

Sunday January 29th 2012
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Thirty One

1). Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

a). We had seen last week how we are admonished to ‘hold fast the confession of our hope’ – literally we are to cling to, to not let go of, to have mastery over, that which we speak, which is the confession of our faith; and what we speak in this confession is exactly the same as that which God has spoken, concerning the hope. We are then to be in complete harmony with His stated plans and purposes and it is this to which we cling. The idea of holding fast here is typified for us in the example of Ruth - Ru 1:14 *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."*

b). We are then to be in complete agreement with, to be fully assured of and have an absolutely confident expectation regarding all that the Lord has said concerning the coming Kingdom of Christ and most especially all that is promised to us personally – our appearance at the Judgment Seat of Christ / the salvation of our soul / a joint heir with Christ / a king/priest in the age to come.

c). The coming Kingdom of Christ, and all that is to be brought to pass with regards to that Kingdom is to be our focus, the goal to which we confidently, expectantly and unswervingly work – Php 2:12 ¶ *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

d). 1Co 15:58 ¶ *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

e). 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

f). But let's be clear here that the focus we are to have with respect to the salvation of our soul is not just to know that the so great salvation is out there waiting for us someday but is rather to be with the mindset and attitude presented in - Heb 3:6 *but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

g). 'Hold fast' here is the same Greek word as we see in Hebrews 10:23, and here we are to 'hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope' – the words 'confidence' and 'rejoicing' have to do with boldness and pride respectively.

h). The Hope is something with a value that is beyond calculation – just remember what the Lord says about this in – Mt 16:26 *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

2Pe 1:4 *by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises,.....*

Heb 2:3 *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,*

i). As a consequence of this the hope is something we can be bold about and take pride in – it is not something to be hidden or closeted or only spoken of in select circles in hushed tones. According to - Heb 6:19 *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*

j). Therefore what we will now see in 1 Peter is to be our consistent practice with regards to our possession and confession of the hope - 1Pe 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

k). And we will do this fully aware of the rejection and reviling that will probably accompany our 'defense' as we share the gospel of the glory of Christ with other Christians.

l). What we will probably experience from other Christians Peter deals with in the verses both before and after v15 - 1Pe 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, [don't be intimidated by them] nor be troubled."*.....

1Pe 3:16 ¶ *having a good conscience, [having a spiritual awareness] that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct [the way we live out our confident expectation of the hope everyday] in Christ may be ashamed.*

m). We are then to view the hope we possess with boldness and pride, knowing that the hope is an anchor of our soul, the very thing then that should keep

us from drifting away; and we are not to be afraid, or troubled or intimidated by those who might speak evil against us because of it. We are to see the hope and respond to others with regards to the hope in such a way that even those who accuse us of being evildoers might end up being ashamed.

n). Joh 15:20 *"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.*

o). And in case we still have some confusion about the hope let's look at what Paul writes to Titus about it, a scripture that provides us with a succinct and yet profound definition of the hope - Tit 2:11 ¶ *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing[appearing of the glory] of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

p). Paul said in - Ro 1:15 *So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. 16 ¶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

2). And so it is then, with this mindset concerning the hope, that we see this from our opening scripture - 24 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,*

a). And as we have seen from our Bible Studies throughout the week our taking careful note of each other's spiritual welfare can be proactive as well as reactive.

b). And we can find examples for both of these – on the proactive side we find this in - Ro 1:9 *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers,*

c). And then on the reactive side - Jas 5:19 *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

d). If the hope truly is the anchor of our soul, and if we are holding fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope, and if we are holding fast the confession of the hope, then our motivation will be for all those in the race of faith to be found worthy at the Judgment Seat; for them to experience exactly the same outcome that we look to and long for, for ourselves and we will labor to this end with respect to others in prayer and exhortation and study so that love and good works may be

stirred up in ourselves and others - Eph 4:15 *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

e). 1Th 2:19 *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

f). And so it is within the context of the passion we are to have with regards to our faith to the saving of the soul, the hope set before us, for ourselves and others that we are admonished - 25 *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

g). The reasons why we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together should be pretty obvious – first and foremost of course is the fact that this is what God tells us to do and so our assembling together itself is a matter of faith to the saving of the soul.

h). As we said last week we assemble together in eager anticipation of the Day when we will assemble together in the Heavenly Tabernacle – we assemble together to encourage one another in our preparation for that Day – Heb 10:22 *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* We assemble together to supply what is needed to cause growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love - Heb 6:10 *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

i). And in conjunction with this let's remember some basic scriptural truth with regards to faith to the saving of the soul - Ro 10:17 *So then faith[to the saving of the soul] comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

j). Eph 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ—*

k). And according to our Hebrews scripture we are to exhort one another, with respect to assembling together, with respect to the hope/faith to the saving of the soul – ‘and so much the more as you see the Day approaching’.

1). Now we had looked last week at the simple chronology of this – with each passing day so the Day gets closer. However, although this simple chronology would be true I think seeing the Day approaching will have more to do with our progress to maturity as we become fully convinced, without the shadow of a doubt, of the absolute certainty of that Day and all that is associated with it – As the approach of that Day and the certainty of our Judgment and the certainty of God’s promise becomes a greater reality than the world that surrounds us, so the urgency with which we will exhort one another to remain faithful will intensify, as will our own determination to maintain our faith to the saving of our soul. The very thought that is picked up just a few verses later - Heb 10:35 *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

3). And so it is the admonitions to hold fast the confession of our hope; to consider one another to stir up love and good works; not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, to exhort one another, all with faith to the saving of the soul as their foundation and focus, that lead us into the 4th facet of our warning in Hebrews - 26 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

a). The Greek here would give us ‘if we continue to sin willfully’, stressing the habitual nature of this sin.

b). The word translated ‘willfully’ means, as our translation suggests, that we intentionally choose this course of action – and so put together we get the idea of intentionally choosing to continue in this sin as a matter of habit.

c). Now the whole focus of this sin is faith to the saving of the soul – it is specific and particular and cannot be taken out of its context – now the immediate context for this willful sin concerning faith to the saving of the soul is forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. So if we intentionally choose to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as our habit – knowing what God has said about it, and therefore we don’t exhort one another and therefore we don’t consider one another and therefore we lose sight of the Day approaching and if we continue in this unabated this is the willful sin being spoken of.

d). You see, according to the scriptures, there are 2 kinds of Christians – pictured for us typologically in Orpah and Ruth – and these 2 kinds of Christian are presented to us in the final 2 verses of Chapter 10 - Heb 10:38 *Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe [who have faith] to the saving of the soul.*

e). There are those Christians who believe, who have faith, to the saving of the soul [this would be Ruth] and there are those Christians who draw back to perdition, to destruction [this would be Orpah].

f) Those who draw back, draw back with respect to one thing – having faith/believing to the salvation of the soul having understood that this so great salvation is on offer – it is this, the very thing that is the foundation of all scripture, the very thing that all scripture has as its focus which they step back from – the very thing our scripture references - *after we have received the knowledge [epignosis] of the truth,*

g). The willful sin referenced here in Hebrews speaks exclusively of this and nothing else – the destruction of those who sin in this way, who draw back is exclusively to do with the goal of our faith, the saving of the soul. There is nothing eternal in this whatsoever – all those who are eternally saved are just that, but those who sin willfully after the fashion we have seen will not receive the salvation of their souls/the salvation to be revealed in the last time, will have no position with Christ in His Kingdom, will receive no inheritance in the likeness of the unbelieving generation of Israel who perished in the wilderness - Heb 3:14 *For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

h).And so instead of becoming a joint heir with the One who is ‘the light of the world’ they will instead find themselves in the place called ‘the outer darkness’, typified by Gehenna, the garbage dump outside the city of Jerusalem.

i). And so as we consider this we will realize that forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, although the immediate context for sinning willfully, is really the manifestation of the sin rather than the sin itself.

j). That which leads into forsaking the assembling of ourselves together we have already seen – not giving the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, things concerning that which God has said by the prophets and by His Son concerning faith to the salvation of the soul; not hearing His voice while it is called today and therefore hardening our heart against what He is saying about faith to the salvation of the soul; not going on to maturity, not going on to the full assurance of faith to the saving of the soul; falling away from the truth concerning faith to the salvation of the soul - Re 2:4 *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have*

left your first love. 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, [works in connection with faith to the saving of the soul].

k). And so, as uncomfortable as this truth is, we need to realize that the intentional choice to forsake the assembling of ourselves together is proof positive that we are drifting away, and we are drifting away because we have hardened our heart against the truth – and usually this is because it is not what we want to hear – this present age and our present life being of greater value than life in the age to come - Mt 16:25 *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

4). Let's go back to our scripture warning again - 26 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

a). What we see then is a shocking reality – we see a promise that is just as certain and just as valid as God's promise of blessing – if we continue to deliberately walk away from believing God to the salvation of the soul, we will reach that point of no return so that there will no longer remain a sacrifice for sins.

b). And the promise is 'a certain fearful expectation of judgment'; a fearful expectation of God's 'fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries'.

c). Jas 4:4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

d). 1Co 3:15 *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

e). And if this isn't scary enough for us our scripture continues.

5). Heb 10:28 *Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

a). Do we remember from a few weeks back that 'Moses' law' was just a shadow of the good things to come? - Heb 10:1 ¶ *For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things,*

b). Well, according to our scripture anyone who rejected the shadow was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses – witnesses who were imperfect men of flesh and blood.

c). For those who reject the reality then they are not witnessed against by imperfect men, but by the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. And if rejecting the shadow brought death without mercy of how much worse punishment do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has rejected the reality to which the shadow pointed?

d). Let's take a reality check right now as well – as we look at the idea of continuing to sin willfully the words disobedience and unfaithfulness come to mind – and quite rightly so, but look at what those words disobedience and unfaithfulness translate to from God's perspective - *trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace* – this is up close and personal.

e). V30 tells us that God will take vengeance, He will revenge, He will repay those Christians who are guilty of this – and if we would like to get a feeling for God's vengeance look at this from - Na 1:2 ¶ *God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; The LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies;*

f). And let's remember that this is not vindictiveness on God's part but the absolutely righteous Judgment for the sin committed.

g). And we can find further commentary on that which we have just seen in Hebrews in - 2Th 1:3 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 5 ¶ which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting[age lasting] destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. 11 ¶ Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

h). For those Christians then who continue to sin willfully in the way that we have described today after having received the knowledge of the truth it will be a

fearful thing for them to fall into the hands of the living God when they appear at the Judgment Seat.

i). Perhaps in the light of the horror of this Judgment we will see yet another reason for us to consider one another, to stir up love and good works and to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

j). And here we will stop for today.

May the grace of our Lord be with you now and always and may you remain faithful till He comes.