

## Hebrews Chapter 10D

This morning when we rose up to sing that great old Hymn of the faith penned by the hand of Martin Luther, “*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*” we confessed together these powerful words:

*“Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also, the body they may kill, God’s truth abideth still, His Kingdom is forever.”*

- I need to ask you: Did you really mean that? Do you really believe that?
- Are you willing to let go of “goods and kindred” for the promise of an unseen treasure that is stored up for you in heaven?
- Are you so convinced of the reality of the kingdom of God, that you would be willing to yield this mortal life for the sake of the Gospel if it became necessary?
- On the very night that our Lord Jesus was betrayed, before being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane he said these words to his beloved Apostles.

John 15: 20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

- Jesus’ warning concerning persecution moves from generation to generation as the Apostle Paul prepares his own dear son in the faith to carry the Gospel.

2 Timothy 3:10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

- Church history is replete with evidence that bears witness to the truth of these words spoken by the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

In the 1500’s: Almost 40 years after Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg.

The church in England enjoyed six years of vibrant Protestant Reformation under the rule of King Edward the 6<sup>th</sup>. Oxford and Cambridge were turning out clergy who possessed a firm grasp on the doctrines of grace. That is UNTIL:

1553 When Queen Mary took the throne and immediately began her bloody work of restoring Catholicism to England. During the next 4 years Mary would be responsible for the death of 288 brave souls who “*Let goods and kindred go this mortal life also*” in order to uphold the truth of God’s unchanging Word.

The first of these dear saints to be burned at the stake under the reign of “Bloody Mary” was a man named John Rodgers.

- John graduated from Cambridge and became a Catholic Priest. Before long He became disillusioned with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.
- IN the providence of God as Rodgers was traveling in Holland he happened to meet a man named William Tyndale. It was there that Tyndale shared the Gospel of JC with Rodgers and taught Him the Doctrines of Grace. As you might expect, neither Rodgers nor his ministry would ever be the same.
- When William Tyndale was arrested months later he left his Old Testament manuscripts with John Rodgers who would then compile them into a complete English Bible under the code name “Thomas Mathew.”
- It was the Matthews Bible that would become the very first authorized Bible in the English Language.
- In 1548 Rodgers along with his wife and 8 children returned to England from Germany where he had been pastoring.
- That year his dream of preaching, teaching in his own nation became a reality and John Rodgers faithfully proclaimed the Gospel until the day that King Edward died and His half-sister Mary proclaimed herself as Queen.
- Mary arrived in London on Thursday August 3, 1553 and John Rodgers was scheduled to preach the next Sunday.

Even though he was quite aware of Mary’s religious standing Rodgers boldly proclaimed the Gospel by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone for the glory of God alone. And he warned the church about what he called pestilent popery and the idolatry of the Roman Catholic Church.

Commenting on Rodgers sermon that day one biographer said: “There was never any position in the entire history of the reformation, all things considered where the responsibilities thrown upon one single man were greater and the results more important.”

- Rodger’s sermon that day would be his last. One week later he was placed under house arrest with his pregnant wife and now 10 children.
- Six months later he was thrown in prison where he would live in deplorable conditions for the next year, and that brings us to January 1555.

In that month Rodgers stood before Bishop Stephen Gardiner who served as Mary’s hatchet man. There were two charges brought against Rodgers:

1. For standing against the church at Rome.
2. For stating that IN the sacrament of the Eucharist there is not substantially nor literally the physical body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

During his imprisonment Rodgers was not permitted to see his wife or children. As a matter of fact, he was never able to hold his youngest child.

- On February 3<sup>rd</sup> Rodgers pleaded for an opportunity to see his children and speak with his wife before he died but his request was denied and the next morning he was roused from his cell and led out into the streets of the parish that he once pastored.
- He walked in the shadow of the very church in which he once preached.
- Thousands of spectators lined the way and in that sea of faces he saw his wife holding a baby. That was the first and the last time he would ever see his youngest child outside of heaven.
- Standing there alongside of his faithful wife were all 10 of Rodgers older children with their eyes fixed on their father and their voices screaming with pain as they watched their father quietly and calmly march to his death.

When He was tied to the stake the sheriff asked, “**Will you revoke your evil opinions of the Sacrament?**” To which Rodgers answered,

“That which I have preached I will seal with my blood!”

“You are a heretic then.” Declared the official.

“That shall be known on the day of judgment.” Rodgers responded.

“I will never pray for you” shouted the Sheriff before lighting the fire.

“But I will pray for you” Rodgers insisted as the flames began to rise.

I am reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus as he stood on the Mount of Beatitudes: Matthew 5: 10 **"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** 11 **"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.** 12 **Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Friends, as Bible Believing Christians, dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, committed to taking up our cross and following Him, we have enjoyed a long season of peace and prosperity here in the United States.

- We have experienced unprecedented freedom to worship and extraordinary liberty to proclaim the eternal Word of God.
- That said, I do believe that the day of our freedom is drawing to a close. And with that in mind it is imperative that we learn the lessons provided for us here in this book of Hebrews.
- The text before us this morning comes from the heart of a Pastor, who dearly loved and cared for his sheep.

Remembering that the goal of this letter is to provoke the sheep to persevere in the faith even under the imminent threat of persecution, the author skillfully lays a foundation of theological truth that is salted with strong words of exhortation.

- The strong Theology provides believers with a firm footing on which to stand.

- The powerful words of warning give them the motivation they need to fight the good fight of faith and finish the course.
- It is my prayer that our study of this book will have similar effects on YOU.

We have arrived at the end of Ch 10; after a strong encouragement and even stronger exhortation the readers are commanded to:

1. Recall your Resolve
2. Retain your Reward
3. Remain Resolute

### Recall Your Resolve

Hebrews 10: 32 **But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,**

The act of remembering is very important throughout the Bible.

- God called the children of Israel to remember their great deliverance from Egypt in the Passover Feast.
- God calls US to remember our great deliverance from sin through the celebration of the Lord's Table. (Rev.2 Ephesus - Remember your 1<sup>st</sup> Love)

Here in Hebrews 10 verse 32 the Author calls his readers to think back, to remember their former days, presumably the early days of their faith.

- He uses the words: **"When you were enlightened."** When the revelation of Christ first dawned in your heart through the proclamation of the Gospel. Recall the fervor and passion you possessed as God radically transformed your lives.

He is calling them to specifically remember the endurance they displayed in the early days.

- The wording that is used speaks of a time when they were enabled by God to bear up, to stand strong under a heavy weight of sufferings.

The words "hard struggle" actually describe an athletic contest, (for instance) a boxing match where the opponents literally pummel one another for 12 full rounds. *Rocky and Apollo Creed*. Although their epic battle continued for a prolonged period of time the fighters somehow remained standing.

- Because the writer is familiar with his readers he actually describes the battle they endured in the early days of their faith.

Hebrews 10:33 **sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated.**

- The persecution of those days effected different people in different ways.

- Some were publically exposed to insults and mistreatment, victims of verbal abuse and discrimination because of their allegiance to Christ.
- Some were thrown into prison, some were beaten.
- But in the sovereignty of God there were others who experienced this persecution on a more peripheral level. While they themselves were not necessarily targeted for mistreatment they felt the pain and suffering of their brothers. (*as the Apostle Paul describes*)

1Co 12:26 **If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.**

- In the love of Christ they came to the aid of those who suffered the brunt of it.

34 **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.**

- Prisons in the ancient Roman Empire were very different from the prisons of today. Rome did not provide “*Three Hots and a Cot*” for those who were incarcerated.
- The only food, clothing and blankets provided for a prisoner of Rome came from friends or family who visited.
- Think about this scenario: AS a believer, you take food and clothing to your brothers and sisters in prison. When you arrive at the prison gate the first thing they ask is, “What is your name?” “Where do you live?” Congratulations you now have a target on your back.
- Lastly (most importantly) I want you to consider the attitude that describes those who suffered:

**you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.**

- While you are off visiting your brothers and sisters in prison some of the local patriots of Rome broke in and looted your house.
- You just took food and clothing to your brother in prison and when you arrive back home you have no food or clothing of your own. It is entirely possible that your house may even have been burned down and you joyfully accept this??
- How is that possible? How can someone endure such injustice, such cruelty and remain joyful? (*The author provides an answer*)
- Because you **know that you have a better possession and an abiding one.**

Friends, the thought of rejoicing at the LOSS of material possessions is totally foreign to the American Church.

- We tend to take pride in our prosperity and we mistakenly see it as God’s stamp of approval.

- We speak foolishly like Job’s friends, “**WHO, that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? As I have seen those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same?**” (Job 4:7-8)
- Deeply imbedded in the core of our beliefs is the false idea that Christians should always prosper, we should experience blessing and be secure in this present world.
- Is that what John Rodgers Believed? OR did he see himself as a pilgrim, a stranger an alien, believing that this world is not his home and the only treasure worth holding on to is the Gospel of Jesus Christ whereby we are saved.

After calling his readers to remember their initial resolve, He instructs them on how they can hold on to their real reward.

## 2. Retain your Reward

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

- “Therefore” now that you remember the courage and joy IN which you once stood firm at the testing of your faith.
- Now that you remember the joy of your salvation that once filled your life.
- Listen to this mandate: “DON’T throw away your confidence.”
- It was a firm confidence in God that enabled you to endure the battles that you faced in the past, it is that same confidence that will enable you to possess an eternal reward.
- “**Confidence**” is one of the Key words employed by the author of Hebrews.

Hebrews 3:6 **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 4:16 **Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

Just so we’re clear, “Christian confidence” is not “Self-confidence.” (*Confidence in God*)  
The Apostle Paul said: Philippians 3:3 **For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.**

The assurance of faith that we have in Christ is based upon the character of God as revealed by the Spirit of God through the Word of God.

- In the case of these Hebrews believers, their confidence in God was displayed; it was made evident through their willingness to suffer in a time of persecution.

And Now when it appears that they are about to undergo “Round 2” the word from the trainer who is sitting in their corner is this: **don’t throw in the towel, your confidence has great reward.**

- What you need to fight the good fight of faith and gain the promised reward is “Endurance.”

36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

- Endurance (*standing firm under a heavy weight of pressure*) is a necessity for all Believers in this mortal life. If we are going to do the will of God and receive the blessing that God has promised, we must endure to the end.
- In Chapter 11 the Author uses Moses as an example of faithful endurance that yields a great reward.

Hebrews 11:26 He (Moses) considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

- The promise of future blessing, emphasized here in the book of Hebrews is something that is common throughout the entire Bible and is unique to the people of God.
- It is the assurance of an eternal yet unseen reward that has emboldened Christians from every generation to face the hardships and persecutions that are common in this fallen world.
- Listen to the words of Jesus as he spoke with his disciples:

Luke 6: 22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

- IN light of this great reward it is imperative in the days in which we live to remain resolute!

## 2 Remain Resolute

Hebrews 10: 37 For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

- We know from God’s Word that there is an END to this suffering, an end to the trials and persecution that are part of this present corrupt age.
- The last chapter of the Book has been written and it tells us that “The coming one will come and will not delay;”
- Until that blessed day we are called to live by FAITH in Jesus Christ.
- The principle that is voiced here, when the author says *my righteous one shall live by faith*, is a standard that runs throughout the Word of God.

- Those who trust in, those who cling to, those who rely upon the revealed Word of God will live. They will possess everlasting, age enduring LIFE, regardless of the opposition they face here on the earth.

When Israel was about to be invaded, before they were decimated by the Babylonian armies; God told the Prophet Habakkuk that “**The righteous shall live by faith.**”

- Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and so many more lived vibrant lives of faith and the mighty hand of God preserved them.

When the foolish Galatians were insisting THAT the observance of the Law was necessary in order to assure salvation the Apostle Paul said: “**no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."**

- Finally when the Apostle Paul declared the power of the Gospel to the church at Rome he said:

Romans 1:16 **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

- When someone believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, His perfect life, his atoning death and his glorious resurrection, that faith is credited to him as righteousness and by faith He will abide in the presence of God forever.

Friends as we watch our nation become more and more antagonistic to the Gospel, As we hear words from public officials demanding that “*deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs have to be changed*” We Must:

- Recall the Resolve of the Saints who have gone before us and imitate their faith and perseverance.
- Retain our Reward by enduring hardship by clinging to Christ who will never leave nor forsake us.
- Remain Resolute; Why? Because we are NOT of those who shrink back to destruction. We are those who through faith in Christ preserve to the saving of our souls.



