

Can't Lose – Hebrews 5:11-6:12 (Part 3)

Heb 6; This is the last message in our series on Blessed Assurance, and I trust that both your understanding has increased, and your convictions have solidified
We started with an *overview* of salvation, and then began working through various passages – *pillar* passages on salvation; The last of which is Hebrews 6

And we found in Part 1, that there's . . .

1. Instruction for the Immature – Grow up (5:11-6:3)

Learn the basics, apply what you know, and keep going

1. **Come to church every week;** 2. **Attend Harvest Essentials**
3. **Serve in a ministry;** 4. **Join a Discipleship Group;** 5. **Sign up for Frameworks**

2. Warning for the rebellious – There's no way back (v4-6, 8)

No way back for someone who rejects Christ in a willful, sustained, and rebellious way
(A) **Their rebellion is public;** (B) **Their rejection is final;** (C) **Their heart is hard**

Then, in Part 2, we looked at . . .

6 Reasons You Can't Lose Your Salvation

1. It's not supported by the words of the text
2. It's not supported by the testimony of Jesus
3. It's not consistent with the whole of Scripture; 4. It's contrary to God's nature
5. It flies in the face of being adopted; 6. It's an insult to Christ

Leading us to the conclusion that v4-6 refer to those who have come *close* to making a profession of faith, but haven't stepped over the line
Those who are playing along, but aren't genuine

But it's not just warning, there's also . . .

3. Assurance for the faithful – Your salvation is secure (v7, 9-10)

- (A) God sees your faithfulness; (B) God promises you a blessing
(C) God has a purpose for your life; (D) God is just

God knows you, and God has you; That was Part 2

➤ Which brings us to Part 3 and the final thought; There's . . .

4. Encouragement for all – Keep the _____ (v11-12)

Encouragement as in – let me encourage you to do something; I *urge* you

Let me show you what I mean; Starting in v9

[9] *Though we speak in this way [warning the rebellious of bad things], yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. [10] For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.*

[11] *And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, [12] so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

The word *desire* in v11 conveys a strong, intense passion; A strong encouragement
And it's focused on anybody who's listening – *each one of you* as it says, anybody sitting in the pews; There's encouragement for all

➤ The question is, to do what? To *show the same earnestness* as those in v9-10
Those whose work of ministry and love for the Lord is crystal clear, and continues on

IOW **keep the faith** like they do; That's the encouragement here – keep the faith
Persevere in your walk with Christ; Hold *firmly* to the truths of the gospel; *Persist* in your devotion; *Continue* in your belief; Remain *steadfast* in your convictions
Keep the faith

➤ And once again, there are 4 reasons for it here in the text

1. It increases your assurance

V11 – *We desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end*

To have *complete* confidence in things to come, things of salvation

IOW keep the faith, *show the same earnestness*, so that your confident expectation, your hope of an eternity with Jesus, is rock solid
Right up until you breathe your last, *the end*

If you want blessed assurance, keep the faith; And the more you do, the more assurance you'll have

➤ Not only that, but your assurance of experiencing the same glories as those who've gone before, will increase as well; That's v12
Be *imitators* [it says] *of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises* – the promises of salvation; Like the fullness of life, the joys of heaven, & the glory of God
Live like them; Think like them; Those who are ahead of you in their walk with Christ

And do so *through faith and patience* just like them; As in perseverance; B/c faith plus patience *equals* perseverance

If you patiently wait for something you hope for, you're persevering

And the more you do, the more you'll experience the blessed assurance of receiving it

➤ It's like rookies in baseball who get drafted by the New York Yankees or the St. Louis Cardinals – teams that have a history of winning and are often dominant
They're told that if they follow the system, if they keep the faith, they too will win
And they're assured of it by 2 things – the experience of those ahead of them, and a history of promises kept

How much more with us? If *we* keep the faith, *we too* will “win”; We too will experience God's goodness in the land of the living, and we too will arrive at eternity's shore
B/c those who've gone before us already have, and God keeps his promises
It's blessed assurance all the way around; And keeping the faith, increases it

2nd, keep the faith b/c . . .

2. It prevents complacency

Complacency, as in being *sluggish* – sluggish to fulfill your ministry, and sluggish to work out your salvation

That's what it says in v12a – keep the faith *so that you may not be sluggish*

Keep on, so you don't get dull (5:11); Keep serving so you don't get lazy; Keep reading so you don't get smug; Keep praying so you don't lose focus

Keep standing firm so you don't lose ground

It's a lot like a soldier in battle who needs to stay sharp; And prepared; And connected;
And on the same page as their leader; And firmly convinced of their purpose

Why? B/c the enemy is near, and the cost of complacency is death – both for themselves *and* those around them
And the same is true of us; It's the 2nd reason, to keep the faith

3. It **confirms** your salvation

It gives you *the full assurance of hope until the end*, v11; The confident expectation of *life*, until you receive it

What it doesn't do, is obtain it; Perseverance in your walk and convictions, in no way *gains* your salvation; Or maintains it; Or guarantees it; Or keeps it; It doesn't
Rather, keeping the faith *shows* your salvation; It proves it

- And that's a very important distinction, and a very important principle to understand
B/c we tend toward the opposite; We tend to make our salvation a *works*-based thing;
Dependent on what we *do*
And that can't be, b/c the Bible says that God saved us, *not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy* (Titus 3:5)
We're saved by God's *grace*; Period; His unmerited *favor* toward us

Which means that our perseverance, our *keeping* of the faith, only serves to *confirm* our salvation; And I want you to see that even clearer, in Heb 3:14

- The previous verses tell us to exhort one another to keep the faith, and then gives us the reason to do so in v14
For we share in Christ [we're saved; present tense, right now], *if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end*. (Heb 3:6; Col 1:21-23; 1 Jn 2:19)
IOW if you keep the faith until the end, you confirm or show that you're saved *now*;
And were in the past – the moment you surrendered your life to Christ
So perseverance doesn't *keep* you saved, it *shows* you're saved

If it kept you saved, if your salvation was *dependent* on your perseverance, the verse would read – We *will* share in Christ . . .
If we hold our original confidence firm to the end
But it doesn't say that; It says we share in Christ *right now*, *present* tense, if we keep the faith; And since a present fact can't be dependent on a future reality . . .
It has to mean that our future perseverance *confirms* the present fact

It would be like owning your home outright, a present fact, and saying that it's yours *right now*, if you're still living there in 10 years
Such a statement can't mean that your ownership is *dependent* on your future occupancy, b/c you already own it
So it must mean that your future occupancy simply *confirms* your ownership

And the same is true when it comes to this statement about your salvation
Your perseverance *confirms* your ownership, your place in God's family, it doesn't determine it or complete it; God has already done that; It's finished

- But *that* begs the question – Do I have to wait until the end of my life to *know* for sure?
To *know* that I'm really saved? To know that I share in Christ; And the answer is “no”
1 Jn 5:12-13 says – *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of*

God does not have life. [13] I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

You can be sure of your salvation the moment you pray to receive Christ; The moment you have him; The moment he takes up residence in your soul*****
And your faithful perseverance will confirm it every step of the way

- Not only that, but you can rest assured that you *will* persevere every step of the way
If you're saved, you *will* persevere in your faith; You will
B/c Paul says in **2 Tim 1:12** – *I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day* [the day of his return] *what has been entrusted to me*.
Which is what? The gospel – salvation through faith and repentance; I'm sure he says, that God will guard that in me, until the day I see him face to face; He's sure

And we can be too; B/c we're in the same position as Paul before God – sinners saved by grace; So he safeguards it in us, as well*****
Which means that those who are genuinely saved, *will* keep the faith; They *will* persevere to the end; God guarantees it; Confirming our salvation start to finish

But that doesn't relieve us of our responsibility; Which is the 4th reason to keep the faith
4. It fulfills your responsibility

And that brings us full circle to v11; Our lot is to *show the same earnestness* as those whose work of ministry and love for the Lord is crystal clear and continues on
The same diligence and devotion as *those who through faith and patience inherit the promises*; That's *our* responsibility
Just like it says in Phil 2:12 – *work out your salvation with fear and trembling*
And Col 1:21 – *continue in the faith, stable and steadfast*
Saving and keeping us is *God's* responsibility, persevering in it is ours

And the best part, like we just saw, is that God guarantees it; He guards until that Day, the gift that's been entrusted to us (2 Tim 1:12)

- So when you put all that together – God *preserves* those who are saved, and it's the responsibility of those who are saved, to *persevere*
What a difference a few letters make
It's called the *preservation* of the saints, and the *perseverance* of the saints
Both are biblical doctrines, and both are necessary; The former, to *keep* us saved, and the latter, to *show* it
Fulfilling our responsibility, witnessing to others, and glorifying God (**Summary**)
4 reasons; And I hope they spur you on; B/c it's encouragement for everybody

➤ Now, as clear or unclear as that might be for you, it often raises some **FAQ's**; Like . . .
What if I don't persevere?
And the answer, is that it shows you weren't saved in the *first* place; Which you can see in **1 Jn 2:19**; It says . . .

They [referring to those who deny the Father and the Son] *went out from us* [they left the church], *but they were not of us* [they weren't a *part* of the body of Christ]; *for if they had been of us* [if they *had* been saved], *they would have continued with us* [they would have stayed with us and persevered]. *But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*

John is saying that those who renounce Christ and reject the faith, show by their actions that they're not saved, and never were

B/c if they were, they would have persevered*****

So if you don't persevere, you show you weren't saved in the first place

Isn't this just semantics?

Isn't it just semantics to say that you're not saved in first place, rather than you've lost your salvation? An the answer is "no"; It's not just semantics

If you say that you can lose your salvation, then you're saying that what you do, at least to some extent, *keeps* you saved

And that diminishes the work of God, elevates yourself, and negates grace

You didn't do anything to gain or deserve your salvation, and you can't do anything to keep it or lose it

If you could, it wouldn't be grace; It wouldn't be *unmerited* favor

So it's *not* just semantics; It's conforming our mind to that of God's, it's preserving grace for what it is, and it's giving credit where credit is due

And then last, some people say – I know I can't *lose* my salvation, but can I give it up?

Can I walk away from God? (Band out)

And the answer is "yes" – if you're not a genuine believer; If you're just playing the game b/c you like the friendships and perks

But if you're truly saved, the answer's "no"; God won't *let* you walk away

You may backslide, you may indulge in sin from time to time – but you *won't* leave him;

B/c if you try . . .

(A) You'll be the most miserable lot on the face of the earth – suffering his discipline and *yearning* for relief

(B) He'll woo you and draw you to prevent your departure and bring you to repentance

(C) Having received the pearl of greatest price, you won't give it up; You won't *want* to leave

It's like the new believer in Charles Spurgeon's church back in the late 1800's, who said –

"I laid hold of something and something laid hold of me, and I shall never part with it, for it will never part with me." (*Church Increase*, #2692, 8/18/1881)

You can walk away from God if you're *not* a believer, but if you are, you can't and won't (**Summary**; Band starts)

➤ But the encouragement remains – keep the faith; B/c . . .

It fulfills your responsibility, confirms your salvation, prevents complacency, and increases your assurance; Keep the faith (**2nd Summary**)

And if you're immature – grow up; Or feeling rebellious – heed the warning

So that you too can rest secure in the *blessed assurance* of knowing that Jesus is yours

The blessed assurance of glory divine; The blessed assurance of being an heir of salvation, and purchased of God

The blessed assurance of being born of his Spirit, and washed in his blood

If that's *your* story, if that's *your* song – stand and sing; And add this to the praise of your Savior, all the day long