

Full Assurance of Faith: Part One
A Fearful Expectation of Judgment (Hebrews 10:19–39)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (4/30/2017)

Introduction

1. Verse 19 begins the conclusion of the whole argument begun in 4:14.
 - a. The great theme is that Jesus Christ came as our great high priest, offering a single once-for-all sacrifice to save His people from their sins.
 - b. His victory over death won Him a seat at the Father’s right hand, ruling His kingdom of heaven until all His enemies are placed under His feet (10:13).
 - c. Because of His sacrifice, believers have confidence to draw near to the throne of grace (4:16).
2. As we briefly noted last week, there are two great truths on which our confidence stands: (1) the new and living way Christ opened for us into the heavenly holy place (10:19, 20); (2) The continuing work of Christ as high priest over the house of God (His covenant community; v. 21).
3. Three exhortations (“*let us*”) because of our present “*perfect standing*” follow:
 - a. *Let us draw near to God*—with a *true heart* (genuine and ceremonially clean) to exercise “*full assurance of faith*” (v. 22). Confidence depends on real faith.
 - b. *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope* (unrealized faith evidenced by *perseverance*—unwavering trust in a faithful God; v. 23).
 - c. *Let us discover how to motivate each other to love and good works*. Persevering faith requires members of the household of God to look out for each other (vv. 24, 25). This last exhortation is expanded into the *warning* of judgment that ends the chapter. This warning is the focus today’s message.

I. The Reason for Warning

1. The importance of community (v. 25)
 - a. Jesus made it clear that our faith-walk depends on mutual dependence, not independence (John 13:34; 15:12, 17; 1 John 3:23; 4:12).
 - b. People belonging to Jesus will suffer persecution in the world because Jesus did (John 15:18–27; 16:33).
2. In light of our situation, we are to work at discovering ways to encourage one another in the faith (vv. 24, 25).
 - a. Believers are obligated to forget about themselves in order to focus on encouraging each other (1 Cor. 10:24; Rom. 15:1–3).
 - b. The word translated *encourage* is *parakaleo*, the same word used of the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15–17).
 - c. The negative (not neglecting assembling) is far more serious than merely not attending services.
3. Judgment day is coming (v. 25b).
 - a. We will all appear before Christ to give account of how we spent our lives in obedience to His commands (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10).
 - b. As we noted from 9:28, Christ “*will appear a second time . . . to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*”
 - c. Sadly, some saints will be saved “*only as through fire*” (1 Cor. 3:13–17).

II. A Sobering Reality

1. Verses 26 through 30 present a sobering reality.
 - a. Sinning with a high hand (Num. 15:30, 31) invites certain judgment because there was and is *no sacrifice* for such sins (v. 28).
 - b. This warning is not intended to suggest that true saints can lose their salvation.
 - c. It is meant to sober those who carelessly ignore admonitions to obedience, denying in behavior through deliberately sinning, the purpose of God in giving His Son.
2. The nature of these saints' deliberate sins was to abandon Christ's body because they were tired of the suffering they endured for the sake of it (vv. 36, 37). To restore them to their senses—
 - a. He warned them with the awful specter of God's judgment if they continued in their present course (vv. 26–31).
 - b. He also reminded them of the powerful and glorious days of their obedience (vv. 32–34).
3. If Jesus died to save us from sinning, how can anyone who knows this truth keep on sinning?
 - a. Such an one deserves punishment because he/she —(1) has trampled the Son of God, (2) has profaned (regarded as unholy) the blood that sealed the sanctifying covenant, and (3) has outraged the Spirit of grace who ministers the covenant.
 - b. God Himself rewards such contempt (vv. 30, 31).
4. Endurance or perseverance is the grace needed for all believers to wait for God's certain consummation (vv. 35–39).
 - a. Perseverance is the price we must pay if we are to realize the reward of the promises.
 - b. The proof is the prophetic word of Scripture (Hab. 2:3, 4).
 - c. Nevertheless, Paul expressed his confidence in the power of the Word and the Spirit to restore wavering saints (v. 39).

What This Means for Us

Suffering is not something we naturally welcome. Indeed, when hard providence kicks the doors in on our comfortable existence, our first response is to question God. Our song of the month for May is certainly appropriate in light of both our text and of recent trials.

- *1. If God could ordain the most horrific event in human history (the death of Jesus, as Acts 2:23; 4:27-28 clearly show), there is no event, no matter how terrible, that could not have been ordained by Him (which Eph. 1:11; Psa. 115:3; Isa. 45:7; and Dan. 4:35 all affirm).
2. Saying that God merely “allows” evil is really no different than saying God “ordains” evil because merely allowing something has the same difficulties as ordaining something.
3. If God allows evil things, does that mean He is not powerful enough to prevent them? Then we question His omnipotence. If He is omnipotent, then we question His love and wisdom. Should we not, rather, acknowledge His greatness and wisdom and simply bow the knee and submit to Him, knowing that He loves and cares for His own, knowing what glorious prospects await them.
4. The simple fact remains: God is God, and He does what He pleases as Acts 2:23 and 4:27–28 show. God ordained the death of Jesus at the hands of lawless men who crucified and killed Him to “*do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*”

*From a recent article by Jon Pratt of Central Seminary (Mpls.) entitled “Providence and Evil” in the blog *Nick of Time* addresses this problem.