

**Warm-up**

What keeps you going when the chips are down? Do you ever get discouraged and are tempted to think that your efforts are not good enough?

- ▶ God set out to stimulate us to serve and encourage others, and to have boundless hope! *Let's go!*

**What We Have** (vs. 18-21)

*"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus," (v. 19)*

Do you know a sure thing when you see it? There is an old saying, *"Better is one in the hand than two in the bush"*. Ecclesiastes 4: 6 puts it this way: *"One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind."* Another old saying goes like this: *"Don't look a gift horse in the mouth"*. So, what does complete forgiveness look like to you? Allow me to paraphrase these four verses in Hebrew 10:

*God desires to convince us that we are completely forgiven of all of our bad attitudes and things we've done wrong. We're relieved of the burden to try to make it right by trying harder. God's forgiveness is complete. Christ Jesus cleansed us and presented us to the Father without blemish.*

*And so we have confidence in knowing Him and walking closely with Him, right into God's presence! He removed all barriers that used to keep us distant from God. Not only that, He personally pleads our case before the Father, always convincing Him that we are forgiven because of His sacrifice. It's a done deal, and we have His peace.*

So, what do we have?

- Forgiveness – complete, once for all, never to be revoked.
- Confidence – right up to the point to approaching God's "throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16).
- An advocate; a great priest, King Jesus! He is always praying for us and defending us before the Father. (Rom. 8:34).

- ▶ *Don't ever let the enemy convince you that there is no hope! We persevere because of hope in Jesus Christ.*

*"For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." (Rom. 8:24-25)*

We are on a new road now! The trail was blazed by Jesus. *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."* (2 Cor. 5:17)

**What We Do** (vs. 22-25)

*"let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (v. 22)*

My son and daughter-in-law planted in the minds of their young children that they must make good choices. They told them that they have options, but that making good choices always brings satisfaction. What about us as "mature" adults? What does a good choice look like to you?

Since we have forgiveness (v. 18) a good choice is to walk closely with God. James 4:8 says, *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you"*. Heb. 10:22 tells us that:

- We are to "draw near with a sincere heart"
- We can have a "full assurance of faith"
- We can have a pure conscience ("our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience")
- Our actions are also cleansed ("bodies washed with pure water")

This is what Christ-followers do! We are sincere in pursuing Christ. We demonstrate faith when life is tough. We don't entertain impure thoughts; we allow God to control our mind (see 2 Cor. 10:5, "taking every thought captive"). And we honor God with our actions and our speech on a consistent basis.

*"Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us." (Phil. 3:17)*

*"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." (Ps. 19:14)*

- ▶ *Hold fast, not wavering, encourage others, and stay connected with other believers. That's what we do!*

### **What We Don't Do** (vs. 26-31)

*"For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" (v. 26)*

Don't you hate it when you make the same mistake twice? And if you're like me you've gone against what you know is the right thing to do in a premeditative fashion sometime. It may be that "to err is human", but when and if I choose to sin, rejecting God's truth, I'm in trouble! Making this a *pattern* separates me from God, without His peace. Just as light and darkness cannot coexist, sin will separate me from God, who is light.

I don't believe that God subtracts salvation from a believer who sins willfully! (See John 5:24; 10:28; 1 Cor. 3:15; 1 Peter 1:4-5). But I do believe that we lose fellowship with God, and that we "suffer loss" in the building of God's temple in us. And I know that God judges our works (see Ps. 62:12 and elsewhere).

Does it bother you that verse 26 says, "*there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*"? Balance out that phrase with 1 John 5:18, which says that "*no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him*". Back in 1 John 3:9 we read, "*No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abide in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*". When we are outside of Christ we are in danger, but when we are "captured by Christ" (Col. 3:3) we are secure. In this position sin subtracts, but does not condemn.

For a person who has full knowledge of God's love but will not accept His gift of salvation, things get serious! Verse 29 refers to "*severer punishment*" when someone "tramples underfoot" God's Son; they "*insult the Spirit of grace*". God will not and cannot look the other way in this case. Read Hebrews 6:4-6 regarding those who "*crucified to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame*", making it "*impossible to renew them again to repentance*" (v. 6). Another passage, 2 Chron. 26:16, speaks of "*extinguishing their hope of salvation*" through continual, strategic rejection of God. As Hebrews 10:31 says, "*It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"

▶ *God is incredibly loving and wants everyone to be saved (2 Pet. 3:9). Rejecting Him at any level causes pain.*

### **Reminders, Benefits** (vs. 32-39)

*"Remember the former days, when, after being enlightened..." (v. 32)*

Dr. Bruce Wilkerson, former president of Walk Thru the Bible, liked to teach us "How to remember never to forget". He took his cue from the scriptures! God loves to bless those who remember and keep His word. A great way to sharpen this skill is to recall the things that God has done in the past. Have you ever made a list of specific things God did during a challenging time in your life? Or perhaps made a list of ways that God gave you "exceedingly abundantly" more than you deserved or asked for?

Walking with the Lord sometimes puts you at odds with the world and produces a "conflict of sufferings" (v. 32). When this happens He will *always* grant you the hope and endurance to get you through. He is the "God of hope" in Romans 15:13.

Keeping in mind what God has promised me brings me JOY and produces confidence (see vs. 34).

- Keep your compassion
- Hold things loosely
- Stay confident; endure; a reward is coming (vs. 35-36)

When you're in dire straits and wonder how much longer you can endure, remember verse 37. "FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY." God will rescue you sooner than you think, and in plenty of time. Stay faithful!

▶ *"BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH... we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." (vs. 38-39)*

### **Group Discussion**

1. Which of the "What we have" thoughts struck you this morning? (vs. 18-21)
2. Which of the "What we do" truths did God impress on you today? Share why this is so. (vs. 22-26)
3. Recall and share a time when God brought you through a time of struggle. What effect did this have on you and on your family? (vs. 32-29)

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**NEXT TIME: Lesson 8: FAITH / In Gear – Hebrews 11:1-12**