

The Constant

Hebrews 13:5,6 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*



We noted in our last message from Hebrews 13 that the whole book of Hebrews up to this point has been intent on focusing on the grand theme of the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ as he is exalted in His personhood, His positions of prophet, priest, savior and king and in His saving Work, of proclaiming God's truth, fulfilling the demands of the law, providing a perfect sacrifice for our sins, and rising from the dead and ascending to present that sacrifice in the presence of a holy God on our behalf. And after this thorough exaltation of Christ we are brought to Hebrews 13 and the application. This is God's order for the believer. We always move down into our practice. The movement of the Christian life is not a struggle upward to advance some line of holiness that we make by our own efforts. The movement of the Christian life is downward, like an eagle landing in nest or a place of rest, we come down from the greatness of God and His salvation freely given to us into a settled life of loving response to Him. A life empowered by that same God living in us and with us; empowered by that salvation transforming us from within. And so our obedience is just grace played out, it is mercy celebrated.

The passage we have just read is a perfect example: The applications here are in two directions – what you are not to be act upon and what you are to act upon. You are not to act out of covetousness (wanting more of what others have). You are to act out of contentment and courage. But before you act you are to take note of where your action begins. It begins with a promise God has made.

1. God says He will never leave or forsake His children.

When facing the present difficulties, when catching your breath from a challenging yesterday while looking ahead to an unknown and daunting tomorrow keep in mind the promises of God. If you want to get a fix on what the future holds try to lay hold of those passages in God's Word where God says, "I will." **James 4:13-15** instructs us that when we plan for the future we are not to say, "I will do such and so" but "if the Lord wills I will do such and so." The reason for this is that you have no power to control the future but God does. Everything in life ultimately rests in the "I will" of God. He determines the future.

We have a plaque in our home that says, "The future is as bright as the promises of God." When God says, "I will it is a prophecy and a promise for the future." Here is one of those

promises. *I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.*” The Greek gives us double negatives. The promise is emphatic. God says, “*I will never, never leave you (give you up)*” “*I will never, never forsake you (let you go).*”

A. This promise is pointed to the Christian.

It is a promise to those who have come into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Having received Him as Savior we become God children (John 1:12,13). We were lost and wandering in darkness from Him. God came and found us and claimed us in a great saving work. And having claimed us as His child He will not let us go. You ever lost a child and looked frantically for them and when you found them your first thought was, “*I’m never going to let this child go.*” You are at the beach and some how the head count got mixed up. You are one child down and it’s the little one. You frantically search the crowd for the little one. You run along the waters edge. You call for a chain to form to search the waters. You are beside yourself. Your spouse rushes back to the car to get a cell phone to call for people to pray and there she finds the child wandering along a dune picking wildflowers.

B. The promise points to the Christians God.

There are other god’s you know. There are the god’s and spirits of other land who are begged for blessings and who are fed to keep from being cursed. They are impersonal and yet they personally impact your life for good or ill according to their whims. These god’s are inconsistent because lurking behind them is the power of finite and dark, diminishing spirits. But the Christian’s God is God. All powerful, Eternal, Omnipresent, Unchanging and committed in love to His own children. Because God is all powerful nothing can disrupt His hold on your life. Because He is Eternal no moment can take away from Him. Because He is Omnipresent there no where you can go or be that His is not all there with you. Because He is unchanging He will not relent in His promise to you.

There are fair weather friends I suppose, and there are moody folk who are good when they are good and distant and negligent of your friendship when other things are on their minds. You are always on God’s mind. He is not subject to mood changes. He is unchangingly good.

Here is the promise. The Holy God will ever be with you.

Here is the promise. The loving God will never forsake you.

And He is with you as He is and always shall be... Kind, Good, Gracious, Righteous, Majestic, Gentle, Above all, near to all, Self Generous, Self Giving, Rich, Patient, Wise, Just, Faithful, True, All you need... All you truly want... glorious.

He is there with you as He consistently acts on your behalf... protecting, guiding, correcting, sheltering, counseling, keeping, convicting, comforting, challenging, providing, renewing, restoring, rewarding, working always working to bring you nearer and nearer to Him and His power... blessing...

Ask Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers, unjustly placed in prison in Egypt, “Did God ever leave you?” “No. Never.”

Ask David fleeing from King Saul, hunted in caves, and valleys, driven from home and family. “Did God ever forsake you?” “No. Never.”

Ask Daniel if God left Him when he was thrown into a den of lions. “Not for a cat nap.”

Ask Stephen, the first Christian martyr, stoned by Jews with an unconverted Paul looking on and approving the murder. Crowds rushing in on him; casting stones on him; as they ‘gnashed their teeth’ in rage. Stephen we are told in **Acts 7:56** looked up to the sky at that very moment and cried out, “*Look! I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.*” “Stephen did God leave you even then?” “No. Never.”

The pledge of the all-powerful, eternal, omnipresent, immutable God is that once he has laid hold of you... once he has found you... claimed you as His child... He will never let you go.

That is the high point of the text... and this has all been argued and proven by God in the first 12 chapters of Hebrews. Christ has come to seek and save those who are lost and His power to find you is a power to keep you. Now from this high point come these two notes.

2. Because God will never leave or forsake you don’t act in covetousness.

Here is the picture. The Christian lives his or her life nestled in the strong arms of this loving and saving God. The Christian is an heir of all God has as His child. Yet amazingly he looks out across the way to his neighbor and is vaguely aware of an uneasiness growing in him. His neighbor’s car is nice. His house is nicer. His kids are quiet. He finds himself interested in the sound of his neighbor’s law mower, sounds lighter, faster, more powerful. He begins to wonder if his job is as rewarding as his neighbors. Before long that Christian child of God is leaning out from the arms of God, craning his neck to take into view all the things that others seem to have that he seems to be missing. He is no longer resting in loving arms that hold him. He is twisting and turning to the next thing and the next thing and next. Slowly having his needs met isn’t enough... wants become needs... and enough is not enough...

How unloving to be found longing for things and changes that are required to make you truly happy... all the while forgetting the arms that are this very moment holding you in love. And the voice that says, “*I will never, never let you go.*”

Spurgeon said there were four ways that covetous marks our lives.

1st – It is seen in grumbling and complaining against your state in life.

2nd – It is seen in envying the person, place, position or possessions of others.

3rd – It is seen in regular cravings and longings for what you do not have.

4th – It is seen most often as fear for what the future holds. Worry is a desire to acquire the blessings of the future.

All while, the irony is that you are doing this as you lean out from the arms of the everlasting, ever-loving God, who holds you to Himself and is more than enough for the one who will turn to Him. God is not opposed to riches or to the prosperity that often comes to those who are industrious. He doesn't disdain the pleasure of things or enjoyment of acquiring what is beautiful or helpful. If God did not appreciate that he would not have given us a parable like that of the man who went on a search for a "pearl of great price" and gave all to possess it. Only remember that pearl is you. Christ found you. Gave all for you. Has taken possession of you.

The spirit and attitude that looks out from the arms of God and desires to arm itself with things for its satisfaction and happiness; that attitude grieves God and is an unloving sin against Him and against the whole reality of your salvation. God would always have it be that we found our satisfaction and happiness in Him. See what God says here, "*He Himself has said... I will never, never leave you.*" It is **He Himself** before you. Is He not enough for you?

- Coveting is a sin against God because it says, "Lord I want more than you can offer me."
- Coveting is a sin against yourself because in doing so you are withholding from yourself the one and only thing that does satisfy; GOD.
- Coveting is a sin against your neighbor for it tells a lie. It is a denial of the Lord Jesus before your neighbor. It is withholding from your neighbor a message he needs to know, "*Jesus is enough.*"

3. Because God will never forsake or leave us we act in contentment and with courage.

No circumstance can sever you from God and so every circumstance must bring to you another lesson in God's sufficiency... content yourself with Him. Because God is every with you take courage in facing the uncertainty of tomorrow. His grace has not failed you and will not. His mercy is new every morning. Great is His faithfulness.

Ex. Children should not forget the days in which they were held. Example of pretending to be asleep in the car just as we got home. Remember those times. How safe, how secure, how sufficient was life then. It is still now.

Ex. The setting is Rome. Paul is to go before Nero for judgment. After the event Paul writes about it in **2 Timothy 4:16-18**. Paul faced Nero twice. The first time he was reprieved. The second time he was beheaded. Between those times Paul continued on in the missionary work God had given him to pursue. After the first meeting Paul writes to Timothy. Roman law allowed a person accused to have others go with them to vouch for them. Paul says, “no one went with me. Everyone left me.” When approaching Nero Paul would have had to pass by two large lions on chains. He went just out of reach of their fangs and claws up to Nero, the Lion of Rome. Here is what He says of that moment: *“At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. ¹⁸ And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!*

Contentment... even when others fail... Courage... courage... The Lord will not fail you. Give Him thanks.