

**Hebrews 6: 13-18; “We have Strong Consolation”, Sermon # 23 in the series –  
“Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

How does a Christian come to have the strong consolation that is mentioned here? How is it that they can come to know that they are a true Christian and will persevere in faith to the end of their life? What is full assurance of our salvation based upon? I believe that these verses give us the answer to these questions. They are showing us that strong consolation will come to any sincere Christian concerning their perseverance in the faith if they will remember to ask themselves 3 very important questions concerning God and themselves. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – In my perseverance, am I trusting in Christ or am I trusting in myself? 2<sup>nd</sup> – In my perseverance, do I remember God’s oath-bound promise? And 3<sup>rd</sup> – In my perseverance do I remember the Immutability of God’s Counsel? What we are being told here is that strong consolation can come to you as a Christian to persevere in your faith, if you will remember these truths and meditate upon them every day of your life. They are placed here for your being strengthened in your faith, and for your comfort and encouragement.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – In your perseverance, are you trusting in Christ or are you trusting in myself?** (verses 9-12)

We need to set the context here. I need to do some review of some past verses. The strong consolation which is being talked about here in verse 18 is your knowing that you can persevere in your faith, because you are not trusting in yourself; that somehow you think that persevering is done by your own strength of determination to do and keep God’s commandments. Instead, you are persevering in faith in Christ, trusting that He will help you to keep God’s commandments, and that He will cover you with His righteousness when you don’t. It is a perseverance of faith in Him that the Bible teaches, not faith in your self that you will persevere. You will persevere but you will do so by the grace which God supplies. God has sworn that in Christ He will bless you.

Every Christian needs to understand that salvation is based upon God’s promise to you, to supply you with grace so that you will persevere in doing His good will. Your perseverance is not your somehow trying to prove to Him that you are a true Christian. God knows whether you are a true Christian or not. He knows that He has had mercy on you. He has saved you and called you according to His own purpose and grace in Christ Jesus. But sometimes those who profess Christ do not understand this. The word of God tells us here in this passage that the reason that a person falls away from their profession of faith in Christ it is because of the vacillation of their heart. That is, they go back and forth in their thoughts about Christ. Do I really need Him and His grace, or do I not? Do I need His grace in order to be able to love and serve Him as I ought?

These are questions which you yourself need to answer in the sight of God. A Christian’s faith must not be in themselves when they are trying to live for God. They must not try to impose their own understanding on the Bible. God expects you to receive it, plainly and simply, and then He will speak to you through it. And you will learn to do it. This is being a disciple of Christ. This is what it means to be a true and faithful Christian. When you believe in Christ you will keep seeking those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. You will be setting your mind on things above, not on things that are on the earth. For you have died to sin, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Therefore you will cultivate the life of Christ in your soul by means of reading His word with a view to doing it. You will walk by faith with Him. You will talk over with Him everything related to your faith and obedience to God. In verse 9, we find that Paul says, that he was convinced of better things concerning those who he was writing to. He mentions the things

which accompany salvation. In verses 10 and 11, he told them that God was not unjust to forget their work and labor of love which they had shown toward His name, in that they ministered to the saints, and continued to minister to them. This was a part of their perseverance. He was telling them that it was their continuing in these labors and in these good works which would give them an assurance of hope; that is, if they were diligent to continue to pursue godliness and love for all the brethren. This assurance of hope is the hope that you have, concluding that you are a Christian because of the evidence that you see in your heart and life that Christ has really given you grace to change. It is His life in your life which is motivating you to do good works and keep His commandments.

He was saying to them, and he is saying to us here today, that if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you should be doing good works. You should be going about to keep the commandments of God will bring to your heart and mind the assurance that He has indeed saved you. In this form of assurance you are proving to yourself that God has done a work in your heart. The witness of the Spirit and the evidence of good works work, go together in the assurance of hope. You know that your hope is a sure hope because you subjectively see the evidence that Christ is working in your life. Because of this change that He has produced in you by His Spirit, which leads you to obey His word, you rightly conclude that you are a true Christian. You are working out your own salvation with fear and trembling. You know that it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure. And so you persevere in faith in Him.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – In your perseverance are you trusting in God’s Oath-Bound Promise?**

Verses 13-16 say – “For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying ‘Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’ And so after he has patiently endured he obtained the promise.” “For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.” I want you to see that your having the strong consolation that Paul talks about here in our text is based on something much greater than your self and the evidences of your good works. It is based upon God’s faithfulness to Himself and to you. God wanted to show Abraham the certainty of what He was going to do for him so that he could patiently endure. That is perseverance.

This consolation which God gives to His own dear people is that which comes from your seeing that He has sworn that He will bless you, and continue to bless you. All of the blessings of salvation are based upon God’s oath-bound promise in His faithfully giving them to you. And may I say it? Especially the blessing of your persevering in your faith. Abraham is the father of all believers because of his great example of his perseverance in faith; his perseverance in faith in relation to his receiving what was promised. God made many promises to Abraham but none greater than the one which is found in Genesis 22, verses 15-17. That is why Paul uses it here. “Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son – Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’”

What was the situation back there in Genesis 22, which Paul is referring to? Well, it was the culmination of all of the promises which God had given to Abraham in Genesis 12, Genesis 15 and Genesis 17. The promise in Genesis 12 was that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. The promise in Genesis 15 was that one who would come from his own body would be his heir, and that his descendants would be as the number of the stars of the heavens. The promise in Genesis 17 was that he and Sarah would have a child. You will remember that Abraham’s wife Sarah had been barren and she could not conceive a child, even though they had tried to do so for 25 years.

And Sarah, in Genesis 16, hearing of the promise that Abraham was to have a son, and seeing that she could not give Abraham that son, (she thought) she gave her maid Hagar to Abraham, and they conceived and bore a son, Ishmael. This was how they thought that the promise would be fulfilled, by their own efforts and their own understanding; not trusting that God could help them do what was impossible for them to do. God Himself had to teach them His ways were not their ways. He had much greater plans which they did not understand. And this is what we must learn as well. Abraham and Sarah would have no part in the matter of fulfillment except to learn to respond in faith to what He was intending to do. And then they had to continue on in faith and obedience to His word in relation to His promise. That was their perseverance. It is not only their perseverance which is being talked about here in our text this morning. It is ours.

In Genesis 17 God Himself finally appeared to Abraham one day when he was 99 years old, and He said to him – “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.” “And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” This should show you that what God is most interested in, is the obedience of our faith. He makes the covenant with Abram. He tells him that he and Sarah were going to have a child. He tells him that the birth of Isaac would most certainly come to pass in the next year. And then it says in verse 17 that Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? “And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? “Oh, that Ishmael might live before you!”

Now this was not Abraham staggering in unbelief at the promise of God. He was simply blown away by the greatness of what God was intending to do. When he said that he wanted Ishmael to live before God, as the child of promise, he was showing God that he did not yet understand how important it was to God that he would not put forward his own understanding and his own attempts at trying to fulfill God’s purpose, in the place of what God was doing for him, to build his faith. Yes it was true that God was teaching Abraham that faith is based upon a promise. But God does not want us think that our own efforts are in any way, the basis of the fulfillment of that promise in terms of our living our life to God, or glorifying Him in what we do and say.

Dear Christian, have you understood this yet? Your perseverance is based upon supernatural grace! God is continually helping you to understand what His purpose is; that is, to bear fruit to Him in a much greater way than you can possibly imagine! God knows that for this to happen, you must persevere in your faith in what He is doing, all through your life. He knows how to build that faith. He knows that you need strong consolation to persevere because there will be times when you think that you have failed him miserably. And indeed you may have failed Him badly. But He wants you to see that your salvation and even your persevering in faith all rest upon Him.

This is why God swore an oath. He had given Abraham all of these precious and magnificent promises, but He also tested Abraham’s faith in relation to the promise. He tested it in order to build and establish it. He was not questioning it. He knew that Abraham knew Him because of the work that He had done through His own word and promise, from the beginning, when He called him out of Ur of the Chaldees. But He knew that Abraham’s faith, and our faith too, needs to be built and strengthened as we go through this life. How does this happen? It happens when you will give to Him what is most precious to you when He asks you for it.

This was what was happening in Genesis 22. It says there in verse 1, that God said to Abraham – “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” This command, Abraham obeyed by faith. He took Isaac and a few of his trusted servants, and they went to the mountain. When they got there, Abraham said to the young men – “Stay

here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.” When he said that, he was persevering in His faith in the promise of God; that God had told him that his descendants were to come through Isaac. Therefore, he had the faith to believe that even if God slew his only son, God would raise him from the dead. This is what it says in Hebrews 11: 17 – “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your see shall be called, concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

What does this mean? It means that he received Isaac back from the sure and certain death that he would have died, had not God intervened to stay his hand. But because Abraham offered up Isaac in a way that showed that he actually would have slain Isaac, it became a type of what God would do with His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God was very pleased with Abraham’s perseverance in faith. And so, when he offered Isaac up by faith, the Angel of the Lord said to him – “By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son – blessing I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their their enemies.” “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Abraham’s promised “seed” was Christ. God was taking an oath that He would send Him and offer Him up for us all on the cross. And so, in Him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. In this persevering obedience of Abraham, we have a type of all those who would be faithful to keep God’s word and persevere. He patiently endured and he obtained the promise. He retained his Isaac as the sworn pledge of many future blessings, to Himself and his people the Jews. He retained him as the sworn pledge of all of the spiritual blessings of salvation coming to the spiritual Israel; all the people of God, Jew and Gentile from the foundation of the world to its ends.

He obtained the promise of having a seed through whom the salvation of the world would come. This was strong consolation to him for now he had a sure hope that he himself was confirmed in His faith. He would persevere to the end of his life, and God would multiply blessings to him and to his descendants, both physical and spiritual. He knew that God had given him grace to enable him to offer up to God what was most precious to him in his life. Dear Christian, is this you? Can you offer up what is most precious to you when called upon to do so? You can only do it by faith, in accordance with the grace that God has supplied you with. But is this not the most God-glorifying way of doing things? Surely it is.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – In your perseverance do you remember the Immutability of God’s Counsel?**

Verse 18 says – “That 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 of the hope that is set before us.” Dear Christian – Do you see that your perseverance in the faith is based upon two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie? The two things which are immutable, which cannot change, are His promise and His oath concerning His promise. Both are related to His having given Christ to be your Savior from sin, and His having given Him to be your spiritual life and strength so that you can persevere in the sure hope of everlasting life. Your salvation and all of your strength to persevere in doing His will rest upon the promise of God and the oath of God concerning His promise.

Isn’t God’s promise enough, without His taking an oath, some might ask? Yes, it most certainly is. Paul says in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1, verse 19 – “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us – by me, Silvanus, and Timothy – was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.” “for all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” The promise of God will always be enough to give us sure hope as we persevere in

our faith and learn to obey God's word at every point. Then why the oath, you ask? It was given to confirm the certainty of God's keeping His promise. God who cannot lie has determined to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise, the immutability of His counsel. His counsel, what He has eternally purposed that He will do in relation to all of His elect people, will never change.

And you and I who believe in Jesus can rest our whole soul upon it. If we have believed in Jesus, He will give us grace to persevere in our faith also, for He is faithful to all of His promises and will never violate His oath. We will have strong consolation; that is, our hearts will be comforted, even in the midst of our spiritual temptations and the battles that we fight for the establishment of the truth, that Christ Himself has overcome on our behalf, and He will establish us in every good word and work, so that we will persevere all the way to glory, to that place where we will see Him face to face. Let us see the certainty of our being able to persevere is secured by God's Immutable oath concerning Christ; what He has done, and what He is doing for us by His mighty power and grace. Let us rejoice to work and labor for Him.