

SERMON  
SERIESAND WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE  
TO PLEASE HIM, FOR WHOEVER  
WOULD DRAW NEAR TO GOD  
MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS  
AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE  
WHO SEEK HIM.

## HEBREW'S



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HEBREW'S  
VERSE BY  
VERSE STUDYLET US DRAW NEAR IN  
*Faith***SESSION OBJECTIVE: HEBREWS 6:9-12**

To better understand the things that belong to salvation.

**Read the Text:**

*"Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. 10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. 11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."* (Hebrews 6:9-12, ESV)

**Study the Text:****Sure of Better Things**

The beginning of Hebrews 6 strikes a nerve. The author compares the case of those who have once been enlightened and then have fallen away to land that has "drunk the rain that often falls on it" but "bears thorns and thistles" and therefore "it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned" (Heb. 6:7-8). These words are convicting and hard to hear. But just as the author has done in prior chapters, while he does not shy away from (and even emphasizes) the reality of falling away, he also assures his readers in this passage that he expects better things in their case. Below is a breakdown of the key words and concepts in this passage.

**BELOVED**

In chapter 3, the author called his readers "holy brothers (and sisters)" to convey their familiar relationship with one another while still emphasizing their heavenly calling. Here he uses another name, "beloved," which communicates that they are loved. This specific Greek word ἀγαπητός (agapētos) communicates not only that the readers are loved by the author, but also that they are loved by God. While this is the only place in Hebrews where this specific word appears, Paul uses it multiple times (Rom. 12:19, 1 Cor. 10:14, etc.), and John uses it several times in 1 John to exhort the reader and affirm their status as loved. Additionally,

“beloved” would remind the reader of the gospel’s account of both the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus where a voice from heaven calls Jesus “my beloved son” (Mark 1:11, Mark 9:7).

### **THINGS THAT BELONG TO SALVATION**

The author described in chapter one the superiority of Jesus to the angels that provided the message of salvation to Israel in the Old Testament, noting them as “ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14). Then he described how, since the first salvation message declared by angels was reliable, we must not neglect such a great salvation. For the messenger (Jesus) and the message (salvation) are both superior. “What is man, that God is mindful of him,” and yet Jesus, the Son of God, calls us brothers. And “since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He (Jesus) Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery... to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:14-15, 17). The author is confirming to his readers that lifelong slavery and the fear of death are no longer their lot, for there are better things he is sure of for them.

### **WORK AND LOVE**

Verse 10 says: “For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown.” Earlier in this same chapter, verses 7 and 8 give an example of two types of land. One bears thorns and thistles and is near to being cursed. The other has “drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated.” The author wants his audience to make the connection - he feels sure of better things for them because of the work and the love they have shown “for His (the Lord’s) name in serving the saints.” Their lives are producing useful fruit, and God, who is not unjust, sees it.

But why does the author tie their work and love specifically to God’s name? Because both Christ’s love and work (becoming like us and dying on the cross) and His children’s love and work (sacrificing in service to the saints) are done “for His name’s sake.” Jesus repeatedly attaches the phrase “for my name’s sake” to acts of sacrifice (Matt. 19:29), enduring hatred (Matt. 10:22), and even death (Matt. 24:9). While Jesus’ work completed salvation for those who believe, the author encourages his reader that their own “work and the love that [they] have shown **for his name** in serving the saints, as [they] still do” is not overlooked by God.

### **FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTIL THE END**

Remember, the author has repeatedly noted the reality of “falling away.” Here he is compelling his readers to hold on to the full assurance of the hope of salvation **until the end**. Grindheim notes, “the crucial point is therefore that the audience may pursue such fullness until the end. Christian life is a life lived from an eschatological (end-times) perspective. It is defined by God’s intervention in this world through Jesus Christ and the expectation that this world is about to come to an end. Life in this world is evaluated in light of these convictions.”<sup>1</sup> We are to live knowing that Christ’s cross satisfied the wrath of God. We are no longer slaves to sin or under the fear of the sting of death, for our hope is that we will be raised to life just as Jesus was raised. And, the author gives a practical reason that “earnestness to have the full assurance of hope” is worth pursuing: “so that you may not be sluggish” (Heb. 6:12).

### **IMITATORS**

The author continues, saying that “earnestness to have the full assurance of hope” will not make them sluggish, because his readers are to be “imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” He will elaborate extensively in chapter 11 on exactly who is worth imitating. But worth noting is

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<sup>1</sup> Sigurd Grindheim, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, ed. D. A. Carson, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2023), 325.

that imitation is not a Hebrews-specific call. Paul says “be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1) and “therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Eph. 5:1, also note the term *beloved*) and “you became imitators of us and of the Lord” (1 Th. 1:6) and “be conformed to the image of [God’s] Son.” The call to imitate Jesus and those who have come before us and those who are faithful among us is a call worth considering.

## What About Now?

The last two weeks of study may seem like a rollercoaster. While reading last week’s study guide, you may have started to wonder which group you are in. Then you read this week, and wonder if you would be called “beloved” by the author. We are told in 1 John that “they [antichrists] went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.” They did not remain. But the author today gives us hope in saying, “yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things.” Why would he feel that way? Because for his reader to hear his words, they must have been listening. They must have been in earshot of a person reading his letter. They are most likely believers or part of the community who are currently working and loving each other for Jesus’ name in their service. You should also hold on to the hope the author gives. For you are in earshot of the truth of Hebrews, whether in a study group or by listening to the sermons as we go through Hebrews. Hold onto that community and “have the full assurance of hope until the end” (Heb. 6:11).

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read Hebrews 6:8-9. What do you think the author means by “though we speak in this way?”

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2. What tone does the author take in verse 9 by addressing his readers as “beloved”?

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### Day Two

1. Read Hebrews 6:10. What evidence does the author point to that notes why he feels sure of better things?

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2. How does their service to the saints demonstrate their love for God’s name?

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### Day Three

1. Read Hebrews 6:11. What does the author desire for each believer?

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2. What does the phrase “until the end” suggest about the nature of the Christian life?

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### Day Four

1. Read Hebrews 6:12. What is the warning here? What encouragement do we find here?

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2. What two qualities are we to imitate? Why do you think these are worth imitating?

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### Discuss the Text!

## Session 14 Discussion: Title

Hebrews 6 calls us to be imitators, but sometimes we imitate the wrong people. We know that we are to conform to the image of Christ, but do you see imitating the faithful as a part of conforming to His image? The author wants us to be “imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises,” but sometimes we choose a different path. Talk as a group about who you imitate.

1. Icebreaker: Would you say you imitate people of the faith or people of the world more often?
2. What wrong people do you imitate?
3. Who are some of the people in the Bible that you try to imitate?
4. In what ways do you conform to the image of Jesus? In what ways do you not?
5. Would you want others imitating you in your walk of faith?
6. Kid Talk: Talk to your kids about how they are like you. Tell them they started doing those things because they are around you a lot and, naturally, like most kids, imitate you. Then connect that to Christian living. We are to imitate those who are close to us as they imitate Christ.

## Takeaways:

1. God does not overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints.
2. Be imitators of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.