

The Christian's Spiritual Anchor

Hebrews 6:13-20

Introduction

The writer of Hebrews began the chapter by making a strong appeal for the Hebrew Christians to grow up in spiritual maturity; to refuse to go backward (going over the same ground over and over again); go forward. The writer urged the Hebrew Christians to turn from sin (v.1); turn to the Lord; keep pushing towards maturity (v.4). The writer then addressed some important concerns about those who have tasted the heavenly gift, shared in the Holy Spirit and tasted God's Word and were tempted to return to empty religion. The author illustrated this situation like a piece of land that when fruitful is blessed, and when barren is cursed (vv.7-8). The writer is confident that the warning does not apply to His readers. He now provides an anchor for spiritual maturity (vv.13-20). What is the believer's assurance of spiritual growth and maturity? We have God's promises (vv.13-18). The God of Israel promised to bless Abraham and he did (vv.13-15). Our heavenly Father promises to bless us and He will (vv.16-18). We have a Savior who is also a Priest who dwells in the presence of God forever (vv.19-20).

Since God is incapable of lying we have a strong anchor for our soul. These promises provide strong assurances of both consolation and hope (v.18). The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said (2 Cor.1:20); "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through Him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God." Your best chance of surviving life's storms will be to trust God's promises.

God's Promise To Abraham (vv.13-15)

Hebrews 6:9-20 (NKJV) 9But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

Why is the author confident of their spiritual condition? He points to their lives! Not just what they profess to believe but how they live their lives!

10For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

12that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The writer includes their "work and labor of love"; "full assurance of hope" and imitation "through faith and patience inherit the promises". Faith hope and love and the characteristics of true believers! But even then he warns them not to drag their feet (become sluggish); but exercise real faith and patience to receive the blessing.

Who is an example of patient faith? Why father Abraham!

13For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

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Bob Dylan sang;

God don't make no promises that He don't keep
You got some big dreams, baby, but in order to dream you gotta still be asleep
When you gonna wake up, when you gonna wake up
When you gonna wake up and strengthen the things that remain?
Counterfeit philosophies have polluted all of your thoughts
Karl Marx has got ya by the throat, Henry Kissinger's got you tied up in knots
When you gonna wake up, when you gonna wake up
When you gonna wake up and strengthen the things that remain?
You got innocent men in jail, your insane asylums are filled
You got unrighteous doctors dealing drugs that'll never cure your ills
When you gonna wake up, when you gonna wake up
When you gonna wake up and strengthen the things that remain?

Read more: <http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/when-you-gonna-wake#ixzz3OomxcOJJ>

Bill Clinton said something remarkable; "The road to tyranny, we must never forget, begins with the destruction of the truth." And then he said, "Nearly everyone will lie to you given the right circumstances." Tragic and true words.

But there is one who will not lie—who will never lie—and can never be found lying. My friend Doug Groothuis says; "Everyone may be entitled to his own opinion but everyone is not entitled to his own truth. Truth is but one."

We can speak of God's glory or goodness or grace or holiness or knowledge or love or patience or power. And all of these things point to God's honesty. C.S. Lewis said, "A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word darkness on the walls of his cell."

Human beings cannot make God a liar. Paul wrote (Rom. 3:4) "Let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged." Paul argues our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God.

God is true. God tells the truth. We sometimes think; "This isn't possible." God says; "All things are possible (Luke 18:27). We say, "I'm too tired." Jesus says, "I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28-30). We say, "Nobody really loves me"; Jesus says, "I love you" (John 3:16; John 13:34). We say, "I can't go on". God says, "My grace is sufficient (2 Cor.12:9; Psalm 91:15).

14saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."

The author recounts the well known story of Abraham found in Genesis 22:16-17.

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Did God bless Abraham? Did God give Abraham abundant off-spring?

15And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Did Abraham patiently endure? The text says so. Did he obtain the promise? God promised Abraham a seed. God promised Abraham a child through whom a nation of people would be born. God promised a land in which they could live. All Abraham had to do was believe God.

Did Abraham stumble and fall? The book of Genesis records two instances where Abraham lies about his relationship with Sarah. Did God keep His promises to Abraham even though Abraham stumbled and fell?

“After all, the covenants of God do not depend on the faith of the saints for their certainty; they depend only on the faithfulness of God. God verified the promise of Gen. 22:16-17 by swearing by Himself—and that settled it! Abraham did not receive the promised blessing because of his own goodness or obedience, but because of the faithfulness of God. Abraham experienced many trials and testings (as did the original readers of Hebrews), but saw him through” (*Wiersbe's Expository Outlines of the New Testament; p.693*).

Someone said, “The truth will make you free, but first it will make you miserable.”

The seed promised to Abraham was Isaac and the Jewish people—but there is more. The promised seed is a reference to Jesus—the Lord—Jesus Christ. It is also a reference to the nation of believers who are born through Christ. Abraham is the Father of believers (see Romans 4:11-12; 17). Abraham believes the promises and inherits the promises. Abraham has seen a nation born as the seed of his faith, a nation of people who believe God and follow God as he did. Abraham has inherited heaven. He is face to face with the promise. He received the promise because He patiently endured. We are to follow him and all other believers who have trusted God and endured to the end.

God's Promise To Christ's Heirs (vv.16-19a)

16For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.

What does this mean?

“...in all their disputes, an oath is final for confirmation” (Ryrie; Study Bible notes; v.16 p. 1877).

17Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,

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The writer spells out clearly that God was going to use Abraham as a timeless example of what He was willing to do for the “heirs of promise”.

Who are these heirs? The physical children of Abraham? The spiritual children of Abraham? In verse 18 we discover the heirs are those who have fled to God in Christ to find refuge; true believers; we are Abraham's children by faith (see Gal. 3).

And what exactly is the promise? A trouble free life? A pain free life? No the promise refers to the promise of salvation? It is a big promise indeed. **There is no promise of salvation to the unbeliever and the make believer. There is no promise of salvation to those who do not trust Christ.**

Jesus is our promise! All the promises of God find their ultimate meaning and significance in Christ. The blessings and benefits flow from the ministry of Christ and work of Christ and death of Christ and resurrection of Christ.

Why did God allow the trials and difficulties for Abraham? So that future generations would know that God's counsel will stand; God's covenants are true and God's promises are certain.

Immutable is word that means not subject to change.

18that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

What are the two immutable things? The promise that God made to Abraham. The oath that rests on the very being or nature of God.

Martin Luther wrote; “If God promises something, then faith must fight a long and bitter fight, for reason or the flesh judges that God's promises are impossible. Therefore faith must battle against reason and its doubts. The devil, too, approaches us with promises, and indeed such as seem very plausible. It certainly requires a keen mind rightly to to distinguish between God's true and the devil's false promises.”

But God's promises are like the stars! The darker the night. The brighter the light.

The writer will employ four figures or metaphors to drive home the absolute certainty—the utter reliability—of God's promise. Think for just a moment. What is the central promise being made? Those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved! God promises to save everyone who believes (saving faith) in Jesus Christ. The Lord God confirms it with an oath! The conclusion is inevitable: the believer is eternally secure (see William MacDonald; p.2176).

1. A city of refugee (v.18)

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2. An anchor (v.19)
3. A forerunner (v.20)
4. A High Priest (v.20)

What do all the metaphors have in common? They are types and pictures of the Savior.

The Place Of Refuge

Who are the believers? Those who flee from this doomed world! The true believer runs away from sin and this doomed world into the Kingdom of God; into the place of refuge—more accurately the person of refuge! What does God do for the person who looks for a place of shelter, for a place of refuge? He provides Himself!

19This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and

The Anchor Of The Soul

We have 'this hope' as an anchor of the soul. What is the anchor of our soul? **The unchanging Word of God and the unchanging Person of God. We have His Word. We have His oath.**

Pause for just a moment. I dare you to imagine anything more certain, more secure. We all know what an anchor is—a heavy metal object used to keep boats in place. Anchors are necessary because storms are certain. What will you do when the storm hits? How will you keep from drifting?

The storms and trials are inevitable. What will happen when the storm hits? The storms of adversities. The trials and temptations to turn from Christ? The Christian is repeatedly told that this world is not our home. In our salvation we are promised a future glorification! Paul says that future is as certain as if it has already happened. We are seated in heavenly places (Ephesians).

What will keep you stable in the wild waves of doubt, despair and uncertainty? The anchor is not plunged into the shifting sands of an ever changing world. Our anchor is in heaven. Immovable. Immortal. It cannot be rusted by the corrosive elements in this world or cut loose from our souls! Our hope is our anchor!

The chapter is not meant to frighten saints into thinking they have lost their salvation. Does the chapter warn about unbelief? Yes. Does the chapter warn about the unrepentant? Yes. But it also provides hope for both the unbeliever and unrepentant. The unbeliever need not remain an unbeliever. The unrepentant need not remain unrepentant. We have hope. We have a hope anchored in eternity.

God's Priest In His Presence (vv.19b-20)

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which enters the Presence behind the veil,

What is behind the veil? The Presence. What is behind the veil? Our hope. What is behind the veil? Our Savior! And if He is there; you are there! The veil in the Temple—was a great curtain that marked the boundary where none could pass. This is the great curtain that separated God from man. The very presence of God dwelt in beyond the veil—and no man was allowed to enter—except the Priest once a year. And then only to offer sacrifice for sin! The death of Jesus tore the curtain down forever!

If He is in us and we are in Him—we are there!

20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Forerunner

What is a forerunner? A toyota 4X4? Well yes and no. A forerunner is the one who goes before; the one who blazes a trail, a trail-blazer (car pun intended).

Why is this importance? To insure that we get there? In a sense—“His presence there insures the ultimate entrance of all who belong to Him. It is no exaggeration to say that the simplest believer on earth is as certain of heaven as the saints who are already there” (William MacDonald; p. 2177).

D. Anderson-Berry writes:

“The word translated “forerunner” is found nowhere else in the New Testament. This expresses an idea never contemplated in the Levitical economy, for the high priest entered the holiest only as a representative. He entered where none could follow. But our Forerunner is a pledge that where He is, we also shall be. As Forerunner He (1) announced our future arrival there; (2) took possession of heaven's glories on our behalf; and (3) has gone to be able to bid His people welcome when they come, and to present them before the Majesty of heaven” (cited in MacDonald p. 2177).

When the writer of Hebrews wrote these words—there were believers already in Heaven with Jesus. They had already inherited the promises of God. They were already with Jesus. They no longer experienced pain, suffering, trial, temptation, terror. By faith and endurance they inherited the promises.

The High Priest

What is the fourth figure? The High Priest. But not just any High Priest. A High Priest forever. The writer hinted at this in chapter 5:10—where the writer digressed on his extended warning

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about apostasy. Now he returns to his initial theme—the superiority of Christ's priesthood to Aaron's priesthood.

Why is this important? The eternal priesthood of Jesus guarantees our eternal preservation! Jesus is our mediator. Jesus is our intercessor. Jesus stands before God and presents us to God. Jesus is our eternal High Priest. Which means we are acceptable to God forever and ever!

Paul writes about this concept in Romans 5:10; "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Jesus has risen. He can't die ever again. In Heaven we have an eternal Priest who is also an eternal guardian. The resurrection ministry of Christ in Heaven keeps us saved. Peek ahead to Hebrews 7:25; "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them."

Conclusion

Do you have a shelter from danger?

Do you have an anchor in the violent storm tossed world? Or are you floating—aimlessly—tossed to and fro by fear; in danger of being damaged or sunk by the terrible waves? Do you have a hope that is steadfast and sure? Are you floating on forbidden shores—or do you have an anchor—holding fast on eternal ground?

Have you made the journey beyond the veil? Or is there still a thick curtain separating you from God? Do you have a great High Priest—a mediator and intercessor? Do you have hope?

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees—why does he yet hope?" (Rom.8:24).

Do you have an unchanging hope in an unchanging God who has given us His unchanging Word? "I can't figure things out." "I will direct your steps" (Proverbs 3:5-6). "I'm not smart enough". "I will give you wisdom". "It's not worth it." "It will be worth it" (Rom. 8:28). "I can't manage." "I'll supply your needs" (Phil. 4:19).