

HEBREWS 33
(Hebrews 10:32-39)

MOTIVATIONS TO REMAIN FAITHFUL
By Ron Harvey
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INTRODUCTION

One thing that we have learned in Hebrews is that as Christians, we are on a journey. Just as Israel was redeemed out of Egypt and it was necessary to journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, to the promised land, so we have been redeemed and we are on a journey to a heavenly land.

Contrary to popular preaching these days, God has not promised His people smooth sailing through this world on their way to glory. In fact, the Scriptures predict that it will be quite the opposite.

We must through much tribulation enter His kingdom. (Acts 14:22)

There will be much trouble along the way. And we should not expect it to be any different. After all, this world is under a curse. And the thing that has brought down that curse is sin. And since we still live in a world of sin and since we still reside in a carnal body, it is not a strange thing that we are still made to taste the bitterness of sin and the sting of the curse.

Just think what it would be like if this present life were free from sorrows and sufferings. What if in this life we were free from sickness and infirmity? We would be very content and satisfied with this earthly place.

But God has so ordered it that we are constantly reminded that this is not our rest. We are not at peace here. We are not at ease here. There is weariness with every step. There is trouble all around us.

God has ordered it this way so that he can work in us “a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.” (Phil. 1:23)

Now don't think that God doesn't also bring peace and rest and great benefits to us even in this life. But he leaves some of the trouble so that we will not be anxious to stay here, but will look forward to that heavenly place

of rest.

Now we saw this morning that some will not hold fast to Christ to the end. They will wilt in the hot sun of trouble and persecution. And they will abandon Christ. And when they abandon Christ, all is lost. There is no other sacrifice for sins other than that true sacrifice and when they leave Christ they cast themselves into the hands of the living God for the purpose of fierce judgment.

Now I want to reemphasize that a saved person will never become an apostate. A saved person will never forsake Christ. But the lost, who have a loose and outward attachment to Christ, will fade away into apostasy.

Example of the four kinds of seeds (Matthew 13:4-23)

This parable was told by Jesus to the multitude. But the disciples asked Jesus later and he interpreted the parable for them. (See vs.18-23)

Now pay particular attention to the ones who receive the word. (v.20) You will notice that they receive the word. They receive the word with joy. They endure for a while. And then, when tribulation comes, they are offended. And because there is no root, the word abides only temporarily and he is offended.

This parable teaches that it is possible for some to receive the word temporarily and even to receive it with joy. And yet, after a while they fall away.

This whole idea of some hearing the word, initially receiving the word with joy, enduring for a while and then falling away into apostasy is the classic circumstance which is warned about in Hebrews.

See Hebrews 2:1

See Hebrews 6:4-6. Now these who are capable of falling away are unsaved people. This is clear, because in verse 9 the writer contrasts them with the saved.

And in Hebrews 10, the readers are warned not to leave Christ for then there is no hope.

So, we ask ourselves this afternoon, “How shall we avoid such a fate?” What should those of us do who yet remain with Christ. We have not forsaken his assembly. We have not forsaken Him. We have not trod under foot the Son of God. And our text this afternoon gives us encouragements to help us to hold on and to endure to the end.

Now the first thing that I see in the text (v.32) is that,

- I. We must remember how far we have come.

Example: Now when you engage in any project, you invest a lot of time and a lot of energy and a lot of passion in that project. And the further you go in the development of that project, the harder it is to turn your back on it.

If you start to paint your house and you paint one board and then your wife comes out and tells you she wants another color, it’s not too hard to change. But if you have painted for three weeks and the house is almost completely painted and she comes out and tells you she wants another color, it’s hard to start over then.

And in some ways it is helpful for us as Christians to call to remembrance the former days. Remember when you started this journey. Maybe it was 20 years ago. Maybe it was 40 years ago. And you have come so far. You can look back and see how he brought you through many troubles.

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions. (v.32)

Now these Hebrew “professing Christians” had endured great afflictions when they first heard the gospel and when they received it. The light of the gospel shone on them and in this way they were illuminated. It may or may not have been a saving illumination. And the writer is encouraging them to hold on to Christ to prove that it was a saving illumination.

And he says remember.

Remember how much you have invested in your Christianity.

Remember how much you have suffered. Remember how much you gave up for Christ (many of them lost their goods v.34).

Remember that at one time for Christ's sake you consented to be a gazing stock. That is, the Jews and the world looked at them with amusement as they lost everything for Christ. They lost their houses and their possessions and their families.

So, they are encouraged to remember how far they have come.

Secondly,

II. We are encouraged to keep in mind what we have in heaven.

Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

This may be the key to enduring hardship in this life. It is keeping our eyes fastened to the hope of things to come.

A. In comparison, our suffering is virtually insignificant compared to the glory which we shall have in heaven. (Romans 8:18)

B. In comparison, our suffering is virtually for a moment compared to the eternal glory that we will have then. (2 Cor.4:17)

We have been begotten to an inheritance which is Incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.

1 Peter 1:4

Notice that what we have in heaven is termed "substance." (v.34) Just as the old covenant rituals were shadows and Christ is the substance, so earthly things are but shadows of the substance in heaven. I suspect that all the pleasures of this life are but pictures of ultimate pleasures in heaven.

Notice that in heaven we have a better substance. Whatever we have here, it is better in heaven. Whatever we tend to put our hearts in here, it is better there. All the pleasures of this world are but a taste of the pleasures to come. And all the pleasures here are mitigated by sorrows and sufferings. But when God wipes away all tears and all sorrows, then we will experience joy unmitigated.

But notice also that we have an enduring substance in heaven.

Our worldly goods are fleeting and they may disappear in a moment. But our riches in Christ may not be taken away. The stock market may crash. We may lose our jobs. The economy may disintegrate. But our stock in Christ's riches never diminishes.

So, don't cast away your confidence. Don't cast away your faith that you have placed in Christ because there is a great reward waiting for you. (v.35)

And have patience and do the will of God and then you will receive the promise. (v.36)

Some of our members are enduring difficult times right now. Joe and Marie Bledsoe have had a run of hard trials. And what this passage says to them is to not cast away your confidence. It is natural to get discouraged but don't get overly discouraged. Especially don't give up your faith because there is great riches and peace of mind and comfort awaiting in heaven. And it says to be patient and then you will receive the promises.

Bro. John is burdened down right now. But this passage says don't cast away your confidence. Just a little more patience and you will have the promises.

Remember how far you have come. Keep in mind what we have in heaven. And thirdly,

III. Keep in mind that your redemption is very close. (v.37)

The principle hope of all Christians is that Jesus will come. Our hope is solely in Him. The end of our sufferings, the bringing in of our peace and joy – it is all associated with the coming of Jesus.

Now there are many comings of Christ. Christ came at his incarnation. Christ comes to us when we are saved. Christ comes at times in judgment as he did in AD 70 when he used Titus to destroy Jerusalem and the temple. There will be a final coming of Christ.

Now at the time Hebrews was written, there were just a few years until Jerusalem would be destroyed. And Jesus had clearly foretold that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed. And perhaps the writer is referring most immediately to the coming of Christ when he would remove all the remnants of Judaism which was the chief obstacle to Christ's kingdom.

Until AD 70, Christianity was opposed at every turn by Judaism. But after AD 70, Christianity enjoyed a period of relative freedom from oppression.

So, the writer says,

Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.