

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Part II

STUDY NUMBER ELEVEN - Hebrews 6:9-20

If one word could summarize this particular study it would be the word PERSEVERANCE.

These people are having a real hard time and they are contemplating going back under Judaism and those eight verses last week were very grim.

It was a very serious warning of what happens when we go dead in the water and we fail to persevere.

The writer now is turning back to the readers and he is saying, “I really believe in you.”

“I don’t think you are going to throw in the towel and quit.

I think you are going to persevere through all of this and you are going to be better and you are going to go on from here.”

Eugene Peterson has written the Psalms in message form. And Psalm 119 he says this:

“I took one look at the quitters and was filled with loathing; they walked away from your promises so casually!”

The writer is talking like a coach at halftime, “I really believe you are going to play a better second half. I really believe you are going to do the right thing.”

v. 9 But, beloved, we have been convinced of better things concerning you, things that are belonging to salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

Well, we know what way he has been speaking. It's been pretty serious in the first eight verses. The word “but” forms the contrast from last week's somber passage.

Now notice the next word. “But, beloved.”

The word “beloved” is only used of people who have a relationship to Christ. It is used 61 times in the New Testament.

Paul is the one who is the most prolific user of the word.

He uses it some 27 times himself.

Remember he is the one who over and over again spoke of those who related to him and were in ministry as beloved ones.

And then he spoke of our relationship to Christ by saying we are “in the beloved.”

Now when you look at Matthew, Mark and Luke they use it three times each and they occur because the Father says, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” three different times in each of the gospels.

Peter uses it. “Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is going to try you as though some strange thing happens unto you.”

And you find that James uses it, Jude uses it, and the word always refers to a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now notice the next word, “But, beloved, we.” He is changing from “those.”

Remember last week he kept saying, those who would fall away cannot be renewed to repentance. Now he is back to “we” and to you again.

“But, beloved, we have been convinced.” That word is in the perfect tense. The perfect tense always indicates something beginning, going through a process and coming to a conclusion.

What he is saying is, “I have been through an awful struggle looking at your life, your ups and downs, as Hebrew Christians.

But I can tell you that I have gone through the struggle and I have now come to a subtle conviction about you. I have come to a conclusion about you.”

What was it in these Hebrew Christians that caused the writer to say, “I have come to a conclusion? I am convinced that you are the genuine article, you are the real stuff.

Whenever you speak to someone who is a Christian and you are convinced that he is, you always see these three things in his life. They are just there, his or hers.

- 1. First of all, DISCIPLINE. The person is doing what he has to do rather than what he wants to do a lot of times, in order to walk with God, because he has to go against the culture. He is a disciplined person.**
- 2. Second, he is a DISCERNING person. You can sense that when he speaks he speaks with wisdom. He speaks with authority. He has thought things through. And there is a discernment, there is a judgment, there is a wisdom about him.**
- 3. And third, he has his DESIRES in check. He has good and godly desires. The right kind.**

I might add one more thing, to the person who would pass the test, he has a consistent commitment.

**You don't see him blowing hot,
you don't see him up and down,
you see him consistent.
Always there, you can rely upon them.**

**And so the writer is saying,
“But, beloved, we have been convinced of” what?
“Better things.”**

**The last illustration we had last week,
just as we wrapped the study up was in verses 7 and 8
and the writer said,
“the rain falls down on the good ground and it brings
forth fruit.”**

**“But that same rain falls on other ground and
it brings forth thorns and thistles.**

**And in essence the writer is saying,
“we have become convinced of better things.”**

**That means you are like good soil that the water has
fallen on and fruit is being born through you.**

**We are convinced of that, that your lives can bear up
under that scrutiny and we can see that fruit
is in your life.**

Now some of you are thinking, what do you mean when you say fruit?

There is always, when you use the word fruit in the New Testament in relationship to a person, there is always, two manifestations of it. There is an internal and an external.

Internal fruit, is the work of the Spirit of God in you, producing the fruit of the Spirit.

It's Galatians 5:22-23 and it looks like this:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Those are the things that we look at, in the life of a person, to say the Spirit of God is working in that person's life, because those things are being produced in them.

And then when you look at fruit externally, it's your witness to those that are around you. You let your light shine and people respond.

God gives us opportunities all the time to bear fruit and to let our lights shine before Him. We just need to trust Him along that line.

**And so he is saying I'm "convinced of better things concerning you" and then notice the last thing he says in the verse,
"things that belong to salvation."**

What are those things that belong to salvation?

PURITY

SERVANTHOOD

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE FOR THE LOST

CHASTITY

CHARITY

COMPASSION

CONCERN

Those are the kinds of words that characterize a person who is new in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Now Verse 9 sets the stage for the rest of the passage.

**“I am persuaded,”
the author is saying,
“that you are going to live for God. That you are not
going to remain babies who are fussing about
whether you are going to go back under Judaism
because you can’t stand the heat, you want to get out of
the kitchen.”**

**“You are going to go on to maturity, you are going to
persevere, you are going to grow up and you are going
to learn from the experiences. I am convinced by what
I have seen in your life that this is going to be true of
you. You are going to go on to maturity and
Christlikeness and you are going to rise above this
adversity and you are going to honor God in it and you
are going to glorify his name.”**

Now verse 10.

**v. 10 For [reason] God is not unjust so as to forget your
work and the love which you demonstrated toward
His name, in that you ministered and are still
ministering to the saints.**

**God never forgets,
he is not unjust to forget the little things
that you do for Him.**

2 Corinthians 5:10 says we are going to appear before Him and we are going to be evaluated.

I always find great comfort in Matthew 10:42,

“And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say you shall not lose your reward. God understands what we do in faithfulness to Him.”

Can you imagine in your wildest imagination.

Going before the Lord and you are trying to put a better spin on some stuff you did in your life.

And you hear this big voice say stop, we have it on video.

You know that's really the way it's going to be.

God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you demonstrated toward His name.

Chuck Swindoll in his book *Finishing Touches* has this neat little quiz called “Nobodies.”

Pull out a sheet of scratch paper and with your memory bank see how well you answer the following questions:

Who taught Martin Luther his theology and inspired his translation of the New Testament?

Who visited with Dwight L. Moody at a shoe store and spoke to him about Christ?

Who worked alongside and encouraged Harry Ironside as an associate pastor?

Who was the wife of Charles Haddon Spurgeon?

Who was the elderly woman who prayed faithfully for Billy Graham for over twenty years?

Who financed William Carey's ministry in India?

Who helped Charles Wesley get underway as a composer of hymns?

Who found the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Who taught G. Campbell Morgan, the "peerless expositor," his techniques in the pulpit?

Who followed Hudson Taylor and gave the China Inland Mission its remarkable vision and direction?

Who disciplined George Muller and snatched him from a sinful lifestyle?

Who are the parents of the godly and gifted Daniel?

Okay, how'd you do? Before you excuse your inability to answer these questions by calling the quiz "trivia," better stop and think. Had it not been for such unknown persons—such "nobodies"—a huge chunk of church history would be missing. And a lot of lives would have been untouched.

Nobodies. What a necessary band of men and women . . . servants of the King . . . yet nameless in the kingdom! Men and women who, with silent heroism and faithful diligence, relinquish the limelight and live in the shade of public figures.

As Jim Elliot, martyred messenger of the Gospel to the Aucas once remarked: “Missionaries are a bunch of nobodies trying to exalt Somebody.”

And that’s the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We all need each other. And God is not going to forget your faith, or your work and your love.

What does that tell you?

It tells you, that if you have come to know Christ you need to be involved in ministering to others. It is just part of the family.

I mean you go through the babyhood and drink the milk and all that stuff but you grow up and you start giving help instead of always needing to receive it. You reach a level of maturity where it is give.

v. 11 And we are desiring that each one of you be demonstrating the same diligence [that is being a servant] so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,

See that word “DESIRING,” that means passionate desire.

He burns inside for these Hebrew believers that they will, each one of them, “demonstrate the same diligence,” in other words, they will keep their focus on others and not on themselves and the price, that they are paying.

“We are desiring” what? “That each one of you,” we don’t want to lose any of you, we want all of you to catch this truth and hang onto it and give of yourself fully. Don’t go dead in the water. “Demonstrate the same diligence.”

When it says, “the full assurance of hope until the end,” what does that mean?

**That means, you keep on going to the goal of Christlikeness.
You continue to finish the course with joy.**

**With the apostle Paul,
“I fought a good fight, I finished the course,
I kept the faith.**

**v. 12 in order that you may not become sluggish (lazy),
but imitators of those who through faith and
patience are inheriting the promises.**

**Back in chapter 5, verse 11, he said,
“I sure would like to talk to you about the Melchizedek
priesthood but I can’t do it because you have become
sluggish. You have become dull in your hearing.”
And there’s the same word again.**

“In order that you may not become”

...sluggish (lazy), but imitators of those who through...

two key words:

...faith and patience are inheriting the promises.

The scripture puts a high reproach on laziness, laidback people, who are not giving of themselves for the glory of God.

Proverbs 24:30

I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense and behold it was completely overgrown with thistles.

You know, just keep going. Break the tape.

**Vance Havner said,
“The alternative to discipline is disaster.”**

**The author is saying,
“We don’t want you to be lazy,
we don’t want you to be slow and sluggish.
We have already talked to you about that
but in contrast what?
We want you to be
“imitators of those who through faith and patience are
inheriting the promises.”**

**In other words, that you just keep on,
knowing that you can put your faith and trust
in the promises of God.**

Patience, remain under the stress.

Endure. Persevere, to the fulfillment of the promises

Pavlov Cassles, the great cellist was once asked at 85 years of age, why do you continue to practice 5 hours a day?

He says because I think I'm getting better.

I love that.

It's people who just keep on.

v.13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

“For” (reason) “when God made the promise to Abraham,” what did he say in verse 12? He said, “imitators of those who are inheriting the promises.”

Who would be a good illustration, as a model of somebody, who inherited a promise?

Well Abraham!

So we are going to have a little conversation about Abraham for a minute.

The author just brings him in here to show you, how you are supposed to act in the midst of adversity and impossible circumstances, be like Abraham, he says. Let him be the model that you are going to imitate.

Now over in Hebrews 11 he is going to give you a great hall of fame, of all of those who did this but he pulls Abraham out here.

He shows what God did with Abraham in Genesis 15 to give him an unconditional promise.

Now what's the difference in a conditional promise and an unconditional promise?

A conditional promise has conditions attached.

For instance, the law of Moses is a conditional promise. I mean you keep the law, God is obligated to bless you in this way.

The covenant of Abraham has nothing to do with Abraham.

In fact God put Abraham to sleep in Genesis 15 to get him out of the way and then God alone walked between the pieces to ratify the covenant.

God says I am going to do this and you are not going to have anything to do with it.

Now, that's exactly the promise that God made to you in your eternal salvation.

It has no conditions attached.

God says I am going to save some and my salvation is a gift and I give it to you and there are no strings or conditions attached whatsoever.

When you get to verse 14, this is what the Lord said to Abraham in Genesis 22:17 just after he was willing to offer his son as an offering to the Lord.

Do you remember God stopped him at the last minute.

v. 14 saying, “Blessing, I will bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply you.”

**And then verse 15 gives you the results.
look, this is crucial.**

v.15 And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

That's it.

**Just when it's going rough and everything is on hold,
don't get discouraged.**

Don't quit.

Don't go dead in the water.

Everything is going to be okay.

**It's just part and parcel of the process of getting us
and the promise together.**

**For Joseph it was getting out of prison.
But God said no, you've got two more years there
before Pharaoh is going to be ready for you.
So two more years there and then God is ready.**

**And Pharaoh and Joseph come together for that
awesome, beautiful demonstration of how God can take
a guy like that through all this training and bring him
to this point.**

**And that's exactly what we've got here.
You wait through the process to the fulfillment of the
promise.
And just because it's on hold, doesn't mean that God is
not going to keep the promise and do it.**

"Having patiently waited."

**How long did Abraham wait?
Well we know 25 years.
And you recall, everything was against him.**

**And then at the 25-year mark God comes along and
says okay, this is it.
And the little son is named Isaac and means laughter.**

**God fulfills faithfully the promises.
The problem with so many Christians today
is they don't want to do that.**

They don't want to go through the painful process of perseverance to come to the fulfillment of the promise. And as a result we have a bunch of selfish, immature, little babies running around who are just waiting for everybody else to help them, instead of growing up and giving help to others.

God fulfills every promise.

Let me share a couple of verses.

Joshua 23:14 in his farewell address just as he is ready to die he says:

“Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul, that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed.

Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.”

And Solomon said the same thing. 1 Kings 8:56

“Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.”

**And so having patiently waited,
God in impossible circumstances,
fulfilled the promise and Isaac was born.**

For what reason, verse 16.

v. 16 For men are swearing by one greater [than themselves] and with them an oath [given] as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

When you get on the stand to give your testimony, you take an oath.

I solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me God.

And then you are going to be under great, great difficulty if you don't tell the truth on the stand.

There are consequences for that.

So the writer says, an oath ends every argument.

You now have it in writing.

You now have the word from the mouth of the person that he is going to do that.

And that solves it.

You know the promise is going to be fulfilled.

Now don't you love verse 17?

God is so good He can't lie and when He makes a promise He is going to do it and He doesn't need to take an oath but He does.

v. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the

unchangeableness of His purpose, [what a phrase] guaranteed by means of an oath,

**God even more wanted to do this,
to show you that by the promise and by the oath,
He would be faithful to fulfill the promise.
And the promise is based on what?
“The unchangeableness of His purpose.”
He is the Lord God and He does not change.**

Listen to Proverbs 19:21

“Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.”

**Now that is different from us, isn't it.
We get hot and then we get cold.
We have ups and down,
we get fat, we get lean,
we get good, we get bad,
we get fruit, we get failure and
away we go.**

**We are all over the map.
But God is determined to accomplish His purpose and His will.
And His promise will be fulfilled.**

**Someone said if bad things
didn't happen to good people
then we would all be good for the wrong reasons.**

**And you know that's it.
God's purpose is unchangeable.
And when you run into it
realize that purpose is related to the fulfillment
of the promise and just because there's a gap between
the two doesn't mean that God isn't going to ultimately
fulfill the promise and in the process make you a better
person and bring more fruit from your life.
Too many times we are too close to the forest to see the
trees and we formulate wrong opinions.**

**v. 18 in order that by two unchangeable things,
in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may be
having strong encouragement, we who fled for refuge
in laying hold of the hope set before us.**

“in order that by two unchangeable things,”

**What are those two unchangeable things,
well the oath and the promise.**

“in which”

What?

“it is impossible for God to lie,”

Numbers 23:19

“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

**The answer is certainly not.
Now because he is that kind of God,
He has an unchangeableness of purpose and
He will never lie.**

What can we do?

“we may be having strong encouragement,”

“we who fled for refuge”

“in laying hold of the hope set before us.”

As long as you have hope you can keep on going.

**Call it hope to cope and hang on to the rope.
You just keep going and you keep trusting
as long as there's hope.**

**The word “hope” occurs four times here in the passage.
That's the key.**

**As long as they have hope and they are encouraged
to keep going, it is going to be alright.**

**Verse 11, verse 18, and then there are two occurrences
of the word “hope” right here in verse 19.**

**v. 19 This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul,
a hope both sure and secure and one which is
entering within the veil,**

**Now the author has turned to a nautical term again.
And he is saying, this “hope” is like an anchor.**

**It's something you can hang on to, to ride out
the storms of life to the fulfillment of the
unchangeableness of his purpose.**

It is a “hope” both sure and secure.

And then he goes a little further.

**Not only does he describe it as an anchor but
it is a “hope” that is not only that but
it is one that is “entering within the veil.”**

**In times like these we have an anchor.
We are anchored in Jesus Christ.**

**When it says “an anchor within the veil,”
what does that mean?**

**Usually when you think of an anchor,
what do you think of?**

You take the anchor and you throw it in the water and it goes down and it hooks in the bottom and the boat rides out the storm.

This anchor does not go down it goes up.

This anchor is actually the blood of Jesus Christ that He took back to the heavenly temple and He went inside the veil into the holy of holies just like the priest does on the day of atonement and He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat and God the Father accepted that blood in the holy of holies for the forgiveness of sin and my anchor holds in that heavenly temple.

And I can hang onto it and ride out any storm in life because my anchor is steadfast and secure.

He made one sacrifice, once and for all.

He is my priest and I can trust Him.

He has gone into the presence of God the Father.

And the fact that you celebrate Easter indicates the fact that the Father put His stamp of approval on it or He would have left His son in the grave. He is alive.

Now, verse 20,

v. 20 where Jesus entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

“where Jesus entered”

That is, into the holy of holies.

**“entered as a forerunner”
What’s a forerunner?
He is the one who goes before.**

**And when you have a forerunner,
it means there are going to be others who are going to
follow and that is us because of our identification with
Him.
We have been made heirs of the promise.**

**“for us, having become”
What?**

**“a high priest forever according to the order of
Melchizedek.”**

**Come back next week to learn all you’ve ever wanted
to know about Melchizedek and his high priesthood.**

Now, I’m not done.

**There are five things that describe Christ
in these verses.**

- 1. HE IS A REFUGE**
- 2. HE IS A HOPE**
- 3. HE IS AN ANCHOR**
- 4. HE IS A FORERUNNER**

5. BY HIM WE HAVE ACCESS TO THE FATHER – HE IS OUR PRIEST.

So He is all of these things for you and for me as we face the storms of life.

Billy Graham concluded his message one night and he was describing the U.S. air crash that took place.

One of the guys that was in charge of going in and retrieving the bodies told the story to Billy Graham after the experience.

But one of the things that he found that he never forgot was two dismembered arms with the hands clutched very tightly together.

And he said, I stood there and I wondered was this a husband and a wife clutching hands going out into eternity.

Was it a lover and a sweetheart facing eternity together, never letting go?

And then Billy Graham ended his message by saying, who are you hanging onto tonight?

We have an anchor that is steadfast and sure.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Are you in the "beloved" because you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

LESSON #2: Are people convinced that you are a Christian by the quality of your life and your commitment to the Savior?

LESSON #3: Are chastity, compassion, charity and concern manifested regularly in your life?

LESSON #4: God does not forget your work and the love which you exhibit.

LESSON #5: We manifest our relationship to Christ by being servants for Jesus' sake.

LESSON #6: We are warned not to be lazy, but through faith and patience to inherit the promises.

LESSON #7: Our inheritance rests upon the unconditional promises of God.

LESSON #8: God's sovereign purpose is unchangeable.

LESSON #9: The promise and the oath give us the assurance and the strong encouragement that our hope is secure.

LESSON #10: The anchor within the veil is Jesus Christ our Savior.

LESSON #11: Christ our forerunner has entered into the Holy of Holies and He there intercedes on our behalf twenty-four hours a day.

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PART II

STUDY NUMBER ELEVEN — Hebrews 6:9-20

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v. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed by means of an oath,

v. 18 in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may be having strong encouragement, we who fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.

v. 19 This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil,

v. 20 where Jesus entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read Hebrews 6:9-20 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. What is Paul convinced of with regard to his readers, according to verse 9?**
- 3. How is God characterized in verse 10?**
- 4. What is Paul desiring of his readers, according to verse 11?**
- 5. What does he want them to do, according to verse 12?**
- 6. How did Abraham conduct himself in relationship to the “promise” that was made to him, according to verse 15?**
- 7. What did God do, according to verse 17?**
- 8. How is our hope characterized, according to verse 19?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Are you in the “beloved” because you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

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LESSON #9: The promise and the oath give us the assurance and the strong encouragement that our hope is secure.

LESSON #10: The anchor within the veil is Jesus Christ our Savior.

LESSON #11: Christ, our Forerunner, has entered into the Holy of Holies and He there intercedes on our behalf twenty-four hours a day.