

Can't Lose – Hebrews 5:11-6:12 (Part 1)

Heb 5:11–6:12; This is the last passage in our series on Blessed Assurance, and it's a 3 week mini-series in and of itself (**Intro**)

And one of the reasons for that, is that this is one of the most hotly debated passages in the entire New Testament

Used by some to say that you can *lose* your salvation, viewed by others as just hypothetical, and a whole slew in between; So there's much to sort out

Not only that, but there's literally something here for everyone; Something for every kind of person, at every stage of growth; Starting with those who are immature; There's . . .

1. **Instruction for the immature** – _____ up (5:11-6:3)

That's the *first* type of person addressed in this passage; Heb 5:11-6:2

[11] *About this we have much to say* [referring to the priesthood of Jesus on our behalf, with all its nuances], *and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*

Notice, that it's not hard to explain b/c it's difficult *material*, but b/c we don't listen, we don't pay attention, we don't apply ourselves; We've become dull of hearing

And it's the first indicator of immaturity here; Something we ought always to guard against; B/c it happens; Indicated by the word – *become*

You have become *dull of hearing*; Implying that they weren't before, and regressed

[12] *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God* [the truths of God]. *You need milk, not solid food, [13] for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. [14] But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

Did you catch that? Solid food there in v14, deeper truth, more knowledge – is not for the Bible study groupies who know much and apply little . . .

Or those high in knowledge but low in wisdom; But the mature – *those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice*

Those who sharpen their gifts of insight, by constantly using them in *real* life; Those who apply what they *already* know

Those are the mature; And that's who *solid food* is for

[6:1] *Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, [2] and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

There's instruction here for the immature; And the bottom line is – **Grow up**

➤ Which you'll never do if you don't first – *admit* your immaturity; That's where it starts Admitting you *don't* pay attention to the reading/hearing of God's word – on your own or in church

That indeed you are *dull of hearing*; That you're a *learner* when you should be a *teacher*, v12; A *child*, when you should be an adult (13)

And that you're anything *but* discerning when it comes to making wise choices That's the *first* step toward growth and maturity – admitting your *need*

The problem is, we don't think we *need* to; So often we fail to mature b/c we think we're already there; We think we're grown-up when we're not

We think we're a counselor when we're a patient; A leader when we're a follower

"I read the Bible, I go to church, I pray; I don't lie, steal, or cheat; Or go with the boys who do; What do you mean I'm not mature?"

Is that you? If so, one of the best things you can do is find someone who knows you well, thinks biblically, and speaks straight – and then *beg* them to tell you what they think *Beg* them to measure you against these verses

In fact, you should start with the Holy Spirit; Letting him impress *these* words on your heart and soul; They might just apply; You might be less mature than you think

If so, admitting it is your first step toward growth

➤ 2nd, is learning the basics; Admit your immaturity, and learn the basics – the basics of God's Word and God's ways

Like *the elementary doctrine of Christ* in v1 – the basic truths of who he is and what he's done;

And *repentance from dead works and faith toward God* (1) – turning from sin and the legalistic dependence on *rules*, to trusting *God* for salvation; Those are basics

As is *instruction about washings* in v2 – like *believer's* baptism that's *foundational* to your walk, and infant baptism that isn't; Get that settled

And the same goes for *the laying on of hands* (2) – something the apostles did early on to *trigger* the Spirit's presence in new believers . . .

And something we do to symbolically *affirm* his presence and calling; It's a basic

And last, is the *resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment* (2b) – basic truths that physical death is not the end for us, and the judgement of hell never stops

If you're going to grow up, you need to learn the basics; B/c you can't *leave* what you don't know; You can't build on something that's not there

➤ And then 3rd, keep going; Admit your immaturity, learn the basics, and keep going Just like it says in v1 – *Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ, and go on to maturity*; Keep going

Not that you throw the basics out and forget about them; But once you have them down, once the foundation is laid – start building on it; Grow up

➤ Now, there are a whole bunch of ways to do that, but we've tried *very* hard to make *very easy* around here; Very clear; And it consists of 5 steps:

1. **Come to church every week** – if you're going to grow up, come to church; You have 4 services and 2 locations to choose from

2. **Attend Harvest Essentials** – it's a two-part class about discipleship and the church, and it's required for membership anyway

3. **Serve in a ministry** – make a commitment to Worship One, Work One every week As in *worship* during one of the services, and *serve* during one of the services; Like in Harvest Kids; Or the Parking Team; Or the Greeting Team Or get involved in one of our *mid-week* ministries – like Harvest Students, or Kids Club, or a local compassion partner

If you're going to grow, you need to serve; And do so every week; B/c those who serve most, grow most

4. Join a Discipleship Group – a small group of people, who meet weekly for the purpose of Bible study, encouragement, accountability, and prayer
It could be a Small Group, a Women's Ministry group, a Men's Table, Alive & Free – you name it
The bottom line, is that growth in maturity requires interactive discipleship

5. Sign up for Frameworks – a 5-part, multi-year discipleship process, that starts with the basics, and builds from there
Exploring your faith, Living the life, Knowing the word, Connecting the dots, and Dividing the truth
5 classes over the course of several years, to help you learn the basics, and then keep going (**Summary**); But it starts with admitting your need

➤ And then it says in v3 – *And this we will do if God permits*; We
Indicating it's not only an individual thing, but a corporate thing
As you grow in maturity, we grow in maturity; A rising tide lifts all boats

If God permits it says; Not that he allows some to grow, and others not; Or only *wants* some to be mature
B/c Eph 4 says that we are to build up the body of Christ until we all attain to mature manhood (v13-14); God wants *all* of us to grow in maturity

So the point here in v3 *can't* be that God is *selective*, but that our growth in maturity is not solely up to us; It rests on *God's* continuing work in our life
Not that we're relieved of our responsibility to *apply* ourselves, but reminded of who's in control (**Summary**); And who gets the credit
It's instruction for the immature

2nd, is . . .

2. Warning for the rebellious – **There's _____ back (v4-6, 8)**
V4 – *For it is impossible* [the word *For* indicating that this is *further* reason to grow up and mature], *in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, [5] and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, [6] and then have fallen away, [it's impossible] to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.*

The purpose of these verses, is to warn against rebellion on the part of those who are *familiar* with the things of God, but aren't truly saved
To warn those who might be *associated* with the church, but aren't *of* the church, to stay the course; B/c if you don't, and fall away, **there's no way back**

That's the message; It's a last ditch effort to prevent you from ever saying, "That's it, I'm done; I don't care anymore"; And in so doing, fall away
As in reject Jesus and his people in a sustained, willful, and rebellious manner
That's what it means to have *fallen away* in v6 – reject Jesus and the church in a sustained, willful, and rebellious manner

It's not a bad day where you get caught up in sin b/c you're not on your guard
It's not waywardness without forethought or design
And it's not a naïve stumbling where you're filled with remorse and regret

Falling away as it's used here, is a sustained, intentional, and rebellious rejection of Jesus, indicated by the strength of the language in the remainder of v6
They are crucifying once again the Son of God . . . and holding him up to contempt
That's not a bad day, that's an evil heart

➤ And God's like, "Don't go there! Grow up and *mature* in Christ, b/c if you don't, and fall away, there's no way back"
Or as it says in v6, it's *impossible* to be restored to a place of *repentance*

If you've experienced a measure of God's goodness like it says in v4-5, and then fall away like it says in v6 . . .
It's impossible to be restored again to a heart of confession and a life of *turning* from sin; *Impossible*; That's what it says

What it doesn't say, is that it's impossible to be restored to a place of *salvation*
IOW if someone *would* repent, they *could* be saved; But they won't, so they can't
Their rebellion is so thorough and deep-seated, they *can't* be restored to a place of repentance, b/c they don't *want* to be
They're so hard, they don't care anymore; They're so calloused, they no longer feel guilty
They're so antagonistic, they actually *hate* the things of God
Having experienced *some* of his goodness, and then fallen away like that – it's *impossible . . . to restore them again to repentance*

Whereas someone who still has a *twinge* of conscience, a *flicker* of guilt, a *little* softness – *can* be restored
B/c such things indicate that they *didn't* fall away in a permanent, willful sense

But take heed, and hear the warning; B/c the slope is slippery, and the cliff looms
And if you step over, if you fall away, intentionally so – there's no way back (**Next**)

➤ And if you're wondering why, or how that can be, there are 3 reasons for it here
Indicated by the word *since* in v6; The first is this:

(A) Their rebellion is public

There's no way back for those who have fallen away, b/c they're making Jesus the public object of their hatred and scorn
That's what it means at the *end* of v6, that they're *holding him up to contempt*
They're openly deriding him; Unashamedly expressing their scorn/disdain; Putting him on a fake pedestal in the town square of their life, and essentially spitting in his face
It's a public thing; And public rebellion is *always* more difficult to turn from

(B) Their rejection is final

That's the idea of the phrase – *they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm*; IOW they're rejecting him to the fullest extent possible
Just like those who put Jesus on the cross in the first place; It was a heinous and final rejection of who he was and what he came for

And so too *now* for those who have experienced some of his *goodness*, and fall away
It's a final rejection, *to their own harm*; B/c there's no way back

(C) Their heart is hard

The deceit of sin has overtaken them; Rendering them numb to its ill-effects, and blind to
the glorious alternatives – the things they've already experienced to some degree
Like being *enlightened* in v4 – they *understand* the truths of the gospel
And they've *tasted* the heavenly gift – the blessings of God
And have *shared* in the Holy Spirit – referring to the benefits of his influence in those
around them

And they've *tasted* the goodness of the word of God – the benefits of hearing and living
by his truth to some extent
And *the powers of the age to come* – the work of God that will change the world one
day; And is evident even now, in the hearts and churches of those who love him
They've experienced all that to some degree – and could care less; Their heart is hard

If we tell them God's word is true, they say “so what”
If we tell them God changes lives, they say “big deal”
If tell them church is awesome, they say “whatever”
Having experienced the things of God and found them lacking, and having chosen sin
and found it enticing – their heart is hard; And there's no way back (**Summary**)
It's warning for the rebellious; Take heed, and take a step back

➤ And if that's not enough to deter you, to keep you from the edge – consider the *end* of
your rebellion; Found in v7-8
[7] *For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it* [land representing those who
are recipients of God's goodness], *and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake
it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.*
[8] *But if it bears thorns and thistles* [if our fruit is sinful and wicked], *it is worthless*
[we are worthless] *and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.*

That's the plight of those whose fruit is sinful and shameful in light of God's goodness;
Those who reject him and rebel
They're condemned – *worthless and near to being cursed*; And face the judgment of
hell – *burned* (**Summary**)

Don't go there; Receive the instruction, and heed the warning

Pray – Father, pierce our heart with the warning of this word, and spur us on to grow and
mature, And draw near to us cleansing our hearts of sin, and binding our hearts in love