



May 17, 2026

## Anchored in Hope Part 2

Hebrews 6:4–9 (ESV)

4 For it is impossible, 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, 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. 7 For land 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. 8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned. 9 Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.

- “**You will die someday.**” It’s a four word tweet that gets repeated, every day, on X. The account responsible is @DailyDeathReminder
- It’s a modern *Memento Mori*. *Memento Mori* is a Latin phrase that means, “*remember that you have to die.*”
- A *memento mori* is a gift to help us see reality.
- In order to make sense of today, what I need is the perspective of tomorrow.
- The Bible gives us it’s own *memento mori*’s:
- Isaiah tells us that our lives are like grass. James tells us we’re like a mist that is visible for a second or two, and then vanishes.

- Jesus himself tells us...Don't make storing up treasures here on earth the goal...it will all turn to dust or get eaten by rats. No...make treasure in heaven the goal. Nothing there will rust or wear out or be stolen.
- What scripture encourages us to do is to hold today up to the mirror of eternity, and when we do that, our today takes on greater significance.
- Tucked into the flow of Hebrews, are *momento mori's*. The whole point of Hebrews, as we've said before, is "Keep going!" "Hold on to your faith!" "Don't ever let go of Jesus."
- If the goal is to remain in Jesus until we finish and not quit, then the logical theological elephant in the room is that it's possible not to do this.
- Chapter 6 will say it flat out: *it's possible to fall away from the faith*.
- There are 5 warning sections like this in Hebrews: 2:1-4; 3:7-19; 5:11-6:12; 10:19-39; 12:14-29. And if Hebrews were a song...these sections would be the chorus that THW returns to over and over.
- Chapter 6 is at the heart of the 5 warning texts. Probably most discomfoting is verses 4-8:

Hebrews 6:4-8 (ESV)

*4 For it is impossible, 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, 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. 7 For land 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. 8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.*

There are two major interpretations of the warning passages in Hebrews.

- **The Arminian view** emphasizes individual free will. It says: We are broken by sin, but our sinful inclinations do not strip us of the ability to respond (or not respond) to God in faith. We are saved by grace, through faith. Faith is not a work, like repentance is not a work, like baptism is not a work, but all are simply the right response to take to obey the gospel and accept God's saving work.
- Because of this belief in free will, Arminians believe that just as a person can choose to follow God, they can un-choose him as well. To Arminians, falling away from faith is a real possibility for every believer, so, every believer must be careful.
- **The Calvinist view** is different in that it emphasizes the sovereignty of God. It says that man is so completely fallen and sinful, that a person cannot even make the good decision to seek after God, even if he wanted to. We are saved by grace, through faith, but faith cannot be the product of a free will choice because of sin.
- So, in Calvinism, it is God himself who unconditionally elects (or chooses) whether a person is saved, or by default, whether a person is not saved. Faith is from God, not from ourselves. Since it is impossible for a person to bring about his own salvation, it is also impossible then, for a person to lose salvation by "falling away." Calvinists will rest in a phrase that maybe you've heard: That a person "once saved, is always saved."

- A quick couple of notes here:
- **First:** neither camp cares for Hebrews 6.
- **Second:** Just a friendly reminder...same team. Ok? All of us should be able to say with one voice: There is no salvation outside the name of Jesus.

## Luke 15

- Help with difficult texts comes with not so difficult texts.
- Luke 15 is a whole chapter about lostness and about recovery of the thing that was lost.
- The third parable is the most famous. In this story, a son is lost.
- The son utterly rejects his father. He has fun for a minute, but then finds himself dead in a far off country. He's still the father's son, but he's a dead son.
- He comes to his senses and he goes back home hoping that his father might take him back, not as a son any more, but maybe as a servant.
- The final scene finds him in the father's arms. The father says these words: ***My son was dead, and is now alive again! He was lost, and is found.***
- The word ***again*** is key here. This son couldn't have become alive ***again*** unless he had already been alive at some earlier time.
- Also, the son could never have become alive ***again*** unless there came a point where he was truly dead.
- So the story Jesus gives is this: A very alive son, falls away from his father and becomes dead, yet repented, and came home, and was welcomed home, alive ***again***.

Hebrews 6 echoes the story of Luke 15.

- Listen to 4-5: These are descriptions of believers in Jesus. These are people who have given their lives to the Lord. Alive in God's family.
- Also look at verse 6: It makes it crystal clear that these are true believers. THW talks of renewing them ***again*** to repentance.
- Just like the son in Luke 15, THW presents his case of what happens if one of these true followers of Jesus decides to give him up. They've fallen away.
- And Luke 15 is still true, right? Surely these once believers now dead can come to their senses and come back home, right?
- At first glance, it appears not. *It is impossible...to restore them again to repentance.*

Dr. Jack Cottrell has written extensively that this verse does not teach that it is impossible for a person to ever return to Jesus after falling away.

- Here's the problem according to Cottrell is the word in the English: ***Since***.
- This would be what we should add if the participles were past tense participles, but they're not. The participles in the text are present tense. So the connecting word should be different: it should be "while" or "as long as"
- "It is impossible...to restore them again to repentance ***as long as*** they are crucifying once again the son of God."

- The right participle makes the impossibility conditional.
- It's like the son in Luke 15! God will never refuse a repentant son. In fact, he'll welcome him home with open arms.
- Note the verse right after the warning: (vs 9) Hebrews 6:9 (ESV) *9 Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.*
- The headline of the gospel is not condemnation...it is hope. The crucial part of the story of the Prodigal son is not that he was dead. The triumph is that he came to his senses, and he came home, alive again in his father's house.
- In Hebrews 6: Read to the end of the chapter. It is dedicated to the secure hope we have in Jesus.
- We have hope because of God's character:
- He is not unjust (6:10)
- He has a history of promise keeping (6:14-15)
- He swears by his own name to keep his promise (6:16-17)
- It is impossible for God to lie (6:18)
- You're going to die. But God's promises never will. Hold on to them with patient endurance.
- Anchor yourself in what he has promised you in Jesus.
- Set this anchor in your heart, and falling away becomes the last thing you'll ever consider.

*God, we thank you for your grace. Let us never give up on to the salvation that you've given us in Jesus. Let us hold fast to the hope set before us. In the name of the one who is Hope, Jesus, we pray and give thanks. Amen.*