

Hebrews 6:4-12 - When you Drink in the Rain – 4 October 2015

We're looking at Hebrews chapter 6 this morning, so if you have your Bibles, it will be fantastic if you could open it to Hebrews, Chapter 6. I want to say in advance that this will be an extremely intense and in the colloquial speech "chim" sermon. I will say that up front. I tried to simplify as best as I can but sometimes it is just challenging and "chim" [means deep and profound]. Today is one day like that. The text before us is verses 4 to 6 and beyond. But let me read these verses to you first.

[Hebrews 6:4-6]

For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit and have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away to restore them again to repentance since they are crucifying once again, the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to the contempt.

There is no doubt, these verses; one sentence really, is one of the most difficult passages in the whole Bible. I want to say if you are here first time, we don't always look at difficult passages. I don't delight in doing difficult passages all the time but at the very same note, the Bible is also not always simple. So God in his infinite wisdom, has planned and placed difficult with simpler passages in his Scripture, in the perfect balance and I think if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, it is our responsibility to discover what God wants to teach us. And indeed, I think it is a privilege for us to learn of His Word. Sometimes you drink milk, sometimes eat steak and we rejoice in both, so this morning I want to assure you, this will not just be academic learning of the verses. I think there will be a lot of rich applications that will come at the end of it all, but it will be [a] an intense serious and deep study of these verses. I urge your utmost attention. For myself, I read up upwards of hundred sermons, Bible studies, teachings on this passage, just like every other week, and the people I've read are good people, good pastors, theologians, commentators, and they pretty much differ in the interpretation of this text. That's why it's so difficult. From the Spurgeon's, to the Piper's, to the MacArthur's, to Wiersbe's, to the Stedman's, they are different in their approach and understanding of this text. Also in our church, I received many inquiries over the years; I've been in the ministry about this text itself. You have sought to understand this passage, you have looked at different commentaries, and you say so at the end of the day I still don't quite get what this is all about. So that's why I think I'm going to spend some time explaining, not just so that you may know for sure what is the truth, at the end of it all, but I also hope to show you how the

principles of Bible interpretation involved in going into it, so I hope humbly to be able to demonstrate and to disciple you in approach of difficult passages here.

For this text, there are several things that will immediately jump to mind. And that is the question, who is this writing about? Who is this referred to? Christians? Churchgoers? Who? What exactly is the writer saying when he says people who have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, shared the Holy Spirit or shared in the Holy Spirit, tasted the goodness of the Word of God and tasted the powers of the age to come, and after you have gotten through that hurdle the next hurdle is what does it mean to fall away? And then when you fall away, why is it impossible to restore them again to repentance? And what is the author saying when he says you are crucifying once again the Son of God to your own harm and holding him up to contempt, so not a easy task.

[Let's] I want to ask you to once again bow and let's have a word of prayer and ask God to guide this time together. Father, we thank You for your perfect Word. And even if we may struggle through it, we know it is always for our good but we thank you that there is help, your Spirit will lead us and guide us and I pray that this will be at the end of it all, [a] an extremely profitable and helpful time we will spend together. I pray for your sheep, I pray for your children, I pray for your people, your followers that they will have a heart that is not dull or slothful to listen but one that is diligent to hear, to understand and most of all to obey. So grant us such a heart and I pray today for people to really come to know Jesus, for people to mature in their faith and for people to step out in wonderful service towards you at the end of this time. We thank You; we pray this in Jesus Name, Amen.

Well, let me first tackle the first [first] segment here, which is about these five experiences. The writer says there are some who have been once enlightened, who have [err] tasted the heavenly gift, shared in the Holy Spirit, tasted the good Word of the Lord and also the powers of the age to come. So what does this really mean? Most of us when we read this immediately we would say oh this refer to someone who is a Christian. Someone who is saved and indeed it is very, very, very likely, and indeed, I think it's true. This will refer to someone who may already be a Christian. He's enlightened he shares in the Holy Spirit, he sees miracles, he tastes of the wisdom the goodness of God's Word, but we can't be absolutely certain or dogmatic that this is exclusively for believers alone. For one, this passage is not repeated anywhere else. These words, these phrases together are not repeated anywhere else, so you can't really be that sure and in the Bible we read of people who has such experiences, but they may not all be saved. For example, in Matthew 4, Jesus appeared before a lot of

people and it is described to be a great light coming upon them. They, they they see great light but of course, not everyone in that region believe ultimately in Jesus Christ, not with that kind of a belief. Then we read of someone who hears the goodness of God's Word, his name is Herod. Herod tasted of the goodness of the Word of God. He heard John the Baptist gladly, but the Bible tells us at the end of it all, Herod did not come to Christ. What's even more revealing is this passage Jesus Himself spoke that there are people who can prophesy, there are people who prophesy in God's Name. They could do great works, they could cast out demons, they could perform miracles, there was the evidence of the mighty working of God. Yet Jesus said to them, I never knew you. It's shocking, that people can have all these experiences, but at the end of it all, never really knew the Lord. So when you look at this, what I'm saying is I can't really be dead sure just by looking at these words, certainly it can refer to believers and it should but maybe not just exclusively for believers. But let's look out at the next clue. The next clue here is this phrase they have fallen away. The word here means to depart, to leave off and almost every commentator, theologian, pastor would agree this is not just about an occasional stumbling into sin. But this is a persistent and determined no to Jesus Christ. It is a refusal to believe, it is a denial of the faith that they once was a profession or once made a profession for. So this is a persistent blatant rejection. So now if you put these two parts together. There will be some who conclude, aah you see, I have a proof text that says a believer can lose his salvation because someone who is enlightened, shares in the Holy Spirit must be a Christian and a Christian can fall away so that is the conclusion and I suppose you could come to that conclusion when you just look at these two parts, but later on I'll show you the other parts that seem to have a very difficult fit with that conclusion, but even before I go to the text itself, it is very very difficult to accept that a Christian truly born again can lose his salvation because elsewhere in the Bible there are too many clearer verses that speak of it otherwise, you can't and you know something about the Bible, one principle of Bible interpretation is comparing Scripture with Scripture. God is not schizophrenic. He doesn't contradict himself. He doesn't say one thing here and say another thing somewhere else. He always is consistent because he speaks the truth. He gives us the truth in the Scriptures, So we are going to look at these verses, I'm going to list alright for those copying notes, you may choose to write that otherwise you just I hope you are impressed with the reality that the Bible is actually very clear, not left to your doubts, the Bible, Jesus Himself says:

John 6:39-40

This is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing.

You can read on yourself but the key phrase I would lose nothing all that the father has given me, I would lose none. You can't have salvation and lose it because God is the one who ensures you have it. So that's one phrase, one sentence, one Scripture for you to note. He will raise him up on the last day that's the guarantee from Jesus Christ. How about this,

John 10:28-29

I give them eternal life, and they would never perish.

Never means never because no one will be able to snatch them out of my hand and he goes on to say, no one is also able to snatch them out of the father's hand, so both myself Jesus says and both the father holds them in their hands, can't lose. No one is stronger than God, not even the devil. It reminds me of a story I read, Northwest 225 this plane that took off from Detroit, some 30 years ago in 1987, there were 155 passengers on board and soon after takeoff, [it] tragedy struck, it fell, it crashed and out of the hundred and 55 passengers only one survive. The survivor is a four-year-old girl called Cecelia, so how did she survive? I mean all the adults died. Cecelia survived because her mother, Paula, unbuckled herself knelt in front of Cecelia's chair and wrap Cecelia with her arms and body. She would not let her daughter go. Our Father will never let us go, no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. Such is the security of the believer because it is rooted in the ability, the sovereignty, the power, the faithfulness of the Father. The Scriptures go on to say among those whom he predestined he also called, so all those he predestined, he calls. No fallout, hundred percent and those he called, he also justified, no loss, hundred percent and those he justified, he also glorified - No loss, hundred per cent. Those who are really in Christ are those who are justified and I'll tell your justification and your glorification is certain - no loss. That's what it is - full hundred percent transmission from God's eternal purpose to God's eternal pleasures and glories to come, for each one who is called. He says nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, nothing, absoluteness in this text. How about:

1 Corinthians 1:7-9

1 Corinthians 1, where he says the Lord Jesus Christ will sustain you to the end guiltless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why? God is faithful.

Philippians 1:6

I mean the teachings of Scriptures just roll on and on and on, man, and he who has

begun this good work in you will perform it unto the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians

1

and first Peter one versus 3 to 5

1 Peter 1:3-5

Your inheritance is imperishable, kept in heaven by God's power being guarded.

Now today, in the volatile markets today, whatever you invest you chuak [hokkien saying, means "scared"], you scared right, buy oil, wah lau [hokkien saying, means "O dear"], oil oil prices drop. You [you] queue up to change your Singapore dollars to Ringgit now 3.1 wah wah, you you kill yourself because you changed at 2.7. You never know whether what you thought you store up will be preserved, but I tell you salvation and the glories and the blessings to come are guaranteed in Christ, by God for you, so it with this huge and I think I'm just shared with you some, with this huge amount of clear texts and knowing that the Scriptures are consistent, there is no contradiction, it is very hard to believe that the author here is saying oh, you are a Christian and now you will fall away, you can lose your salvation.

All right, so that is comparing Scripture to Scripture, but you say Pastor, I, I need something more within the text because I know this trick; you just use other text and just blow away this text. No that's not what I want to do. No, I don't want to blow away this text, I want to continue to go deeper into it and another principle of Bible study or Bible interpretation is the principle of context, right, compare Scripture to Scripture is one, another important principle is context, meaning to understand this passage, you got to know what happens before and what happens after this passage, I mean it's simple. I said I love you, you say, "pastor, what do you mean? You must tell me why you say I love you and what do you mean after you say I love you," so that there is context so what's the context of this passage. Well, read on. I want to show you the context after and then before later on, so after verse six is what, verse seven, all right, this one very simple aah, after verse 6, you look at verses seven and eight. All right, so in your Bibles, you'll look at it now after verse 6 is verses seven and eight and verses seven and eight is a simple example, is a simple illustration but an extremely helpful and powerful illustration. The author almost anticipating we may struggle with this text, gives you an illustration that it clarifies it all. An example is here,

Hebrews 6: 7-8

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 received a blessing from God. But if it bears

thorns and thistles it is worthless and near to being cursed and its end is to be burned.

What is this example? Well, this example is about two kinds of land, very simple, is about two kinds of land, 'liang pian ti' [a mandarin phrase which means "two pieces of land"], two pieces of land. The first kind of land is a good land whereby it is cultivated; it is prepared so when the rain falls on this cultivated land. the Bible says it produces a crop useful to those who, for whose sake it is cultivated so rain comes down and the crops come up, and this is a fruitful land. It is blessed; it receives a blessing from God, good land. Then, there is a not so good land. It is not cultivated. So when the rain comes down, it produces something, wah.. in the beginning, the farmer is excited, growth, life, leaves, branches, twigs, but after a while, it realized it's not crops. There's something but it is actually thorns and thistles, weeds and useless things. So this land that is not cultivated, of course produces useless things and its end is to be cursed, but noticed though there are two pieces of land it's always the same rain. Same rain. Same rain. Two lands, two results. You say, why are there different results? Oh, it must be different rain. No, no, no, the author is saying, same rain, the reason why there are two results is because there are two different kinds of land to begin with. The rain did not change the character of the land. The rain nearly brought out what was originally the nature and character of the land. So the difference in responding to the rain is not the rain itself but the land itself, you see that, so with this illustration, you come back to this text, I mean you have to do that because verses 7 and 8 explain and illustrate verses 4 to 6, so the author is saying here, oh, those who have been enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, shared in the spirit and so on and so forth, these describe the rain that comes down, they drink in this rain and for some they will be like that cultivated land, that when rain comes now, it is good land, it produces fruit. There is life, there is blessing from God, wonderful! But that is not always the case because there is another kind of land where it is uncultivated. It seems that when they have all these experiences, there's some light, some exuberance, but if you inspect long enough, no real fruit, no real life change. No real service towards God, but indeed, though they look like they are in the experience of having the rain, they produce thorns and briars. They continue in sin, in deliberate sin against God, and ultimately they will fall away. That is why all of us in this room receive the same word this morning but at the end of our life we may have very different outcomes. Same preacher, same slides, same words but different lives. The difference does not lie with me or the words that are coming out of my mouth. The difference lies on your heart. So there are people who can be in Church, hear the same message, sees answered prayers, look at the wonderful working of

God, the Spirit moving amongst the church, seen miracles, answered prayers take place, but at the end of their lives, reject Jesus and the Christian faith altogether. Oh, they have changed. No, they didn't change! That was their land from the beginning. So putting it in the graphics again, the rain comes down, the experience of God's blessing, the understanding of His Word, the seeing of miracles and answered prayers within a certain community and fellowship of God's people, it comes down, and on those hearts that are cultivated, it produces fruit and it receives blessing from God. But if it falls on uncultivated heart, you can't expect the same result, it will be a different result of thorns and briars and ultimately cursing, damnation.

So Hebrew 6, verses 4 to 6 is a statement describing how someone in the Church can have spiritual experiences, don't rule it out. An unbeliever can have spiritual experiences but remain unsaved and will ultimately be lost. The key is that they remain unsaved not that they become unsaved. They professed and they say they're saved, they look like they're saved, but actually they remain unsaved. So this is not a case of a Christian losing his salvation. "So Pastor, are you sure you got your interpretation right? Okay, I see your verses 7 and 8, and how it illustrates, I see that your compare Scripture with Scripture, but I need more," and [and] I want to pound on the evidence for you so that you can see actually God is not unclear is we sometimes we have failed to seek the clarity therein. So look on after verse 8 is what, verse 9, so clever and so we go to verse 9, just to build a case and in verse 9, we see:

Hebrews 6:9

Though we speak in this way, yet in your case. Beloved, we feel sure of better things, things that belong to salvation.

Now the logic is this, verses 4 to 6, you talk about people who experience these things and fall away, but brethren, I'm sure this is not your case. I'm persuaded of better things of you. These people, they have the experiences they fall away, but you know because I see not just experiences. I see evidences, I see your work, I see your labour of love in God's name and [and] how it is manifested in serving the Saints. I see the evidences of salvation, not just the experiences in the Church and so I dare say, I believe that you are believers, I see the evidences, but there are those in verses 4 to 6 who obviously are not saved. So that's the logic you see, what about before? I'm so glad we, as a Church are going through the book because if we would have plucked this passage out of thin air and started looking at Chapter 6, verses 4 to 6, we would be lost. I mean, is like 'mei tou mei wei' [mandarin phrase that means "there's no beginning and no end"], no head no tail. I share with you a lot about the tail, verses 7,8,9,10, 11 and 12 later on. Let me show you a little bit of what went on before, the

author in the book of Hebrews have regularly been saying, hey, you guys got to press on. Don't give up; keep believing, because if you don't believe, you may just prove yourself to be someone who never really believed in the first place and to make this clear the author originally in Chapter 4 gives an illustration of the nation of Israel. Here he says,

Hebrews 4:2

For good news came to us just as to them, the people in Israel during Moses time but the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith with those who listened.

Their hearts were not cultivated with no real faith. So, whatever they heard did not bring about fruit. So the point is, the author was originally talking about Israel during the time of Moses and [and] they were such a privilege people right? I mean, they, [they] were saved out of Egypt, they saw the 10 plagues, they crossed the Red Sea, they have the manna, they have the pillar of cloud, pillar of fire, they have the manifest presence of God at the Tabernacle. There was water that flows from the rock that followed them, their clothes were not torn or tattered, their shoes did not wear out for 40 years. I mean it was absolutely amazing! They have tasted of the powers of the age to come, they have heard God's Word from Moses, they shared in the work of the Holy Spirit in this whole nation of Israel. But the sad thing is that when they came to Kadesh Barnea, only 2 said we believed God and we will come in. Oh, you say, "the rest of them did not believe because originally they believed but now they just lost their salvation." No, they did not loss, the Bible tells us

Hebrews 3:10

They always go astray in their hearts, they have not known my ways.

They did not loss their salvation, but over 10 times in the wilderness they proved over and over and over and over and over again, their life is barren when it comes to fruit, but it is always full of thorns and thistles. So, the author of Hebrews is saying, see this is the illustration. This is Israel, don't be like that. See why are there people like that! Let me explain to you. There are those who have five experiences but they can still fall away, What does that mean? Oh, remember the illustration of the lands. The rain merely brought out what was in the land, it did not change the character of the land.

So that's why there are people who fall away. They did not lose it, but they never really had it in the beginning, so be very careful that's what the author is saying.

Hebrews 6 again is a statement describing someone in the church who can have all kinds of spiritual experiences, and such a horrible thought, isn't it? You can come to Church today, you may feel spiritual, you can, you can be baptized, you have lots of things, but you may remain unsaved. And you may ultimately deny the Lord. Wow! Wow! As you look at this diagram, the reality is this, folks; the reality is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is extremely divisive. Oh, don't get me wrong, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is very uniting but at the very same time, it is very divisive, what do you mean? The Gospel of Jesus Christ is very uniting in that it unites people of different languages, races, background, ages together to belong to God, that's very uniting but is very divisive because it divides the believers from the unbelievers. It shows up the cultivated land versus the uncultivated land. It is very divisive not just Jesus' saying: I came to give division but the Bible says:

1 Corinthians 1:8

For the work of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, [but for] but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Extremely divisive, it's not like this "o luat" [a chinese dish, oyster omelette] nice or not? Everybody says nice, very easy to say. But, some may, wow, say this Gospel is "xiao man" [hokkien saying means "crazy"], ridiculous story! How can anybody believe in the Jesus like the verses and the other one who would die on the stick for Jesus? It's extremely divisive, don't you think?

So, someone said this well, "the same sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay," the same Gospel today preached can bring about fruit, it can also bring about thorns. Why? Same Gospel, different hearts.

I think I have finished the explanation of this text, I want to come to the application and I don't want to be long on teaching and short on helping you apply it to life. I want to say first of all, don't lose the whole thrust of this passage, now, it is one thing to get to the text, know what it means, but you got to come back out and see the big picture. You say, what is the big picture? The big picture is this. From the beginning to the end, the author of the book of Hebrews is warning people from turning away from Jesus. They are under pressure, they are under persecution, it's stressful, it's easy, tempting to say, that ah, I'm not going to bother about Jesus, I'm going back to my Judaism, but the author here is saying don't you ever do that, it's very dangerous, it's terrible to fall away and depart from the faith. Now, let me say this again, I think I have said this 10 times this morning. When you fall away, it's not because you lose your salvation, all right! But if you fall away, it just shows that you never had

salvation from the beginning. You don't lose it; you just proved it that you never had it.

This is what is said in first John, it's a very clear text; I think it's a clear text that's used several times. But, why not.

1 John 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 one of us.

So John said I'm not surprised they left, because they were not of us from the beginning, they did not lose salvation, but they just proved that they never had salvation. It's clear text. How about this phrase that I shared with you before: "If your faith fizzles before the finish. It's because it was faulty from the first. Chinese we call it "rao kou ling" [a mandarin phrase that means tongue twister], fi fa fi fi. All this is all Fs. If it fizzles before the finish, you know that it was faulty from the first. The reason why it does not persevere in because he was not a real thing anyway. The real thing, the real faith - perseveres. God will persevere you through real faith. And, so if you give up and you deny, then it goes to show it was not real from the Word of God. Now I think I want to share with you, read to you what Piper has to say. I find it so beautifully put that I could not improve upon it at all. So let me just read it as what he has said or written with regards to this text, he says,

I'll be very personal, to give it its sharpest point. If in the coming years I commit apostasy and fall away from Christ, it will not be because I have not tasted of the Word of God and the Spirit of God and the miracles of God. I have drunk of his word. The Spirit has touched me. I have seen his miracles and I have been his instrument for a few.

But if, over the next ten or twenty years, John Piper begins to cool off spiritually and lose interest in spiritual things and become more fascinated with making money and writing Christless books — if I buy the lie that a new wife would be exhilarating and that the children can fend for themselves and that the church of Christ is a drag and that the incarnation is a myth and that there is one life to live, so let us eat, drink, and be merry — if that happens, then know that the truth is this: John Piper was mightily deceived in the first fifty years of his life.

His faith was an alien vestige of his father's joy. His fidelity to his wife was a temporary passion and compliance with social pressure. His fatherhood was the outworking of natural instincts. His preaching was driven by the love of words and

crowds. His writing was a love affair with fame. And his praying was the deepest delusion of all — an attempt to get God to supply the resources of his vanity. He has been deceived for the past 50 years if he does ultimately apostatize or fall away from the faith?

What's so dangerous about falling away? Why can't I believe Jesus today and then tomorrow, I forsake. Maybe next time I can come back to Him. Like a hotel, I leave; I check out, I check in, I check out, I check in. I check out, I check in. Hopefully before I die, I check in. How about that? Live the sinful way I like, I believe Jesus, but you know, tomorrow I want to sin, so I don't believe first, I sin first, I sin, sin, sin, sin, just before I die, I check back in. Wow! Good plan, but extremely foolish and dangerous, why? Because the author says, if you really do that, if you have been in church tasted of all these things, heard the Word of God. Seen the mighty workings of God in the people of God, and you choose to fall away. It is now impossible for you to be restored again to repentance. It is impossible! You have all the rain, as much rain as you [come] have, but all it produces is thorns, well, you have just proven yourself, someone who has never known Christ. And it would be impossible, Why? Because what else would get you to believe. What else in the light of the Word, the blessings, and you still would not believe and you fall away, and you still fall away. What else could save you? It's impossible!

So the moment you have such a thought, a complacent thought as if I can check out and check in anytime, you're on dangerous ground, you have despised God, His Word and His blessings. The author would go to say later on in Hebrews. Is a case of despising the things of God, like Esau did and what you're doing when you reject Christ after you professed faith in Him is that you shame Him, you know. Now he says you're crucifying Jesus, not literally but symbolically, what you're doing is no different from those who say he is no Messiah, crucify Him. You are the same! I've tasted of Jesus and his blessing it is when I find not worthy of my following, not worthy of my faith, not worthy of my life, so here I go away. And Jesus is put to open shame because you've tasted of everything and said he's not worthy. So that's the meaning of this text, and so from the start, I just want to pile these verses to show you that the author of Hebrews is a very coherent person. He's not like that some of us, we talk, "eh, eat what, then you go where, then last night I this, then wah...?" Wah! What you are talking about? No coherence!

The book of Hebrews extremely coherent, consistent thought, warning and warning and warning and warning:

Hebrews 2:1

Please don't leave, please don't depart, is dangerous, so pay attention lest you drift.

Pardon me if I don't through every verse, I think you've gone through that before. It says here, verse three.

Hebrews 2:3

How can you neglect such a great salvation?

What more can be done? How can you escape if you don't believe in Christ?

Hebrews 3:4

Hold fast your confidence ...

In chapter 3 verse four.

Chapter 3 verse 12. [Hebrews 3:12]

Be careful of an evil unbelieving heart that will fall away from the living God.

Be careful about that! Do not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hold your original confidence firm to the end. Be careful that you failed to reach it because there is no faith in any verse 11

Hebrew 4:11

You fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Be careful of how you treat your wife, how you treat your husband, how you look at pornography, how you live in worldliness and covetousness and continuing in your sinful lifestyle because that is just something that may prove your heart is never change, you are just having thorns and thistles and the more sin you have the more it hardens you and ultimately you have proven yourself never to be have truly experience the salvific or saving grace of God. So this is a deep solemn warning.

I think in today's context, too many churchgoers are too complacent about salvation, all they are concerned about is: "Did I make a profession of faith 10 years ago?" All they are concerned about is "Did I raise my hand, [was], did the pastor pray upon over me? Did the pastor lay his hand on me?" To them, these are what they want, no regard as to since the time of profession, any fruit in their lives. And they happily, habitually, blatantly go on with sin and they say, "I will be fine." No, you are not fine!

That rain you are experiencing right now, if it is always bringing out thorns and thistles, you've got to be very concerned, you've got to come back to the cross, you got to repent of your sin and you really got to come to Jesus. So, there is a warning against falling away and I do pray that in the Church where the Bible is preached, God's Word would warn you. Now, no pastors like to talk about these things. Goodness, no one! I don't like to be seen as someone who's always questioning our salvation. No, but this is what the Scripture says, and I think if you're a child of God. You will hear these warnings and be diligently applying yourself to pursuing God. But if you are a hypocrite, you probably say, "this has nothing to do with me."

Let me move on, well, don't fall away, but its not just don't do something, he says, do something. Don't do this, don't fall away but let's press on. Let's press on it and that's what he says in verses 9,10 11,12. He says:

Hebrews 6:11-12

We desire each one of you to show the same earnestness ...

Now the word earnestness, last week we shared was the word "spoude", which is to have speed, haste, diligence, effort, enthusiasm. So, don't be slacked and complacent and living in sin but be diligent to persevere and press on in faith and patience and we sort of link that to what the author was saying just before Chapter 6 and Chapter 5 that how you must not be dull of hearing, how you must not be lazy in hearing God's Word. But, we press on so that you must drink the Word of God, no Christians should say: "I'm saved, I have a ticket to heaven, so let me relax, No, every Christian says: "I'm a child of God, I want to grow," so drink, drink lots of it and digest it please. What is digest? It means to think, to reflect, meditate upon the scriptures so that God uses His word to change your worldview, it's what the scripture says to renewing the mind, changing your perspective, and then not only that, with a renewed perspective you apply that to daily life to do God's Word, to obey.

What is this saying? Well, he's saying be careful about complacency and living in blatant disregard and sinful lifestyle, be careful about it. Don't do that. That's ... that's drifting from God, but be attentive to His Word, drink, digest to diligently pursue growth. That's what the long and short of it is all about. But there is one more, one more thing that you can learn from this text, which is the application and that is how you can find assurance. So often, the church teaches assurance like this: If you're not sure about your salvation. Look at:

First John 5:13.

These things have I written unto you to believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know you have eternal life.

See, you have eternal life! Believe that, full stop. It's like trying to psycho yourself that if you are not assured, just be assured. You see, the way to use first John 5:13 is not just to take that as a cup and hack and whack it on your head and just believe. 1 John 5:13 is written in the context of all the evidences he wrote in Chapters 1 to 5. Right? So we are going to look at all the things he wrote in Chapters 1 to 5. If you have them, you know you have assurance. That's what it is, not just an empty whack on the head, believe.. believe ..believe .. assure. No! Based on objective realities, so the encouragement of assurance is not based on nothing but on something. You say, what is that?

Hebrews 6:9-10

The assurance comes when we see things that belong to salvation but I say, you don't just have the experiences, you have the evidences and the evidences are seen in your work and the love that you have shown for His Name in serving the Saints as you still do.

Remember, how first John tells us if you really have real life you will love God you will keep His commandments, how you will love the brethren because we love the brethren, we know we have passed from death unto life. By this shall all men know you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. But when you see the love of God, when you see the pursuit for holiness, when you see a genuine love and service to one another. You know that's what you can say: I got fruit. I'm a durian tree. And I see a lot of durians hanging; I know I'm a durian tree. But if you say you are a durian tree and all it hangs is papaya. You say I'm a durian tree, no, no, no; I'm not a durian tree. No, no, no you are a durian tree, but I have papaya, "never mind, you are a durian tree." That's what church is doing to you, no fruit but never mind, you professed faith, you prayed before, you must be a durian tree. No, you are a papaya! But I prayed, no! I see your fruit, it's papaya! No matter what you say, by your fruits you shall know them. Jesus Himself says:

John 15:8

You bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

Not what you say but by your fruit. Talk is cheap. "Bo bakay" [hokkien phrase which means not guaranteed] but fruit is real.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved, not the results of works, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

A new creation in Jesus will have good works. I love this verse because it clarifies, allows me to also clarify. Now, don't ever imagine that you earn your salvation by doing good works. Don't ever think, oh, the author is saying do a lot of good works, so that you can get saved. No, no, no, salvation is not of works, but real salvation will result in works, so you do work not to get salvation, but to show and assure yourself that truly there is a work of grace in and through your life. All of grace, our salvation, never of works.

It goes on to say, wonderful verse here, clear verse

Titus 1:6

As they profess to know God, but they denied him by the works.

Very few of us, I really lament this, I really lament is, very few Christians today, think about one another's salvation based on fruit.

"Hey, how are you, I'm a Christian, I have been in church for 20 years, you must be a brother, now I'm not saying you walk around...Christian or not, No, I'm not saying that kind of ... wah lah, weirdo, but you are alert to the reality that not everyone who says he is a believer, is a believer. You are alert to that. You are not overly suspicious but you're also not overly complacent, so that when you see someone's life not matching Scripture, you would not hesitate to point him or her to Jesus Christ and not be an accomplice to ushering him into hell by falsely assuring him, you're actually okay. You just need to work on your assurance. You just need to believe in first John 5:13. You know, what kind of a harm we do to people when we do this! So, look at their works. James says:

James 2:17

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

It's not real faith if it doesn't produce anything, so the assurance of salvation comes when we see fruit and evidences and look at the beauty of this fruit, you have work and the love that you have shown for His name, you will have love for God's name. You will have love for God, all things work together for good to them that love God, do you love God? Or do you just love the Church? By Church, I mean, Church's rituals and formalities. Do you love God, do you love His name? Do you desire His glory, His worship? Can you say deep in your heart, "I love him?" That is a fruit and I

say to you this is not just mere empty talk or hypocrisy because this love for God's name will be manifested in serving the Saints. There will be a concern for one another. They'll be in ministry to one another. You will not be someone who comes to church, sing a few songs, hears a message, goes away and not bother with anyone else in church, but you looked around. If you are a true believer and you say, he is my brother, he is my sister. I want to serve him if God presents me those opportunities, I will get and grab those opportunities to serve because these are the fruits God wants in my life.

It's so scary that people can be churchgoers for years and absolutely no regard for anyone else but it is so encouraging when I see brethren serve one another. You know, right after the first service today, a lady came in and said she's so encouraged to be in this church to see some of you, many of you in fact, she says all she has interacted with, all of you, welcome her warmly. Invite her for lunch, so much so that she has no time for lunch, all packed already, all the church people, already... and she says, they are not even assigned befrienders. They are not even the tagged up people who are supposed to do the job. They are the believers, and when when you hear something like that, it is so encouraging, you are not told to do it by someone out there, but you want to do that because God lives in you. You see, that durian, you smell the durian, wow, nice! This tree, thank God, is a durian tree. I pray the aroma of Jesus will be known through you, serving the Saints, out of the love for God, but this is a very complex sermon and I acknowledge. I.. I told my wife, I change this like don't know how many thousand times, I thought it's done, change, change, change, change until today. I hope it's as simple as it gets. But maybe I conclude with three words for you.

KNOW

This passage is number one about how you should really make sure you know Christ, not assume, not presume, not be complacent, but really examine yourself, whether ye be in the faith. 2 Corinthians 13. Are you someone who knows Christ for real?

GROW

Number two, if you are someone who knows Christ, this must be the inevitable desire in your heart, and indeed, outcome of your life that you will grow, you will grow, you will drink the word, you will digest the word, you will do the word and you will grow

GO

and I say, if you are someone who know Christ and grow in Christ. You'll be someone who go for Christ.

In essence, this is what our church believes in the three steps of the Christian faith. This is what it means to be leading generations into a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ. Do you this morning have a life changing relationship with him? I pray God's Word today would save the sheep, would save His Church and bring us to Himself. Let's bow for a word of prayer together.

I deeply appreciate your attention this morning, as far as I know you did not fall asleep but I pray your heart will be really open to God right here right now. I spoken hard things, maybe to some of your unpleasant things, but I think they are words of love, words that care for your soul, they are words about eternity. My friend, whatever the Lord is saying to you this morning, I just want to give you this short time to respond to God, right where you are. Maybe you have been shocked to realize there is no fruit. I say to you, it is not too late this morning. You can repent and believe there can be salvation. Today is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation, would you come to Jesus today. Maybe you have been resting on your laurels, you have been sitting on your bum, you been complacent as any to get out. I need to grow. I want to be more like Jesus. Maybe there's a determination in your soul, would you pray to God right now. Maybe somebody say, "I've no fruit, but I know I want to." Maybe you have been making excuses for myself for laziness, for convenience and I've not been really really doing what I should but I want to. So you pray, "God, help me today." Whatever is it, the lord is saying to you, would you respond to him right here, right now? May God have His mercy upon each one of us?

Oh my friend, how different it is when you really look at the Bible and when you look at church all around, Christianity as a culture, it has been invaded by all kinds of philosophies, we have been deceived by all kinds of humanistic philosophies and methods. That the preaching like this should shock you, but I trust that you realize there is nothing here that is out of the scriptures. It is absolutely in line with God's Word, and so my friends don't fight God, yield to Him, humble yourself, repent and believe. Obey. Let that ground, drink in the rain this morning and let it produced abundantly, that it produce fragrant fruit, let it bring glory to God and that heart will receive a blessing. Father, thank You for this morning, Bless Your church, bless each one here, O Lord, that's too much to say, that's too many hearts to know but you know each one and we know that there is one Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is to be our goal, He is to be our aim and He is to be our desire. So let Jesus be supreme right here, right now. Speak O lord, speak to our hearts we pray, in Jesus Name, Amen.