

“Holding Fast Until the End”  
Hebrews 3:6  
(Preached at Trinity, November 19, 2023)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 3** the writer is stressing the immeasurable superiority of Jesus over Moses. Moses was the greatest individual of the Old Covenant and highly revered by the Jews but was subservient to Jesus. Moses was a servant to God's house, but Jesus was a son.
2. Moses was faithful in the discharge of his calling. Like all of the Old Covenant God's design in his calling was to point to Christ.  
**Hebrews 3:5 NAU** - "Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;"
3. As God's Son Jesus is Lord and possessor of the house. But what of the house? As I stated last week, the house refers to God's household. It refers to God's people. These people were entrusted to Moses, and he discharged his duty with faithfulness. In the New Covenant God's house refers to the church. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church. He is the Head of the church.
4. Who are God's household? Who are part of His Church?  
On the one hand the answer is easy. God's household is comprised of His elect people and none other. The "holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling"  
On the other hand it isn't so easy, because the Bible describes a human element in the form of a condition. The author applies the conditional word "If."
5. By referring to the human element we are in no way implying that salvation somehow depends upon human effort or human involvement. Our salvation is what we call monergistic. In other words, it is God's work alone. He chose us and sent forth His Son to redeem us and His Spirit to apply this salvation thorough the gifts of faith and repentance. We need a great and powerful High Priest.  
**Hebrews 2:17 NAU** - " He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."
6. But this doesn't mean that human beings are mere passive pawns. It doesn't mean we are sit back and wait for God to overshadow our lives. Salvation is described as a pursuit, a striving, a pressing on.  
God's sovereign grace and human responsibility are not incompatible.  
Charles Spurgeon – "Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, *that is true*; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, *that is true*; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other."

7. On the one hand, faith is a gift from God completely apart from human action. On the other hand, faith is commanded of every man. All have the duty to believe and receive the Gospel. And all who come will be saved.
- a. This does not mean that all will come, nor does it imply that all are able to come.  
**John 6:44 NAU** - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."
  - b. But it does mean we need to pursue the Christian life with great energy.  
**Hebrews 2:1 NAU** - "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*."  
**Hebrews 3:1 NAU** - "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;"
8. The Book of Hebrews is a book of admonishments.  
**Hebrews 3:13 NAU** - "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."  
**Hebrews 4:1 NAU** - "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it."  
**Hebrews 4:14 NAU** - "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."  
**Hebrews 10:23 NAU** - "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering"
9. So I ask the question again. Who are a part of God's household. The answer remains the same—God's household is comprised of His elect people and none other. Those elect people, however, press on. They endure. They persevere.  
**Hebrews 3:6 NAU** - "Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house-- whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end."
10. These statements are not meant to discourage the Christian but to encourage us to press on in confidence. Our place in God's household is secure and absolute. Our steadfast confidence and courage as we stand firm provide the evidence of our place in God's household. It encourages us to press on in the face of hardship.
- I. Those of God's household hold fast in confidence.
- A. "Hold fast" - The author uses a strong word - κρατέω –
    1. It refers to a posture of strength, of laying hold or seizing, of taking custody or arresting.
    2. It is a determination to grasp tightly and not let go.  
It is the word Jesus used to describe the slave seizing the one who owed him.  
**Matthew 18:28 NAU** - "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.'  
Or the arrest of Jesus:  
**Matthew 26:48 NAU** - "Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him."
    3. We hold fast to the truths of the Christian faith.  
We must hold firm to the Word of God, unwavering and uncompromising.  
Most important, we hold fast to Christ.  
**Hebrews 3:1 NAU** - "consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;"

- B. “Confidence” refers to courage. What is the source of our courage?
1. Our courage is in Christ. He is the boast of our hope.  
**Hebrews 3:1 NAU** - "consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;"
  2. Jesus is the source of all things. He is preserving us. Paul described us as conquerors.  
**Romans 8:37-39 NAU** - "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."  
KJV: “more than conquerors”
- C. True Christians remain firmly planted in Christ. Jesus said,  
**Matthew 7:24-25 NAU** - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock."  
**Hebrews 3:14 NAU** - "For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,"
1. Those who stand firm are those who are held mightily.
  2. Martin Luther stood firmly in the face of an unbelievable battle, yet the battle was not his own.  
*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:  
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;  
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.*
  3. We stand because we are united inseparably to Christ  
Like a stately oak we remain immovable through every storm because we have been firmly planted.  
**Psalms 1:1-3 NAU** - "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers."

II. Christians press on. We stand “firm until the end.”

- A. This refers to remaining steadfast in the faith – standing firm upon our profession
1. Paul taught that faith and steadfastness are inseparable. Those whom God has chosen will be preserved until the end.  
**2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 NAU** - "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. <sup>14</sup> It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup> So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us."
  2. The Gospel demands looking to Christ as our Solid Rock, our Sure Foundation, Our Corner Stone – We must stand firm upon this unmovable bedrock of our soul.
  3. Eternal life is promised to those who endure to the end.  
**Matthew 10:22 NAU** - "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."
- B. Standing firm means we are pressing on through every adversity. This was a needed word for these struggling Hebrew Christians.
1. This demands a steadfast determination. We have resolved, I will follow Christ to the end, come what may, no matter the cost.  
Paul charged the Corinthians to be courageous, to stand firm in the faith, to act like men.  
**1 Corinthians 16:13 NAU** - "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."
  2. Matthew Henry writes: “Observe, He does not say, “You are chosen to salvation, and therefore you may be careless and secure;” but *therefore stand fast*. God’s grace in our election and vocation is so far from superseding our diligent care and endeavour that it should quicken and engage us to the greatest resolution and diligence.”<sup>1</sup>
  3. Standing firm demands standing firm in the pursuit of holiness.  
This is the continuing admonition of the New Testament.  
Those who have the hope of eternity press on in holiness.  
**1 John 3:2-3 NAU** - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."  
**2 Peter 3:13-14 NAU** - "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,"

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2348.

**1 Corinthians 15:58 NAU** - "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord."

- C. Standing firm implies remaining fixed in the face of turbulence, tossing waves, fierce battles through which there is no retreat. The Christian must remain firmly fixed in Christ.
1. The life of a believer is a great battle, an unceasing warfare.
  2. Standing firm is at the heart of fighting any battle.  
The image is of a soldier standing his ground. We must not retreat or flee in fear. We must not surrender and give ourselves over to the control of the enemy. We must not lay down our weapons or slumber in the midst of the battle. Perseverance is the order of the day—Stand firm!
  3. The winds of compromise are always blowing. We are continually being tempted to act like the citizens of this world. Paul reminds his readers, **Philippians 3:20 NAU** - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;" **Philippians 4:1 NAU** – Therefore "stand firm in the Lord, my beloved."
  4. The pleasures and riches of this life can appear irresistible. It has caused the faith of some to suffer shipwreck upon the rocks of worldly pleasures. **1 Timothy 6:10 NAU** - "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

#### Conclusion:

1. Holding fast and standing firm in the raging battle that is all around us is an act of futility if we attempt it by our own might. Human weapons are completely impotent against our spiritual battles. And human strength is impotent in this spiritual war.
2. Paul wrote:  
**Ephesians 6:10-11 NAU** - "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
3. We are in the midst of a raging war against unseen spiritual forces. We must remain steadfast and unmovable. This is only possible as we remain fixed upon Christ. It is a life of faith. Of absolute trust in Christ.  
Through Christ we can live above this world and stand firm against whatever crushing force may rise against us.  
**Matthew 7:24-25 NAU** - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.<sup>25</sup> "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock."
4. Those of our Lord's household endure forever. We find great comfort in our perseverance. It is one of the means of our assurance—we are pressing on.