

Hebrews 6:1-8 Is it Really Impossible?

INTRODUCTION: When a baby is born, it has all the equipment it needs to grow and mature – It is not like a pollywog - gets arms, legs, later

A.) So the Older that Child gets the more he uses what he has been given, **brain / muscles**; the more it develops, grows and matures

B.) **Same principle applies spiritually** - when saved - given all we need to grow and mature.

- 1) Spiritual maturity **is not a process of gaining things** you didn't have when first believed
- 2) It is a matter **of developing what Lord has given** you

C) However a Christian can **become arrested** in his development by not using what he has been given!

This was the problem with the Hebrews.

A) The foundation for their faith had been laid but they never built upon it.

B) Not very attractive – **neighborhood of slabs.**

1) God's intent from the beginning is always Grow – Move forward, if we don't, go backward.

Bb) You learn the ABCs not so you can recite the alphabet - but so you can read words, sentences, books... Basics are a means to an end, not the end itself.

C) So At the end of chapter 5, the Hebrews were rebuked for still needing milk instead of eating solid food.

D) They needed to **grow up - press on - move past** the first principles.

1) *These guys had been in the first grade too long.*

So In chapter 6 the author wants to leave, “the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ” and “go on to perfection. RD V.1-8

A) The Greek word translated “perfection” **means “to complete or consummate.”** It's not “*sinless perfection*”, but “*maturity*”. They need to mature.

B) At the end of chapter 5 the author of Hebrews explained how he wanted to elaborate on the priesthood of Jesus... that Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

1) ***And he'll get to those truths in chapter 7*** - but before he can tackle the Priestly ministry of Jesus, he first has to address the Hebrews' immaturity.

C) Break up our passage today into three groups

1st V 1-3 A list of foundational truths

2nd v. 4-6 A warning against falling away.

3rd v. 7-9 A Final illustration from nature on the importance of moving forward

1st V.1-3 A list of foundational truths

A)Remember this list is foundational/basics – keep context in mind that will help interpret meaning -

B)First on the Hebrews' list is **repentance from dead works** and faith toward God.

1)) **DEAD WORKS** are trying earn God's favor by things you do – Context – **Rituals/ Sacrifices / Ceremonies** / those are dead works of Judaism -

B)Dead in the sense that they could not save a person.

1)And Every member of the Hebrew Church had spent plenty of time on the treadmill of religion.

C)They knew what it was like to never measure up no matter how hard they tried.

1)They knew the shallowness and deadness of trying to please God through rituals, and works, and charity.

D)Consequently The Hebrews lived under a cloud of condemnation.

So basically he is saying here Repentance from dead works is Coming to an understanding that You cannot earn God's favor.

A)Repentance = turn away from – Turning from faith in dead works to save You and turning to faith in Christ to save You.

B)Saved by grace through faith – Alone - Not of worksboast.

The Coast Guard drops a cable - or a rescue basket from a helicopter – then they'd use the cable to hoist desperate people to safety and salvation.

But I'm certain no one saved by the Coast Guard was under the illusion that they were using their own strength to climb to the copter. **Those that were saved weren't climbing – they were just clinging.** Salvation was coming from above.

C)Spiritually it is the same thing -Try to climb to God on **the rope of religion** and you'll die.

D)Our good works don't stack up. Isaiah 64 refers to our works as **"filthy rags"**.

1)*Good works done with the intent of earning God's favor are dead works.* They fail to accomplish their intent.

E)Here's a truth you need to nail down... If you're going to get anywhere with God you need to have faith.

1)**Try, try, try is worthless.** It's trust, trust, trust...

If you need a blessing...don't barter for it, just believe enough to ask God.

A)If you need power to obey... don't flex your muscles, as if it's up to you – step out to obedience and rely on God's strength.

B) Believe God makes up what you lack.

1) If you need a miracle... don't try to purchase one, have faith in God's grace.

C) If you need hope and comfort... rest and rely on God's unfailing promise.

Next is Baptisms. 3 main baptisms that relate to our walk with God.

1st – Baptized into the body of Christ - POSITION

1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...” Here the word “baptized” means “to initiate, to make a part”.

That happens upon conversion – It speaks of our position.

A) We are **spiritually** baptized into Christ – when we become one with Him - our sins are washed away with His blood.

B) The Spirit transplants His nature in us. We're literally born again.

C) The Holy Spirit alters our spiritual DNA.

1) He creates a family relationship between me, and you, and the rest of the body of Christ.

D) So Baptized into the Body of Christ.

After we believe – the Scriptures declare we should be baptized in water.

A) **Believe and be baptized** Mark 16:16

A) Outward revelation of inward – symbols - death and Rez.

B) But there is another baptism we need – Baptism with the Spirit – for Power.

Go and wait – I will baptize you

C) So we are Baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ – Placed in the family.

1) We get baptized in water – declare our faith

D) Jesus baptizes us with the Spirit for Power.

1) Continues to refill us as we ask Him

Laying on of hands

A) Now some great Bible teachers refer this to what we read in Scripture in the book of Acts – laying on hands in prayer for healing, prayer, baptism of the Spirit

B) Could be that – but I struggle to see that as foundational truth relating to my walk with God, which all these other points do refer to.

C) I believe this refers to the OT practice of sacrifice.

1) See the person who brought a sacrifice, had to put his hands on it, to symbolize his identification with it (Lev. 1:4; 3:8, 13).

D) But we no longer need to do that - Our identification with Jesus Christ does not come by putting our hands on Him;

1) it comes by “Laying a hold of Christ by putting your trust in Him.”

E) No more laying on of hands

Resurrection – Our faith is built on this –

A) Christ did not rise, our faith is in vain. 1 Cor 15:14

B) Living Hope 1 Peter 1:3 Our future hope of Res of our bodies is based on His Res –

1) First Fruits – First of many

Eternal Judgment

A) “Appointed unto man to die once Judgment.”

Hebrew 9:27

B) Two Judgments – Great white throne Rev. 20:11-15

1) Bema Seat 2 Corinthians 5:9-11

Those are six foundational doctrines

A) You have to have these down.

B) But then we need to move forward, faith in Christ is based on these things!

1) Don't go back to the old system – move forward – then he issues this warning,
one of many warnings in this letter:

Bible is a book, feeds us also warns us

A) If merely feed - never warn - only fattens us up for kill

B) Here he warns of the dangers of not moving on to maturity can eventually lead to falling away!

C) Danger in that -

V.4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

A) Now this passage is one that has caused much confusion: Brings up age old question / often debated once saved, always saved?

B) Important to not let theology shape the way I interpret the Bible, but I need to let the Bible shape my theology.

C) Systems of theology are important, because the Bible *does not* contradict itself; but the way to right systems *begins with a right understanding of the text, not one that bends the text to fit into a system*

1) Keep that in mind as we break this down today.

(Spurgeon's sound advice) *"We come to this passage ourselves with the intention to read it with the simplicity of a child, and whatever we find therein to state it; and if it may not seem to agree with something we have hitherto held, we are prepared to cast away every doctrine of our own, rather than one passage of Scripture." "It is far better to be inconsistent with ourselves than with the inspired Word.*

There are several ways that this passage is interpreted. There is only one way that it Biblically makes sense in context

A)SO need to consider the Context : Many because of their theological bent ignore the context – trying to bend this passage to fit their theology.

B)Question: Who is this written to? Christians or non –Christians?

C)Context: Who is the book written to?

Ch. 3 identified as *Holy Brethern - partakers of heavenly calling*

C)Warning is don't drift / don't turn/ don't neglect so great a salvation by going back to Judaism – Contrast why Christ is superior

D)Another consideration:

1)If these people are *non-Christians* they can't be falling away from Jesus. They were never united.

Notice also the phrases used to describe these folks...

A)They were "once enlightened" literally means "once and for all enlightened".

B)The word "enlightened" speaks of new rays of light shining on someone.

1)It's the same word used later in Hebrews 10:32 - which clearly speaks of a converted Christian.

C)In Ephesians 1:18 Paul prays for believers that "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened..."

1)He applies the experience of enlightenment to Christians.

They "tasted the heavenly gift" - "to taste" speaks of experience.

A)In Hebrews 2:9 we're told Jesus became a man so He could "taste death for everyone."

B)When Jesus tasted death He didn't just sample it... *sip it from a spoon, but not pour Himself a bowl –*

1)He embraced it completely. Jesus experienced it fully.

C)And in the same manner these Hebrews tasted God's heavenly gift. They maxed out.

1)They tasted it to the fullest. They chewed, swallowed, digested...

They were also “partakers of the Holy Spirit”. The Greek word translated “partakers” means “*sharers*”. They were *sharers of the Holy Spirit*.

A) They shared the life, and fruit, and gifts, and power of the Holy Spirit.

B) Hebrews 3:1 refers to “partakers of the heavenly calling”. 3:14 mentions “partakers of Christ”.

1) In both places “partakers” refers to bonafide believers.

C) Even Warren Wiersbe, a staunch once-saved-always-saved advocate has to concede, “To suggest the phrase, “*partakers of the Holy Spirit*”, means they only went along with the Holy Spirit to a certain extent is to ignore the meaning of the verb. It means “*to become sharers*”... I have concluded that the people addressed were true believers, not mere professors.”

Finally, they “tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come”.

A) Again they experienced to the fullest the life-changing dynamic of God’s Word, and the miracle power of God’s Kingdom.

B) They didn’t just roll it around in their mouth – absorb the flavor – then spit it out.

1) When they tasted, they digested.

C) Remember prior to his first election, Bill Clinton was asked if he ever used marijuana. His reply became famous, “I smoked it, but I didn’t inhale.”

D) That’s how some folks try to interpret verses 4-5. They took a draw on salvation, but never inhaled.

1) I don’t agree. To me these terms imply a true, salvation experience.

But now these Hebrew believers were considering – forsaking Christ’s work on the Cross to save them and going back to trusting in Dead works of religion.

A) That is the falling away that the writer is talking about here.

B) Important to grasp that – he is not just talking about someone who merely fell spiritually.

C) There were groups in the early church that misinterpreted Hebrews 6.

1) They taught if you sinned significantly after you were baptized there was no hope for your salvation.

D) That’s not what the writer of Hebrews is trying to communicate.

B) He’s not talking about doubting, or backsliding, or some moral failure. This is something far worse – it’s the deliberately walking away from faith in Jesus.

C). We all slip up and fall from time to time. But this was a “falling away”. It was far more serious.

1) These people were choosing to no longer trust in Jesus and put their faith in other stuff.

See I do not believe that the Bible teaches that a person can lose their salvation.

A) It can't be misplaced like your keys – I want it I just lost it.

B) But I do believe and this is one of several passages that supports this idea – **I believe that a person can choose to leave their salvation.**

C) A person can decide I no longer want to walk with Christ – I no longer believe He is the only way.

D) God didn't force you to believe and He doesn't continue to make you believe.

1) God doesn't force Himself on anyone / He never forces anyone to follow after Him / and He never will – **GENTLEMEN / NO hostages**

E) Denise – forced to Marry me – I would have to buy a dog

So From my study of Scripture I believe you can be a true, born-again believer, in Christ – yet you can renounce your faith, and walk away from His benefits.

A) That is the issue that this passage is describing

B) Which leads us to ask the question – what is the consequence of such a decision ?

Is it really impossible to renew them again to repentance?

A) "Some people interpret this verse to mean - if a Christian falls away - then they can never be renewed to faith in Christ again.

B) Is this saying if someone backslides, goes back into the world – lost forever?

C) I don't think so – best Commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself

1) And there are a whole host of passages that teach as long as a wayward soul – a lost person - has breath to breathe, there is always hope.

D) Ex The Prodigal Son! He was a member of the Father's family before he fell away - but when he returned with a repentant heart he was warmly welcomed back.

C) Romans 11:23 says of the Jews who were cut off the vine of salvation, "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."

D) Notice, the words, "for God is able to graft them in again."

1) Paul is describing folks who had it - lost it - but got it back again! It's possible!

So what's "impossible?" ...

A)The writer of Hebrews says if a person turns away from Christ and begins to trust in other things for their happiness / for their RIGHT standing w/ God-

B)AS LONG AS THAT IS WHERE THEIR TRUST LIES, it is impossible for them to be renewed. .

Bb)To put your trust in RELIGIOUS RITUAL is to reject Jesus all over again.

1)You belittle His sacrifice. You join the crowd that yelled "Crucify Him".

C)For these believers to rejoin the ranks of Judaism - to return to Jewish practices – is to mock and cheapen the sacrifice of Jesus.

D)In his commentary on Hebrews, David Guzik sums it up as follows, "The idea is not that *"if you fall away, you can't ever come back to Jesus."* Instead, it means "if you turn your back on Jesus, don't expect to find salvation anywhere else..."

The sentence structure of the text makes this even more clear!

A)The Greek words translated in verse 6, "crucify" and "put", are actually present participles. They imply current action.

As long as they are crucifying Jesus by their rejection - and are putting Him to an open shame... they can't be renewed to God.

B)There must be a change in their view about Christ

C)While a person is in a fallen state, it's impossible for them to be renewed.

1)But once he or she returns to faith in Jesus, God will graciously renew you again to repentance and restore to you His blessing, mercy, and forgiveness... *like the Prodigal Son.*

In essence, the author of Hebrews is saying you can't have it both ways...

A)Either you trust in the blood of animals or in the blood of Jesus.

B)Either you rest on the Sabbath or Jesus is your rest.

1) Either God dwells in marble Temples or He dwells in believing hearts.

C)Either the Levites are your priest or Jesus is your great High Priest.

As one author puts it, "There is no salvation back in Judaism. If you aren't saved in Jesus, you aren't saved at all."

App for us

A)This is a warning not just to the Hebrews, but to us.

B)Modern view religion like a smorgasbord – a buffet of different beliefs. Potpourri

1)People today like designer religion.

C)A little bit of everything Jesus /

1)a feast or two from Judaism – a little eastern meditation – some Hindu karma – bits and pieces...a tradition from over here - a few rituals from over there - a couple of Jesus' teachings –

D)But if you're faith is not exclusively in Jesus, you're rejecting and crucifying Him all over again.

1)You've degraded His sacrifice - and demeaned His nature – you're mocking His Lordship – you're putting the Lord of Glory to an open shame.

Here's a way to illustrate the point of our passage... Let's say I have tickets to Monday night's Padres game – but I decide I don't need a ticket – they will let me in? Will they?

Without a ticket I've got no hope of getting into the stadium. You've got to have a ticket... a Petco Park ticket.

Of course, that doesn't mean I can't go early tomorrow night - walk up to the box office - and get another ticket.

They are Free - **I can... as long as tickets are available...**

This is what the author of Hebrews is saying to his readers. Jesus is the ticket to heaven.

A)Don't leave your ticket - then expect to get into the game.

B)If you've walked away from simple faith in Jesus you need to have a change of heart.

C)That's the purpose of this warning.

1)The author of Hebrews wants you to return to Jesus and get a new ticket... *Heaven isn't a sellout - not yet!*

Finally Verses 7-8 pose an illustration from nature that reinforces the warning... It's not how you start that matters, it's how you finish.

Verse 7, "For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;/ **but if it bears thorns and briars**, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned."

What is coming out of your life is the evidence of what is going on in your heart!

A)You will know them by their fruit!

B)Good tree is going to bear good fruit – Blessed by God.

C)But if it bears thorns and briars – cursed – not a good tree!

C)John 15 Key to bearing fruit is to abide.

1)Fruit is evident – manifested

D)See, Faith is more like a plant.

1)You sink its roots - but then you tend it, and water it, and weed it, and feed it... and if you don't, it will wither and eventually die.

E) “faith is like a muscle.” Exercise it and it'll grow.

1)But put it in a cast – completely immobilize it - and it'll atrophy, and shrivel up, and even die.

Maturity is seen – Evident – GERALD YOUNG

A)Gerry – call me Gerald – yes Sir

B)You moving on in maturity will be evident to all

1)Work that faith muscle –

C)Get into God's word – put it into practice

1)Spouse will see u growing

D)Friends – Kids -

Question must answer today is: do you have your ticket? Trusting Christ or something else.