

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

C. Stephen David | *Ekklesia Evangelical Fellowship* | March 12, 2023

Perseverance: Persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay until we reach the goal.

After giving caution to his readers about the irreversible condition of the apostates, the author now goes on to give hope and encouragement to his readers:

Hebrews 6:9, Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved [*the only time in the letter*], we feel sure of better things— things that belong to salvation.

- ❖ **TLB translation**, “Dear friends, even though I am talking like this I really don’t believe that what I am saying applies to you. I am confident you are producing the good fruit that comes along with your salvation.”

What are the things that belong to salvation?

1. PERSEVERING TO SERVE GOD’S PEOPLE

What is the Great Commandment? [only possible as a believer]

- ❖ **Mark 12:30**, And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

What is one great evidence that we love God?

- ❖ **1 John 5:1**, Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and **everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.**
- ❖ **Hebrews 6:10**, For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and **the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.**

The love you have SHOWN for His Name: Something that is clearly expressible and visible. LOVE IS SOMETHING THAT IS SEEN.

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Observe: There is no commandment here. This is an acknowledgement.

- ▶ **Saints:** All God’s people, not the most sacred people among all God’s people.
- ▶ **Serving [The root word *diakonos*] the Saints:** God’s people are called to serve God’s people. Anything that you do for the welfare of God’s people is a ministry to people which is holy and pleasing to God.

Hebrews 10:32-34, But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

- ▶ Those who serve God's people show their love for God.

Note: You cannot genuinely love God's people unless you love God. And you cannot stop yourself from loving God's people when you love God.

People love because of two reasons:

- ▶ People love because they are loved or want love.
- ▶ People love to express their love for God.

Question: If you claim yourself to be a Christian, how are you loving God by serving God's people?

Never give up: Hebrews 6:10, For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, **as you still do.**

Galatians 6:9-10, And **let us not grow weary of doing good**, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD:

Article "Government contracts and nonprofit organizations: Problems and solutions": Nationwide, 24% of nonprofits said that said they have a small problem, and 44% that said they have a big problem with government contracts, where the government has failed to pay the full cost of the contracted services, the Urban Institute Study reports.¹

Luke 18:4-6, For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming. And the Lord said, "Hear what the **unrighteous [adikos]** judge says.

Hebrews 6:10, **For God is not unjust [adikia] so as to overlook your work** and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.

Comment: To overlook [without rewarding] what you do for God's people is to be unjust on God's character.

- ▶ God watches over your service to His people.

¹ <https://lodestar.asu.edu/blog/2013/08/government-contracts-and-nonprofit-organizations-problems-and-solutions>

- ▶ God takes delight in your service to His people.
- ▶ God remembers your service to His people.
- ▶ God rewards your service to His people [if not now but definitely on the Last Day].

Examine: If you are not doing anything for God's people, even that God is watching and is grieved by your lack of love for His Name.

Remember: Our love for God and God's faithfulness should be a great motivation for us to serve God's people.

2. PERSEVERING TO TRUST GOD'S FAITHFUL PROMISES

Hebrews 6:11, And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, **6:12**, so that you may **not be sluggish**, but **imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises**.

Show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end: Earnest in serving the saints but dull in hearing and sluggish in hope [persevering].

Two problems:

- ▶ Some are good in practical ministry but dull in doctrine.
- ▶ Some are good in doctrine but poor in practical ministry.

We all must be good in practical ministry, sound in doctrine, and persevere in hope till the end.

What you should NOT be? Don't be sluggish. Previously "Dull in hearing" (5:11), now "Sluggish" [not hostility but passivity, lukewarmness, spiritual numbness].

- ▶ Sluggish is contrary to earnestness [passion] and efforts [diligence].

Hope: is the fuel for the Christian life to press on forward despite trials and temptations in life. BE DILIGENT IN HOPE. FEED YOUR HOPE.

Saying: "Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only for one second without hope."

- ❖ **Romans 12:12**, Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. [No patience and prayer without hope]

What you should do? Hebrews 6:12, so that you may not be sluggish, **but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises**.

An example to imitate:

- ▶ **God's Promise**

Hebrews 6:13-14, For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you."

► **Abraham's Perseverance**

Hebrews 6:15, And thus Abraham, having **patiently** waited, obtained the **promise**. [God bless him and multiply him].

Observe: What Abraham could see was only a glimpse of Isaac and his sons. But it took more than 400 years for his tribe to multiply and acquire the Promised Land.

Why did Abraham wait patiently? Because He trusted God's faithfulness. What God promises He fulfils.

Hebrews 11:17-19, By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." **He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Nature of People:

Hebrews 6:16, For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. [Ex. God promise, Mother promise]

- People make promises. People should produce evidence to fulfil their promises. Why? Because people can be unfaithful and break their promises.
- Even now, when you make a promise to pay back the loan, a surety is required.

Nature of God:

Hebrews 6:17-18, So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise **the unchangeable character of his purpose**, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by **two unchangeable things**, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

Two Unchangeable Things:

- **Promise:** What you make
- **Oath:** By something you swear to assure the promise

First, God promised Abraham that He would bless him and multiply him.

Second, God made the oath by Himself (since there was none greater than Himself).

- ▶ Who is the ultimate standard of greatness? God.
- ▶ Who is the ultimate standard of holiness? God.
- ▶ Who is the ultimate standard of love? God.
- ▶ Who is the ultimate standard of truthfulness and faithfulness? God.

v. 18, ñso that by two unchangeable things, in which IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIEò.

- ▶ God cannot fail to keep His promise.
- ▶ God cannot lie or change.
- ▶ God is faithful to keep His Word.

Numbers 23:19, God is not man, **that he should lie**, or a son of man, **that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?**

Hebrews 10:23, Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **for he who promised is faithful.**

Wayne Grudem: God's faithfulness means that God will always do what He has said and fulfill what He has promised.

3. PERSEVERING IN FAITH TILL THE END [Inherit the Promise]

What is Christian hope?

- ❖ **Hebrews 11:16**, But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, **a heavenly one**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, **for he has prepared for them a city.**

Application: [reviving hope]

Illustration: After nine months of pregnancy, when the mother goes through labor pains to deliver the child, what is told to her is: **persevere**. You are close to delivery.

- ❖ **Hebrews 3:6**, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, **if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.**
- ❖ **Hebrews 6:11**, And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to **have the full assurance of hope until the endé**
- ❖ **Hebrews 6:18**, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, **we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.**

Strong encouragement: The trustworthy character of God [**when God makes promises, it is impossible for Him to lie**] is a strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

- ❖ **Hebrews 10:35-36**, Therefore **do not throw away your confidence**, which has a great reward. **For you have need of endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

Anchor: a device used to remain fixed in the seabed whatever the conditions at sea.

- ❖ **Hebrews 6:19-20**, We have this [**hope**] as a **sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain**

Inner place [holy of holies]: Figurative of God's heavenly place where God's complete presence manifests.

- ▶ Salvation (2:3)
- ▶ God's Rest (4:1)
- ▶ Eternal inheritance (9:15)
- ▶ A better possession and an abiding one (10:34)
- ▶ Heavenly city (11:16)
- ▶ Lasting city (13:14)
- ▶ Inner place [holy of holies] (6:20)

- ❖ **Hebrews 6:19-20**, We have this [**hope**] as a **sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain**

Steven Cole: The certain hope of our future salvation is an anchor to steady our souls while we wait on God in present storms.

- ❖ **Hebrews 6:19-20**, We have this [hope] as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, **where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**

Encouragement: The Lord Jesus has gone ahead of us [**forerunner**] as our eternal high priest.

- ❖ **Forerunner** means "**who went before us.**"
- ❖ **On our behalf:** Because Christ died for our sins and ascended to heaven, we, too, have the hope of eternal life. No Christ, no hope.
- ❖ **Hebrews 1:3**, After making purification for sins, **he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high**

- ❖ **Hebrews 4:14**, Since then we have a great high priest **who has passed through the heavens**, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Christ Himself testified of going ahead to prepare a place for us:

- ❖ **John 14:1-3**, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**"

Illustration: A cheerful older Christian was asked the secret of his triumphant attitude. He said, "I've read the last book of the Bible, so I know how the story ends. I'm on the winning side!" Let's take hold of our certain hope in Jesus!

Invitation to Unbelievers: Repent and believe in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Encouragement to Believers:

- ▶ Persevere in serving God's people.
- ▶ Persevere to trust in God's promises.
- ▶ Persevere in your faith till the end.

Conclusion:

- ❖ **Hebrews 6:20**, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, **having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**

How is Christ our high priest? How is Christ our eternal high priest? How is Christ our high priest in the order of Melchizedek? Next sermon answers these questions.