

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages

## Sermon Notes & References

### Presumptuous or Persevering?

Hebrews 10:26-39

November 16, 2014

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<sup>A</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:14

<sup>B</sup> Leviticus chs 1-7; Psalm 19:12-13; 1 John 1; Deuteronomy 17:1-6

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<sup>D</sup> Matthew 11:3, Luke 7:19; Acts 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:12

<sup>E</sup> Psalm 23:4, 6

## A. Introduction

### 1. Of Titles and Teaching

- a. now, before going much further, let me say that the title I have given to this message is both inadequate and inexact – like most titles
- b. it would be easier, perhaps, to have two independent messages based upon the two sections of our text
- c. however, to do so would be to segregate interdependent thoughts contained in the passage as a whole;
  - (A) statements in the first section which are qualified in the second
  - (B) encouragements in the second that flow from the first
- d. for these verses, in their entirety, provide an illustration, a practical application of the text of last week's message: "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- e. so our titles are usually some attempt at simplification in order to help us to recall what the passage in the Scriptures teaches – but by their very nature as mere titles, they are a simplification!
- f. be that as it may, let us state that before us today we have two very distinct and discordant thoughts:
  - (A) a sharp warning against the danger of presumption
  - (B) a gentle encouragement to persevere in our faith

### 2. The People Described

#### a. In the Warning

- (A) there are two key phrases describing those used as an example
  - (1) how they have lived 'after receiving the knowledge of the truth' and by the word 'we' the writer includes himself in this group
  - (2) and how a person has treated 'the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified'
- (B) so there is no doubt that these words are descriptive of every true believer, one who has been born again by God's Holy Spirit
- (C) as such this passage forms a genuine warning to God's people
- (D) but these words can also describe non-Christians
  - (1) in Hebrews 6 we pointed out that there are people who have been convicted of the truth by the Holy Spirit, but not saved

- (2) they can give an intellectual assent to the facts of the Bible, but never surrender their will to the Jesus as their Saviour
- (3) such people – on account of family or of friends – have had a tremendous privilege of being set apart – sanctified – by such circumstances
- (4) Paul gives one example: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14)
- (5) the Scriptures being verbally inspired means that this use of the word ‘sanctified’ can equally well apply here

(E) what separates the Christian and non-Christian in this matter is not the experiences they have in common but their end

b. In the Encouragement

- (A) therefore, it is the endurance or perseverance, which separates these two groups, that the readers are encouraged to pursue
- (B) first they are to look back – in times of doubt and depression – to their past experience and victories
- (C) and second, to look forward to the receipt of God’s promises

B. The Warning of Presumption

1. Wilful Sin . . . . . 10:26-28

a. ‘26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,’

- (A) the key word in that verse is ‘willfully’ – it is the deliberate exercise of a person in direct opposition to the revealed will of God
- (B) if you read the first 7 chapters of Leviticus, you will discover that there are sacrifices for inadvertent sin against God but none for the deliberate rebellion against Him and His covenant
- (C) no wonder, then, it is that David prayed, “12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. 13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.” (Psalms 19:12-13)
- (D) in verse 18 of this chapter, the point is made that there was but one sacrifice, that of Christ, which deals with sin and it does so completely; but if as is said in this passage, a person rejects that one, all-sufficient sacrifice, then the alternative is ...

b. ‘27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and The fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.’

- (A) the nature of the apostasy – the falling into sin – is here made clearer: it involves aligning oneself with the enemies of God
  - (B) we are not speaking here of the sin that besets us and for which 1 John 1 provides the remedy of confession and cleansing
  - (C) but the rejecting of God’s revealed truth with its convicting power leaves one with all the uncertainty of pending judgement
- c. **28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.’**
- (A) this verse takes us – and the readers – back to the fearful warning given in the first six verses of Deuteronomy 17
  - (B) there, God’s people are warned against abandoning the true God to return to idols – in the Christian perspective, this is the same as refusing Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary to seek some other salvation
  - (C) for the OT people of God this was a detestable offence; how much more so, for those who reject the better salvation in Jesus Christ

2. Character of Sin of Apostasy . . . . . 10:29

- a. **‘29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?’**
- b. those who fall into this kind of apostasy, rejection of the truth, have three witness against them, and of the rightness of the punishment which they must bear: these witness are found in their own actions
  - c. the first action is that of spurning the best and highest of all beings with outrageous scorn and contempt
  - d. the second is treating the work of Christ on the cross as worthless; if that work is the only source of salvation, how can such a one survive?
  - e. the third is insulting the Holy Spirit who has made known salvation given by God’s grace, disregarding both His work and His person
  - f. and this is done every day: **‘Oh! we know so much more now; we don’t need the Bible or God.’** No wonder such thinking is unforgivable sin

3. A Bleak Outlook . . . . . 10:30-31

- a. **‘30 For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.”’**
- (A) this is a double-barrelled verse
  - (B) it is certainly a warning against those who make no pretense of Christianity; who regard it with contempt

and disbelief

- (C) for His vengeance certainly includes those who through rejecting the truth align themselves with God's adversaries
- (D) but it is also a warning the God's own people, to take every step to ensure that they cannot be accused of such apostasy
- b. '31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'
  - (A) for Peter gives us this warning: "17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 and if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?" (1 Peter 4:17-18)
  - (B) a man's anger against another disappears at his death, but this is the living, the ever-living God – His wrath against sin will not pass away as a man's does, but only once it has been punished

### C. The Encouragement to Persevere

- 1. The Lesson of Experience . . . . . 10:32-34
  - a. '32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,'
    - (A) you and I as believers are reminded here that we are in the midst of a great spiritual warfare – when we first heard the gospel, when the Holy Spirit brought upon us the knowledge and conviction of sin, we were painfully aware of this fact as we wrestled with truth
    - (B) perhaps, like the Jewish Christians, those were days of both exhilaration and hardship – knowing the joy of the Lord, but also knowing the scoffing of friends and separation from them because of the decision we made at that time
    - (C) as we face temptation to step back from our Christian profession we are encouraged here to remember, to repeat our victories then
  - b. '33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.'
    - (A) we may have been laughed at; these people faced real hardship
    - (B) but they accepted those attacks which warred against their faith
    - (C) in fact, they showed the nature of Christian fellowship by standing by the side of others who were being attacked
  - c. '34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.'

- (A) prisons in the NT times were markedly different from today's – we hear stories of these being almost resorts with prisoner's privileges
- (B) food, clothing, necessities – none of those were provided to the prisoners in the Roman jails – friends had to supply them
- (C) and showing such sympathy and aid like as not would bring the persecution upon themselves
- (D) this is what you suffered; this is what you did – this was victory then; this can be victory now ...

2. The Need for Endurance . . . . . 10:35-36

- a. '35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.'
  - (A) given what God has brought you through in the past, trust Him
  - (B) as you face temptation to quit, to relax from what you know you should do, to become disheartened, to give up – don't do it!
  - (C) in those past endeavours you showed confidence; boldness; bravery – don't toss all that into the garbage; it's worth too much
  - (D) continue on the road you have taken to your great reward
- b. '36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.'
  - (A) endurance is what you and I need if we are to gain this victory
  - (B) and with that victory receive the fullness of God's promise to us

3. The Promise of Preservation . . . . . 10:37-39

- a. '37 For yet in a very little while, he who is coming 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.'
  - (A) these verses are a very clear reference to Messiah's return
  - (B) that phrase, 'he who is coming' are the identical words in the original language that disciples of John the Baptist used in Luke 7:19 (& Matthew 11:3) to denote the Messiah
  - (C) as the angel said to the disciples, 'They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."' (Acts 1:11)
  - (D) and Paul had confidence in God's keeping power, "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." (2 Timothy 1:12 NAS95)

- (E) Christ is coming again for us so that we can say with the writer,
- b. '39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.'
- (A) once again the writer includes himself with his readers
- (1) as he sees himself in need of the warning of verse 26
- (2) so also he now recognises himself as one of those who will persevere in the faith to the realisation of his final salvation
- (B) we share with each other in the hardships and struggles of our faith as we are engaged in that spiritual warfare – 'we share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear'
- (C) these are the things that enable us by God's grace to persevere

#### D. Conclusion

##### 1. Faith as Intellectual Assent

- a. some years ago there was a well-known preacher
- (A) he seemed to have a fruitful ministry
- (B) then he decided to take further education
- (C) during that training, modernist professors poured discredit upon chapter after chapter of the Scriptures
- (D) bit by bit he lost his faith and left the ministry
- b. as he approached death, some old friends tried to persuade him to repent and to return to Christ
- (A) but he sadly replied, "I should like to believe again, but I cannot."
- (B) apparently, his faith was only intellectual assent and when that went, his knowledge of the truth was wasted and he was lost

##### 2. Faith as Eternal Relationship

- a. David, king of Israel was a very imperfect man
- (A) at one point he was kept back from wreaking personal vengeance on a certain man by the gentle words of a wise woman, Abigail
- (B) at another, after committing adultery and murder, he was brought to repentance by the message from a prophet, Nathan
- (C) at one point he brought God's judgement upon himself and his people by his rebellious taking a census, despite Joab's warning
- (D) based on the subsequent lives of some of his children, he appears to have been a bit of a failure as a father

- b. yet God said that this David was a man after His own heart; and made great promises for him and his descendants
  - (A) David was a man of faith, but it went beyond mere intellect
  - (B) that faith is revealed in many of the psalms which he wrote, but perhaps best of all in the Shepherd Psalm
  - (C) "4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.... 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." – it was the Presence of God in his life that mattered
- c. faith is the eternal, trust relationship between sinful man and the holy God which will enable you and I to persevere to the very end.



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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh  
BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870  
EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan  
*Hebrews*, by Leon Morris  
EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton  
*Hebrews*, by Marcus Dods  
Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.  
Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com).  
NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
*The Epistle to the Hebrew*, by F. F. Bruce  
RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson  
TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*  
*Hebrews*, by Donald Guthrie