

**An Encouraging Word  
Hebrews 6:9-12**

This morning we have assembled together with our brothers and sisters in Christ. And because we are brothers and sisters in Christ we should not and cannot be indifferent to one another. We need to take an active interest in each other's lives and when given the opportunity we need to be eager to help one another and to assist one another and this interest and this eagerness needs to continue to express itself until the end our lives.

So why is this so important? Our active interest in each other's lives and our eagerness to help and assist one another until the end of our lives is a necessary expression of genuine faith in Christ and love toward God. And this thought now brings us back to our study.

We are presently studying the Book of Hebrews. This book was written by an unknown author to a group of struggling Hebrew Christians living in Rome, who under a great persecution were considering leaving the Christian faith in order to return to Judaism.

The author in response to this struggle wrote this particular book in order to strengthen their faith so that they, in having their faith strengthened, might be able to persevere.

In seeking to accomplish this goal, he sought to focus his reader's attention on the superiority of Christ. So, what have we seen so far in our ongoing study of this epistle and therefore in our ongoing study of Christ's superiority?

We have seen that Christ is superior to the Old Testament prophets. We have seen that Christ is superior to the angels. We have seen that Christ is superior to Moses. And now we are seeing that Christ's priesthood is superior to all other priesthoods (Hebrews 4:14-10:18). This section began in **Hebrews 4:14** and will continue all the down through **Hebrews 10:18**.

So how did the author begin this section? The author began this section by focusing his reader's attention on Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry in **Hebrews 4:14-16**. After this the author then pointed out to his readers that Christ's appointment to His heavenly high priestly ministry was according to

the order Melchizedek. He did this in **Hebrews 5:1-10**. So then what did the author do?

The author, after having introduced the Son's divine appointment according to the order of Melchizedek, then took a strategic detour in order to warn his readers in Hebrews 5:11-6:20. And this is the section we are presently in. We are in this warning section.

So how did the author begin this warning section? The author began this warning section with an exhortation (Hebrews 5:11-6:3). This exhortation can be found in **Hebrews 5:11-6:3**. So how did this section of verses begin?

The author in this section of verses, before exhorting his readers, began by sharing with his readers in **Hebrews 5:11-12** what he believed was a serious spiritual problem among them. And what was that problem? He believed his readers were “**dull of hearing,**” that they were “**lethargic in hearing,**” that they were “**lazy in hearing.**” And because of this they, rather than spiritually maturing, had actually gone backwards, and so much so that the author told them they needed someone to teach them all over again the elementary principles of the oracles of God.

And what was the by-product of their “**dullness of hearing**” according to **Hebrews 5:13-14**? They were no longer able to discern good and evil and because they were no longer able to discern good and evil they obviously had, spiritually speaking, become extremely vulnerable.

So, what was the author's solution for their problem? The solution for their problem was for them to pursue spiritual maturity. And this is exactly what he exhorted them to do in **Hebrews 6:1-3**.

And hopefully this is what everyone in this room this morning is presently doing, knowing that if we fail to do this we will invariably find ourselves going backwards in our Christian walk rather than forwards. And if this continues over a long enough period of time, our ability to discern good and evil will become so extremely compromised, we could find ourselves no longer able to discern good and evil, just as the recipients of this letter during the time of this persecution were finding this to be the case, which obviously placed them, spiritually speaking, in a very dangerous position.

So do we believe this? Hopefully we do! And if we do believe this we will, in response to this author's exhortation, pursue maturity or in other words we will purpose ourselves to understand and to apply more and more of God's Word to our lives. And if we fail to do this, is there anything at stake? Absolutely! And this led us to the next part of our text.

After the author exhorted his readers, he then presented a harsh warning (Hebrews 6:4-8). He presented this harsh warning in **Hebrews 6:4-8**.

And how did this harsh warning begin? It began with an assertion. And what that assertion? The author in **Hebrews 6:4-6** asserted that it is impossible to renew to repentance those who fall away after they had enjoyed certain spiritual blessings.

This assertion was obviously a warning. But to whom among this congregation was this warning being directed? Was it being directed toward those within the congregation who had truly exercised genuine living saving faith or was it being directed to those within the congregation, who though professing faith and blessed in various ways by their attachment to that congregation, had never truly exercised genuine living saving faith and therefore when tested might fall away?

And what was our conclusion? This warning was being directed toward those within the congregation who though professing and blessed in various ways by their attachment to that congregation had never truly exercised true genuine saving faith. They were like Judas. Judas had attached himself to Christ and to Christ's disciples. He had been blessed in various ways because of that attachment but even in spite of all of this he had never truly exercised genuine living saving faith or in other words he never had become a true disciple of Christ. And what was the proof of that? He fell away in spite of all the blessings he had been surrounded which thus rendered him what? Irrecoverable!

So after this harsh warning that was spoken to the whole of the congregation but directed at a certain group who may have been a part this congregation in **Hebrews 6:4-8**, what did the author do next? After the author's harsh warning he then softened it in Hebrews 6:9-12. Let me now read these verses for you and see if this is not so. **"But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation,**

**though we are speaking in this way. (10) For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. (11) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, (12) so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”** So did the author, based on these verses, soften the harshness of the warning that he had just given his readers earlier in **Hebrews 6:4-8**? Yes! Absolutely!

So why would he have done this? He wanted his readers to know that just because he had, within his previous warning, spelled out for them the dire consequences for those who fall away after having been so blessed, he did not want them to conclude that this was what he believed would happen to them. And this is why I believe he softened this warning. So how did the author do this?

The author initially softened the harshness of his warning by using a term of endearment (Hebrews 6:9). And what was that term of endearment? It was the term **“beloved.”** Isn’t this exactly what we see at the beginning of **verse 9**? What did the author say? **“But, beloved.”**

Yes, it is true the author had just confronted them with the potential dangers that were facing them, as a by-product of their dullness of hearing but this did not mean that he did not care for them, otherwise he would not have used the term **“beloved”** but he did use the term **“beloved.”** He used the term beloved because he did in fact still care for them in spite of all their spiritual struggles.

So did this term **“beloved”** as an expression of care for them soften the harshness of the warning that he had just given them? Yes! Absolutely!

But this was not the only thing that this author did in order to soften the harshness of the warning that he had just given them. So, what else did the author do?

The author also softened the harshness of his warning by telling his readers that he was convinced of better things concerning them (Hebrews 6:9).

So let us continue to read **Hebrews 6:9** and see if this is not so. **“But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you.”** So would these words that followed his term of endearment have further softened the harshness of his previous warning? Absolutely!

So, what were these **“better things”**? The “better things” would have been those things that were in some manner related to salvation. So how do we know this?

Let us continue to read the verse. **“But beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.”** So based on these words, would the **“better things”** most likely have been referring in some manner to things related to salvation? Yes, I believe that would have to be our conclusion.

The author had just warned his readers that those who fall away after having been so blessed would be judged because it would be impossible to renew them again to repentance. But here this author is making it very clear to his readers that his expectation for their congregation as a whole, in spite of his warning, was not judgment but rather things related to salvation. So, what did the author do next?

After expressing his confidence in his readers the author then went on to explain to his readers why he was so confident (Hebrews 6:10). So now let us now read Hebrews 6:10 and see if this is not so. **“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”**

So did the author based on these words explain to his readers why he was so confident that they rather than experiencing judgment would in fact experience things related to salvation? Yes! Absolutely!

And what was the reason? **“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name.”** So, what did he mean by this? First of all, I believe he meant that their faith (the faith of this congregation as a whole) was being lived out in their **“work.”** And because their faith was being lived out in their work, this author was convinced at this particular time that this congregation as a whole would not be facing judgment, for he knew that God, being a just God rather than an

unjust God, would not forget their work of faith. This is what I believe the author meant when he said, **“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work.”** And this is why this author was so confident that this congregation of struggling Hebrew believers would as a whole be experiencing **“better things.”**

So why would I conclude that this work that this author was referring to here, the work that God would not forget, was a work of faith even though the author did not specifically say it? It had to be.

I believe we can conclude this because **Ephesians 2:8-9** tells us very clearly, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not as a result of works, so no one may boast.”**

We are saved through faith and faith alone and not by works. But true, genuine, living, saving faith will work. What does **James 2:17** tell us? **“Faith, if it has no works, is dead.”**

Did the author believe these things I just shared with you? Of course he did. This is why this why I believe this author told his readers, **“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work.”** This author would not have been able to say this if he had not viewed their work as an expression of their faith. But this was not all that this author saw as he viewed their work.

Let us continue to read **verse 10** and see if this is not so. **“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love that you have shown toward His name.”** So, what else did the author see as he viewed his reader’s work? He saw their expression of love toward God.

So hopefully we should now understand why this author was convinced of better things for his readers in matters related to salvation. He was convinced of better things for them in matters pertaining to salvation because the work that he was referring to here expressed their faith and love toward God.

So now we come to the big question. What was the work, this work that made such a strong impression upon this author and that produced in such great confidence toward his readers?

Let us continue to read **verse 10. “But God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”** So, what was this work that produced in this author such great confidence for the reasons that I shared with you? It was their past and ongoing ministry to the saints.

They were struggling in their faith but their faith and love toward God had not failed. How did the author know this? He knew because of one thing. Their ministry to one another had remained a constant even in spite of the great persecution that they were now undergoing.

So why was the author focusing on this particular work? Based on God’s Word it would be expected that those who possess genuine faith and love toward God would express their faith and express their love in this particular way.

Let me read for you **James 2:15-16. “If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, (16) and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? (17) Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”** If genuine, living, saving faith, is truly present it will continue to express itself when confronted with the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is a given. And if it doesn’t it’s dead.

Let me for you **I John 3:16-18. “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (17) But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (18) Little children, let us not love with word and with tongue, but in deed and truth.”**

If the love of God is truly present it will continue to express itself when we are confronted with the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is a given. And if it doesn’t then the love of God is not abiding in us.

When this author considered this congregation, he knew they were struggling, he knew that they were in danger, but he also was very confident that they would be responding to his exhortation to pursue maturity. He believed this. Why? It was because they, though struggling, had remained

constant in a specific area of ministry? And what was that area of ministry? It was their ministry one toward another.

So, what did the author do next? The author, in light of what he had just explained, then expressed his personal desire for each of his readers, which was to realize the full assurance of hope until the end (Hebrews 6:11). And what would that require? It would require them to continue to exercise the same diligence as they had in this matter of ministering one to another until the end.

So now let us now read **Hebrews 6:11** and see if this is not so. **“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end.”**

Based on these words if we are going to enjoy full assurance of hope until the end, continually rejoicing in the fact that we are saved, what will we have to do? We will need to continue to minister to one another, not in a passive way but in an energetic way until the end our lives.

The author’s personal desire for each of his readers then led him to personally challenge his readers to be imitators of a certain group of people (Hebrews 6:12). And who was this certain group of people? These were Old Testament saints, who these Hebrew Christians were very familiar with, who through faith and patience inherited the promises of God. Or in other words, though they may have suffered over a long period of time, they had now entered their promised rest. And this was the group of people that this author was now challenging this group of readers to imitate.

We cannot be indifferent to one another. We need to take an active interest in each other’s lives and when given the opportunity we need to be eager to help one another and to assist one another.

So why is this so important? Our active interest in each other’s lives and our eagerness to help and assist one another are necessary expressions of genuine faith and love toward God and therefore if we are going to realize the full assurance of our hope until the end then we need to stay actively involved in each others live and showing an eagerness to help one another, as best as we can until the very end of our lives



May God give us the grace to continue our ministry to our brothers and sisters in Christ to the end so that we to the end might enjoy the full assurance of our hope until the end.

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