

## “Dear Struggling Christian—Don’t Play Dead, Imitate Life!”

Hebrews 6:7-11

March 10, 2024

**INTRO...** ? - *What Do We Do When Our Lives Become Inconsistent with Our "Salvation Story"? ...Besetting sins or Controlling Habits ...Gripping Anxiety or Frequent Fears ...an undercurrent of Pride & Self-Importance ...a Lazy Spiritual Life or Lack of Passion*

**Hebrews 6:7-11** *For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. <sup>8</sup> But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.*

*<sup>9</sup> Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup> so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”*

Last Week ... Our Salvation is Fail-proof!

...Then WHY This "Uncomfortable Questions" about salvation in Heb 6?? ...Because there was actually something about their lives that was "Inconsistent with Salvation"

**Heb 5:11-14** *About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

“It is usually not difficult to get Christians to fear for their salvation. If a preacher says, as the New Testament does, that the ungodly shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven, he can be sure that many of his hearers will spend sleepless nights. If he suggests that some in the church may be false believers, as Jesus and the writer of Hebrews insist there are, then he can be sure to cause quite a disturbance in the pews.

There is a reason for this. Although true believers can be sure of their salvation, they are nonetheless in real and great danger. We live in a world that is perilous to faith in Christ. The writer of Hebrews has described it as a harbor where the current pulls hard out to sea, and if we are not anchored firmly we can be dragged away (2:1). Believers also have to contend with opposition from strong and crafty spiritual powers. The apostle Peter writes, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). In addition to dangers around us, believers gaze inward and invariably find much that is opposed to God. Our faith seems weak and our love for the world strong. Therefore, while we know that true believers are kept safe by God’s power (1 Peter 1:5), the Christian life takes place within the context of grave danger. While the New Testament speaks of assurance, this is why it never allows for sloth or complacency.

Assurance of salvation is something we can have and should strive for, but it comes only through the active exercise of faith in Christ. J. C. Ryle was right when he said, “I bless God that our salvation in no wise depends on our own works. . . . But I never would have any believer for a moment forget that our sense of salvation depends much on the manner of our living.” **Daniel Doriani**, “Reformed Exp. Comm.”

### "SALVATION"

v. 9 ... "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—**things that belong to salvation**"

**(1) How Big and Central to Your Life is the Concept of "SALVATION"?**

- One could accurately say that IT is the Ultimate Aim of All of Scripture!

***It is Not unusual to find (especially in Mainline Denominational Settings) morals, human good/bad, life wisdom, traditional human customs (clothing, family, marriage, rites of passage, thoughts of an afterlife), the 'Christian Jesus', and the "Jewish 10 Commandments" ...all these are "Put in a Blender" and become some kind of RELIGIOUS SMOOTHIE***

Lk 1:68-69 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people<sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

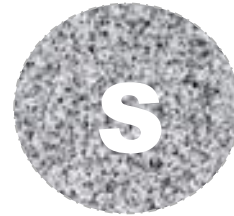
Lk 1:76-77 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,

- At Some Point—The Bible Brings us to a Personally REDEFINING MOMENT! ...This Moment of Our SALVATION!! ...It is BIG ...It is CENTRAL ...It is ULTIMATE

**NOTE: The "Things that Belong to Salvation"—Don't all Feel & Function the Same!**



**Salvation's 2 Vantage Points  
(2 sides of the Salvation Coin)**



- **Salvation is NOT a "Vague" Notion—it has DEFINITES!**
  - ON the God-Side ...Salvation involves the Full, Complete, Satisfaction of Something In God
 

**Heb 10:14** *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*  
...Here, there is a "Perfect, completed, 100% Thing" ...&... an "Incremental Thing" (an ongoing process)

**Eph 1:3-14** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,<sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, ...<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ...<sup>11</sup> In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...*  
...Absolutes, Not Incremental
  - On the Human Side ...Salvation involves its own ABSOLUTES
 

**Eph 1:13-14** *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,<sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*  
—You either Have the Holy Spirit or you DON'T!

**1 Pet 1:3-10** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ...<sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,*  
...This has either happened, when God caused it—or it has NOT!

...But THESE "Absolutes" are Not Experienced or Observed in "Absolute Ways"—they are a little fuzzier!

## How Does the Bible Interact with our "Fuzzy Salvation Experience"?

...(1) It may "Pronounce it Dead" ... (2) It May "Look for a Pulse"

### (1) It May Pronounce it Dead (It May Question its Validity)

- **Heb 6:7-8** ...The Land

...This is a description of what the Fallen World Condition produces!

**Gen 3:17-18** *cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;*

...But Not All Parables & Illustrations are as Black & White ...Some introduce "FALSE Impressions"

- **Matt 13:3-9** ...the Parable of the Sower (2 of the 4 soils "Appear" to Have Life—at least for a moment)
- **Matt 13:24-30** ...The Wheat & the Tares
- **Matt 7:21-23** *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

...Again, there's an APPEARANCE and some Activity ...but they were "NEVER" known by Jesus!

**1Jn 2:19** *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*

...John's audience of "supposed believers"

**1 Jn 2:1-6** *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. <sup>3</sup> And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup> Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*

**NOTE!! - v. 2** ... "HE is the propitiation for our sins" ... "SALVATION" is about God Being Satisfied/OK with us. ...We are saved from the "Combustible Reaction" (ie 'WRATH') of God's Righteousness to Our Sin!!! --By the Person & Work of Jesus (ABSOLUTELY - 100%)

v. 3-6 **...is Not about the "ACHIEVING" of Salvation ...it is about the "ASSURANCE" of Salvation!! ...It is the "stuff of life" that bears witness to the "Real Exchange" that Salvation Brought to You!!**

### (2) It May Look for a PULSE (Paramedic on the Scene)

**Heb 6:9** *Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.*

...Remember, Heb 5:11-14 has presented some "Corpse-Like-Characteristics"—The DON'T Appear HEALTHY!

...How Does This Hebrew's Paramedic Proceed?

**Heb 6:9-10**

"Things that belong to Salvation" — What are these things?

**#1** ... "Repentance & Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ"—Without Exception!

? - Have you or Have you NOT Done This? ...This Part of Salvation should NOT be "Fuzzy"

#2 ... "A PULSE"—Fruit/Growth/Signs of Life ... sometimes things that ARE ALIVE can "Appear Dead"!!!

v. 9-10 ...*Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.* <sup>10</sup> For God is not unjust so as to overlook **your work** and **the love that you have shown** for his name in **servicing the saints**, as you still do.

Eph 2:8-10 ...We are saved by grace through "faith alone"—but true saving faith is NEVER ALONE!

## "Playing Dead or Imitating Life"

What Do I Do in My Moments of Distance & Dullness? ('sloth or complacency') ...Don't Play Dead, Imitate Life!

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

"earnestness" — 1. From spoudé ('haste'), spoudázō means 'to make haste' or transitively 'to hurry something on,' then 'to treat seriously or respectfully.' C. The NT. - 1. spoudázō means 'to make haste' in 2 Tim. 4:9, 21; Tit. 3:12. It then denotes zealous effort in Gal. 2:10 or 1 Th. 2:17. In Eph. 4:3 Christians must exert themselves to maintain the unity that Christ has achieved for them. In 2 Tim. 2:15 they should do all they can to present themselves as approved. In Heb. 4:11 they must act in such a way as not to be shut out from the rest that God has prepared for them. In 2 Pet. 1:10 they are to secure their calling by their conduct, and in 3:14 they must be zealous to be found without spot or blemish. At issue in all these references is an actualizing of salvation, a fulfilling of what has been opened up by grace. (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged - Little Kittel))

"imitators" - μιμητής mimētēs; from 3401; an imitator; a mimic

...My "Speckled-Salvation-Life" can Feel "Dead" (unmotivated ...caving in to sin ...not changing or growing => Like Heb 5:11ff)—BUT! ...Heb 6:11-12 Speaks to me about What I'm ABSOLUTELY Capable of DOING!

Rom 8:12-16 *So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.* <sup>13</sup> *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.* <sup>14</sup> *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* <sup>15</sup> *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"* <sup>16</sup> *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...*

— What Do I Do? ...and "Doing" is the right Concept to Explore —

"Assurance of salvation is something we can have and should strive for, but it comes only through the active exercise of faith in Christ. J. C. Ryle was right when he said, "I bless God that our salvation in no wise depends on our own works. . . . But I never would have any believer for a moment forget that our sense of salvation depends much on the manner of our living." Daniel Doriani, "Reformed Expository Commentary"

...What do I do? ... "Don't Play Dead, Imitate Life"!!