

Pentwater Bible Church

Hebrews Message 14

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Jesus In the Miracle of the Fishes and Loaves by Jacopo Tintoretto

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Hebrews

Message Fourteen

OUR WORKS FOLLOWING SALVATION

March 4, 2018

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Hebrews 6:9–20

⁹ But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. ¹⁰ For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. ¹¹ And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: ¹² that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. ¹³ For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, ¹⁴ saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. ¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. ¹⁷ Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: ¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: ¹⁹ which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; ²⁰ whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (KJV).

OUR SALVATION LEADS TO BETTER THINGS

Hebrews 6:9

⁹ But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak (KJV).

The Bible describes the concept of salvation as one of *deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness*. It can mean saving in a bodily sense in some instances from some peril. More importantly though it refers to spiritual salvation from the judgment of God which is reserved for God's enemies, including unbelievers. Salvation is the great inclusive word of the Gospel. It is a collective word embracing all the redemptive acts and processes associated with it.

Included within it are: *justification, redemption, grace, propitiation, imputation, forgiveness, sanctification, and glorification*. Salvation associated with the Gospel is presented in three tenses:

1. The believer *has been* saved from the guilt and penalty of sin (Luke 7:50; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; Ephesians 2:5, 8; 2 Timothy 1:9) and is *safe*.
2. The believer is *being* saved from the habit and dominion of sin (Romans 6:14; Philippians 1:19; 2:12, 13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 8:2; Galatians 2:19, 20; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
3. The believer is *to be* saved in the sense of entire conformity to Christ which is our sanctification (Romans 13:11; Hebrews 10:36; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 3:2).

Salvation is by grace through faith, is a gift, and wholly without any works done by the recipient (Romans 3:27, 28; 4:1–8; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8). The divine order is: first salvation, then works (Ephesians 2:9, 10; Titus 3:5–8). These works are called sanctification as the believer moves through time and space from the justification event and by growing in compliance to the moral order of the universe with knowledge and wisdom becomes more Christ like. The culminating event embodied in the general inclusive word salvation is glorification. This occurs when the believer leaves their body for the spiritual realm where God exists.

The apostle here promises the Hebrews in the Church that following salvation there are many more benefits of being a believer in the Church that follow the initial genuine belief. One who is saved will produce works that are the evidence of salvation. Even though Paul has used harsh terms to criticize them for considering a return to the Temple services and the Levitical law he none the less calls them beloved and is convinced that they will produce better things than the briars, thorns, and thistles he cites in verse eight. Even though the produce of the one who produces no good works are destroyed the individual who truly believed the Gospel himself is still saved. This is evidenced by the field of verse eight not being destroyed and also from I Corinthians 3:15. Those who produce only minimal level of sanctification in their life after salvation will receive no rewards in this life or position in the Messianic Kingdom. Paul is offering this group hope and not condemnation.

We can see that our Lord Jesus explained the good works that the genuine believer is led to perform and will manifest is shown in the parable of the sower.

Matthew 13:1-9

The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the sea side. ² And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. ³ And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; ⁴ and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: ⁵ some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶ and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had not root, they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ⁸ but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. ⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (KJV).

Just as a field is proven worthy by producing good food, so too is a believer's fruit in terms of good works in this life. The book of James tells us that we should be doers of the Word not just hearers (James 1:22). He goes on to declare the *evidence* of a saved soul is works.

James 2:14-20

¹⁴ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead (KJV)?

Not every believer will bear the same amount of fruit as the Lord said *some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold* but will produce the same general kind. As evidence that we are children of God will have the character and conduct which the Holy Spirit will show in us. Those characteristics are; love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, goodness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-26). This is what the Bible teaches us regarding the process of sanctification in that it is the outworking of our salvation. This is further evidence that no amount of works can save us but we are saved unto good works.

Philippians 2:12-15

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings: ¹⁵ that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world (KJV).

GOD KNOWS WHAT WE DO

Hebrews 6:10-11

¹⁰ For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. ¹¹ And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end (KJV).

This group had already produced some good works since their salvation. They produced and to some extent were still producing them. Paul now lists five things God will not forget concerning them.

1. He will not forget their *work*, which are their good works following their salvation (Ephesians 2:10);
2. He will not forget their labor of *love*. Love is the motivation behind the good works. Our love for one another is further evidence of God within us, for God is love (I John 4:8).
3. God does not forget those things which they have shown *toward his name*. The works they did in the past were for the glory of God.
4. He will not forget their past ministry and love to the saints.
5. He will not forget their present ministry to the saints. They have produced good works and they will continue to produce good works.

Paul's acknowledgement of their love is further evidence of their salvation.

II John 1:4-6

⁴ I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. ⁵ And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it (KJV).

Following the assurance that God realizes all they have done in the outworking of their salvation he restates his original desire for them to press on to maturity. This was stated in 5:11–14. The sanctification process must continue and they must persevere. They are not saved by persevering, but they receive the full reward of by persevering. They receive a full assurance of hope, and this hope provides a certainty of their salvation and on God's path for them *unto the end*. The word for *end* means until they reach maturity, which in turn will give them assurance of their salvation. One's life needs to reflect what they believe and the blessing of our salvation. We demonstrate this to the world.

WE MUST BE DILIGENT IN OUR WORK FOR CHRIST

Hebrews 6:12

¹² that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (KJV).

Paul adds the statement regarding the possibility of not performing their good works when he says "*that ye be not slothful.*" The word "slothful" (*nōthroī*) is the same word rendered "slow" in 5:11 in the phrase "slow to learn." The sluggishness which marked their immaturity was to be shrugged off. He is warning them to not become sluggish or dull of hearing. Further they were to become imitators of those *who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. In other words, they need to continue in faith as believers exercising patience, and endurance in the realization that the promises, which are yet future, will be realized. This is because God always keeps His promises. The Greek word for imitate is *mimic*, which is the origin of the English

word “mimic.” They are to mimic others who have obtained the promises by patient endurance. We need to follow the example of genuine believers who are growing in Christ likeness. The promise, here, is to attain spiritual maturity in this life and rewards for the Kingdom in the next life. In the Book of Hebrews, the word “promise” is used eighteen times. Sixteen of those times it is used of the Kingdom.

THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM

Hebrews 6:13-15

¹³ For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, ¹⁴ saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. ¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise (KJV).

Abraham was seventy-five years old when God approached him with a covenant. This covenant was given to him in stages over many years. God said that He would make him into a great nation in the land that He would show Abraham (Genesis 12:1–9). God also promised to give the same property to Abraham’s offspring (Genesis 12:6–7). God repeated this promise after Abraham and Lot separated (Genesis 13:14–17).

Because God had not fulfilled His promise of a special son on Abraham’s timeline Abraham thought to make Eliezer of Damascus his heir. God told Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky (Genesis 15:5). Further, as a result of their impatience his wife Sarah gave Abraham her handmaid Hagar when he was eighty-six years old, and Ishmael was born of that union (Genesis 16:16). God told him that Isaac, not Ishmael, was the fulfillment of the covenant promise (Genesis 17:21; 21:12). Isaac was born when Abraham was a hundred years old (Genesis 21:5). Even though he faltered in his trust of God occasionally he still *patiently endured, he obtained the promise,*

Abraham put his hope in God and trusted that God would keep his promise to make Abraham into a great nation. He waited twenty-five years for God to fulfill that promise. Sixty years after the birth of Isaac, Jacob and Esau his grandsons were born (Genesis 25:26). Abraham had one son to whom the covenant was passed (Isaac) and one grandson who received the covenant (Jacob).

God tested Abraham’s faith on Mount Moriah by telling him to sacrifice his son Isaac. God rewarded that faith by restating, on oath, the promise that Abraham had received: “*that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;*” (Genesis 22:17). God gave Abraham this sworn promise because Abraham was an example for all believers. Abraham lived by faith and hoped with expectation for the coming of the Messiah. But he, his son and grandson were not given the privilege of seeing the fulfillment of this promise. The Hebrews of which Paul directed the book of Hebrews did not have to live with the expectation of the promise. To them Christ had come and the promise was fulfilled.

God spoke to Abraham in human terms when he addressed the father of believers: “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, ... I will surely bless you” (Genesis 22:16, 17). God did not have to swear to guarantee the trustworthiness of his Word; his Word is true, and God will keep his promise. But God used the ways of man and swore by himself as a means of affirmation (Exodus 32:13; Psalm 95:11; Isaiah 54:9).

The apostle says that man always swears by someone greater than himself; however, God has no one above Him to swear to, therefore, “he swore by himself.” God in a sense identified himself with His Word when he swore and gave Abraham the promise. The solemn promise came directly in response to Abraham’s faith, but its fulfillment would take a long time.

Abraham could see some fulfillment of the promise through the birth of Isaac. That was only the beginning of all that God had promised. Therefore, God swore an oath. The oath assured Abraham that God would keep his Word in spite of the years of waiting that were in store for the recipients of the promise.

After twenty-five years Abraham saw one of God’s promises fulfilled in the birth of Isaac. But He did not see the many descendants promised him. He only saw a partial fulfillment. That caused him to believe the rest of the promises and understand that they would be realized in God’s timing.

Jesus in his controversy with the Jews told them: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56). Abraham waited patiently for God’s specific promise to him (Isaac’s birth), saw the next generation when Jacob and Esau were born, and claimed the promise of the coming of the Messiah for himself. Abraham was a stellar example for us as a man of faith in the promises of God.

GOD’S PROMISES ARE TRUSTWORTHY

Hebrews 6:16–20

¹⁶ For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. ¹⁷ Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: ¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: ¹⁹ which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; ²⁰ whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (KJV).

God makes promises to all believers, and we need to follow Abraham’s example in patience which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. When God makes a promise, He does two things. First, He stops all contradiction and controversy and, second, He establishes trust. He is the greatest authority, and His Word, its prophecies and realizations confirm it. There is no valid argument against His Word that any honest person can make.

God made an oath in His Own Name in as in the human method because He wanted *to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise*; that is, He wanted to guarantee to Abraham and his seed that the promises would be fulfilled. That which He promises, He will fulfill. Because His nature is unchangeable, His promises are unconditional and eternal. The mere promise of God is sufficient. God gave His immutable Word in the promise. God did not need to give any more, but He chose to give more. As if His Word were not enough, He gave an oath. Thus, God's promise can be trusted because of His oath.

Verse 18 demonstrates that there were *two immutable* or unchanging *things*. First, the *promise* given to Abraham in Genesis 12 was immutable. When Abraham was seventy-five years old, God promised him a son. The promise contained the content of the covenant. Second, the promise with *an oath* was given in Genesis 17. This was given when Abraham was ninety-nine years old. The promise and the oath were the unconditional guarantees of the covenant. God did not need to give the oath, but He gave the oath for two reasons. First, to show that His promise is immutable because *it is impossible for God to lie*. Second, to give a strong consolation or *strong encouragement* to those who have fled to Him *for refuge*. The word *refuge* is a reminder of the concept of the cities of refuge. The Old Testament concept of refuge is the background for this verse. Just as a man flees to a city of refuge, the believers have fled to the Messiah for refuge because that is where *the hope* that is *set before us*, the Messianic Hope lies. Abraham patiently endured and the promise was fulfilled. Believers have a promise made by God that they can obtain spiritual maturity. They must gain it like Abraham did: by faith and patient endurance. This section of Scripture ends with the certainty that Jesus entered Heaven. That is, He rose from the dead as promised and entered Heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father Almighty according to the promise (Mark 16:9).

Next message: MELCHEZEDEK IS A TYPE OF CHRIST

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