



A NEW AND BETTER WAY



A STUDY IN HEBREWS

WEEK SIX – THE ENDURANCE OF FAITH

Read Hebrews 2:1-4, 4:1-3, 11-13, 5:11-6:20, 10:26-39, 12:25-29

“Endurance is not a fashionable concept: we have explored the importance and significance of faith (Hebrews 11 v1 and Romans 10 v 17), but in this session start to look at those difficult concepts of endurance and discipline.”

What does it mean to endure in a spiritual sense? Endurance means **getting through the trial without compromising or wavering**. If you talk to someone who has continued with a strong faith in Christ, you will find a common theme. In the most difficult times of life, they endured, and they did so by relying on God to be with them.

When we looked at the *Heroes of Faith*, we saw examples of people at different times and in different circumstances each having the common denominator that **they did not give up**.

Read Isaiah 53

This is one of the most moving passages of scripture as it demonstrates the suffering of the coming Messiah.

- Look at verses 4-5 and 7. What picture of Jesus emerges from these verses?

Matthew 24:13 “He that endures to the end shall be saved.”

Revelation 3:5 “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My father and before His angels.”

It is highly unlikely that we will ever have to endure the suffering that Jesus went through, though persecution for Christians in some parts of the world is severe. However, no matter what comes our way we need to ‘*endure to the end*’.

- Do we have the determination to hold on to our faith, whatever it **might** cost?

Being a Christian is not for the faint-hearted. In Hebrews, we are given five warnings to guard against maintaining our faith.

[Hebrews 2:1-4 Warning against neglect](#)

In the NLT, those verses read: *“So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. The message God delivered through angels has always proved true, and the people (Old Covenant) were punished for every violation of the law and every act of disobedience. What makes us think that we can escape if we are indifferent to this great salvation that was announced by the Lord Jesus himself? It was passed on to us by those who heard him speak, and God verified the message by signs and wonders and various miracles and by giving gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose to do so.”*

- Do these verses make you sit up and think?
- When a boat is adrift on the ocean, it has no control over its direction. What do you think the message means for us?
- How might indifference look in our lives?

[Hebrews 4:1-4. 11-13 Warning against unbelief](#)

We touched briefly on how the Children of Israel were not allowed to enter into God’s Sabbath rest of the Promised Land. God, because of their sins, filled their years with futile journeyings until all those who had come out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, died before they could enter that land. Whilst in Egypt, they had been forbidden from resting and honouring God on the Sabbath Day. Their unbelief had prevented them from enjoying the promised blessings.

What does God’s rest mean in the book of Hebrews, and today?

“God’s rest is a state, or place, where God rules and manages his creation, free from the chaos and disorder brought about by sin and rebellion. All who will rest from their own work of bringing their own life under control can enter into God’s rest.” [Christianity.com](#)

- Do we believe in the promises that God has given us?
- As with the Israelites, the fulfilment of God’s promises requires belief and action on our behalf.
- What does verse 7 of chapter 4 warn against?
- How do we build up and maintain our faith and trust in God?

[Hebrews 5:11-6:20 Warning against lack of maturity](#)

In modern parlance the writer is saying **“GROW UP”**. This is not to those who have recently come to faith, but to those who have been Christians for a long time. Verses 12-14 of chapter 5 say: *“You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God’s word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. “For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn’t know how to do what is right. Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognise the difference between right and wrong.”*

Some time back, in one of our studies, we talked about how our role is to make disciples. If we haven’t grasped the basics of this gospel and its ability to change lives, then we are still at the beginning. If a baby failed to progress to eating solid food and was still taking only milk by the age of two, we would think there was something seriously wrong.

- When we look at ourselves, what do we see? Are we growing in our faith and understanding of God and his word, or have we stagnated?

I like verse 9 of chapter 6: *“Dear friends, even though we are talking this way, we really don’t believe it applies to you. We are confident that you are meant for better things, things that come with salvation.”* We should regularly give ourselves a spiritual health check to assess how we are doing. It’s not for others to do it. We all have enough to do to look after ourselves.

Hebrews 10:26-39 Warning against turning back

This section almost sounds harsh. We say God is love, so doesn’t he just forgive us. The key is in verse 26: *“Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins.”*

- What do you think it means?
- The writer compares those who refused to obey the law of Moses to those of the new Covenant who turn their back on God’s mercy and love. *Read again, verses 28-35.*

We should remember that these Christians were now experiencing persecution. However, as always, we must read and understand scripture in the wider context, not selectively. Don’t just pick out one verse and base everything you believe on that. We need to have a knowledge of Scripture so we can see the whole picture. At the end of the day, GOD IS LOVE, and he extends that love to us, but we must have *“patient endurance”* (verse 36). Jesus said: *“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”* (Matt. 24:13.)

[Hebrews 12:25-29 Warning against refusing God](#)

If these warnings sound harsh, read verse 28: *“Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshipping him with holy fear and awe.”*

In Luke 9:62: Jesus taught: *“No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

The man with the plough always had to keep looking forward to plough a straight furrow.

And as the gospel song says: *“We have too much to gain, to lose.”* In other words, NO TURNING BACK.



Prayer:

Father God, keep our eyes always towards you that may we follow you all the days of our life.