

HEBREWS 6:1–12 — Hold on to a Greater Hope (3 min)

Big Idea: Saving faith is not proven by how you start, but by continuing to trust Jesus until the race is finished.

Hebrews 6:1–8 (ESV)

Therefore ¹let us leave ²the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance ³from dead works and of faith toward God, ⁴and of ⁵instruction about washings, ⁶the laying on of hands, ⁷the resurrection of the dead, and ⁸eternal judgment. ⁹And this we will do ¹⁰if God permits. ¹¹For it is impossible, in the case of those ¹²who have once been enlightened, who have tasted ¹³the heavenly gift, and ¹⁴shared in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁵and ¹⁶have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ¹⁷and ¹⁸then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since ¹⁹they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. ²⁰For ²¹land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ²²But ²³if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, ²⁴and its end is to be burned.

²⁵Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. ²⁶For ²⁷God is not unjust so as to overlook ²⁸your work and the love that you have shown for his name in ²⁹servicing the saints, as you still do. ³⁰And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance ³¹of hope until the end, ³²so that you may not be sluggish, but ³³imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

PRAY

- I. INTRODUCTION — THE RACE (2 min)
 - a. The Start Line (Chicago Marathon, 2019)
 - i. One of the major marathons in the world
 - ii. 40,000 runners
 - iii. 2 million spectators
 - b. The start line feels like the Super Bowl
 - i. Energy
 - ii. Emotion
 - iii. Adrenaline
 - 1. The amplitude. I honestly thought. There is a chance that I could win this race.
 - c. Everyone feels strong and run there fastest mile at the gate
 - i. You can run mile 1 with the wrong perspective
 - ii. Experiencing the mile, not the marathon
 - iii. Key line
 - 1. Mile 1 will not sustain mile 26
 - 2. You don't run for the start line
 - 3. You run with the finish line in view
 - iv. Transition
 - 1. Every believer has a start line in the Christian life
 - 2. Remaining at the start line is not normal

- II. THE CALLING — MOVE TO MATURITY (v. 1–3) (2min)
 - a. Let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity
 - i. *Let us be carried forward*
 - b. Spiritual growth happens through
 - i. Receiving God's Word
 - ii. Obeying what we learn
 - iii. Yielding to the Holy Spirit
 - c. The foundation has already been poured
 - i. Three foundational categories
 - 1. First relating to Conversion
 - a. Repentance from dead works
 - b. Faith toward God
 - 2. Second relating to Church Life
 - a. Baptisms
 - b. Laying on of Hands
 - i. blessing, commissioning, healing, receiving HS & spiritual gifts
 - 3. Future hope
 - a. Resurrection of the dead
 - b. Eternal judgment
 - d. We don't outpace the fundamentals
 - i. They are not the goal
 - 1. They are the foundation
 - 2. You build on it

III. THE CRITICAL JOURNEY – Janet O Hagberg & Robert A. Guelich

- a. Stages
 - i. Recognition of God
 - 1. Encounter
 - ii. Life of discipleship
 - 1. Learn
 - iii. Productive life
 - 1. Serve
- b. A Shock to the System
 - i. Many prefer early stages
 - 1. Avoid deeper work
 - 2. Avoid surrender
 - ii. There will come a moment when things get hard, where the hype wears off
- c. The Wall
 - i. Crisis/Shock/Hardship/Suffering
 - 1. Crisis, Loss of certainty, Confronting deeper things
 - a. These moments are where many drop off
 - i. Not because they cannot continue, But because they stop trusting
 - ii. Hagberg and Guelich write about what they call “shocks to the system” in the life of faith—moments of crisis that raise an important question: are these seasons actually necessary for spiritual growth?
 - 1. They suggest that over the course of our race, these moments are not interruptions but invitations.
 - iii. They write, “I do believe that shocks or crises in the life of faith frequently move us and are, in the long run, healing—if we attend to the calling of Jesus that they bring.”
 - 1. These shocks return us to places in our journey where we may have gone dormant, or they move us forward into a new stage of maturity.
 - a. Journey Outward
 - i. Trust Jesus w/ the deeper things
 - b. Life of Love
 - i. Alignment

IV. THE WARNING — HEBREWS 6:4–6

- a. These verses are some of the most difficult in the entire New Testament.
 - i. And part of the weight of this passage comes from one key phrase:
 - ii. **“It is impossible.”**
 - 1. That phrase is used four crucial times in the book of Hebrews.
 - a. Here in Hebrews 6, it is impossible to restore again to repentance.
 - b. In verse 18, it is impossible for God to lie.
 - c. In Hebrews 10:4, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
 - d. Hebrews 11:6, without faith it is impossible to please God.

- iii. So when the author uses this word, he is not speaking casually.
 - 1. He is making a strong, definitive statement.
 - 2. Which is why this passage raises a very real question:
 - a. Can a Christian lose their salvation?
 - i. Now when people read this, they feel that tension.
 - b. They start thinking:
 - i. What if I've fallen away? Gone too far? Can't return?
- b. So we need to slow down and ask:
 - i. What is actually being described here?
 - ii. The text says these people were:
 - 1. Enlightened, tasted gift & goodness WORD, shared Holy Spirit
 - iii. This is real exposure to the things of God.
 - 1. And then it says: They have fallen away.
 - a. So how do we understand this?
- c. One view is that these were genuine believers who truly knew Christ and then lost their salvation.
 - i. And if that is the case, this becomes a very serious warning that salvation can be lost.
 - 1. And that's where the fear comes from for a lot of people.
 - ii. But when we interpret a difficult passage, we have to interpret it in light of clear ones.
 - 1. The Bible consistently teaches that salvation rests on the finished work of Christ—not our ability to maintain it.
 - a. Jesus says in John 10:28, “No one will snatch them out of my hand.”
 - b. Romans 8 says nothing can separate us from the love of God.
 - c. Philippians 1 says He who began a good work will bring it to completion.
 - 2. So whatever Hebrews 6 means, it cannot overturn what is clearly taught elsewhere.
- d. Another view is that this is referring specifically to first-century Jewish believers who were tempted to drift back into the old system.
 - i. And that context matters, because the entire book of Hebrews is addressing people who are tempted to go backward instead of forward in Christ.
- e. Another view is that these people were never truly saved.
 - i. That they experienced the things of God, but were never genuinely born again.
 - 1. And in many ways, that helps explain what's happening here.
 - 2. Because they had exposure... but not transformation.
 - a. They were around the work of God... but not surrendered to it.
 - ii. And I remember hearing Pastor Chuck Smith speak to this passage.
 - 1. This Scripture that has troubled a lot of believers.
 - 2. And he would bring it back to two anchors.
 - a. First, salvation rests on the finished work of Christ—not in our ability to hold onto it.

- b. And second, the warnings in Hebrews are real warnings—meant to keep believers from drifting and to call them to maturity.
 - iii. Because Hebrews was written to people who were tempted to move backward into something familiar instead of continuing forward in Christ.
 - 1. So here is the clearest way to understand this passage.
 - a. This is a severe warning.
 - b. But it is not describing ordinary believers losing their salvation.
 - 2. It is describing someone who has fully experienced the reality of the gospel and then makes a decisive, settled rejection of Christ.
 - a. Not struggling
 - b. Not doubting.
 - c. Not weak.
 - i. But: “I know who Jesus is... and I don’t want Him.”
 - 3. That is what is called apostasy. (from the Greek – defect or revolt)
 - iv. And this is where the text itself presses in.
 - 1. It says they are “crucifying once again the Son of God” and holding Him up to contempt.
 - a. In other words, they are not passively drifting.
 - i. They are actively rejecting.
 - ii. They are treating the cross as insufficient.
 - iii. They are aligning themselves against the One who saves.
 - 1. And that is why the text says it is impossible to restore them again to repentance.
 - a. Not because God cannot forgive.
 - b. But because there is no other sacrifice.
 - c. Christ was crucified once for all.
 - d. And if He is rejected, there is nothing else left that can save them.
 - i. Jesus is the only way.
 - v. If you are sitting here wondering: “Is that me?”
 - 1. That concern itself is evidence that your heart has not rejected Christ.
 - a. Because apostasy is not anxious. Not wrestling, its hardened, settled... no desire to return.
 - b. So this warning is not meant to terrify genuine believers. It is meant to wake us up.

V. WHEN THE MILES GET HARD

- a. Mile 18
 - i. Hit the wall
 - 1. Cramping from sternum down
 - 2. Fell on the course
 - a. The crowd wasn’t enough
 - b. The energy wasn’t enough
 - c. Adrenaline wasn’t enough
 - ii. Two lessons

1. You can use the curb to roll out the cramp
 2. Not all miles are for running, Some miles are for walking
 - a. What is important is that you keep moving
 - iii. Internal battle
 1. Can I do this
 2. Am I supposed to be here
 3. Is it even possible to continue
 - iv. Sister in Christ jumps the barrier
 1. Walks with you
 2. Encourages you
 - a. This is your race
 - i. Don't compare yourself
 - ii. You can finish
 - iii. I'll see you at the finish line
- b. THE CONNECTION — WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING
 - i. Maturity is not always upward
 - ii. Sometimes it is simply forward
 1. Not all seasons are for running
 2. Some are for enduring
 - iii. Some of you think
 - iv. I've lost my salvation
 1. But what actually happened
 2. You hit a wall
 - a. You are not falling away
 - b. You are being brought
 - i. To healing
 - ii. To dependence
 - iii. To maturity

VI. THE ENCOURAGEMENT (v. 9–10)

- a. Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things - things that belong to salvation. ¹⁰ For ^zGod is not unjust so as to overlook ^ay our work and the love that you have shown for his name in ^berving the saints, as you still do.
 - i. Though we speak in this way
 - ii. We are confident of better things - Things that belong to salvation
 1. God sees your work
 2. God sees your love
 3. God sees your endurance

VII. THE EXHORTATION (v. 11–12)

- a. Full assurance of hope
- b. Until the end
 - i. Do not become sluggish
 - ii. Imitate those who endure

1. Faith and patience
 2. Inherit the promises
- c. CONCLUSION — THE FINISH
- i. Mile 26.2
 1. The finish line
 2. You don't run to earn salvation
 3. You run because Jesus secured it
 - ii. The question is not
 1. Did you start the race
 - iii. The question is
 1. Are you still running