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Sermon Notes

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Things That Accompany Salvation

Hebrews 6:9-12

I. Two Christians Described

A. The Church a Mixed Assembly

1. Every Sunday, all over the world, people gather for public worship
2. Not everyone who claims to be a Christian and who gathers for public worship is genuinely saved

B. Those Richly Blessed But Not Regenerate

1. The Author to the Hebrews is addressing a category of people who are professing faith in Christ but who lack the reality
2. Highly favored with rich external spiritual blessings brought by the Holy Spirit

Hebrews 6:4-5 once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age

- a. Their minds had been illuminated by the ministry of the word of God
- b. They had tasted the powers of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual gifts, the miracles, the supernatural evidences of the presence of God
- c. BUT they had at some point fallen away from Christ into open apostasy and were repudiating any connection to Jesus... even blaspheming His name and trampling it under foot
- d. They had received the soaking rain of blessing coming from the word of God and the Holy Spirit, but had brought forth NO FRUIT
- e. So... last time we discussed the absolutely essential requirement that all true believers in Christ bear fruit

C. The Truly Regenerate

1. By contrast, there are the true believers who receive the blessings of the soaking rain and the rich soil of their noble hearts produces an abundant harvest of righteousness for God
2. Thus the two different kinds of Christians are on display in this passage
3. This topic is one of the direst seriousness for every church-goer to ask... to search out your own heart to see if you are genuinely in Christ

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-- unless, of course, you fail the test?

II. Words of Pastoral Assurance

A. Contrast from the Dark Words

1. We have been discussing these terrifying things... the deep darkness of apostasy, a pit from which there is NO ESCAPE
2. We have used the direst terms
 - a. “fall away”
 - b. “impossible to renew to repentance”
 - c. “crucifying the Son of God all over again”
 - d. “subjecting Him to public disgrace”
 - e. “land that produces thorns and thistles”
 - f. “worthless”
 - g. “in danger of being cursed”
 - h. “in the end it will be burned”
3. These phrases should send shivers down the spine of each true believer
 - a. We know well the seeds of our own destruction are within our own hearts
 - b. We wonder if it may be that we will become apostates someday
 - c. We know that we are capable of denying Jesus like Peter did

d. We even know that we are capable of betraying Jesus for money as Judas did

e. At the Last Supper, when Jesus said “One of you will betray me”

Matthew 26:20-22 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." ²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

f. True disciples have a sense of their own frailty; words of warning like this are VERY SOBERING to us

g. How delightful that this Shepherd of Souls, the Author of the Book of Hebrews has the spiritual sensitivity now to encourage and build the true disciples up, so they won't be overwhelmed with sorrow

4. “But, beloved...”

a. The word “But...” implies we're going in a different direction after all these troubling words

b. How much more when he adds the term of endearment: **Beloved!!!**

c. The sharp words of rebuke (Hebrews 5:11-14) were not meant to be unkind, but to help them to grow to full maturity... no longer drinking milk, but able to eat meat

d. Here we also see that pastoral love always seeks the highest good for the people of God, and will be willing to cause pain through rebukes, warnings, reproofs, admonitions

e. BUT when the time comes, the author quickly turns to comfort and encourage these Hebrew Christians, lest they be overwhelmed with sorrow and discouragement

B. What the Author Does to Encourage True Believers

1. Expresses his good will toward the Hebrew saints

2. Declares his judgment concerning their good state

3. Gives the ground on which that judgment is based

C. The Author's Purpose: To Make the Best Use of the Warnings

1. The warnings in this book among the most severe in the Bible

2. The Author is not saying “I think you may be apostates... I actually do not think you are”
3. True Christians should take these warnings to heart IN THE PROPER WAY
4. Neither make light of them, or become discouraged by them
5. The purpose of these warnings is to stimulate true Christians to even greater perseverance and zeal in personal holiness and lives of active service to the Lord

D. The Author is Persuaded of Better Things in their Case

Hebrews 6:9 Even though we speak like this, beloved, we are persuaded of better things in your case-- things that accompany salvation.

1. He uses the word “persuaded” or “convinced” or “feel sure”
 - a. Not an infallible certainty, but a strong confidence based on good grounds
 - b. This expression used similarly in other cases

Romans 15:14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

2 Timothy 1:5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

2. The grounds of this confidence is clear from the rest of the passage... these Hebrew Christians had been willing to put their faith on the line to help God’s people... more on this later... but this gave him strong evidence that God was at work in their lives
3. They are not the “rocky ground” hearers

Matthew 13:20-21 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

4. We see the need that every pastor has to know the condition of his flocks, so he can give this kind of personalized encouragement

Proverbs 27:23 Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds

5. Without such knowledge, that kind of encouragement is really nothing more than FLATTERY!!

6. Without such knowledge, the pastor won't know when encouragement or warning is needed
7. Without such knowledge, he is like a spiritual physician prescribing medications at random... not having examined the patient... hoping that this antibiotic or that steroid will cure the patient's unknown ailment
8. A pastor then must truly know the spiritual condition of the flock to administer the right medications

III. Things That Accompany Salvation

Hebrews 6:9 Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case-- things that accompany salvation.

A. Key Phrase to Explain the Spiritual Condition of Those Mentioned Earlier

1. Receiving the list of spiritual advantages mentioned in verses 4-5 does NOT guarantee salvation

Hebrews 6:4-5 once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age

2. Other evidence is required...

B. What Are the Marks of Salvation??

1. How can I know if the Lord's grace has regenerated my heart?
2. How can I know if I am truly one of God's children?
3. How can I know if I am an authentic disciple, not merely an imposter, like Judas was?
4. What are the marks of genuine, saving faith?

C. Some Scriptural Marks Listed

1. Sorrow over and hatred of sin
2. Yearning and love for righteousness resulting in holy lifestyle
3. Humility and self-denial
4. The peace of God comforting the conscience
5. A consistent pattern of Spirit-led obedience to God's commandments

6. Perseverance in the means of grace: bible intake, public worship, Lord's Supper, private prayer
7. Genuine love for the brothers and sisters in Christ
8. Joyful expectation of being conformed to Christ and spending eternity with Him
9. Willingness to suffer earthly difficulties to follow Christ
10. Running with endurance the race marked out in front of us... persevering to the end

D. The Book of 1 John: An Entire Book Devoted to Assurance

1. Seven times in the epistle, the Apostle John says "This is how we know..."

1 John 2:5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him

1 John 3:10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

2. John gives three basic tests

- a. The doctrinal test:

1 John 4:15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

- b. The love test: love for God, love for brothers and sisters in Christ

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers.

- c. The obedience/moral purity test

1 John 2:3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

E. What Is Mentioned Here in Hebrews 6

Hebrews 6:10-12 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. ¹¹ We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. ¹² We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

1. These verses give a clear sense of the EVIDENCE of the conversion of these Hebrew Christians... there is a DISPLAY of their faith in verse 10

The love you have SHOWN him...

- a. The Greek work means that their faith in and love for God have been put on display
 - b. There has been a clear pattern of evidence of their saving faith in Christ
2. The holy trio: faith, hope and love
 - a. Commonly found list in the New Testament

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Colossians 1:4-5 we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints-- ⁵ the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven

1 Thessalonians 1:3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

So also those same three traits are on display here:

b. Faith

(vs. 12)... we want you to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised

c. Hope

(vs. 11) We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.

d. Love (vs. 10)

(vs. 10) God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them

These three character traits result in a kind of life... a life of persevering holiness and hard work for God

3. The sacrificial service to the Body of Christ

- a. The author specifically singles out the love they have shown GOD by sacrificially serving His people
- b. Verse 10: He mentions their LOVE and LABOR on behalf of GOD'S PEOPLE
- c. Jesus takes this as a direct act of love to HIM, just as an attack on His people is a direct attack on Him

Acts 9:1-5 *Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.*

Matthew 25:35-40 *I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

4. This is the clearest display of love for God: to help His people in their toilsome race

1 John 3:16-18 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

5. These Hebrew Christians had been doing that in the earlier days

Hebrews 10:32-34 *Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. ³³ Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴ You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*

- a. They were engaged in a GREAT CONTEST of faith in the face of earthly suffering

- b. Their sufferings were of various sorts: insult and persecution, or standing side by side with others going through that
- c. They were willing to risk imprisonment themselves by visiting brothers or sisters who were imprisoned for their faith... they brought them food or a blanket or whatever they needed... perhaps they stayed and prayed with them so their faith would be renewed
- d. Sometimes when they did this, their property was seized by the governmental authorities... and these people JOYFULLY accepted that, knowing by faith they had better and lasting possession IN HEAVEN
- e. This is all great EVIDENCE of the saving faith they had in the earlier days

F. The Most Certain Mark: Perseverance to the Very End

Hebrews 6:10-12 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. ¹¹ We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. ¹² We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

1. This is the MOST CERTAIN PROOF of saving faith: perseverance to the end
2. The author is urging them again to KEEP ON trusting, KEEP ON suffering, KEEP ON believing, KEEP ON standing firm in the time of testing
 - a. Vs. 10: “as you CONTINUE to help God’s people”
 - b. Vs. 11 “we want EACH OF YOU to show this same DILIGENCE TO THE VERY END, in order to make your hope sure...”
 - c. Vs. 12 “we do not want you to become LAZY...”
 - d. Vs. 12 “but to imitate those who through faith and PATIENCE inherit what has been promised...”
3. The words here speak of a hard working route to heaven
 - a. Vs.11 “diligence” = zeal, eagerness, haste, striving with full effort
 - b. Vs. 12 “lazy” = slothful, sluggard... already saw this word in Hebrews 5:11, where they had become LAZY LISTENERS... the Christian race is HARD, requiring full effort in the journey; Satan always tempts us to rest on our laurels, as though we’ve done enough to merit heaven
4. Conversely: we are to IMITATE those who went before us, who kept running the Christian race with endurance right to the end

- a. They inherited the goal of their faith by believing RIGHT TO THE END of their lives
- b. They needed PATIENCE: “longsuffering” ... willingness to suffer for a long period of time without giving in

Examples: Hebrews 11 is full of heroes of the faith who ran their race right to the end; who through FAITH and PATIENCE inherited a place in the City of God, the New Jerusalem

I read the pages of church history, and I find many accounts of men and women who had HARD RACES to run in order to finish their Christian lives to the glory of God:

- John Calvin, violently ill and overwhelmed with work every day of his life; driving himself to finish his writings before his illnesses finally caught up with him; his last sermon in the pulpit in Geneva he was spitting up blood from his lungs
- David Brainerd, missionary to the Indians during colonial America; dying young of tuberculosis, coughing violently and spitting up blood; continuing to trust in the love of his Savior to sustain him until he at last took him home three weeks after he expected to die
- George Whitefield, the evangelist of the Great Awakening, continued to preach multiple times per day, driving himself at an unbelievable pace until at last he could barely stand up in preaching to a crowd in Newburyport, MA; when he was carried exhausted to a home where he could rest and recover his strength, a crowd gathered outside the door to hear him preach again; he did so holding a candle; he preached until the candle was burned down, then went upstairs and died
- Lottie Moon, who ran her race right to the end, denying herself food because the people she was seeking to reach with the gospel were themselves undergoing famine
- Adoniram Judson, missionary to Burma, enduring so much suffering that it boggles the mind... burying two wives and a number of his children, so depressed that he dug his own grave and sat by it for days; recovered his faith and his zeal and kept serving God in Burma year after year. Like David Brainerd, he died extremely hard, in unutterable agony; he said “How few there are who suffer such torment—who die so hard”... yet he kept his faith strong right to the end, saying he believed the pain and suffering were being inflicted to make him fit to die—to make him submissive to God’s will

Here in this church also I have witnessed some precious saints run their race right to the very end with perseverance

- One woman who cared for her husband who was afflicted with Parkinsons disease; she cared for him sweetly every day, loving him and meeting his increasing needs until at last he died... she never tired of caring for him

- So also another godly couple who traveled the same road over many years; his health weak, their love for Christ and for each other so strong... a clear testimony to the vitality of their faith
- So also another godly man, serving in a variety of ministries week after week for decades; running a race with endurance right to the end; he's eighty now, serving God every single week

5. The finish line is set by God: vs. 11 "until the very end"

Psalm 139:16 All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

God has measured out how long each Christian's race is to be run; all we can do is show patience to keep running until He tells us to stop

Illus. Freshman year in High School, running winter track in Massachusetts; I was a distance runner; the coach was a hard man, driving us to excel; we had to run in the freezing cold around the baseball/football/soccer field in front of our High School... the whole circuit was probably something like a half mile... he would stand there with a stop watch and have us line up, and then send us; we had to run hard, coming in under a certain time, or we would have extra laps to run; we knew we were going to run at least five of those timed laps... but after that, we had no idea; we would cross the finish line of a lap, have a few minutes to recover, then the coach would call us back to the line to run again; a sixth lap... then we would rest, wondering if we'd have to go again; then he'd call us harshly back to the start line to run another one; after that lap, we would wonder if we were finished... the only man who knew how long we'd have to run was the coach... our job was to keep running hard until he told us to stop!!

6. AA

IV. The Justice of God: Encouragement for the True Christian

Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

A. Amazing Concept: The Justice of God as a Blessing for Christians

B. Ordinarily the Justice of God Would Be Against Us as Sinners

1. Justice = that which is RIGHT, what aligns with God's Laws and God's holy character
2. God's commitment to justice is immeasurable

Psalm 36:6 Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep.

Psalm 97:2-5 Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. ³ Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side. ⁴ His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. ⁵ The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.

3. For us as sinners, this towering justice would be our infinite agony
 - a. God's justice would be set against us
 - b. God's justice would keep a perfect record of all our transgressions against His holy law... not a single violation would be overlooked; not a single action would be too small
 - c. God's justice would call for the proper penalty for each of those transgressions; the accumulated wrath of God would break out against us
 - d. God's justice would consign us to an eternity in hell, in torment for these many and varied sins... there could be no escaping that justice... God's omnipotence would hunt us down and crush us righteously
4. BUT the cross of Christ has changed all that forever for all true believers in Christ

Romans 3:23-26 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

- a. Now it is God's justice that enables Him to forgive us our sins!!! What a miracle of God's grace... that His justice has turned 180 degrees and is now demanding that He forgive anyone who has fled to Christ for refuge
- b. Hear the testimony of 1 John

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- c. The justice of God is now mobilized, because God the Father made a covenant with God the Son... that whoever the Son shed His blood for, He would forgive and reconcile; and also God the Father has made this same promise:

Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

d. His JUSTICE is now our greatest ally, not our greatest enemy; it would be absolutely UNJUST for God to punish any believer in Christ

C. God's Justice Also Rewards Us

1. In a similar way, it would be unjust for God to forget any act of kindness shown to His people

Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

2. God has promised to reward even seemingly tiny acts of service plainly

Matthew 10:42 if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

3. God has promised to reward anyone who suffers for Christ

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

4. God has promised to reward secret sacrificial giving

Matthew 6:3-4 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

5. God has promised to reward secret faith-filled praying

Matthew 6:6 when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

6. God has promised to reward humble servanthood

7. God has promised to reward faith-filled courageous witnessing

IT WOULD BE UNJUST FOR GOD TO RENEG on His many promises

Revelation 22:12 Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done

V. Applications

- A. Learn the “Things that Accompany Salvation”
- B. Test Yourselves to See if You Are in the Faith
- C. Come to Christ if you have not
- D. Faithfully Serve God by Serving His People
- E. Look Forward to Your Reward
- F. Don't Get LAZY in the Christian Life
- G. Imitate those who through FAITH and PATIENCE inherit the Promised Land