

**HEBREWS 5-6**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Now to understand this letter we have to remember who Paul is writing to. He is writing to Jewish Christians who were living in Jerusalem and were struggling with their faith. They were being drawn back to the Law, back to Judaism.

And you have to understand that every day they woke up there was the Temple. There were the priests and the sacrifices that were being made. And it is possible that this was drawing them back, it was what they were involved in since they were young, and now, in Christ, that has all passed away.

Or maybe it was persecution, because they became Christians their family and friends did not want to have anything to do with them.

More than likely, it was a combination of both.

Thus, in this letter Paul is showing the superiority of Jesus over everything and everyone!

In Hebrews chapter 1 Paul started out by showing us the superiority of Jesus over the prophets of God.

Then, as he continued on in Hebrews chapter 1 and through Hebrews chapter 2, the focus was the superiority of Jesus over the angels.

In Hebrews chapter 3 Paul shows the superiority of Jesus over Moses, one of the heavy hitters of the Jewish faith.

And in Hebrews chapter 4 we saw Paul show them the superiority of Jesus over Joshua.

And as Paul closed out that chapter, he wrote this, which leads us into what we will be talking about next. He wrote in Hebrews 4:14-16, **“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

It is an introduction to show us that Jesus is a Great High Priest, not entering the Holy of Holies but into the Heavens and it is through Him who became flesh and dwelt among us that we can go to God in our time of need and find help at His throne of grace.

Then, starting here in Hebrews chapter 5 and through Hebrews chapter 10, Paul shows us the Superiority of Jesus over the Levitical priesthood.

In Hebrews chapters 5-7 Paul shows that Jesus comes from a better priestly order.

Then, in Hebrews chapter 8 Paul shows us that Jesus is a better covenant.

In Hebrews chapter 9 we see that Jesus is a better sanctuary.

And in Hebrews chapter 10 he shows us that Jesus is a better sacrifice.

Let me share with you this quick overview of the chapter and then we will dig into Hebrews chapter 5 this evening.

We are told,

Hebrews chapter 5 opens as part of one continuous train of thought, from the end of chapter 4. At the end of chapter 4, the writer explained that Christ’s status as fully human made Him uniquely qualified.

Jesus can understand our weaknesses and temptations, since He has experienced them just as we have.

Here at the beginning of chapter 5, we see that a human high priest must be able to empathize with the people, and to offer a sacrifice for their sins. Only because Jesus was fully human was He able to fulfill this role.

The early part of chapter 5 once again refers to Psalm 2 and Psalm 110. The point made here is that Christ was called to His position of High Priest by God.

The Old Testament verses are explained as a prophecy about the Messiah being both priest and king, something that was not the case in the days of Moses, or David, or Solomon.

The figure used to illustrate this is the mysterious Melchizedek, from Genesis chapter 14.

According to the writer of Hebrews, Melchizedek's unique combination of priesthood and kingship was a symbol of the eventual role Christ would play as both our High Priest and the One who made David's kingly line eternal.

Later verses in chapter 5 transition to another dire warning. Earlier, the writer of Hebrews chided the readers to pay more attention to their faith. Those who are careless run a risk of drifting into error, and error always comes with consequences.

In this case, there is much more to be said about how Christ is part of a superior High Priesthood, but the original readers need to be warned, first, not to be careless and apathetic about the Word. This warning will continue through all of chapter 6.

Here, the specific criticism is of spiritual immaturity. This letter is written specifically to Jewish Christians of the early church.

Apparently, there was a lack of development in their Christian lives. Knowledge and wisdom are not magically imparted at the moment of salvation. Some aspects of our spiritual lives take time and effort to develop. Those who fail to develop are like children who are still dependent on milk, when they should be eating solid food.

The end of chapter 5 and the early verses of chapter 6 form an interesting approach by the writer of Hebrews.

On one hand, he points out that these Christians are immature and need to learn more about the subject.

In this case, it is the idea of Jesus as a High Priest, using the example of Melchizedek.

On the other hand, the writer sees these Christians as too spiritually immature for deeper details.

So, what does the author of Hebrews do?

He warns them about their lack of depth, but chooses not to start “from scratch.” Instead, he will continue on with his examination of Christ’s High Priesthood.

As the next chapter will say, directly, this letter is not meant to re-explain the basic doctrines of the faith. Rather, the author will press on to show how Jesus, as our High Priest, is superior to any other figure seen in Scripture.

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Exactly. With that said, let’s begin reading in Hebrews chapter 5, starting in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

**HEBREWS 5****VERSES 1-4**

Paul is going to start out by speaking of the weakness of human priests or specifically the weakness of the Levitical priesthood.

The earthly High Priests were men who were weak and prone to sin just like the people they represented to God.

And this should just make sense to the readers but often times we need to be reminded of these things.

And then from the weakness of the Levitical priesthood, Paul will continue on in this chapter showing us the superiority of Jesus, our Great High Priest!

But, before we look at Jesus, we see in this section we have just read, there are four main points regarding the High Priest and his position.

First of all, the High Priest is taken from among men and specifically from the lineage of Jacob's son, Levi.

Now Levi had three sons: Gershon whose family took care of the veil, altar, fence and curtains of the Tabernacle – Numbers 3:21-26.

Then there was the family of Kohath whose family took care of the ark, the table of showbread, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary of the Tabernacle – Numbers 3:27-32.

And the family of Merari whose family took care of the boards of the Tabernacle, the fence – Numbers 3:33-37.

Now please understand that only the descendants of Aaron could be the High Priest, the others could work in the Tabernacle or the Temple, but they could not be the High Priest or even a priest, that came through Aaron's family who was a descendant of Kohath.

So the priest was to represent God before the people and the people before God and one of the qualifications was that he was to be from the tribe of Levi, a descendant of Aaron, a man.

Now there were some who tried to usurp this role of priest and they were not of the lineage of Levi. And we see the results.

There was Korah, who was swallowed up in a divine earthquake. (Numbers 16)

Then we see King Saul try to usurp the role and he was rejected from his place as King. (I Samuel 13)

And we also see King Uzziah attempt to be a priest, and he was struck with leprosy in the Temple itself. (II Chronicles 26:16)

Secondly, he was to be sympathetic, have compassion for the people, not to look down upon them because of the position they had.

You see, they too were men and subject to failure, they too were sinners, and to think they were better than anyone else was just plain pride on their part and it was wrong.

Proverbs 16:18 reminds us, "**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**"

The third point is that he offered sacrifices for the people, not only blood sacrifices but grain sacrifices that expressed thanks to God, fellowship with God.

You see, the grain offering was made of fine flour, oil, and it was mixed with frankincense to give it a pleasant aroma.

Sometimes it was baked or fired into a cake and part of the offering was burned on the altar to God and the remainder belonged to the priests to eat.

The person who gave this to the Lord was showing that he had dedicated all he had to the Lord and was giving the Lord thanks for what He had provided for him.

And keep in mind that the High Priest did not offer these to God for the people alone, he too was a sinner and needed to offer sacrifices before the Lord.

And the fourth point is that God appoints the High Priest, not man.

Remember what I just shared with you about Korah, Dathan and Abiram, when they rebelled against Moses and felt that any Israelite could be a priest, you did not have to be from the tribe of Levi, a descendant of Aaron.

What did the Lord do when they rebelled like that? He had the earth swallow them up because what they wanted to do was wrong – Numbers 16.

As we read on, we are going to see Paul move from the lesser - the order of Aaron to the greater – the order of Melchizedek, which Christ came from!

But here might be a question his readers could have. ***“Who made Jesus a High Priest? He’s not even of the tribe of Levi, did He appoint Himself to the office of High Priest?”***

And Paul is going to answer that in a powerful way, as we will see.

#### VERSES 5-10

Remember that Paul laid out four main points for the Levitical priesthood.

And what he does here is show us that those four points that Paul made regarding the High Priest he is going to make of the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

First of all God became flesh and dwelt among us but He was not from the tribe of Levi, interestingly enough, He was from the tribe of Judah which was not a priestly tribe, so how could He be a High Priest?

That is a very important question that these Jewish believers might have. And Paul tells them how Jesus could be the Great High Priest.

It is because He is from a higher priestly order, that of Melchizedek whose name means ***“King of righteousness.”***

This King was also a priest according to Genesis 14:17-20 which is interesting because Aaron was not a King, he was just the High Priest!

Some of you may not be familiar with Melchizedek. And if you think about it, he has to be one of the most enigmatic or mysterious figures in the Bible.

In fact, he only appears once in the Bible and that is in Genesis 14:18.

Yes, David mentions him in Psalm 110:4, but that is some one thousand years after we see his appearance in Genesis 14:18!

And then, here in the book of Hebrews he is mentioned some nine times in relation to Jesus and he becomes the central figure in Paul’s theology of the New Covenant with Christ as its Great High Priest!

Now we will cover Melchizedek more when we get to Hebrews chapter 7 as there is a more detailed description about him. But if you are interested, read on ahead because he is a fascinating figure in the Bible and he is a picture of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ!

Secondly, as He was in the Garden of Gethsemane the night He was arrested, before He was taken to Calvary the next morning, Jesus felt pain, anguish, the struggles to the deepest degree and yet He was without sin.



Thus, we are told, **“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”** Hebrews 4:15.

Aaron and his descendants never resisted sin to the point of being sinless nor did they have the compassion towards the people they were ministering to like Jesus did.

In regard to this point and the fact that God became flesh in the Incarnation, fully God and fully man, one writer pointed this out for us. He wrote, *“We must remember that our Lord, in His earthly walk, lived by faith in the Father’s will. As God, He needed to learn nothing. But as the Son of God come in human flesh, He had to experience that which His people would experience, so that He might be able to minister as their High Priest. He did not need to learn how to obey because it would be impossible for God to be disobedient. Rather, as the God-Man in human flesh, He had to learn what was involved in obedience. In this way, He identified with us.”*

The third point is that He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice, not to cover our sins, but to take them away.

Notice that Paul quotes out of Psalm 2:7 saying, **“You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.”** What does he mean?

He is not speaking of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem but His resurrection.

How do I know that for sure?

Because Paul tells us in Acts 13:33, **“God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’”**

You see, Aaron and his descendants could not take away our sins by their sacrifice, they could only cover them for a time but Jesus has come and taken away our sins and conquered death for us so that we may live with Him!

And the fourth point is that Father God appointed Him as High Priest, not according to the order of Aaron but according to the order of Melchizedek.

And here is the big difference. The priestly order of Melchizedek is not a temporary order but one that is eternal!

Again, who is this Melchizedek and what does this all mean?

You are going to have to wait because Paul is not going to deal with this subject again until chapter 7 where he picks up on this thought once again and thus, that is where we will deal with it.

Right now, Paul is going to make a small detour as we are going to see in the next verse, it is not a place he wanted to go but because of their condition, he had to go there! And let's just begin reading in Hebrews 5:9 as this will flow into what Paul is saying in verse 11. We are told, **“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest ‘according to the order of Melchizedek,’ . . .**

#### VERSE 11

Please understand that Paul wanted to explain more about Melchizedek and how that relates to Christ but because of their immaturity, because they were dull of hearing, because they were lazy, because they were slothful with their spiritual lives, they wouldn't understand what he was saying.

Keep in mind that these people he was writing to were Jewish believers, they knew the Old Testament very well, but because of their spiritual condition, they just didn't get it!

Now let's look at this a little closer. First of all, when Paul speaks of them being dull of hearing he is not saying that they have a problem with their ears. Not at all.

Then what is he saying?

Paul is saying that this is a problem with the heart. You see, they really were not interested in what God had to say. And because of that, this was a spiritual problem for them.

And when someone doesn't want to hear the Word of God any longer, that is a dangerous place to be because you will replace the Word of God with the Words of man!

So gradually they became dull of hearing, they did not want to hear God's Word anymore and from that dullness, they felt like giving up! That is the progression downward, away from God, dullness and they are giving up!

In fact, the word "**become**" in Hebrews 5:11 speaks of them not starting out being dull of hearing, but they became that way. And thus, Paul is warning them of this dangerous path they were on.

Look at these warnings that Paul has given to them so far.

The first warning that Paul gave them was in Hebrews 2:1-4 that dealt with them drifting away from the truths of God. If you are not anchored in Christ and His Word, you will drift away!

The second warning is found in Hebrews 3:7-19 and it deals with the hardening of their hearts to the things of God.

And here in Hebrews chapter 5 it is a warning against spiritual immaturity or what we might call, ASD or Arrested Spiritual Development!

You see, these discouraged Christians need to be encouraged and comforted and taught, but they also needed to be warned. They need to be reminded of the consequences of departing from Jesus.

#### VERSES 12-14

Please understand that these Jewish believers were not new to the faith. At this point some of these Jewish men and women could have been believers for some 30 years and yet, they were still babes in Christ.

Again, Paul is not speaking of new believers here, which is normal for them to be babes in Christ, but this is not normal.

Imagine the head of some company speaking to a room filled with new employees and he begins his lecture by saying, “ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ!”

And then he closes the meeting expecting to get some candy for that wonderful presentation. But that is all he has, that is all he has learned, that is all he knows as the head of the company.

Yes, you need to know your ABC’s, the basics but you also then need to grow and be able to put the letters together, you need to be able to form words and sentences and-so-on.

Growth is the thought and it was what they were lacking!

And please understand when Paul speaks of them being teachers he is not talking of the gift of teaching but to be able to share their faith, to teach others the things of God, to show them the things you believe.

Yes, babies are cute, and I love them, but a 40-year-old who is still crawling and is saying Goo-goo and gaga is tragic!

And maybe they felt that since they are saved, that is all that they needed. And thus, the teaching pandered to their spiritual immaturity and they did not grow in the faith, they did not mature!

Listen to what one pastor had to say about this. He wrote, ***“I’m sorry to say that in many churches, sermons cannot be longer than twenty-five minutes. And during those twenty-five minutes, the preacher better have lots of stories and jokes because people choke on meat.”***

And let me add this. These are the people that are always running around looking for some new thing, looking to be entertained and as they are, they are constantly being blown around by every wind of doctrine that comes blowing through the church.

They are easily deceived. Kind of like a little child, and you pretend to take their nose, and they want you to put it back on because they think your thumb is their nose. They are deceived and so are these people!

And yes, a baby needs milk to grow. Peter even tells us in I Peter 2:2-3, **“as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”**

But as a baby grows you start to introduce more solid food until you finally introduce meat into their diet.

You see, these Jewish Christians were caught up with the Old Testament, the ABC’s you might say, but the New Testament is the complete message.

It is not that the Old Testament is bad or wrong, but as Christ comes on the scene, we see that which was concealed in the Old Testament is now revealed to us in the New Testament and thus, as we read the Old Testament it is now far richer than ever.

In Psalm 40:7 we are told, **“Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.’”**

You see, the Old Testament is a picture of Christ. It is as Jesus said in John 5:39-40 to the religious leaders, **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”**

But so many are deceived into going back to the picture instead of the substance, which is Christ!

That is what Paul said in Colossians 2:16-17, **“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”** May we not forget that, Jesus is always the main thing!

Listen to what Warren Wiersbe wrote,

*As we grow in the Word, we learn to use it in daily life. As we apply the Word, we exercise our “spiritual senses” and develop spiritual discernment. It is a characteristic of little children that they lack discernment. A baby will put anything into its mouth. An immature believer will listen to any preacher on the radio or television and not be able to identify whether or not he is true to the Scriptures.*

- Warren Wiersbe

Today some churches feel that the unchurched people, the seekers can't take solid food, the meat of God's Word so they give them milk week after week and they make their people weak!

You see, the sheep who go to that church are starving, you don't feed the goats, the unsaved, you feed the sheep and as you do, because God's Word is living and powerful, some of the goats will become sheep, they will get saved and you will have healthy sheep that are reproducing, sharing their faith!

Where are you at this evening? Have you become a babe in Christ? Is your life unstable, being tossed to and fro by winds of doctrine that blow through the church or by different things that happen in your life? You see, if you are then you are like a baby being tossed from one person to another!

Maybe you are a person who causes divisions wherever you go because you have to be right, it is only your way, it is all about you just as a child wants what he wants and when he wants it!

Maybe you love to sleep, zone out when it comes to God and His Word, spiritually speaking you are out like a light. You are just like a baby who needs to sleep often, you have not grown up!

Now let me say this. I know that most of you come home from work, you eat, and you come to church and you are tired. And as you rest, relax in these chairs, you may go to sleep. That is not what I am talking about. That is just your body telling you that you are tired, and you sleep.

But those who have no interest, their eyes may be open but spiritually speaking they are sleeping!

And the list can go on and you know where you are at this evening. And here is the thing, if you are being a babe in Christ, not a new believer, but those who are having their second childhood in the faith, they have gone backwards and not forwards, you have become unskilled in God's Word.

And notice the contrast between those who are mature, they are skilled in the Word and the evidence is seen by the discernment they have regarding good and evil.

This is a huge problem today in the church, there is no discernment because so many are just babes in Christ.

How does this maturity happen, how do you grow?

By exercising your faith, by putting into practice what God has said in His Word, by sharing your faith. You have to put your faith to use or, like a muscle, if it is not used it will atrophy!

Now as we move into chapter 6 this evening, Paul is going to continue dealing with this thought of Arrested Spiritual Development!

It was an important issue back then and I believe it is just as important for us today!

## **HEBREWS 6**

### **VERSES 1-2**

Keep in mind that Paul has just rebuked them for their spiritual immaturity and told them to grow up, to mature in the Lord.

You see, because of all that Christ is, all that He has for us, don't remain spiritual infants but grow up to perfection, to maturity!



What a great admonishment for each of us – to go on to perfection and not become dull, stagnant in our faith!

Now this Greek word for, “**perfection**” is TELEIOTES and it better understood as “**maturity.**”

And as you read this list some feel that this is speaking about the basic Christian principles of our faith, but notice that Paul wants us to leave these things, why?

Because these things that Paul is speaking of relate to the Jewish practices, and not the Christian faith and that is why we are to move away from them.

One writer put it like this, “*Many people regard this as a Biblical list of important ‘foundations’ for the Christian life. Bible study series have been taught developing each one of these topics, out of the thought that this is good list of basic doctrines. But that isn’t the writer’s point here at all. To understand this list, you must ask a basic question: What is distinctively Christian about this list? Where is the specific mention of Jesus or salvation by grace alone? Can you believe or practice these things and not be a follower of Jesus Christ, believing Him to be the Messiah?*”

And Griffith Thomas put it like this, “*It is profoundly significant to observe how little distinctively Christian there is in this statement. Repentance, faith, resurrection, and judgment were certainly Jewish, and on this account the reference seems to be the Jewish foundation, and they are urged to avoid these elementary things which they are to leave for something higher and richer.*”

Let’s look at this list and you will see what I mean.

First of all, the Greek word that is translated “**baptisms**” is not the word that is regularly used in the New Testament for a Christian baptism. The word is used to refer to Jewish ceremonial washings. (Hebrews 9:10, Mark 7:4)

We are cleansed because the blood of Christ cleanses us from all our unrighteousness. We don’t need ceremonial cleansings; we need the cleansing of Jesus in our life! Thus, move on!

When Paul speaks of the “**laying on of hands**” he is not speaking of leaders laying hands on believers before sending them out to minister in the name of Jesus.

He is speaking of what would happen under the Old Covenant as the person brought the sacrificial animal to the priest and the person would lay his hands on it to symbolize his identification with it. (Leviticus 1:4, 3:8, 13) Thus, move on!

And in regard to the resurrection of the dead, the Jews believed that. Remember what Job said in Job 19:25-26, “**I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God.**”

But we obtain resurrection life not by being good or keeping the Law, but by our faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, move on.

And in regard to the coming judgment, we are told in Ecclesiastes 12:14, “**For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.**”

And in the New Testament we see that Judgment spoke of clearly in the book of Revelation. That judgment is not for believers. Thus, move on!

And what Paul wants to point out to these Jewish believers is that they need to leave these things behind and go onto maturity in their relationship with Jesus.

And maybe, by using similar words as we see in the Jewish faith, they would not be noticed as much, and they could blend in!

We see that today as people try to blend in their faith with the world, but folks, Jesus causes divisions because He said some things that were very radical, that He is the only way to the Father, that if you don't believe that He is God you will die in your sins!

That is divisive but it is also true, and we need to stand strong in the faith that has been entrusted to us!

### VERSE 3

Is Paul saying that God does not want some to mature in the faith?

Absolutely not!

What Paul is telling them and us is that our growth in the Lord is dependent upon Him and all He asks us to do is walk by faith, to listen to His voice, to trust in Him. You see, the work that He has started He will complete, let's not get in His way!

In other words, what Paul is doing is showing our complete dependence on God. If we do press on to maturity, we realize that it only happens at God's pleasure.

### VERSES 4-6

Here is a verse that Satan loves to use to twist the Scriptures and get people to believe that you can lose your salvation and once you lose it you can't return to it, you are lost forever!

That is not what these verses are saying here and please understand that Satan knows the Scriptures and he will twist them to confuse us, discourage us, and-so-on.

Let me give you two things you can do when you come to a difficult passage that you don't understand so that you don't come to an unbiblical conclusion.

First of all, never isolate the verse from the context from which it came from.

Secondly, never come to a conclusion that contradicts the rest of the Scriptures.

If you use those simple principles, I believe it will keep you out of trouble, it will keep you on solid ground!

Now what about this passage?

There are some who feel that this is speaking of a Christian who backslides, and he can lose his salvation and it will be impossible for him to return for he has already tasted and seen!

Now let's think about that. Has anyone in the Bible ever backslidden and been restored?

Yes, they have. In fact, many of the people in the Bible have done that. There is Abraham, Jacob, Samson, Moses and even David and Peter! So that can't be right.

Well, what is the context of this letter?

Paul is writing to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith. He is not writing to unbelievers or those who were sitting on the fence, close to salvation but not entering in.

Then is this saying that you can lose your salvation and once you do you are lost forever; you can never get it back?

Not at all because that goes contrary to the rest of the Scriptures, what they teach, as I have said.

Peter put it this way in I Peter 1:3-5, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

Jesus has saved us, and that salvation will not fade away, it will not be lost because we have a place reserved for us in heaven and in this life it is the power of God, not our own strength, that will keep us saved!

Then what is Paul saying here?

Again, keep in mind he is writing to Jewish believers who are struggling with their faith, going back to the legalism of Judaism because of persecution or just being drawn back to the Jewish religious practices.

Thus, I believe this is just a hypothetical or supposed situation that Paul is speaking of. In other words, to those who are thinking about leaving the Lord, walking away from Him, where are you going to go if you could go, what else are you going to do?

If you reject Jesus, if you write Him off, what other hope is there for you and if you reject Him there is nothing else you can go to, He is the only hope. And keep in mind the reason they are even thinking like this, it is because they are dull of hearing!

And here is an important point.

When Paul speaks of them “**falling away**” in verse 6 he uses the Greek word PARAPIPTO, (Par-ap-ip’-to) which speaks of falling alongside.

In Galatians 6:1 we are told, “**Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**”

That word “**trespass**” or “**fault**” is the Greek word PARPATOMA (par-ap’-to-mah) from which PARAPIPTO comes from.

So I don’t see this as the falling away from the faith but a falling alongside, not departing from the faith but slipping, moving away from it.

You see, I think Paul is trying to encourage them to hang in there, don't give up, where else were they going to go when Jesus has the words of eternal life.

And when you look at Hebrews 6:9, which says, “**But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner**” I think Paul is writing to believers.

Yes, maturity is vital but not for salvation but for the deeper things of God, that is the call, to grow in the Lord, don't move away, don't remain spiritual babes in Christ, don't go backwards!

Also, look at the words that are used of them: enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word. Those are the things spoken of believers, not unbelievers, so these verses are dealing with believers and like I said, it is a hypothetical situation, not that it could happen, but how foolish it would be to go down that path.

#### VERSES 7-9

The illustration here is bearing fruit and if you are dull, if you are lazy, you will not bear fruit because you are not taking in the nourishment of God's Word into your life, you are not spending time with Him to be refreshed, you have moved away in a sense!

And Paul again is trying to encourage them to mature in the faith, to receive all that God has for them and see the fruit He will produce in their lives.

#### VERSES 10-12

We have seen Paul rebuke them but now he is encouraging them by telling them that he has seen fruit in their lives, that God is working in them and how they are serving the Lord.

He says, “**which you have shown**” which speaks of what they were doing, the past, and then he says “**and do minister**” what they are presently doing for the Lord.

Yes, there is fruit in their lives, but God desires more fruit, greater fruit so he wants them not to go back but to move forward.

You see, God won't let you go all the way back.

How do I know that?

Did He let the children of Israel go back to Egypt, back to the world once He delivered them by the blood of the lamb?

Not at all, yes many remained in the wilderness, walking by sight and not by faith, but they did not go back to Egypt and God desired for them to enter into the Promise Land as He does with us! He wants us to walk in the Spirit, not by sight!

And here's the thing. Progress demands effort on our part, thus, let's move forward, don't give up.

Listen to what happened to David as he was living in Philistine territory and was supposed to go and fight against King Saul, his fellow Jew, but the Philistines didn't want him to do that so as he and his men return home, they find that the enemy has invaded their city and taken their families.

In I Samuel 30:1-6 we are told, **“Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.”**

You see, keep your eyes on the Lord even and especially when things seem to be falling apart around you. Make no mistake about it, He is our strength!

For David, he **“strengthened himself in the LORD his God”** and so should we!

If you do you won't be dull, weak but fully assured not only of your salvation but of all that God has for you, knowing that He is able to bring to pass all that He has said.

Don't go back to your works but come forward to the rest that Jesus has for you, the rest in Him, the rest of His Spirit!

Now this is a good lesson for all of us. We are to follow those who have walked with the Lord, learn from their examples.

Paul said in Romans 15:4, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

The promises of God are ours; all we need to do is walk by faith!



VERSES 13-15

Abraham waited 25 years for what God promised Him to come to pass and when he tried to help God out, it only caused trouble.

When Abraham was 100 years old and his wife Sarah 95 years old, God brought to pass the promise, the impossible became possible, the barrenness of Sarah's womb for all those years was now going to bring forth a child, Sarah had a son named Isaac.

Paul is telling us to look at the example of Abraham as a man who was patient with God and follow his example!

VERSES 16-17

In regard to our trust in the promises of God, one writer put it like this,

When making an oath, a person always vows by a greater power than himself to assure the fulfillment of his oath. In this situation, God condescended to employ the custom of the day. He swore by the greatest authority in the universe – Himself – putting His own integrity, reputation, and honor on the line to guarantee the fulfillment of His promises to Abraham.

- David M. Levy, Hebrews A Commentary, p. 67

We can trust what God has promised because God can't lie. Thus, His Word is true, what He has said will come to pass and His promises we can rest upon!

And we can relate that to our own lives as well. You see, Jesus told us that our "yes" should be "yes", and our "no" should be "no", we should be men and women of our word.

And if we do take an oath, we swear by that which is greater not lesser.

In court we swear on the Bible not on our mother's grave!

And when God makes an oath He swears upon His own name because there is nothing higher for Him to swear by. Thus, when God takes an oath and swears by His name, He is going to do it, you can count on it.

### VERSES 18-20

We have this hope, the promises of God because God has made an oath and He can't lie or go back on His Word as I have said.

We can have this hope as we take refuge in God's promises, they are that certain.

And as you trust in God, as you trust in His promises it will dispel fear, discouragement as our life is anchored in the promises of God.

That is why Satan loves to twist the Word of God, he loves to see us fearful, discouraged, to doubt God's promises to us. Don't let him!

So don't be discouraged, hope in the promises of God and Jesus will lead us to glory!

When the storms come, and they will; when the weather starts to get rough, and it will; anchor your life in Jesus!

You see, Paul tells us that we will see the very presence of God, we are assured of access to God right now through Jesus but one day we will see Him face-to-face.

So don't go back, don't remain dull of hearing but move forward keeping your eyes upon the Author and Finisher of your faith, Jesus Christ!

Don't let ASD or Arrested Spiritual Development keep you drifting aimlessly through life.

Be in God's Word, study God's Word and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

One author gives to us this insight as he wrote,

*“In the catacombs of Rome, where Christians hid in times of persecution, one symbol can be seen more than any other: the anchor. No matter what storms come our way, we are anchored in the Word of God, in the promises He made. We have this sure hope that He will do what He says. So don’t go back to temple worship, entreats the author. Don’t go back to heathen practices, to partying, to wherever else you came from. Be anchored in the immutable, unchangeable, sure, and steadfast Word of God.”*

And Warren Wiersbe gives us this perspective. He wrote,

*“However, this spiritual anchor is different from material anchors on ships. For one thing, we are anchored upward - to heaven - not downward. We are anchored, not to stand still, but to move ahead! Our anchor is “sure” - it cannot break - and “steadfast” - it cannot slip. No earthly anchor can give that kind of security!”*

- Warren Wiersbe

That is the security that we have in Christ. We are secure in Him and no one will be able to remove us from His hand or the hand of the Father. The security of our salvation!

As I close this evening, let me end with this.

Paul tells us that He, Jesus, is our **“forerunner”** which was a Greek military word that spoke of a reconnaissance man who blazed the trail for everyone else to follow.

Thus, Jesus has gone first to make it safe for us to follow, He blazed the way to heaven and to God and now we must follow right behind Him, our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ!