

Perseverance Hebrews 10:26-39

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. ³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Who speaks truth to you? Whom do you listen to? We all need someone in our lives who will speak truth to us in love (Eph 4:15). Such a relationship can be hard to create and even more difficult to maintain.

This “*speaking the truth in love*” is a particular responsibility of “*apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.... so that we may no longer be children...[but]...we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, in to Christ...in love*” (Eph 4:11-16)

First: The Author’s Warning 26-27

The author’s point has been and continues to be “trusting in the Temple, the priests and the OT sacrificial system after the cross, is not just wrong, it is dangerous.

26-27 – “*For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries*”

The sin the author has in mind primarily is the complete and final renunciation of the faith after being enlightened to it.

“*Deliberately sinning*” carries the idea of consciously and permanently rejecting Christ. To know God’s way, to hear it preached, to study it, to count oneself among the faithful, and then to turn away is to become apostate.

Such a person does not sin because of ignorance, nor is he carried away by momentary temptations he is too weak to resist. To deliberately sin, in this particular case, is to choose the Temple over Jesus, to leave Christ for the sacrificial system.

In our world, we are being challenged to choose cultural relevance over faithfulness to Jesus.

What challenges your faithfulness to Jesus?

If Christ’s sacrifice is rejected, then all hope of salvation is gone. To turn away willfully from this sacrifice leaves no sacrifice; it leaves only sin, the penalty for which is eternal death. Why?

10:4 - *For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

We must remember that in the book of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit is not contrasting two kinds of Christianity. He is not contrasting

- a) immature Christians and mature ones. He is contrasting
- b) Judaism and Christianity,
- c) the unsaved Jew in Judaism and the redeemed Jew in Christianity.

He is contrasting

- a) the shadow versus the substance
- b) the pattern versus the reality
- c) the visible and the invisible,
- d) the print and the original
- e) the picture and the person.

The shadow cannot save.

In the Lord Jesus, Christians have the substance and reality, of which Judaism contained but the shadows and figures

The emphasis on deliberate, or final, denial is important because, as the life of the disciple Peter demonstrates, true believers may temporarily deny Christ and still be restored.

The Bible’s Encouragement. 28-29

28 - In the OT, anyone convicted of “*set[ting] aside the law of Moses dies without mercy.*”

This speaks to capital cases in which two witnesses were required to definitively prove guilt (Numbers 35:30).

Jesus claimed three witnesses prove his identity –

Luke 24:44 – “...everything written about me in

- a) *the Law of Moses and*
- b) *the Prophets and*
- c) *the Psalms must be fulfilled.”*

29 - “How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?”

These warnings should concern us and may even frighten us, and that is not altogether a bad thing.

- The point is not to make us doubt our salvation or think that particular sins can keep us out of heaven.
- The point is to encourage us to trust Jesus and Jesus alone.

Doing otherwise –

- a) 29 - Trampling underfoot the Son of God

He’s saying, “If you walk back to the Temple, you’ll have to walk back over the body of Jesus.”

When Charles Spurgeon began preaching the book of Hebrews to his congregation, he gloriously announced, “*I have nothing to do tonight but to preach Jesus Christ.*” He was doing exactly what the apostles had done before him.

Luke tells us that the very first Christians “they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.” (Acts 5:42).

When Phillip went down to Samaria, “*he proclaimed to them Christ*” (Acts 8:5).

And when he climbed into the Ethiopian’s chariot, “*he told him the good news about Jesus*” (Acts 8:35).

Immediately after Paul was converted, “*he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues*” (Acts 9:20).

Paul told the Corinthian church that he resolved to know nothing “*except Jesus Christ and him crucified*” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

If you choose the Temple (anything) over Jesus, you have:

- Trampled underfoot the Son of God
- b) Profaned the blood of the covenant
- c) Outraged the Spirit of grace

The purpose of these warnings is to prevent us from falling away from the Faith, which is, in actuality, an evidence that we were never in the Faith.

1 John 2:19-25 – *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. ²⁰ But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. ²¹ I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. ²² Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴ Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.”*

Matthew 15:8 - *“This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.”*

Matthew 7:23 - *“Lord, Lord, didn't we do this in your name? Didn't we do that in your name?” He will send them away, saying: “Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you.”*

Note, Jesus will not say: *“I knew you for a season and then you went sour and betrayed Me.”* Instead, he says, *“No, you never were part of My church.”*

The whole purpose of God's salvation is to bring His people safely to heaven;.

Last Wednesday night: John 3:16 – *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

- a) The extent of God's love – For God so loved
- b) The demonstration of God's love – that he gave his only begotten Son
- c) The purpose of God's love – that whoever believes in him
- d) The effect of God's love –should not perish
- e) The reward of God's love – but have everlasting life

What does this mean? If God gave his Son,

- a) People will be saved
- b) God will keep those who are saved

If Jesus dies and people are not saved or lose their salvation, God dishonors the Son.

As with most things concerning salvation, it is between the Father and the Son before it is between the Trinity and us

Therefore, what He starts He promises to finish. He not only initiates the Christian life, but the Holy Spirit is with us as the sanctifier, the convictor, and the helper to ensure our preservation.

We persevere because we are preserved.

John 6:37-40 - *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*”

Endurance in the faith does not rest on our strength. Even after we're regenerated, we still lapse into sin, even serious sin. But our perseverance doesn't depend on our works or lacks thereof but Christ's work.

This means that our Hebrews author is not telling us that we can lose our salvation. But

1 -He has a biblical view of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone

2 – He has a biblical view of providence – that God uses human means to encourage us in our faith.

We often call this ‘the perseverance of the saints’

Perseverance may be defined as that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart is continued and brought to completion. It is because God never forsakes His work that believers continue to stand to the very end.

Louis Berkhof in *Systematic Theology* (pg. 546)

Philippians 1:6 – *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

John 6:44 - No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:63-65 - It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

What God begins, God completes.

Perseverance of the saints is the biblical doctrine that the Father wholly, completely and eternally preserves in faith, all of those he has given to the Son so that they are never lost. It maintains that none who are truly redeemed by Christ can be condemned for their sins or finally fall away from the faith. But again, it is because God is faithful.

Because God is faithful, he will keep his word to return and reward those who trust in him. And that soon return is an encouragement to continue to live for God.

37-38 - For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”

We persevere because Jesus is an able and faithful Savior

Third: The Judgement of God 30-31

30-31 - For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Here is a thought to make us afraid of sin: “If God judged his own Son, he will judge us.”

And, as a way to further encourage his readers, the author reminds them of what they have already sacrificed for Christ, i.e., they have come too far to go back.

Fourth: Your Past Life 32-34

32-34 - But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Sixth: The Author’s Application. 35-38

35 Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. 37 For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.

Do you remember Abraham’s reward (35) ?

Genesis 15:2 - *“Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”*

Isaac’s miraculous birth presents a model for (37) - *“Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay”* for all of us to believe – (38) - *but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.*

God’s reward is far greater than anything any Hagar (the world) can give us.

Conclusion:

We all must heed these warnings. The writer even includes himself in this passage as one of those who must continue in the Faith. When we heed these warnings, we confirm the reality of our faith and avoid the judgment for those who ignore them and fall away into faithlessness.

39 - But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

To shrink back = destruction

To have faith = preserve soul

Community Groups:

1 – Are you seeing ‘hope’ in the midst of our pandemic?

2 – How is your daily reading coming along?

3 – Read the text

4 – v 26 - How do you define “sinning deliberately” in this passage?

5 – v 27 - What can we expect if we leave Jesus?

- 6 – v 28 - What was the penalty for a capital crime in Israel?
- 7 – What witnesses did Jesus provide to prove his identity?
- 8 – v 29 - What does it mean to “trample underfoot the Son of God”?
- 9 – What does it mean to profane the blood of the covenant?
- 10 – What does it mean to outrage the Spirit of grace?
- 11 – Read 1 John 2:19-25 and discuss what it means
- 12 – How does John 3:16 provide security for believers?
- 13 – What does “we persevere because we are preserved” mean?
- 14 – Read verses 35-39 and apply the text to your life.