

Jesus Has a Better Hope - Hebrews 5:11-6:12
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

One of the most beautiful, dangerous, and misunderstood doctrines is the truth that we can have assurance of our salvation. The doctrine, also called the doctrine of eternal security seeks to answer the question, "Can a person lose their salvation?" The simple answer is "no". But this is where we need our text in Hebrews to make sure we don't oversimplify our security. Our text in Hebrews speaks of individuals who, when they show up in the church, will rock everyone's security. The author speaks of an individual who once was active, involved, and seemed to be thriving in the church with a faith that seemed real enough. Most of us who have hung around the faith long enough know people who were active in the church with what appeared to be a real faith. Then one day they disappeared, walked away from church and the faith. Some fell into sinful lifestyles, others embraced other religious pursuits, while others deconstructed their faith and just left. The language of verses 4-6 make it appear that these person were once Christian, but now they have fallen away and lost their salvation. And while there are some who do interpret this text in that way, if we do it will throw any doctrine of assurance and security out the window.

But our text, along with many other passages show us that this is not the case. Look at verses 9-12, which are the main point of this passage. The author turns his focus from those who have left to those who remain in the faith, and he does so with much hope, because "we feel sure of better things – things that belong to salvation," for them. And he calls them to "show the same earnestness to have full assurance of hope until the end." the author wants these people to know that, in spite of some leaving the faith, they can have full assurance of their salvation in Christ without wavering.

The very concept that we can be sure of our salvation may seem difficult. So many things can shake this security. Our own sin and failures can rock this sense of assurance, as can seasons of drifting and luke-warm faith. And as mentioned earlier, our faith can be rocked when others who seemed to have a vibrant faith fall away. We wonder if this sort of thing can happen to us. So how can we be sure, and does the Bible push us in this direction? The answer is yes, with a caveat.

To begin with, we need to begin realizing that the basis of our security are rooted in the faithfulness of God and not in our own effort, works, and feelings. There are so many passages that remind us that we are secure in Christ because of the saving work of the Trinitarian God (read Romans 8 and all of 1 John). We cannot lose what we didn't gain to begin with. Salvation belongs to the Lord, and in your redemption God did so many things that are irrevokable. The only way we could lose our salvation would be if God turned back on all the works of grace He did that secured our salvation. And He won't. We can't be un-born again, un-justified, un-adopted, un-loved in covenant love. Just won't happen

So what actually happened to the person in verses 4-6? I believe the author is picturing a person who sat in the beautiful rain of God's grace as he or she sat under the Gospel teaching and benefitted from the Gospel ministry of the church. The person may have even made a "decision" to follow Jesus, and shows some signs of discipleship. Externally, they looked like a believer. But something in life exposed the central problem, whatever his or her religious experience, it did not really involve saving faith. In 1 John 2:9, the Apostle John addressing the same issue for a church in Turkey tells them that those who left the faith actually revealed that they were never really part of us, because if they were truly saved they would remain. Furthermore, Jesus gives us the Parable of the Soils (Mark 4) about a farmer who throws seed on four types of soil. All four soils show some kind of life, symbolizing an initial and maybe even season lasting type of growth and life. But only one of the soils actually bears fruit and produces a crop. The story is clear, there will people who respond and appear to be growing, but hardship, the cares of the world, busyness, and more will choke out and kill

the plant. These are not people who were once saved and lost it. They never had saving faith which was revealed in their falling away.

This leads us to the caveat. We do believe that if a person is genuinely saved they will not, cannot lose that salvation. Yet, the doctrine also pushes us to make sure we are authentically in the faith. And to do that we must look at two points of grace in our lives. The first is our conversion, the time we were born again. Salvation begins with a burst of life-changing grace where we go from death to life, from dark to light, where we are born again. But the Scriptures also point us to the present, and call us to see the beauty of fruit producing grace in our lives now. Assurance based on a religious moment without any real fruit in life is unfounded. And any assurance that finds security in doing religious stuff without an authentic salvation will always turn to our own works and goodness as the basis for salvation. You can be sure of your salvation, but we also need to test ourselves to make sure we are actually in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5).

We will come back to this text next week to see the markers for assurance the author gives us. But let's close with thanksgiving to the God, who in His Son is able to save us to the uttermost and who by His Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are sons and daughters of God.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Psalm 125	Psalm 126	Psalm 127	Psalms 128	Psalms 129	Psalms 130	Psalms 131

Reading from this past week: Hebrews 5:11-6:12

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 5:11-6:12

Family Worship

Song - *Oh Give Thanks to the Lord*

<https://youtu.be/DeZs4tb0Mrl?si=jjAELWJAtXUnZXbG>

Gospel Project

Unit: God Is In Control

Story: The Suffering of Job

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything?

Answer: God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

Scripture: Job 1, 2

New City Catechism

Question 48: What is the church?

Answer: A community elected for eternal life and united by faith, who love, follow, learn from, and worship God together.

Verse: 2 Thessalonians 2:13

Scripture

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

- Have you ever known anyone who appeared to be an authentic believer, but then walked away from the faith? How did this affect you and the church?
- Why is the assurance of our salvation so important for our spiritual lives? How might being unsure influence our relationship with God and our life as believers?
- How does this text warn us of false assurance? How does it point us to true assurance?

Prayer

*Give thanks this week for your church.

*Pray that God would give you a true assurance of your salvation.