A hand holding a feather pen

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***HEBREWS 6 – Anchor of Hope***

**Heb. 5:13-14“**Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. **14**But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

Chapter 5 ends, and Chapter 6 begins with a message about maturity.

**Hebrews 6:1-3 “***Therefore* let us move beyond the *elementary teachings about Christ* and be taken forward to *maturity*, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, **2**instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. **3**And God permitting, we will do so.”

In other words, let’s move past the basic, elementary teachings about our faith, and onto deeper, more mature topics. This is the only way our faith will remain firm and unmoved by the temptations to drift away or fall away from the truth.

He then makes a statement that can be very confusing and is often misinterpreted;

**Hebrews 6:4-6 “**It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, **5**who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age **6**and who have *fallenaway*, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”

This could be a very difficult portion of scripture to understand, but the author follows it with an allegorical explanation to help us understand;

**Hebrews 6:7-8“**Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop *useful* to those for whom it is farmed receives *the blessing of God*. **8**But land that produces thorns and thistles is *worthless* and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.”

The passage states that;

It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, **5**who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age **6**and who have “fallenaway”, to be brought back to *repentance (change of mind)*.

These experience, as wonderful as they are;

1. Being enlightened, 2. tasted the heavenly gift,  3. sharing in the Holy Spirit, and  4. tasting the goodness of the word of God, are all based on cognitive understanding, and NOT spiritual transformation.

They are NOT equivalent of being “born again” (John 3), “becoming a new creation” (2nd Cor. 5), “receiving the spirit of adoption” (Romans 8), or “being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory” (2nd Corinthians 3).

When we come to *true faith in Christ*, it is not just “being enlightened”, but it is being “transformed by the Power of the Holy Spirit”.

Those he is describing are those who hear the word, and perhaps even experience it intellectually or emotionally to some extent, but do not fully surrender their lives to God, and place their Faith completely into His hands, to become Born Again by the Spirit.

*Until they do this it is impossible to be brought to a “true repentance” that leads to salvation and transformation.*

*(Remember, those who is speaking about are very likely, Jewish people who learned about the truth of Jesus the Messiah, and were taught about the sacrifice of His crucifixion, yet decided to return to Judaism, publicly reject Jesus’ sacrifice, and no longer consider Him the Messiah, thus subjecting Him to” public disgrace”.)*

The analogy in verses 7-8, of land that takes in water and produces thorns instead of crops is very similar to Jesus’ parable about the sower and the seeds.

**Mark 4:2-8**  “He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

Then Jesus explains it,

**Mark 4:14-20** “The farmer sows the word.  Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.  Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy.  But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.  Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;  but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

It's possible to hear the word of God, and maybe even be exposed to the Goodness of God, without allowing the seed of the word of God to take root deep within our hearts.

If that happens, we will not experience the transformation of the Spirit of God.

But if we remain “good soil” we will experience what happens when the seed germinates, takes root, shoots sprouts, and ultimately bears fruit in our lives. We become Born Again, changed by His Spirit in a new creation, given the Spirit of Adoption and the promise of Eternal life.

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Continue…

**Hebrews 6:9-12“**Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. **10**God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. **11**We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, *so that what you hope for may be fully realized.* **12**We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been *promised*.”

**“**so that what you *hope for* may be fully realized.”

The author begins to speak about Faith and Hope in these chapters. He knows that God gives us hopes and aspirations to lead us, encourage us, and give us vision for the future. He exhorts us not to become lazy but remain diligent in our faith so that we receive the promises God has for us, just as those who lived by faith before us.

Later in Hebrews he lists many godly men and women of old (including Abraham), who were *patient and diligent* in their faith despite suffering severe hardships, and tells us in chapter 11 that “Faith is the substance of things hoped for”.

**Hebrews 6:13-16 “**When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, **14**saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” **15**And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.” **“**People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument.

Yes, God swore by Himself!

**Gen 22:16** “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Swearing by someone means that you are invoking a greater authority to which you will honor your pledge. (Like swearing on a Bible.). There is no higher authority than God, yet He wanted Abraham to know the seriousness of the covenant promise He was making to him. This is the *only time* God swears an oath to do something in the stories of the patriarchs.

**Hebrews 6:17-18“**Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to *the heirs* of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. **18**God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to *take hold of the* ***hope****set before us* may be greatly encouraged.”

The *“two unchangeable things”* in these verses are;

1. God can not lie. It is impossible for God to make a promise that He does not keep.
2. The history of God’s people “the heirs” speaks for itself. God accomplished what He said He would, and that cannot be changed.

The fact that God promises things in His word, and then has been faithful through generations to keep His promises, gives us a hope that is firm and secure.

**Hebrews 6:19-20“***We have this* ***hope*** *as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure*. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, **20**where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” <>

*“We have ‘This Hope’ as an anchor for the Soul”.*

*It’s always amazing to see old ship anchors that have been salvaged and put on display in public parks along the shore. These old anchors from the 1700’s and 1800’s often weigh up to 5 tons and are usually made of rusted iron and bronze. I find it astonishing that these massive items were built in the first place, then somehow installed onboard these ancient ships, and lowered and raised by wooden pulleys and massive steels chains.*

*But there are times when these anchors become the most important part of the ship’s equipment, because in times of storms or heavy seas, they are the only thing that can keep a vessel firm and secure, and keep it from Drifting away in the waves out to sea.*

**Hebrews 6:19 “***We have this* ***hope*** *as an* ***anchor*** *for the soul, firm and secure*.

This is not the hope the world offers; it can only be found in Jesus (our High Priest forever.)

**Hope** : Biblical Definition - *"confident expectation”*

We can only have *“confident expectation”* of things that God has promised, otherwise it is *“speculative presumption”,* which is not hope.

**Biblical Hope vs. Worldly Hope**

**Biblical hope** is a confident expectation rooted in God's promises and character.

**Worldly hope** is often a wishful desire based on presumption, not on the promises of God as expressed through His word.

We can’t just conjure up our own selfish aspirations and then say we “have hope in the Lord”. If we place our hopes in our own desires, instead of God’s promises, We are bound to wind up disappointed with God.

*[All 32 baseball team’s fans started this week of “hoping” to win the World Series. Some are preposterous hopes, others have reasonable hopes. The truth is 31 of those teams will have a day this year where their team is either eliminated, or loses their final game. Only one team will win the World Series and fulfill their fan’s hopes. All of the other 31 team’s fans will have their “hopes deferred”.]*

**Prov. 13:12 “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.”**

Hope Deferred -*“Situation does not produce the outcomes anticipated in the manner or time that it was imagined.”*

Heart Sickness - Deep disappointment. Often leading to emotional distress, doubt and lack of Faith.

I believe that there are many Christians who are walking around with “Heart Sickness”.

They hoped for something they thought was of God and it turned into a disappointment. Now they are not as eager to trust God, have lost faith and are afraid to hope.

This is because they have responded to adversity in an immature way, by not allowing God’s word to cultivate roots deep in their hearts. When they faced trials and disappointments, they became weakened instead of becoming mature and strengthened. Instead of developing endurance and character, they turned to doubt and unbelief.

**James 1:2-4** “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Paul affirms this in Romans…

***Romans 5:3-5*** “We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5And this HOPE will *not* lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”

David, who often speaks to his own soul, wrote about this during a time of deep disappointment;

***PSALM 42:5*** “Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
    Why so disturbed within me? Put your ***HOPE*** *in God,*  
    for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”ope

*[ Pastor of the Baptist church in my hometown.]*

*He had a storybook marriage to his amazing, wonderful, contagiously-enthusiastic, wife [Rita] for 47 years. The two were married during their time when they both starred in the daytime soap opera “As the World Turns”. They left the show to pursue church ministry, he as a Pastor, and she as his faithful loving wife and mother of their three children. They did everything together he would pastor and preach, and she would do everything else that was needed around the church and during the services.*

*Two years ago it was discovered that his wife had a very aggressive brain cancer and was terminally ill. She died on Christmas Day leaving him devasted. His ability to minister and function deteriorated, he could no longer live alone or run the church and he was recently confined to senor living nearby [here in Middletown.]*

*I visited him this past Thursday, not knowing what to expect. To my delight I found him looking great, lively and very personable, and filled with hope about two things;*

1. *He has complete, “confident, joyful expectation” that he will see his dear wife again, who is now in paradise with Jesus.*
2. *He is able to share the hope of glory, and the good news of the gospel every day to this new community of people, many of whom have lost hope and become heartsick in the latest stages of their lives.*

This is not the hope that world gives, this is not the false hope that comes from speculative presumption…

**This is the hope that can only be found in Jesus,**

**who not only gives us hope, but IS our hope.**

**Col. 1:23,27 “continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not drift away from the hope of the gospel.”**

**27”…which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”**