

Believers Continue to Believe

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: 1 Peter 1:4

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1 Peter 2:1, “Wherefore laying aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may develop, mature, grow like babies grow into childhood and adulthood that is if so be that you have experienced that the Lord is gracious to whom coming...”

“But I got saved.”

“...to whom coming...”

“But I came to Christ.”

“...to whom coming...”

It doesn't say you got saved. It says, “to whom coming as unto a living stone,” not just a fact and a foundation that you agreed with or accepted, “to whom coming as unto a living person, a living stone, a living relationship. Oh, rejected indeed, disallowed, rejected of men but chosen of God and precious.”

Now I am here to tell you if we preachers are genuinely and really concerned, if we really are—and I question whether many are—but of those who stand in the pulpit are really concerned for three things, for the glory of God, the glory of God almighty and, secondly, for the truth of his Word and, thirdly, for their own spiritual welfare, their own and the well being and welfare of their hearers, if they really are, if they are concerned for those three things... are we? The glory of God, the truth of the Word and the eternal well being of the people and ourselves, if we are then we are going to preach as clear as we can, as faithfully as we can that this thing of repentance and faith and coming to Christ and salvation is not—I repeat—is not a once for all decision. It is not—I repeat—it is not a once for all experience as seems to be believed today.

But to really repent before God is to keep on repenting. To really believe on Christ is to keep on believing on Christ. To really be saved is to keep on being saved until you are finally saved. I am telling you the truth. To come to Christ Jesus is to continually come to Christ Jesus.

I tell you and I tried to say this through the years, the Bible, the Word of God is full of warnings to those who do not continue to repent. And I know some of you sitting right here have loved ones—and I do—who made professions of faith, who learned the doctrines of grace, at least here, who say that they are saved. But they don't worship God. They don't read God's Word. They don't identify with the people of God. They don't lend their help and support to the kingdom of God.

If everyone were like them, there wouldn't even be a church here today preaching the gospel. And you tell me they are saved? I am telling you they are not and you might as well get it through your mind. They are not. They are not. They are not, I repeat, children of God. Children of God continue to repent. Children of God continue to believe. Children of God continue to walk with God. Children of God continue to come to Christ and they grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. They mature in Christ. That's so.

This book is full of examples of people who looked back, who turned back, who quit the race. Philip, our Lord in the shortest sermon he ever preached, the sermon of three words said to his disciples, "Remember Lot's wife." That's all he needed to say. Remember.

She left Sodom. She made a grand exit. She, for the moment, identified with God's people. She, for the moment, heard the warning and acted on it. But she turned and looked back. Her body left. Her heart never did. And she looked back and she perished.

Listen to Hebrews three verse six. "Christ is the Son over his own house whose house are we—comma—Christ is the ruler and the Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing, the confidence and rejoicing firm unto the end." Unto when? The end, firm unto the end.

Listen to Hebrews 3:14. "We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."

Hebrews 10:38, "Now the just shall live by faith." They live by faith. Faith is not an isolated decision or experience. They live by faith. They begin to live by faith. They continue to live by faith and they die in the faith. The just shall live by faith. Faith is the...is the life of the believer. "But if any man draw back," God said, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him, no pleasure." It doesn't matter how far he ran or how fast he ran or how long he ran, but if he draws back, my soul has no pleasure.

But Paul hastily adds, "We are not of them that draw back. But we are of them that believe, that continue to believe, that are believing to the salvation of the soul."

Would you give hope where there is no hope? I can't. Would you cry peace when there is no peace? Would you encourage a man and tell him he will wear the crown if he is not in the race? That's not fair. Would you tell a man that he will be crowned and he will reign with Christ who is not even in the race, who is making no effort to run, who is making no effort to show any interest in Christ? Would you dare do that?

If you do, you are that man's enemy. You are his enemy. You are not his friend. You give a hope where God has given no hope. You are siding against the Lord of glory.

Colossians 1:22. "Christ will present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight—comma—if you continue in the faith, grounded, settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel."

That goes for Henry Mahan. It goes for Mike Bertha and Ron Tragnan and Gerald Kuhn, if you continue. If you don't...?

Well, John said, that you never did know him. If you can leave Christ, you didn't see him. If you can leave Christ you never did come to him. You can't leave everything for nothing. But that's just so. You see, my friends, and how did we get so far out in left field? We became...we became the...the play things and the toys of covetous preachers. That's how we got out there. We became merchandise for these hucksters of souls and they got us out there.

The Bible never anywhere indicates that salvation is a once for all decision and experience of the past. No, sir. The Word of God reveals that salvation and our union with Christ is a living union, a growing union, a lifetime union.

For example, you who have studied the Word of God more carefully than just zipping through it know what Ephesians 2:8-9 says, don't you? It says, "For by grace have you been saved through faith. For by grace have you been saved through faith."

And you know that 1 Corinthians says to those who are being saved, "Christ is the power and the wisdom of God." To those who are what? Being saved. We have been saved. We are being saved and Paul wrote in Romans 13:11, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

The apostle Paul who was the champion of justification by grace, who was a champion of election and the purpose of God and predestinating graces talks about our salvation being nearer than when we believed. Exactly. That's the gentleman who said my salvation is nearer now than when I believed because he knew that that eternal work was not complete till he stood conformed to the image of Christ. And he said, "I keep my body and bring it under subjection let while preaching to others I, myself, become a what? A cast away.

In 2 Corinthians one he said this, "God has delivered me from so great a debt and he doth deliver me and I trust he will yet deliver me"

Like I said to you a moment ago, four times in the Word of God it says that the just shall live by faith. The just shall live...he lives on faith. He grows on faith. He thrives on faith. He walks by faith. Faith is his life. It is not a sideline. Religion is not a sideline. Christ is not a sideline. He begins to live, to really live by faith. He continues by faith and he concludes his journey in the faith. These all died in faith.

And go back up there to 1 Peter one and verse 22, 1 Peter 1:22, the apostle says, “Seeing that you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto genuine unfeigned, not hypocritical, unfeigned love of the brethren. See that you love one another with a pure heart being born again, being born again not of corruptible seed, not of corruptible seed like you were born the first time of the flesh, but of incorruptible seed. You were born of the Spirit of God by the Word of God, born again by the power of God through the Word of God. This is a new birth. This is regeneration. This is resurrection. This is the quickening. This is life from the dead. This is a new man, a new creature created in Christ Jesus. It is not the old man making a decision. It is not the old man reforming his ways. It is not the old man regretting his past. It is not the old man accepting a doctrine. It is not the old man uniting with a church. It is a brand new person, brand new. If any man be in Christ he is not the same old guy who got saved. He is a new creature, brand new, brand new, a life that never lived before created by God in Christ Jesus. That’s salvation.

Salvation is not appealing to the flesh and appealing to the old man and... God said, “I’ll give you a new heart, a new nature, create a new man. That’s what has happened to most religious people. That old flesh just changed religions. That old man just changed doctrines. That old nature just had some preacher appeal to them and...and give them a snow job, you know, to promise a bunch of benefits for 10%. And he said that is a good deal. I think I will accept it. He accepted the deal.

But this thing of salvation is not an acceptance of any deal or anybody. It is God coming down in power, not corruptible seed, but incorruptible seed by the Spirit of God, by the power of God and creating someone who never existed before, a new man, a new life, a new nature, the life of God. And he becomes a new creature whom even Satan can’t kill.

Paul, he said, verse 24, “All flesh is grass.” That old man, that old nature that old flesh is just grass and all the wisdom and knowledge and glory and honor and accomplishments of man by nature are the flower of grass. The grass withereth, the flower thereof falleth away. It is all going out to Rose Hill and be buried six feet under the ground. None of it is going to live. The place thereof shall know it no more, but the seed of God, the Word of God that life of God begotten by the seed, the Word of God, endureth forever.

He can’t quit. He can’t. That’s the reason John said, “If they had really been of us, they no doubt would have continued because the life of God can’t die. The Spirit of God can’t die. The seed of God can’t die. The Word of God can’t die. It can’t quit. It is a new life. That’s what’s happened.

And this is the very Word of God which is preached to you. Wherefore—now watch this. “Laying aside...” Wherefore what?

“Well, I laid it aside.”

No, you didn't. You thought you did. "Laying aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, evil speaking..."

My friends to talk about...to talk to me about a once for all complete victory over these enemies, impossible, utterly, absolutely impossible in the flesh.

But to exhort me to be about my master's business, to exhort me to be about this business of laying this aside continually, oh, now that is a different situation. I can handle that.

"Wherefore, laying aside...laying aside.." Laying aside what? Malice. Lay it aside today. Lay it aside tomorrow. Lay it aside next week. Lay it aside next month. I am not perfect. I haven't arrived. I haven't laid it aside. I am laying it aside. That's present tense, is it not? "Wherefore, laying aside..."

I read that yesterday, but I read it again today. It says the same thing today. I'll read it next month, Bob, and it will say the same thing next month. "Wherefore, laying aside all malice."

What is malice? Well, it is not just hatred. It is unfriendly feelings towards others. It is an unforgiving spirit. It is pride. It is a spirit of superiority. That is malice. An attitude of superiority. That's malice. Lay it aside. Lay it aside today. Lay it aside...all guile, deceit, speak the truth. Be honest, straightforward. Cooperate with others. Make their journey easier. Ease their burdens. All hypocrisy before God and men. What is hypocrisy? Well, it is the opposite of sincerity. It is speaking with my lips what is not my heart or pretending to be outwardly what I am not inwardly.

Lay it aside. Envy. Oh, that's a difficult area, isn't it? Envy. Envy. Let me be content with what I have. Let me be content with whom I am. Deliver me from covetousness. Deliver me from jealousy. Deliver me from envy. Enable me, oh Lord, to rejoice in the gifts and happiness and prosperity and honor of others.

Did you get that all fixed up when you got saved? No, sir. Ain't got it fixed up yet. But I am laying it aside.

See what I am saying? I am laying it aside. I am growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. Lay aside, laying it aside.

Evil speaking. Boy, how these tongues need to be disciplined. I am telling you this. Other than the heart, other than the heart the tongue sins more than any other member we have, other than the heart. Oh, to control the tongue. But you got saved.

See how ridiculous it all sounds. Got it all fixed up. I walked an aisle 27 years ago and I got this all worked out. No you didn't. You have got deceived. You got taken in. You became a statistic. Some preacher bragged on the fact that he won you to the Lord and you have corroded back yonder and you are still back there. But these people who have

been by God born again and life given to. They are growing in him, walking with him and laying aside.

Oh, the tongue, to refrain from speaking harshly and critically and unjustly and in an uncomplimentary and hastily and exaggerating. Laying it aside.

Wherefore laying aside...

You know, God's people are not rebels. They can be taught. They are not rebels. They can be taught. They know...like verse two. Listen. They know they are new born babes. "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby."

The apostle takes for granted that they are born again by the Spirit of God, they are children of God. They are children of God. Now he says, "You are like babies." Here a baby is born, a new born baby. The first thing that baby wants is his mother's breast. It is born hungry. It is born desiring the mother's breast, to get as much nourishment and milk and strength as it possibly can. And that baby...that's just for the first year and a half of his life about all he is interested in is eating. That's right.

But, you know, if you don't watch you a fellow got saved they'll make him a Sunday school teacher in two weeks. Can you imagine a two week old baby teaching somebody else? That's how we got out in left field.

But he says as new born babies. There is no masters here. Paul said, "I am not perfect. I haven't arrived."

Boy, if he's not perfect and he hasn't arrived, we are babes in swaddling clothes.

But there are no graduates among us. We are just babies. We are just children. We know in part. We preach in part. We see through a glass dimly. As newborn babes hunger for the Word, desire the Word, feed upon the Word.

Why?

That you may grow, that you may grow.

I'll tell you, as a baby clings to a mother's breast for food and that food enables that child's cheeks to be pink, eyes to see, ears to hear, little limbs to grow, gives it the ability to walk, so the Word of God comes in to the believer, the newborn babe and enables him to speak and ears to hear and give him a good countenance and the Word of God puts strength in his limbs so he can walk the way for Christ and strengthen his arms so he can serve others.

He grows in faith. He grows in love. He grows in patience. He grows in gentleness. He grows in kindness. And you mean to tell me this is something you get fixed up down at

the front of a church at a mourner's bench or shaking a dumb preacher's hand? It ain't so. And we are being deceived by these hucksters of souls.

It is life from above. And it is the life of God. And it is an eternal life. And it is a fresh life. It is a new life. It is a newborn babe. And the Word is his milk And the Word is his meat. And the Word is his children's bread. And by the Word he grow and develops and matures and...did you ever see a baby turn away from a mother's breast? The mother gives the milk to the child and he grabs for it. He doesn't spit it out and turn his head and go to the garbage can.

And I say, again, God's children are not rebels. They love the Word. They love the Word. They love the Word. They love the Word.

And I'll tell you some of these preachers are like these pacifiers. They ain't nothing in it. And after a while the kid jaws get tired chewing on it. And he will spit that out. But momma is genuine. That's right. And they know the difference. God's children know the difference.

And all of this, listen, verse three. "If you have tasted, if you have experienced that the Lord is gracious..."

Have we? He didn't ask if you got saved. He said, "Have you really experienced, have you really tasted that the Lord is gracious? Have you really tasted? Have you really? Have you ever seen him and been embraced by his arms and found your strength in him and you...your life in him and your happiness, contentment and fulfillment in him? Have you really tasted that he is gracious?"

Well, if you have, verse four. Here it is. I am coming right back where I started. "To whom coming..."

Now this is written to people who have already come to Christ. But Peter says, "To whom coming."

They have already tasted. They have already trusted, but he says, "To whom coming, to whom coming....laying and coming...laying aside and coming to Christ."

I...I am going to go through this tomorrow. Laying it aside and coming to Christ. Coming to Christ.

This is the reason I am trying my best to be totally and completely honest in my preaching. And I know, I know that people feel like that sometimes I am a little bit too severe, but I do know this. I do know this, that what is called salvation today in these experiences that stay old and these decisions and these getting fixed up, it is not what this is saying here. Salvation is the life of God. It is the life of God. It is a new nature. It is turning from our idols to serve the living God constantly all the time. That's exactly right. To whom coming, to whom coming. It is coming not to a ceremony, not to a church, not to

an altar, not to a law, not to a standard, not to a system of doctrines, to whom cometh...to whom cometh...to him.

The woman with the issue of blood said, "If I can just get to him...him... a blessed person."

And I tell you. It is a blessed occupation. It is always coming, always coming to Christ, always trusting, always believing, always looking, every day to Christ. And it says here, look. "Coming as unto a living stone." A stone means a foundation, a rock, immovable. But he is living. It is not coming to a position. It is not coming to a legal transaction. It is coming to a living person, a living stone, a living person.

When you got married you didn't...that wasn't just a ceremony. "Well, that's all. I'm married."

No, you married a person. See what I...a person, a person with whom you live, with whom you walk, with whom you talk, to whom you are devoted. The two become one. Not just...not just a...and that's what some of these church members. You know, they say, "Well, I got saved. I got married."

And she hasn't seen him since. That ain't marriage.

You heard about the old boy of few words. He got married, stood in front of the preacher and pronounced them husband and wife. He was a man of few words and he turned to his wife, his new wife and he said, "Now, I love you. If I ever change my mind. I'll let you know. There ain't no use me saying I love you every day."

That ain't too nice, is it? I don't he ever...that he really loved her.

We are married to Christ, a living stone, a living person, to whom coming to a living...

Oh, I know, disallowed of men, but chosen of God and precious.

Now watch this and I'll quit. You also...watch this now. You also...and this sure rules out that isolated experience and that old experience that stays old and that old "got saved" business. You also as what? Living stones, living stones, active, warm, identified, are built up by whom? By the Lord God. A what? A spiritual house. Not off somewhere else, but here in Christ. A holy active what? Priesthood. To offer up what? Spiritual sacrifices. When? All the time. Not accepted, but acceptable on a regular basis to God by Jesus Christ.

That totally rules out this "I made a decision" junk. I got fixed up. I am on my way to heaven.

Not unless you are a living, active stone in Christ's house being built up by him and offering constantly sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise to God by Jesus Christ.

Forget it, my friend. A man is going to die just like he lives, just exactly how he lives.

Unidentified? He'll die unidentified. Uninterested? He'll die uninterested.

You see, and this fellow is telling me the truth and you, too. Back in the Old Testament, back in the Old Testament, there were three things, three things necessary for worship. There was a tabernacle, a priesthood and a sacrifice. Is that correct? Is that correct Cecil? You have been around a long time. A month or two longer than I have. And you know that's...I'm telling the truth, aren't I? There was a tabernacle. There was a priesthood. There was a sacrifice. That's just so. And that's how people came to God.

Jesus Christ came in the fulfillment of all that. He tabernacled among us. "A body," he said, "Thou hast prepared me." Isn't that what he said? And he is our priest. And he offers his blood as our sacrifice. So we worship God. We worship God in Christ. He is our only mediator. And his blood maketh atonement for our souls. Is that correct? You know that's so. That's so. We come to God by faith in Christ Jesus. I have a high priest who ministers not in the tabernacle made with hands, but in heaven itself. And his blood maketh atonement for my soul.

All right. Watch this.

You also are a tabernacle. You also are living stones made by God into a spiritual house. Come on. A what? A holy priesthood. Where is the priest? Well, he is not on duty today. Well, he ain't God's priest, then, or he would be on duty. He quit. God's priests don't quit. I hope my high priest doesn't quit.

To offer sacrifices of praise and prayer to God continually which are acceptable in Christ Jesus.

I am telling the truth, Mr. Kuhn. It's right there. You also...there was a tabernacle, Bob. And there was a priest and there was a sacrifice. God ordained it and God almighty accepted it. And there was a man called Jesus Christ who came to this earth and tabernacled among us—John 1:14—and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. And he took away the first and established the second. And he is the great high priest who offers his blood and God accepts us. And when God saves a man, not when he makes a decision, not when some preacher talks him into joining the Baptist Church, not when he is baptized, not when he believes a certain doctrine, but when God almighty in heaven above by his power through his seed and his Word and by his Spirit creates that man in Christ Jesus, that man becomes a living stone. And he is built up by the power of God into a spiritual house with other living stones in whom Christ dwells. And they are themselves a holy priesthood, a royal priesthood, kings and priests unto God. And they walk with God and they offer constantly sacrifices, spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Frail though they may be, frail though they may be, but they are genuine. Here they are frail and incomplete and imperfect. But they are real. They are real. That's the reason he says, "To whom coming."

And bless your heart. John Newton said, "Well, Lord, if I haven't loved you before, let me start today."

What on earth...please help me with this. What on earth is gained by defending something that happened 40 years ago? Please tell me what is the virtue of that? Please tell me what is the virtue of saying that a person knows God when he doesn't walk with God? He doesn't have any interest in God, that God never hears from him, that God's people never see him, that he has no interest and identification and support of these things which are God's. What on earth is, in the name of common sense, is the use in defending such a position? It makes light of the glory of my God. It utterly makes light of the glory of God.

You know, when God calls a man to the ministry it says something in the Bible about one who rules well his own house. Isn't that what it says? Has his children in subjection

My God rules his house well. And his children are definitely in subjection. I'll guarantee it.

That too hard.

Well, it is so, nevertheless... That's... Someone wrote this about our Lord Jesus Christ. "To the artist he is the altogether lovely one. To the architect he is the chief cornerstone. To the hungry he is the bread of life. To the thirsty he is the water of life. To the builder, the sure foundation. To the sick our great physician. To the weary, my rest. To the branch, he is the vine. The sheep, he is the shepherd. To the ignorant, he is my wisdom. To the sinner, our Savior. To the farmer, the seed, the sower and the Lord of the harvest. To the student, he is the truth. To the weak, the power of God. To the dying he is my life."

How can I keep from coming to him? I come this morning again. Do you? I come to Christ. I confess him all over again. I want to be identified with him and his people and his Word. Christ is my own.

All right. Let's sing a hymn. Let's do number 509. Mike come lead us in 509. "The Sands of Time."