

Well let's pick up our passage in Hebrews 6 back in verse 9.

### ***Hebrews 6:9-10***

Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do.

As we studied in **5:11-14** and **6:1-8**, the Spirit exhorted these believers to grow up and stop living like children who do not believe. While they should be “eating meat,” so to speak, and teaching others the deeper things of God they were suckling on milk and had an appetite only for the very basic and rudimentary things pertaining to their lives in Christ. This was not ok.

Then, after this initial rebuke, the Spirit bumped up the intensity of His message and reached back to what He had previously communicated in Chapters **3** and **4** through the metaphor of the exodus story with a truth that stood to serve as a dire warning to these believers.

If you remember the exodus story, all but 2 of the Israelites had determined that regardless of what God had done for them during their brief time in the wilderness, they did not believe in Him, did not think He would deliver them, and to our surprise had been, during this entire time, continually making a personal decision to live in unbelief. Oh sure, they were willing to take of the goodness of the Lord, share in all that He had chosen to give them, and even put on a very

good religious face as they took advantage of His provision. But for some reason their hearts were frozen cold to the Lord.

Keep in mind, their great sin was not a onetime mistake when they feared crossing over the Jordan River; rather, their refusal to cross into the Promised Land was just a fruit of their incessant unbelief and decision to harden their heart towards God. As a result, God agreed to stand by the decision they had made to live in unbelief and swore in His wrath that they would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land and experience His promise of peace and rest. They would be stuck wandering through the wilderness until they died; which ironically seems to be exactly what they wanted.

In the same manner, the Spirit said in **6:6** it is impossible to renew to repentance a believer who has been enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, has been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, tasted of the goodness of the Word of God and the powers to come, and yet despite all of that has decided, nay determined, to continually live in unbelief.

You see there seems to be some point where a believer who chooses to continually live in unbelief and so hardens their heart toward God—even rejects God—that they will practically not get to share, *in this life*, in the promises of peace and rest that God has for them; they will not get to experience the things in this life that pertain to their great salvation. Rather, at some point God decides to honor their choice to not believe and lets them live according to the path they have chosen. They get to wander around the wilderness of unbelief never getting to enjoy the benefits of the Promised Land.

Now, their choice as a believer not only harms them, but it also shames the work of the cross holding it up to public contempt. By implication they are saying that the cross is not enough for them to move forward onto maturity. Because of the hardness of their hearts they are too afraid to do the work that is required to possess the Promised Land. They are afraid that Jesus is not going to be to them everything that He promised He would be; He might be that for others but not for them. And instead of growing up to maturity they would rather live as a child keeping themselves busy by constantly revisiting the elementary principles of Christianity. This decision makes it seem as if Jesus is just too small to actually care for them and this decision shames the cross.

This is serious and not to be taken lightly. However, the Lord, the Lord God, is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth (**Exodus 34:6**). Therefore, while there is still opportunity for these believers to soften their hearts, the Spirit gives this clear and dire warning. He says 3 times in **3:7, 15; 4:7**, (which as a good Bible student anytime something is said 3 times it should make your ears perk up for the statement is wrapped up in perfection) "Today, if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts."

In other word, if you are sitting here and the Word of God is still able to find a soft place to land in your heart and you have not yet hardened your heart so completely that it cannot take root, then 1) take comfort for you have not yet reached that place where God will let you live in your own horrific choice to not believe and 2) choose today, right now, to respond to the Word of God and let it be the absolute authority over your life. Remember, hardening is a process. The more you are exposed to the Word of God and refuse to let it have its place of authority over your life the harder your heart becomes. But if you choose to

soften your heart and let the Word have its place in your life you can experience all the benefits that come with living out your salvation here and now.

Now, let's get back to the immediate context in **6:9**. These believers were given this warning because they were seriously playing with the idea of going back to Judaism (or religion) and abandoning the truth that without faith it is impossible to please God. However, the Spirit was still hopeful that they would make the choice to soften their hearts, grow up in to maturity, and not become like those who shame the cross. It is clear that the Spirit expected them to respond and fully experience, in this life, the things that pertain to salvation.

I love that about God. He is always so hopeful for us even when we tend to get down on ourselves. In this passage, it's as if the Spirit reminds these believers of what they have done so they will not lose hope but have full confidence that they can continue to move forward toward maturity and reject the temptation to harden their hearts. He reminds them that since they have served other believers (the "saints") with God's agape love, and they continue to do so, there is great hope. Clearly, they have serious maturity issues, but they must be trusting Jesus to some extent because He has taken up enough of a place within their hearts that His love is able to be expressed, from time to time, out of their lives.

Isn't it comforting that God always remembers our works of love and points us to them? Do you know why? It is because our works of agape love give honor and glory to His Name. What we have translated in the ESV as "for his sake" literally means "toward the Name"—their work of love was toward the Name. To me this is beautiful. It says that anytime we believe, and let Jesus do His work of love through us, it always brings glory to the Name. Now, we must not too quickly run

over this statement. You have to understand that in the mind of a Jew the Name is a big deal for it is one of the most powerful of Jewish concepts. I took the following from a Judaism 101 text and I thought it would be good for us to get an appreciation for the Name.

The most important of God's Names is the four-letter Name represented by the [Hebrew letters](#) Yod-Hei-Vav-Hei (YHVH). It is often referred to as the Ineffable Name, the Unutterable Name or the Distinctive Name. Linguistically, it is related to the [Hebrew root](#) Hei-Yod-Hei (to be), and reflects the fact that God's existence is eternal. In scripture, this Name is used when discussing God's relation with human beings, and when emphasizing his qualities of lovingkindness and mercy. It is frequently shortened to Yah (Yod-Hei), Yahu or Yeho (Yod-Hei-Vav), especially when used in combination with names or phrases, as in Yehoshua (Joshua, meaning "the Lord is my Salvation"), Eliyahu (Elijah, meaning "my God is the Lord"), and Halleluyah ("praise the Lord").

For those of you who don't know the word "ineffable" means indescribable, beyond words, or overwhelming. To be able to personally labor on behalf of the ineffable, unutterable and distinctive Name (the Name that is like no other) is probably one of the greatest honors afforded to us as believers. This is our great privilege when we serve and minister to each other with God's agape love.

On a very practical note, I have to ask you something. Are there people in this body that for whatever reason you are unwilling or reluctant to let Jesus love through you? Are you being a barrier to the work that God wants to do in them through you? If so, please stop, for you are not showing love to the Name. If you understand this concept then you will realize that any issues that you have with your brothers and sisters in the Lord are not really between you and those that

you find to be so difficult or unpleasant, but it is between you and God—between you and the Name.

Therefore, this is something that you must give great heed to and I implore you do not harden your hearts. Children make distinctions between the people they will give themselves to and those they will avoid; but the mature in the Lord are willing to continually let God's agape love pour from their lives to the holy ones (the saints) that God has placed in their lives. Again, it is time to grow up.

Do you know that the ability to love others with God's agape love is the fruit of the Spirit that accompanies those who live out their salvation in the here and now? Love is not the work we do but it is the fruit of the work of believing. This love is the distinctive that separates our relationships in the body of Christ from all others. In addition, it is this distinctive—God's agape love—that evidences our true obedience to Christ (***John 14:21; 15:17***). It is what Jesus desires from us.

Just by way of emphasis, the word "beloved" comes from the word Agape. In other words, they are loved of God. It is also in the **vocative** case which **emphasizes** this point. They are not only partakers in the heavenly calling (as we studied in **3:1**) but they are totally, completely and **emphatically** loved of God.

***Hebrews 6:11-12***

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

The Spirit wants all of us, every believer, to choose to believe in order that we might enjoy the promises of peace, rest, provision, joy, and love that come with our salvation. These are the promises that are to be ours in the here and now. These are the promises that it seems everyone wants but so few enjoy.

People come to the Lord believing that these promises are to be their instant reality; as if it they are something they can swing by and pick up off the shelves of the nearest Christian store. But they do not understand, and probably have not been taught, that these blessings are attributes of the person of Jesus Christ (***John 6:48; 14:27; 15:9-11; Matthew 11:28-29***). They come with Him and there is no other way to attain them except to have more and more of Him in your heart.

That is why the key to the true Christian experience is belief—knowing why you can trust yourself to God, knowing how to trust yourself to God (which is prepared belief), and then to make the ultimate decision in the moment to be active in your belief and live according to the truth of who Jesus is and who you are to Jesus. This is the pathway to experiencing the promises of peace, rest, provision, joy, and love that come with our salvation.

Now, clearly this is a journey that takes patience and endurance. In each of our souls there are so many rooms, not to mention all the little hidden nooks and crannies, where we simply do not trust ourselves to Jesus and instead maintain adamant and vehement control over our own lives and decisions. So if we are willing, Jesus will take us one room at a time and shows us why He is enough, why He is sufficient, and why His cross and His love are bigger than anything we can imagine. But still we must choose to believe that His words are true. We must still choose to activate our belief into faith by trusting ourselves to His rule over our

lives, by refusing to follow our own voice, and choosing to let His Word be the ultimate authority over our lives evidenced by how we make decisions.

The good news is that there are those who have done it and are doing it and we are to follow in their footsteps. We are to imitate, or literally mimic, those who through faith and patience experience the promises. We can watch how they activate their belief into faith. We can understand the challenges in their life and how they are tempted to not trust Jesus and yet see them walk through those temptations in victory as they let Jesus be their Lord and God.

We can see how God becomes to them everything that He said He is. We can see how they make choices to love others despite what they may feel or even want to do. And in this body, we are very lucky for we have living proof that this walk of faith is possible and something that we too can experience. We have those who have chosen to bet their lives on the Name. We are fortunate in deed.

But you must follow the pattern they have set for you and you must never forget that the promises of God only come with the person of Jesus Christ. They are experienced when you know His character, nature, and personality so well that you are willing to trust Him with and in everything. And with every room within the corridors of your soul in which you give Him His rightful place to rule and reign over your life, you will experience more and more of His peace, His rest, His provision, His joy, and His love. So don't be sluggish or lazy; instead, always be followers of those who have learned to live by faith.

Furthermore, as I stated in our study in **6:1-8**, the inheritance of these promises deals with experiencing our salvation in the here and now and it is not addressing experiencing salvation in terms of the after-life. I am fully convinced of this for the



many reasons we previously discussed but also because the word “*inherit*” is in the present active tense and not the future tense. We are to presently and actively live in and experience these promises; they are our present inheritance of our great salvation.

Now, I am not settled with the way the ESV translated the phrase: “And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end.” This “to have” is not in the Greek and I want us to understand this in context and ensure that we do not read something in to this phrase that is not being said.

With the addition of “to have” we might be misled to think we must “do” in order “to have”—that our eternal security (our hope) is somehow conditional or dependent upon our ability to do it right and show the same earnestness as those who have learned to live by faith. But as we know, that is wrong. Our hope has been reserved for us in heaven and is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away and is protected by the power of God for a salvation to be revealed in the last days (**1 Peter 1:3-5**). Besides, we can know (or be fully convinced) that if we believe in the Son of God we have eternal life (**1 John 5:13**). So do not be confused by the translators insertion of “to have” into this passage.

The literal translation should be rendered: “And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness unto [or toward] the full assurance of hope until the end.”

Let me explain. In the same manner that our works of agape love are toward the Name, our showing earnestness to follow in the footsteps of those who have learned to live by faith is an act which expresses the confidence of our full

assurance that our hope is ours and no one can take it away. Our earnestness to live by faith demonstrates that we belong to and are part of the family of God. It communicates to others that we are fully persuaded that it is ok to trust ourselves to Jesus and live by faith because we belong to Him.

Accordingly, we know that even if we blow it and don't do it "right" that we are ok because we are safe in His hands. After all, He has given us eternal life and no one can snatch us away from Him or from His Father who holds us in His hands (**John 10:28-30**). It communicates that we are free to patiently work through this journey of faith knowing that even though we may stumble it is ok for we will always belong to Him. It takes the pressure off of our failures and allows us to continue down the pathway of learning why we can trust ourselves to Jesus and how to trust in the very real and practical aspects of our life. So this earnestness is an expression toward this full conviction of our hope until the end.

This phrase carries with it the idea that if you are fully convinced of your hope that you will naturally not be sluggish but will be imitators of those who live by faith. The point is that your hope is so incredible, especially when you consider the outcome of those who do not have this hope, that it should inspire you and motivate you to be given fully over to this God who has saved you.

He has given you this hope and it is all dependent upon His character and nature and not your ability to muster up the will and wits to do things right. He is so gracious, loving and kind to us which if we truly appreciated the extent of His love we would not neglect so great a salvation but pay much closer attention to what we heard so that way we do not drift away from it (**Hebrews 2:1-3**). This great salvation of ours is to be understood, known and expressed through our

lives as evidence of our firm conviction of who we are in Christ Jesus and the assurance of our hope. We are to be the living examples of those who have presently and actively inherited the promises and get to enjoy the peace, rest, provision, joy, and love that come with our salvation.

***Hebrews 6:13-20***

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

The point of this passage is that you can have firm confidence in your hope and not waver even a moment in time; for your hope is all dependent upon God and God always doing everything that He says—it is not dependent upon you to keep it up and maintain it. The first example we have here is how faithfully God dealt with Abraham. God made Abraham a promise (and we know that God cannot lie)

and sure enough even though Abraham had to wait patiently for many years, He obtained the promise. He was blessed in all He did and a new nation was supernaturally birthed from this one man. The promise was even fulfilled by a supernatural act for Abraham was 100 and Sarah his wife was 91 when Isaac was born.

Now, the tendency that many of us have when we read something in the Bible is to step away from it—to disconnect—and treat it as if this Word that is living and active is not personally applicable to us. We make this choice (whether conscious or unconscious) not to internalize it because we do not believe that God will deal with us in the same way that He dealt with the men and women of old. We think that what happened to Abraham was pretty cool, but then with the same breathe we say that we are not Abraham.

Knowing that we have this tendency to think that God works for others and not necessarily for us, the Father wanted to show us—the heirs of the promise—more convincingly, or in the Greek, in a superabundant way, the unchangeable character of His purpose; so He guaranteed His promise to us with an oath. In the same way that God was fully faithful to Abraham, He will be fully faithful to us and we will one day see Him, know Him, and be like Him; in fact, we will be one with Him. It is our destiny. And His purposes for our lives will not be changed for it is impossible for God to lie. He has promised and He has confirmed it with an oath; thus, it will be done. And just so you know, there is no one greater than God by which this oath can be made. He is infinite and eternal and His Name alone is ineffable, unutterable and distinctive like no other.

The point being that because of who God is and what He has promised to us, we can confidently live out our salvation in the here and now. He wants us to be so convinced of our hope that we let the truth of our great salvation penetrate every part of our lives. He told us this so we stop living as men and women of the flesh who are controlled by fear freaking out over everything that happens in our lives—including great suffering and tragedy. Instead He wants us to presently and actively live as men and women who have been born of the Spirit and who know that they belong to the living God. Does that describe you? It should! You are a child of God!

We have fled to Him and we have been saved and oh it is such a great salvation. Just a side note: “for refuge” is not in the Greek, but it is another adder from the translators to help us non Jews understand the context. I believe the idea behind this statement “we have fled” is very Jewish and would have instantly been understood by the audience as well all of you who have been reading the Exodus story. When Moses gave instructions to Joshua about the Promised Land he told Joshua to set up cities of refuge where the guilty could flee for safety.

For example, if a person killed another (and it was not willful as in 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder but more akin to manslaughter), they could take off running and get to a city of refuge knowing that if they get there before anyone takes revenge on them that by the ordinance of God they would be safe. The knowledge and understanding that, despite their actions, that they had the hope of living is what fueled a person’s race to the city.

Similarly, the knowledge of our great salvation and the certainty of our security are to fuel our desire to live out our salvation in the here and now. I would like to

return for a moment to a list we studied in **2:1-4**, which attempts to describe the potency this great salvation. I do not believe this is an all inclusive list, but there is enough contained in this list that our lives should be radically changed when we live fully convinced that we have been saved from:

- Eternal death and have been given eternal life.
- All the death produced in our lives resulting from our *old sinful nature*.
- The legacy that was passed down to us from our parents and their parents and their parents and so on—the generational sin that has been snowballing in our families for centuries.
- All the self-destructive and dysfunctional coping mechanisms that we learned and adopted in order to deal with our lives.
- The impotency of our own strength, our own wisdom, and the counsel of our own minds, which have no access at all to the supernatural wisdom that comes from above.
- The power and domination over our lives by our emotions, desires, lusts, and the cravings lurking within our bodies.
- Bondage to sin and to the enemy who ruled and controlled our lives.
- Our addiction to this temporal vanishing world that is merely an illusion of reality.
- Our delusion that we can control anything.

In addition, to what He saved us from, Jesus also saved us in order to love others with His agape love. With these being the realities of our great salvation, we must hold fast, or take hold of the hope set before us and live from these truths regardless of what is happening in our lives. We have fled and we have

been saved and our hope in that salvation is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.

This truth of our great salvation is to be understood very practically. It is to steady us in the most vicious of storms. It is to hold us in place and be our assurance that when the wind stops blowing and the waves stop crashing we will still be safe and sound. Others may not have any tools to handle and weather the tragedies of this life, but we do. We have our hope. We have our confidence of our great salvation. We don't have to live like others who do not have hope; we don't have to be panicking and reacting to what life throws at us; we can know that we belong to God and He is a big God; so big in fact that on His own word and authority He promises that we will always be safe for our hope will never wane.

The metaphor in this passage switches again, and we get a 3<sup>rd</sup> illustration about our hope. First, the city of refuge, second the anchor in the storm, and third, the ability to enter into the holy of holies. Remember, if something comes in threes it means that it is bounded by perfection. Our hope is a perfect hope so you better be paying close attention to what I have been saying.

This hope actually enters into the inner place behind the curtain where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. The imagery here is powerful. This means that our salvation has provided us the right and the privilege of coming into the presence of our Father anytime we want. As we studied, this would have shocked the mind of the Jew. The holy place was where the Spirit of God would rest and not just anyone could enter into this room; but only the high priest and only one time per

year. But our hope is so sure, so steadfast, so guaranteed, that we can boldly and confidently enter into this privileged place anytime we need. And we are not entering into the mere copy of the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle, but we enter into the true Holy of Holies in the heavenly realm. Jesus cleared the way for us and we are safe for us because He has made us acceptable to the Father. He has made us holy.

Are you beginning to understand how this hope of our great salvation is to be the fuel that practically strengthens us to believe God in every part of our lives? This is the point of this entire passage. The Spirit knows that what we believe will ultimately determine how we live.

Thus, today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts. We no longer have to be dull of hearing and live as children who drink only milk. We can start to grow into maturity training our sense to discern between all that is good and is from God and all else that is evil. We can experience the supernatural in our here and now and actually know His peace, His provision, His joy, and His love. They can be a constant in our lives. We can have the strongest confidence in our hope and continually hold on to it; in fact, it is to define us and it is to be what centers us and gives us stability in this life.

Oh what a great salvation we have been given. I implore you to no longer live as a child playing with and musing upon religion; instead own your present inheritance—own it. Let it be your truth. Let it define you. It does not matter what those in this world think about you; they are not to be who you follow. Follow those who through patience and faith have inherited the promises.

Let's Pray