

Studies in Hebrews



Lesson IX

Text: Heb. 5:11-6:12

^{5:11} We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

^{6:1} Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,^[a] and of faith in God, ²instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³And God permitting, we will do so.

⁴ It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, ⁶if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because^[b] to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

⁷ Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. ⁸But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

⁹ Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case—things that accompany salvation. ¹⁰God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. ¹¹We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. ¹²We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Footnotes: a. Or from useless rituals b. Or repentance while

Introduction

Our text begins with a slight detour. The comparison between Jesus and Melchizedek will continue in chapter 7 and with it a deeper, fuller understanding of Christ our High Priest. Chapter 5, verse 11 explains, “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.” Before the readers can move on to understand the deeper truths of salvation, they must first stop to take their spiritual pulse. Are they learning, growing, maturing in the things of God?

Questions for Group Discussion

1. How is it possible for someone to be a Christian for years and not grow—to the point that someone would have to teaching them “the elementary truths of God’s word all over again?” (5:12)
2. What is the difference between “milk” and “solid food” (vs. 12b)? Deduce your answer from 5:12-14 and 6:1-3. List your findings below:

Milk: _____

Solid Food: _____

3. Chapter 6, verses 4-6 are three of the most perplexing verses in the Bible. For those who believe in the eternal security of the Christian (“once saved, always saved”), this passage offers a clear challenge to the idea of “irresistible grace.” For those who believe that a Christian can lose his salvation this passage is confirming, yet also troubling since it appears “impossible” (vs. 4) to bring the fallen one “back to repentance” (vs. 6).
 - a. What clues do we have to the identity of this hypothetical person? (there are four of them, vv. 4-5)
 - b. Does the parable in verses 7-8 help to clarify who the writer is referring to? How does this compare with Jesus’ own words in Matthew 7:14-20? For further reference, see John 15:1-6 and 1 John 1:5-2:6.
 - c. How does this passage relate to the larger context, specifically 3:7-19?
4. What does the writer expect from these Christians? (vv. 9-12)