word of God walked in righteousness in every area that

we are conscious of in that measure we are mature now usually our understanding is way ahead of our experience with almost every Christian it is true to say that they have more understanding than experience they have more understanding of righteousness than experience of righteousness they walk in God's ways far less than they know about God's ways and so they remain babes even though they may be very clever in the Scriptures yet they are very poor in righteousness and so they are spiritually babes and so we are told that these people were babes everyone that uses milk is unskillful has no experience in the Word of Righteousness for he is a babe and those who are babies have no experience in the Word of Righteousness and so they cannot understand the deeper truths the meat of the Word of

God they have to keep on drinking milk and that is why he says in verse 11 we have many things concerning Jesus is our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek to say to you but you don't seem to get beyond the elementary thing and so you are dull of hearing concerning these deeper things for he says in verse 12 the time has come when you should have been teachers but you need someone to teach you

again the first principles of the Oracles of God you have become those who need milk and not meat and so he says I can't give you meat you can't give a two-month-old baby meat can't digest it it can't chew it you have to wait till that baby grows up before it can eat meat but what can that two-month baby take and digest only milk and the great tragedy with so many believers is that even after

many years of being believers they are still at the level of drinking milk and usually mother's milk meaning that which is which is pre-digested which is given through someone else they cannot feed themselves they have to be continuously taught and taught and taught and taught and they do not know how it is that how it is to receive God's Word directly from God for themselves one of the privileges of the New Covenant we are told in Hebrews 8 11 is they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother saying know the Lord for all shall know me personally from the least to the greatest this is our privilege not that we do not need Bible teachers but in addition to them we have the privilege under the New Covenant of knowing God personally but if we haven't come to that stage

then we are still babies still needing to be taught the first principles of the Oracles of God what are those first principles we told something of those first principles in chapter 6 verse 1 and 2 repentance faith baptism that is water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit laying on of hands for healing and for spiritual gifts resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment all these things are put together as the first principles repentance from dead works the fact that we cannot save ourselves by our own works faith towards God salvation by faith the importance of being baptized after we are saved and then baptism in the Holy Spirit the endowment of power laying on of hands the receiving of the gifts of the Spirit laying on of hands for physical healing in the name of Jesus resurrection

of the dead and eternal judgment all these things are just the elementary thing and a person who's got thus far has only got as far as the milk this is only the milk of the Word of God then what is the meat the meat is the word of righteousness chapter 5 verse 13 that which leads us into a godly life that which leads us into righteousness the righteousness of the law being fulfilled in us by the power of the Holy Spirit as we are told in Romans 8 verse 2 3 & 4 that is the meat to receive the word of righteousness that leads us into a godly life and so we are told in Hebrews 5 14 strong meat belongs to them that are of full age or mature or perfect even those who by reason of habit and exercise have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil those who come to a place of

maturity where their conscience has become sensitive their will is surrendered they've denied themselves they put the flesh to death and they are living in by faith and dependence upon God they're capable of receiving more and more of the deeper truths of God's Word now the interesting thing we see here is that it is God's will that we quickly come to this place of maturity he says the time has is well past when you should have become teachers but you're still babes oh may God help us to go on to maturity what are those first principles we're told something of those first principles in chapter 6 verse 1 and 2 repentance faith baptism that is water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit laying on of hands for healing and for spiritual gifts resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment all

these things are put together as the first principles repentance from dead works the fact that we cannot save ourselves by our own works faith towards God salvation by faith the importance of being baptized after we are saved and then baptism in the Holy Spirit the endowment of power laying on of hands the receiving of the gifts of the Spirit laying on of hands for physical healing in the name of Jesus resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment all these things are just the elementary things and a person who's got thus far has only got as far as the milk this is only the milk of the Word of God then what is the meat the

meat is the word of righteousness chapter 5 verse 13 that which leads us into a godly life that which leads us into righteousness the righteousness of the law being

fulfilled enough by the power of the Holy Spirit as we are told in Romans 8 verse 2 3 & 4 that is meat to receive the word of righteousness that leads us into a godly life and so we are told in Hebrews 5:14 strong meat belongs to them that are of full age or mature or perfect even those who by reason of habit and exercise have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil that opponent we turn again to Hebrews 5 and verse 14 where we are told strong meat belongs to them that are of full age or perfect even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil the main burden of the Apostle in this section is that the Hebrew Christians will press on to perfection and this is the crying need with so many believers today they remain babes when they

should be teachers of others and there is a great need for this exhortation to us to that when for the time you ought to be teachers chapter 5 verse 12 you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the articles of God and I'll become such as of need of milk and not of strong meat for everyone that use it milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness for he's a babe but strong meat belongs to them that are of full age even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil as I mentioned last week the only way to maturity is by walking in the way of righteousness by seeking first the kingdom of God which is righteousness peace and joy and his righteousness first in our life and foremost and making that the greatest passion of

our life hungering and thirsting for righteousness as Jesus said in every area to do that which is absolutely totally right without any error without any mistake without any anything wrong without anything that's sinful seeking for perfection in our speech in our thought life in our attitudes towards others in our motives in our actions Paul said I press toward the mark never being content with how far we've gone but seeking to progress in likeness to Jesus Christ we're told in 1 John chapter 3 that the one who has the hope of Christ coming will purify himself as Jesus is pure in other words will press on to perfection like Jesus walked this way of obedience and this comes through obeying in the areas where we have liked and judging ourselves where we have failed mourning over our failure

Jesus said blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted and as we mourn we are comforted by the comforter the Holy Spirit strengthened inwardly given grace to overcome and as we press on seeking to obey in the areas in which we have light we shall find that God gives us more light in other areas thus we shall walk from light to light and the path of the righteous will become like the perfect light shining more and more unto the perfect day yes that's it thus it will be and we shall become mature and press on to total perfection total completeness likeness to Christ in every area if we walk as Jesus walked on this earth in obedience then we shall become like him when he comes and this is the great need even today as it was among the Hebrew Christians and we need to be delivered

from this great delusion that makes us think that we can become perfect by increasing in knowledge we should never make knowledge the test of our growth knowledge merely puffs us up if we want a test for our spiritual growth it is the test of love we're told in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 1 that knowledge puffs up but love builds up it is love it is growth in love to God marked by obedience and to other men marked by actions of love manifesting our love to them that shows whether we are growing or not if a man's not growing in love no matter how much he's growing in knowledge it's like a balloon growing bigger and bigger but all hollow and empty inside and it'll burst with the smallest break and so we should never deceive ourselves into thinking that in any increase in knowledge

means that we are growing towards perfection there are people whose heads are filled with knowledge of the scriptures who are still babies spiritually speaking because they have not grown in righteousness they have not grown in love they have not grown in discernment between what is good and what is evil and when we talk about good we mean what is divine shedding the human and putting on the divine this is what it means to grow in the good in discerning what is good in appropriating what is divine into our life and then we shall grow towards perfection and so we are told in chapter 6 and verses 1 & 2 of Hebrews let us leave the word of the beginning of Christ the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and let us go on to perfection and those first principles are mentioned here six of

them repentance from dead works faith to what God the doctrine of baptism laying on of hands resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment and this will be do if God permit now it's helpful to look at these first principles because many who are in these first principles think that they are mature but many things are mentioned here which are in first principles which are called the milk of the Word of God not the meat let us look at them briefly first of all repentance from dead works dead works is our own human righteousness our own human works maybe good works but which are still filthy rags in God's sight our good deeds are like filthy rags we need to repent of them we need to give up trying to save ourselves by our good works we need to turn not only from sin but from dead works which

cannot please God and be cleansed and turn to God in faith and when we turn away from our own human works we turn to God in faith that's the second thing mentioned here faith towards God not just faith in some promise in the Bible but faith in a living God faith that has established contact with the living God in heaven a living dependence upon God this is what it means faith towards God faith is not something merely believing something in the head faith is not even merely believing that a promise of the Bible is true but faith is towards God and faith essentially means living in dependence upon God and that is the second of the first principles and then after we have come through repentance and faith we come to baptism and this is the order first repentance then faith then water baptism

the Apostles followed this order in the Acts of the Apostles repentance faith and then water baptism by immersion in water but we have spoke we are told here of the doctrine of baptisms because there are two baptisms spoken of in the New Testament baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Spirit or receiving the Holy Spirit and the Apostles spoke of being baptized in water and of receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 verse 38 Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost says repent and be baptized that is in water and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit or the baptism in the Holy Spirit and these are the two baptisms spoken of here this also is part of the first principles this is the beginning the very beginning forgiveness of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit is the very

beginning of the Christian life and then we go on to laying on of hands and as we read through the New Testament we find that hands were laid on people for healing and for the impartation of spiritual gifts we read in James and chapter 5 and verse 14 and 15 of the laying on of hands for healing we read in 1 Timothy 4 and verse 14 of the laying on of hands for spiritual gifts and then we are told further in Hebrews 6 of resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment this lies in the future the fact that when Jesus comes in glory we shall be raised from the dead and we shall stand before him to give an account of the deeds done in our body now all these put together are the first principles a man who has repented who has believed who has received forgiveness of sins who has taken water

baptism who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit who believes in healing in the name of Jesus who has received spiritual gifts is still a babe he's still a babe he's still drinking milk if he has not gone on to the

word of righteousness to walk in righteousness as Jesus walked and so we are told let's leave these first principles which are the foundation and press on to build the superstructure to perfection and this is our calling we turn now to Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 4 the Apostle has been speaking about the necessity of going on to perfection of following in the footsteps of Jesus who was made perfect as we read in Hebrews 5 verse 9 and we are told to go on unto perfection in chapter 6 verse 1 then he speaks of the danger of not going on to perfection in verse 4 onwards there are

only two possibilities in the Christian life either we go forward or we backslide there is no such thing as standing still in the Christian life if we are not pressing on going forward then we are drifting whether we know it or not we are drifting we have to either go forward or go backwards and this is the point here in verses 4 to 9 let us go on to perfection he says in verse 1 because verse 4 for and this links it up with the previous three verses that word for it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost 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 to repentance seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God a fresh and put

into an open shame he speaks in verse 6 of falling away that is falling from a height to which they have attained you can't fall unless you have first climbed if you are still on ground level you do not fall if you're flat on the ground you cannot fall but it is only if you're standing up or climbing that you can fall and fall away and so we are told in verse 1 there is the possibility of going upwards to perfection in contrast to that verse 6 we have the opposite of that that is falling away or going backwards and there are only these two possibilities and that is what the Holy Spirit is emphasizing in this passage if you are not one of those pressing on to perfection then whether you know it or not my dear friend you're one of those falling away and backsliding you don't have to smoke

and drink and gamble and go to the cinemas before you start backsliding backsliding is something that begins in the heart you can yield to sin in your heart and mind without anybody around you knowing about it and you're already a backslider because you're not pressing on to perfection and so we find just as in the early days of Christianity even today so many Christians are backsliding because they do not press on to perfection they do not take heed to the apostolic injunctions and exhortations which say let us press on to perfection the same warning the Apostle gave to the Corinthians we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 brethren I would note that you should be ignorant how our fathers that is the Israelites who came out of Egypt did not press on to Canaan and so they perished in the

wilderness and it says there in 1 Corinthians 10 11 these things happen unto them as examples and are written for our admonition and so in Hebrews 2 we are told in Hebrews chapter 3 of the Israelites who came out of Egypt who did not enter Canaan with whom God was displeased and we are told in chapter 4 verse 1 let us therefore fear lest we also don't press on into the land of Canaan lest we fall in unbelief and continuing the same thought we are told in chapter 6 verse 1 of Hebrews let us press on to perfection or let us enter into the land of Canaan lest we also fall away like the Israelites fell away in the wilderness in unbelief and it is this falling away that is described in verse 4 following of Hebrews chapter 6 it is impossible the Apostle says for those who were once enlightened

now it's very obvious that he's speaking about believers who've come through to the first principles that are described in verses 1 & 2 the first principles which we looked at last week repentance faith baptism baptism in the Holy Spirit spiritual gifts etc he's speaking of such people for it says in verse 4 that they were enlightened they received light spiritual light the light of the glory of God had shone into their heart

removing their blindness the light of the glorious gospel and not only were they enlightened we're told secondly in verse 4 they tasted off the heavenly gift yes they tasted of God's gift of Christ through the Holy Spirit the gift of forgiveness of sins they've tasted of it and the gift of the Holy Spirit we're told thirdly in verse 4 they were made partakers of the

Holy Spirit that's very clear that they are he's speaking they're not of Jewish people not of non-believers but of Christians who have received the Holy Spirit they were made partakers of the Holy Spirit and then fourthly they have tasted the good word of God not just known the good word of God in their minds but tasted it in experience in their life and fifthly we are told in verse 5 they've tasted the powers of the world to come the gifts of the Holy Spirit are a foretaste of the powers of the world to come supernatural gifts they've tasted of all of these showing them to be Christians who receive forgiveness of sins being baptized in the Spirit and tasted a spiritual gift and yet it says in verse 6 that they can fall away if they shall fall away he says it is impossible to renew them

again to repentance seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God of Fresh as long as they crucify the Son of God of Fresh how do you crucify the Son of God of Fresh the world cannot crucify the Son of God they crucified the Son of God once when he came to this world nineteen hundred years ago the world cannot crucify the Son of God again the world cannot touch the Son of God but yet it speaks here of certain people who crucify the Son of God of Fresh crucified to themselves that is inwardly they are as it were crucifying Jesus again they have received Jesus and believed in him but they continue to live in sin this is the point and when we live in sin and do our own will and please ourselves we are crucifying Jesus of Fresh we are wounding his heart and killing him again as it

were there are only two alternatives that we have we can either crucify ourselves or crucify Jesus if we crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts as we are told in Galatians 5:24 they that are Christ have crucified the flesh we are to crucify the flesh then we will not crucify the Son of God but if we refuse to crucify our own flesh then we are crucifying the Son of God then we are doing our own will and living after the lusts of our flesh and crucifying the Son of God all over again and putting him to an open shame how do we put him to an open shame because we profess to take his name upon our lips call ourselves by his name and then live manifesting the lusts of the flesh live walking after the flesh and then of course we are crucifying the Son of God of Fresh and then we are

falling away and as long as we are in that condition we can define the Son of God and crucify our flesh again walk the way of the cross deny ourselves put the flesh to death and then we can come back to God not otherwise for we are told in verse 7 the earth which drinks rain and brings forth herbs meet for by for them by whom it is dressed receives blessing from God God blesses when we receive the reign of the Spirit into our life and bring forth fruit for the glory of God but if we receive the reign of the Spirit and bring forth in our life verse 8 thorns and briars no fruit for God's glory the thorns and briars speak of the lusts of the flesh coming forth in our life then that is nigh unto cursing and our end is to be burned in the fire but beloved Paul says to these Hebrews we are

persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation that is salvation from sin though without speak and so he's giving them a warning but at the same time encouraging them saying well we do not believe such things will happen to you such things will happen to those who bring forth briars and thorns in their life but we do not believe it will happen to you because we trust you want to be saved from all sin and so he says let us press on to perfection we were looking at Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 4 to 9 where the Apostle speaks of the opposite of pressing on to perfection and that is falling away instead of

going forward going backwards and I mentioned that there are only two possibilities in the Christian life we either go forward or we go backwards we must bear this in

mind we should never deceive ourselves into thinking that we are stagnant when we think we are stagnant we are actually going backwards and the devil like an angel of light would fool us into thinking that we are not losing any ground we are only stagnant but like a ship in the middle of a strong tide that is unable to know that it's losing ground tremendously so are many Christians not aware that the tide of the world and the lust of the flesh are driving them right back at the very moment when they think they are stagnant the only solution to this is to press on to perfection the only way to avoid backsliding is by wholeheartedly pressing on to perfection there is no such thing as lukewarmness acceptable to God Jesus makes it very clear in Revelation 3 and verse 16 to the church in

Laodicea he says because you are lukewarm neither cold nor hot therefore I'll spew you out of my mouth you're not actively going backwards but neither are you actively pressing forward that's the meaning of you're neither cold nor hot the result is you're lukewarm and in a sense you're drifting backwards without you're knowing it therefore the Lord says I'll spew you out of my mouth all these warnings teach the same thing that those who are merely concerned with receiving from God and not concerned with fruitfulness towards God stand in an extremely dangerous position for the Apostle speaks in Hebrews 6 of the earth which drinks in the rain in other words receives the rain and the rain is a picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit here is the Christian receiving the ministry of the Holy

Spirit going to church listening to the Word of God and receiving the ministry of the Holy Spirit maybe through this program and thus receiving the ministry of the Spirit continuously but not concerned with bringing forth fruit for the glory of God what does he bring forth in stead Hebrews 6 verse 8 thorns and briars he receives the ministry of the Spirit but does not bring forth fruit for the glory of God the end of that is to be burned and Jesus himself said that in John 15 and he said I am the vine and you are the branches and verse 6 he said if a man does not abide in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned in verse 2 he said every branch in me that does not bear fruit my father takes away now notice that verse

very carefully first of all the branches in Christ every branch in me he's speaking about those who are already branches he's speaking about those who are branches in him who have received the forgiveness of sins in the Holy Spirit and then this branch which is in Christ does not bear fruit God the Father takes it away and we are told in verse 6 it's cast into the fire and burned why because it did not bring forth fruit and Jesus made it very clear that we have been chosen verse 16 to go and bring forth fruit the very purpose with which God chose us is that we might bring forth fruit in our life not merely fruit in our service in terms of bringing others to Christ but above all the fruit of the Spirit in our life Jesus said in verse 8 herein is my father glorified that he bear much fruit

Jesus once spoke a parable in Luke chapter 13 and verse 6 to 9 of a man who had a fig tree which did not produce fruit and he came and said let it be cut down but the dresser of the vineyard said master let it alone for one year let me try one more year and see if it will bring forth fruit if it does not bring forth fruit then you can cut it down so the lesson of all these passages of Scripture is the same that God comes looking desiring for fruit in our lives and God brings us into discipline in our life dresses us prunes us and does various things but if we still don't bring forth fruit then we have to be cut down we have to be cast into the fire this is so clear as clear as 2 plus 2 is 4 as black is black and white is white all these passages of Scripture teach the same thing that if

we are not hot wholehearted in pursuing after perfection if we stay in a sort of lukewarmness the Word of God says that we shall be spat out of the mouth of God and so here also we are told that we are to press on to perfection otherwise we shall fall away but beloved Hebrews 6 verse 9 beloved we are persuaded better things of you and so he gives them a word of encouragement he says I don't hope that any of these things will happen to you we believe that better things will happen to you because you desire salvation you desire a total freedom from sin and as long as we desire total freedom from sin we are safe but the moment we begin to become slack in our attitude towards any sin in our life then we fall back then we bring forth thorns and briars and we are very close to being burnt and

he says in verse 10 God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you've showed toward his name and that you have ministered to the Saints and do minister he says I know how you have gone on in your past life though your babes though you haven't pressed on yet you have labored in love and you have worked and you've helped the Saints now he says carry on from there don't just forget those good things that you have done we desire verse 11 that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end this is one of the emphases that comes through frequently in the book of Hebrews of holding on until the end we have already seen it in chapter 3 and verse 6 where we are told that we are the house of Jesus Christ if and there is a very big if

which we shouldn't forget if we hold fast unto the end and we are told in chapter 3 verse 14 we are made partakers of Christ if and again there's a very big if if we hold steadfast unto the end and we are told in chapter 4 verse 11 let us labor therefore to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief and disobedience and we are told in chapter 6 11 we desire that every one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the very end to hold on to the end press on to perfection till the very end and that you not be slothful but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises there's a contrast in verse 12 one those who are lazy and flack and lukewarm and others those who are diligent in following the example of those

who through faith and patience have inherited the promises not only through faith but also through patience faith alone is not enough we need faith plus steadfastness if we are to inherit the promises this comes through many times in the book of Hebrews we are told in Hebrews chapter 10 for example verse 36 you need patience or steadfastness after you have done the will of God that you might receive the promise verse 38 the just shall live by faith but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him but we are not of them who draw back to perdition but of them who have faith to the saving of the soul and all these passages of scripture that we've looked at teach the same thing that if we become lazy in the Christian life if we slacken off and if we give up then we're not going

to stand still we're going to fall back because the world and the flesh and the devil are fighting against us to push us back and we have to swim against the current in the river in the world if we give up then the current will take us down in the opposite direction the only way to make progress is to fight against this current of the world the flesh and the devil and press on and so we are told not to be slothful Hebrews 6:12 but to press on to perfection and to be walking in the footsteps of men of God in past centuries who through faith and patience and steadfastness inherited the promises and we too can inherit the promises if we not only have faith but manifest our faith by steadfastness in every area of our life we're looking at Hebrews in chapter 6 and verse 13 the last two weeks we

were considering the possibility of the Christian falling away from the faith through laziness slothfulness and presumption upon God's grace instead of pressing on to perfection with diligence and so the Apostle

was speaking to the Hebrews and he tells them in verse 12 of Hebrews 6 that they were not to be slothful but followers of them that is Old Testament Saints who through faith and patience inherited the promises and then he gives an example in verse 13 following of Abraham the father of faith Abraham is the first person concerning whom it is written that he was justified by faith Genesis 15 6 Abraham believed the word of the Lord and it was accounted to him for righteousness and so references made here to Abraham and we are told that when God made a promise to Abraham verse 13

because he could swear by no greater he swear by himself saying surely blessing I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply you and so after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise now when God first made a promise to Abraham Abraham's wife was barren Abraham's wife Sarah could not produce a child they did not have any children and yet God told him in Genesis 15 that he was going to have children like the stars in the sky and like the sand upon the seashore when his wife was barren and it is concerning that promise that it is written of Abraham Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness and further we are told that God made a promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 22 he swore by himself not only did God give his word but he took an oath and this was

after Abraham offered up his only son upon the altar in obedience to God and following that when God saw Abraham's obedience he said Genesis 22 16 by myself have I sworn says the Lord because thou has done this thing that is because you've been obedient verse 18 because you have obeyed my voice you've not withheld your son your only son verse 16 that in blessing I will bless you and in multiplying I will multiply you it is at this point that God swore by an oath God had already given him a word in Genesis 12 verse 2 I'll bless you and make your name great and you'll be a blessing and I'll bless them that bless you and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed and he had also told him in Genesis 15 verse 5 that your seed will be like the stars of heaven but it is only in

Genesis 22 after Abraham or obeyed that God swore and said by myself have I sworn in blessing I'll bless you in multiplying I'll multiply you and it says here that after Abraham patiently endured he obtained the promise now there are two things we see here first Abraham's faith and the second Abraham's obedience and we have already seen that these are two sides of the same coin and they go together first in Genesis 15 it says Abraham believed God told him you're going to have children like the stars of the heaven Abraham believed yes Lord it will be so and we are told in Romans chapter 4 that Abraham's faith was of such a nature that even though he looked at his own body which was dead he did not stagger or shake in unbelief at God's promise but he was strong in faith giving glory to God

not looking at the weakness of his own body but looking at God's promise and there we have the example of Abraham as an encouragement to us as we look at our own cells and our own body and our own flesh and see its weakness to do the will of God we are like Abraham we look at the impotence of our flesh but if we continue to look at the impotence of our flesh we shall live in unbelief and say it's impossible if Abraham had continued to look at the impotence of his own body he would never have believed that a son could come forth from that body as we look at our flesh we find it impossible to believe that this body can do the will of God or we see what our nature is like to please ourselves but Abraham looked at God's promise and believed God's promise and we too are to look at God's

promise he who has begun a good work in us will perfect it that's his promise sin shall not have dominion over you Romans 6 14 that's his promise and we are to lay hold of that promise and say yes Lord I believe like Abraham not looking at the impotence of our own flesh but being strong in faith like Abraham because we believe that what God has promised he's able to do we're told in the book of Jude verse 24 that Jesus

is able to keep us from falling we have to look at that promise and give glory to God saying yes Lord it will be true in my life but that was not all we're told that Abraham endured for a number of years holding on in faith to that promise it was not fulfilled immediately and this promise of sin not having dominion over us is not fulfilled in us overnight we fail and we

fall and we get up but we never give up we keep on getting up and believing finally one day Abraham had a son and so it will be in our life too we shall find the promises fulfilled one day if we hold on with faith and patience and we are told the manifestation of Abraham's faith was when God asked him to offer up his only son he offered him up and this we are told in James chapter 2 verse 21 to 23 that when Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar through faith his through obedience his faith was made complete his faith was incomplete without obedience but through works of obedience his faith was made complete and then the scripture was fulfilled which said that Abraham believed God was imputed to him for righteousness and so it is obedience to God's Word which completes the faith we

have and this is why we need to patiently obey as the manifestation of our faith and when Abraham did that then God swore by himself and said to Abraham surely blessing I will bless you and multiplying I'll multiply you and so we are reminded of Abraham's faith and obedience in Hebrews and we are told likewise to follow in the footsteps of Abraham who through faith and patience manifested in obedience inherited the promises and we are told that God swore to Abraham and gave him his word and after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise and it's not going to be any other way for us we are to believe that's where Abraham began but he had to endure in faith till the end not only till he got a son but we are told in the book of James that his faith was made complete towards the end

of his life when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar then his faith was made complete and so we are told we are to follow in the footsteps of men like Abraham who had faith believed God's promise never gave up never looked at the impotence of his own body endured in patience obeyed when God called him to obey and then God swore to him saying in blessing I'll bless you and multiplying I'll multiply you and God will say the same to us if we walk in the footsteps of Abraham in blessing he will bless us in multiplying he will multiply us and as we obey endure and believe we too like Abraham will obtain the promise in all its fullness in our own life as well

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