

Hebrews 6:4-20
The Anchor of the Soul
2017-10-01

Anchor your hope in Jesus, walking in faith and patience

The Graveyard of the Pacific. Where the Columbia River spills into the Pacific Ocean there have been over 2000 vessels wrecked and hundreds upon hundreds of lives lost. A visit to Fort Stevens today will give you opportunity to climb around what remains of the *Peter Iredale*, a ship that ran aground in 1906. Cape Disappointment is on the Washington side of the Columbia, a fitting name to a place of such heartbreak for so many mariners. It's here that the largest US Coast Guard station on the northwest coast is located, busy with search and rescue operations. Not only are the waters turbulent, but a sandbar makes navigating safely through to safety incredibly difficult. So difficult, in fact, that large commercial vessels require a local pilot to come out and take command of the ship, to steer it safely through. So it has become known as the Graveyard of the Pacific.

Scripture Passage: Hebrews 6:4-20

The recipients of this letter were enduring difficult seas of their own. The current of the culture around them was pressing hard on them to renounce their faith in Christ, to let go of their hope in him for salvation, to move along with the flow of popular opinion and acceptance. The threats were intense, the danger was real, and the consequences were eternal. It's to these storm tossed believers that the author writes to them, encouraging them in the strongest possible way to **Anchor their hope in Jesus, walking in faith and patience.**

Beware you don't continue unresponsive (vv.4-8)

1. We left off in our last study of Hebrews finishing in 6:3, where the author writes to them to go on to maturity. They had grown dull of hearing, and there was concern for them, that they not remain dull or stay in a place of idleness, but move on to growth and maturity in Christ. The writer is concerned enough that he writes a stern warning to them.
2. v.4 *"For it is impossible..."* - This doesn't mean it is difficult, or barely possible. It means impossible. The word is used again in this same chapter to say that it is impossible for God to lie (v.18). We read this word again in Hebrews 10:4, that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, then again in 11:6 when it says that it is impossible to please God without faith. Who is it speaking about, and what does it mean?
 1. We have a description of **those it speaks about**. Those who have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, shared in the Holy Spirit, tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come. At first reading, this would seem to be speaking about Christians. Even more than that, it would seem to be speaking about Christians who have lost their salvation and can never regain it. But, I would ask you, is that what the rest of the Bible teaches? **One of the rules that helps us interpret the Bible correctly is to know that Scripture interprets Scripture, and the clear passages help us understand the more difficult or obscure passages.**
 1. John 10:28-29 *"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."* 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."* Contrast these with 1 John 2:19 *"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."*
 1. Judas Iscariot is a prime example of the type of individual being spoken of. Did he understand who Jesus was, seeing the brightness of his glory? Yes.
 2. Did he taste of the heavenly gift? Jesus fed 5000 men with 5 loaves and two fish, and Judas was one of the twelve disciples that picked up the leftovers.
 3. Did he share in the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit was actively working in the life of Jesus, and Judas was a beneficiary of that ministry.
 4. The goodness of the word of God? He heard the incarnate Word preach the word!
 5. The powers of the coming age? Do you remember when Jesus sent out his disciples on their first missionary journey? Luke 9:1-6, 10 *"And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. On their return the apostles told him all that they had done."*

6. There's a difference between being a taster and being a consumer. You might taste something, but never ingest it fully. You might be gathered with the church on Sunday after Sunday and benefit from your association with it, but still not be a regenerate member of it. Judas was so closely associated with Jesus, even being numbered among the disciples, but Jesus knew his spiritual state, even calling him a devil ([John 6:70-71](#)).
 7. J.I. Packer writes, "It is possible for people to be enlightened to the point of knowing inwardly that Jesus is the divine Savior he claims to be, and still not be willing to admit it publicly, because of all the behavioral changes that such an admission would make necessary."
 8. This, then, isn't speaking about true believers, but those who have close association with the church, even benefit from their close association to it, but are unregenerate.
 9. Then **what does it mean?** Turn to [Matthew 12:22-32](#). Here Jesus heals a blind and mute man and everyone is amazed. How did the Pharisees respond? These Pharisees who were so familiar with Scripture and trained in the Law, who knew, probably from memory, the Scriptures telling of the Messiah. They saw the works of Jesus, they knew he was who he claimed to be, but they were hardened and obstinate. They attributed the work of Jesus to Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Berkhof writes that this sin "consists in the conscious, malicious, and wilful rejection and slandering, against evidence and conviction, of the testimony of the Holy Spirit respecting the grace of God in Christ, attributing it out of hatred and enmity to the prince of darkness." Jesus, like the author of Hebrews, warns them in the strongest way possible ([vv.31-32](#)).
2. [v.6](#) "...they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt." - This is to stand in the place of yelling out, "Crucify him, crucify him" ([John 19:6](#)) even in the full awareness of and exposure to the light of Christ.
1. With the group gathered here together this morning, we'd probably all fall into one of three groups. Maybe you're here this morning and you're growing in your faith, passionately following Jesus and desiring to obey his will. Realize that around you there are others who are struggling, who need help and encouragement to grow. God wants to use you to help them. Maybe you're here and you're one of those, struggling in your faith. You don't see much growth in your life. Perhaps you're even concerned that this passage could be speaking about you, and you fear that repentance may not be possible for you. If that's you, listen carefully - that concern you have indicates that this passage is not speaking about you. Speak to the elders, share your concern with a brother or sister in Christ, ask for prayer and help. But maybe you're here this morning and you find yourself growing more cynical, maybe even feeling scornful toward the gospel. I would warn you, and invite you to repentance before repentance becomes impossible. Again, I feel it necessary to say, if you're concerned that it might be too late for you, it's not.

Transition: Instead of continuing in unresponsiveness, what should be done? Pursue the promises in faith and patience.

Be faithful and patient in pursuing the promises (vv.9-12)

1. [v.9](#) "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things..." - Here the language changes dramatically back, from "them" and "their" back to "you" and "your". He was confident of better things, of salvation.
2. [v.10](#) "For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown..." - He was confident of better things because they were bearing fruit. It wasn't that they were earning their salvation by these works, but that the faith they had was producing spiritual fruit. Where there is spiritual life there will also be spiritual fruit.
 1. The next basis of his confidence was in God's noticing their fruit. God is just, he takes note, and he regards the faithful fruit in your life that comes as a result of his Spirit at work in you.
3. [vv.11-12](#) He is confident of better things for them, based on their faithful fruit and God's faithful regard. His desire for them? That they would earnestly pursue and know with confidence the hope that is theirs through faith. [1 Peter 1:3-5](#) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
4. [v.12](#) Having this assurance of hope, that they would press on, not being sluggish or dull ([5:11](#)), but walking in the path of those who have gone before them, in faith and patience inheriting the promises.

Transition: How can we learn about being faithful and patient? The author turns us to the example of Abraham.

Be certain that what God promises he delivers (vv.13-18)

1. **v.13** “For when God made a promise to Abraham...” - There are so many wonderful lessons to be drawn from this. First, I want you to notice that the writer focuses on God. He has promised. He is faithful. What he says he will do, he will do. Also, he draws out this lesson from the life of Abraham, which should be an encouragement for us as students of the Bible. This will be done again in **Hebrews 11**, looking to the example of OT saints so they can be imitated. **There is much to be gained from the study of all of Scripture.**

1. We've been told to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. How did this work out in Abraham's life? **Genesis 12** - It was in Ur of the Chaldees that Abram was called and given the promise of great blessing. He was the son of an idol-worshiper, but was called out to leave, to go to a land that God would show him and give him. **Genesis 15** - Abram was given the promise of being the father of a great multitude, even though he and Sarah had no children. It is here that we read that Abraham “*believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*” **Genesis 17** - God promises that through Sarah he would have a son. Abraham laughs, realizing he is 100 years old and his wife is 90! **Genesis 21** - Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah. But this isn't the end of Abraham's journey of faith and patience. **Genesis 22** - Abraham is told to take his son, his only son, whom he loves, and offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of Moriah. This was the son of the promise, the only heir of Abraham and Sarah, and Abraham was commanded to offer him as a sacrifice. But Abraham believed that what God promised he would do, he would do. He didn't know how, but he didn't need to. There, as Abraham is getting ready to plunge the knife, the angel of the LORD stops him and speaks to him. **Genesis 22:15–17** “*And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.”*”

2. It's from here that the author of Hebrews quotes in **Hebrews 6:14**.

2. **vv.16-17** We get a short lesson on oaths. Oaths are made to confirm something spoken, to settle a matter, to show that what was spoken was in earnest. God guaranteed what he spoke to Abraham with an oath. Did God need to do that? Was his word uncertain, or untrustworthy, unless it was confirmed with an oath? Certainly not. Every word of God is true, and he will always perform what he says. But **v.17** tells us that God did it for the sake of Abraham, to show even more convincingly that what he said he would do. This is God, understanding the weakness of his created beings, condescending for them.

3. **v.18** We have these two unchangeable things. First, God's **promise**, and then God's **oath**. Why did God do this? For Abraham and Isaac's sake, certainly, but for the sake of others to follow and imitate their faith and patience, so that we might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us, that the promises of God toward us will be fulfilled, the salvation accomplished by Christ will be full realized, that the life he has given us will continue eternally.

1. This storm-tossed church, with persecution on this rise, pressuring them to give up or give in, to let go of their faith, had God's sure promise to encourage them to hold fast to their hope, to continue in faith and patience.

Transition: Lastly this morning we see that security is in Christ, obtained by him.

Be secure, knowing that Jesus has gone before us, obtaining our salvation (vv.19-20)

1. **v.19** “*We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...*” - This hope is set securely, and it anchors us. Though winds may blow, storms may rage, and troubles will come, we can remain eternally secure, anchored to Christ.

2. **v.20** This anchor, though, isn't at the bottom of the sea. This anchor is set in the heavenly sanctuary, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, as high priest offering the perfect sacrifice for our sins, his own blood offered so that we could have forgiveness of sin.

Conclusion: Louis Talbot speaks of Christ as our forerunner, setting this anchor of hope for us - The Greek harbors were often cut off from the sea by sandbars, over which the larger ships dared not pass till the full tide came in. Therefore, a lighter vessel, a “forerunner,” took the anchor and dropped it in the harbor. From that moment the ship was safe from the storm, although it had to wait for the tide, before it could enter the harbor.... The entrance of the small vessel into the harbor, the forerunner carrying the ship's anchor, was the pledge that the ship would safely enter the harbor when the tide was full. And because Christ, our “forerunner,” has entered heaven itself, having torn asunder everything that separates the redeemed sinner from the very presence of God, He Himself is the Pledge that we, too, shall one day enter the harbor of our souls and the very presence of God, in the New Jerusalem.” Cape Disappointment, the Graveyard of the Pacific, much of our Christian life is lived in stormy and tempestuous seas and difficult waters. But our passage has been secured by Christ, so that we can be anchored in him, as we continue to live and walk in faith and patience.

Family

Table Talk



October 1, 2017

GOD'S TRUTH

Anchor your hope in Jesus, walking in faith and patience!

Family Discussion

1. Difficulty, struggle, even discouragement- these things can make us, at times, question the assurance we have in Christ. We are human, and our faith can be weak at times, and our hope wrongly displaced. Can you relate to this? Have you experienced a difficult time of struggle or discouragement?
2. Although you may have answered yes to the previous question, it is vitally important that you know the assurance of your salvation in Christ Jesus, your eternal hope.
3. One of the things we have that helps assure us of our salvation is the fruit that is shown in our lives. Where there is spiritual life, there will be spiritual fruit.
4. Consider, and ask those around you, what fruit is evident in your life. Take the time to do this to encourage one another, and see how you might become even more abounding in fruitfulness to the glory of God!

Key Verse



"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."

Hebrews 6:19-20

Scripture Memory: Hebrews 10:12-13

TABLE READING

Lead your kids into God's Word...

2. Hebrews 6:10-11; 1 John 5:11-13
3. Hebrews 6:7-8; Galatians 5:22-23
4. Psalm 1:3; Hebrews 10:19-25

"AND THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE. YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR EYES. YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND ON YOUR GATES." - DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9 (ESV)