

Text: Hebrews 6:4-9 Part 2

Title: The Impossibility of Repentance

Date/Location: February 6, 2011 at FBC

1. Review

The Holy Spirit inspired text of Hebrews pauses several times to direct warnings and exhortations to the readers. 5:11-6:12 is one such section. This warning and exhortation consists of:

1. A rebuke for spiritual immaturity in 5:11-14.
2. A call to move on to spiritual maturity in 6:1-3.
3. A warning against apostasy in 6:4-8.

The view I take is that, despite all seeming signs to the contrary, the person who apostatizes is actually not a real believer from the beginning, and he faces certain eternal condemnation. Once you depart from the faith, there is no second way or second time that Christ will be sacrificed to pay for that sin. This view does have difficulties, but none so difficult as in the other views. It is supported by verse 9 in which the author writes that, though he writes in such a fearful way, he is actually convinced that the readers are saved people and not apostates.

2. Questions

- A. The question several folks asked after I preached this section last time was this: How can someone become a “partaker of the Holy Spirit” and not be saved?
1. Consider the example of Saul. 1 Samuel 10:9-10.
 2. Matthew 7:21-23 is another example. They appeared to have gifts of the Spirit, but they actually did not. They were fakes, as in 2 Cor. 11:13-15.
 3. Another example is Simon Magus in Acts 8. Church tradition says Simon went on to be a terrible opponent of Christianity for years.
 4. The language used in Hebrews seems to be the language of appearance. The person appears to have had a saving experience. From all outward appearances, it would be hard to discern a difference between the real and the fake—like the difference early in the life cycle of wheat and tares (Matthew 13:26).
- B. The next question is, if someone professes faith, how do we know it is real?
1. We should give weight to what the person says, but we also watch what he does.
 2. A true believer truly was enlightened, truly tasted the heavenly gift, truly became a partaker of the Holy Spirit, truly tasted the good word of God and the powers of the coming age, and DOES NOT FALL AWAY.
 3. Ultimately, God knows those who belong to Him and those who do not (2 Tim 2:19).

This is really no different than saying that God keeps those who are truly saved and lets none of them fall (Jude 24-25). Reflecting on this truth helps us avoid a man-centered approach to perseverance, that is, thinking that it is exclusively us who keep ourselves.

3. Where Do You Fit?

Let us think about four kinds of people:

1. Those who are on the road toward of Christian maturity. Some are immature and need the basics, some are more mature in the faith. This includes all born-again Christians.
2. Those who are on the road of apostasy. These folks have been meaningfully exposed to the gospel but have knowingly and explicitly and finally turned away from it. They have committed "deliberate apostasy." (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 149). These folks are the subject of Hebrews 6:4-8. Their end is eternal death.
3. Those who have heard the gospel but have not yet made a decision one way or another; they have had no real experience with or exposure to Christianity. These folks are not yet believers (hopefully they will be soon). Presently, their end is also eternal death. They are not apostates in that they have not provisionally accepted the faith and then turned away.
4. Those who have not heard anything about the gospel of Jesus Christ. These are the unevangelized, whose end is also eternal death. Christians are told to go to them and make followers of Christ from among those folks, baptize them, and teach them whatever Christ has taught us.

Which category most closely describes where you are right now?

Conclusion

Many of you are in category 1 – on the road of Christian maturity. Don't give up! If you are in category 2, you are most likely not here because you have made your decision and there is no point in going to church if you reject Christianity. But if you are in categories 3 or 4, then we, the Christians at Fellowship Bible Church, have a message for you from Jesus Christ.

John 8:24 = "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

1. "I am He" is what Hebrews has been trying to say all along—that Jesus is superior to prophets, angels, Moses, and Levitical priests. He is no less than the very Son of God.
2. "You will die in your sins" reminds us that all of us are sinners. In the words of Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, no, not one." We might think we are decent people, but none of us measures up to the standard of God's *righteousness*. Apart from Jesus, we will die in our sins.

John 3:16 = "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

3. You must believe in Christ, who died for our sins and rose again, so you can have eternal life instead of perishing for your sins.

What does this look like? First, ADMIT you are a sinner and under the penalty of death for sin. Second, BELIEVE in Jesus Christ, that He died for your sins and rose again. Third, CALL upon Christ as your Lord and Savior. There is nothing more to this than earnestly believing these truths with your whole heart and understanding that they apply *personally* to YOU. You can tell as much to God right where you are seated listening to this message or reading these notes. MAP