

Sermon Guide
Speaker : Rayshawn Graves
Date : 9/1/2013
Sermon Series: The Drama of Redemption

Persevering

Hebrews 10:19-29

In the Drama of Redemption, we have seen how God has, from the beginning, gone to great lengths to choose a people for Himself and how He saves and redeems them. Today we want to see how this drama continues through seeing how God keeps His people even as they continue to live in a fallen world. The question then becomes how do men, who believe in Jesus and trust in Him for salvation, continue to live in this fallen world where they constantly face the presence of sin and the sufferings and trials of life? Does God save man and then leave him to himself to maintain and keep up his salvation? Is faith something that can never be lost no matter what a person does? Precisely what is perseverance? How can a Christian persevere in this fallen world?

The Bible has answers for these questions; how Christians can endure in this fallen world is elucidated in the scriptures. Particularly, the book of Hebrews addresses a group of people who are having an especially hard time living in this fallen world. This book gives them (and all subsequent believers) several ways by which they can endure and persevere until the end.

The Ground of Perseverance

Although the actual word “perseverance” isn't frequently mentioned in the Bible, the concept is found in several places. “Endure”, “Fight the good fight”, “Run the race” and “Press on” are all phrases used by the Bible to emphasize that the Christian is called to persist in faith until the end.

“The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.” - Wayne Grudem

Perseverance is a two-sided coin where one side reflects God's preservation of His people and the other side reflects His people's persistence in their faith until the end. However, these ideas and definitions of perseverance are not meant to suggest that “Once Saved Always Saved” or that a man can “Keep himself saved”.

Application

We are programmed to believe that we are the masters of our own fates and the controllers of our own destinies. Thus, frequently, when it comes to salvation, many of us believe that we are the ones who save ourselves and we are the ones who keep ourselves saved. Maybe we don't say this with our mouths, but our actions and our search for assurance lead us into believing that there are things we can do to secure or continue to save ourselves.

Hebrews 10:19-21 “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God”

Hebrews is not a letter of empty commands and *ought-to's* written to a people who are dull and weary. The author is not telling this church to endure because it's the right thing to do or to endure because you'll feel

better and have a better life. The author's commands are rooted in what has been done for us by Jesus Christ. Thus before the author of Hebrews gives them an exhortation to persevere, they want to place their feet on a sturdy foundation that they can confidently stand on. The term "Greater" appears repeatedly which is the source of the grounding:

You Have Received Greater - A Greater Messenger, A Greater Message, A Greater Moses, A Greater Rest, A Greater High Priest, A Greater Covenant, A Greater Sacrifice, A Greater Example, A Greater Kingdom.

In the greater sacrifice we have confidence and assurance to come before God because of the blood of Christ which is better than bulls and goats and the new and living way that He opened for us which is better than the Old Testament system.

In the greater high priest we have confidence and assurance to come before God because this high priest has offered a sacrifice once and for all and He continually intercedes for His people.

The writer of Hebrews points us to the reality that if we trust in Jesus, we have received greater than what the Old Covenant or anything else could give. What God has done for us in Jesus is the greatest work ever accomplished in the universe and it is upon this that we can confidently stand. It is only through trusting in the Jesus that this letter points to, that you and I can be confident in our perseverance.

Application Questions

Do you see the greatness and all sufficiency of what Christ has done?

Is this the motivation and essence of your endurance, or have you diminished this great work in your heart?

Have you sought for assurance through trusting in a lesser work?

The Grind of Perseverance

In light of what a believer has received, the writer of Hebrews gives an exhortation to respond. The gospel focuses not so much on what man must do to persevere but the reasons he will now do what he does which is fundamentally what has been done for him.

Hebrews 10:22-25 "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

The Old Covenant command to God's people was to "stay back" from Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 19:12 "And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.'"

Heb 12:18 "For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest"

Under the New Covenant, because of Christ's work, believers are encouraged to "draw near" as is seen in Hebrews 10:22. To draw near is to "come before God or to approach Him"; it is to come boldly to the throne of grace and come to God through faith.

When the verses speak of "a true heart in full assurance of faith" it is suggesting that the way in which men are to draw near is with a genuine and honest heart. There should not be hiding or covering of sin and there should (can) be full assurance of their confidence and trust in God. Thus this faith is not a remote or

a quarter in a vending machine where the focus is on what may be obtained from God. Rather, faith is confidence that God is for us in Christ and that He will bring us to Himself; faith is a new reality and a new perspective that looks to God, trusts in Him, and is assured in Him. In Christ man is cleansed from his guilty conscience

Application

We will not always feel assured in our faith but we can know that we can draw near because of what has been done through us in Christ wherein our consciences have been cleansed from guilt through justification. This cleansing is what baptism symbolizes and is what happens to us in regeneration; we are cleansed from sin. Thus let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering. Holding fast to our confession means holding firmly and cleaving to what we believe. You trust in Jesus to save you from sin and we can cling to this statement that "He who promised is faithful". This is not an empty imperative, God is faithful; God promised and God is faithful to fulfill His promises! He will not let you go

John 6:37-40 "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

John 10:27-30 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

God does not break His promises but fulfills them. The work that He began in you He will complete. This faithfulness is not based on what you and I can or can't do for God. It is based on the covenant that God has made with His Son. If your faith is weak today, trust in that promise. If you feel guilty or abandoned by God, confidently cling to this promise!

Horizontal & Vertical

Application

Hebrews 10:24-25 "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near"

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good work for perseverance is not just vertical, but horizontal. The literal meaning of these verses is "Let us consider one another". In other words, let me think about others, study them, consider them before myself. To "stir up" means to incite, to provoke thus we are to stir one another up to love and good works. This includes not neglecting to meet together, as was in that day (and continues to be in this day) the habit of some. Habitual isolation results in neglect to the care of your own soul and others as well. Consider whether you are isolated in your endurance and seek to correct this error. For we are to encourage one another and all the more as we see the Day drawing near. These exhortations to stir each other to love and good works through meeting together and encouraging one another is not simply church attendance but smaller and consistent environments where we can effectively remind each other of the gospel.

The Warning

Hebrews 10:26-29 "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled

underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

Application

Hebrews exhorts us with powerful encouragements and also with severe warnings. Just as we are encouraged to draw near, hold fast to our confession, and encourage one another, we are also warned to pay close attention to our salvation, lest we drift away, to be careful of becoming hardened in unbelief, and to fear failing entering God's rest. Hebrews gives perhaps some of the severest warnings against falling away from God, and the aforesaid passage in Hebrews 10 gives another warning against falling away. This warning comes in light of the greatness of what we have received. If after we have received such a great sacrifice and such a great High Priest, if we wilfully and deliberately reject the all sufficiency and goodness of this gift, what else remains? Is there a greater knowledge? Can the trampled God the Father and God the Son point us to a more sufficient savior? Is there better blood, a second Calvary, or a second Gethsemane? Is there a more gracious Spirit? This passage seeks to warn those in the visible church who have become dull, who have begun to coast, and who have even begun to neglect their salvation.

The beginning of Hebrews discusses those who were visibly a part of God's people and characterized by the following: they were delivered from Egypt, they experienced God's provision in the wilderness and they never really believed. Thus it is possible to be a part of the visible church, obtain a knowledge of the truth, and even be "set apart" to a degree where you can look like, sound like, and smell like the church, but not truly believe. This passage does not contradict the established message of the Bible which states that a believer cannot lose their salvation, rather, this passage gives a very real warning to us that if we reject this great work of Jesus and look to other things for our sufficiency, it may show that we never truly believed in the first place. This warning is not so much about whether or not we can lose our salvation, but it is about how we respond to such a warning

Application Questions

1. Do you respond to this warning with dullness and carelessness or callousness?
2. Do you respond in humility and reverence, recognizing that this warning is a very real warning which comes from a concerned Father to His children?

Examine yourselves:

2 Corinthians 13:5 "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves, or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?"

Philippians 2:12-13 "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Final Thoughts

Application

Today you may feel as though God is far off or exhausted from enduring afflictions and trials. There may be experiences of spiritual dullness from falling into sin or wallowing in sin and the associated guilt, shame and sense of exposure. Or perhaps you're wrestling with sin or are weighted down with life's burdens. Hebrews calls us to endure and hang in there. It instructs us on how we can continue to fight the good fight of faith and it gives us a hope to stand firmly upon so that we can endure until the end.

The author exhorts his readers not just by reminding them of what they have received, but he exhorts them through encouragements and warnings and both are necessary for our endurance.

These exhortations are not empty, “ought to’s” which the writer is suggesting. These commands are for our assurance and for our endurance. They are rooted in trusting in the all sufficient finished work of Christ. Because of His work, we can confidently and joyfully come to God, we can confidently and unashamedly hold fast to our hope, and we can freely and joyfully encourage one another and be accountable to one another. Our perseverance is not about trying harder, but trusting more! This book is nothing more than a motivational speech if it is not rooted in the grace and sufficiency of Christ. We are to strive to enter God’s rest, be earnest and zealous in pursuing gospel grounded assurance and strive for holiness but remember that this is not about your resolve, or your commitments to do better, or your willpower it is about the faithfulness of God to His Son and those who are in Him. Because of this, you can and will endure.

Sermon Link : [Perseverance](#)

© 2013. Redemption Hill Church. Used by Permission.

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Redemption Hill Church.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: Redemption Hill Church. Website | <http://redemptionhill.com>