

## The basis for spiritual maturity

Hebrews 6:9-20

As we have heard during the past weeks, God does not intend us to stay at the level of a baby or an infant in our walk with Him, but He expects us to grow spiritually, so that we will reflect more and more of the Lord Jesus Christ in this world.

The verses, that Taylor spoke about last week (Hebrews 6:1-8), really connect the verses of Hebrews 5:11-14 and the verses for today.

So, just as a reminder of those verses, let's read them again before we go to the verses for today.

Hebrews 6:1-3

- **Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.**
- **And this we will do if God permits.**

As already Victor pointed out, as disciples of Christ we are supposed to grow spiritually and that means we need to grow also further in the knowledge of the Word of God beyond the elementary material. Or, as Victor pointed so well, we need to go from milk to meat, just like a baby needs to go from milk to additional and heavier food.

Let's go to the next verses.

Hebrews 6:4-6

- **For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.**

The key to understanding these verses lies in the parables that the Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew 13 (the parable about the different types of soil in which the seed falls) and the parable in John 15 about the vine and the branches.

In Matthew 13: 18-23 he explains the parable for the disciples, pointing out that 4 different types of people can hear the gospel. The first group does not respond to the gospel at all, but the other 3 do. However, only the fourth group really bears fruit. The people in groups 2 and 3 drop out over time.

In John 15 we see how the Father, as a vine-dresser, maintains the vine by removing the branches that bear no fruit and cleans the branches that bear fruit.

In both parables we see that people fall away from Jesus.

This is not a loss of their salvation, they were never really saved, as evidenced by the fact that they did not bear fruit. Real conversion produces fruit, as we also see in the words of John the Baptist in Matthew 3: 8.

Hebrews 6:7-8

- **For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briars, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.**

These verses should remind us of John 15:1-8, the verses that Taylor also did read last week.

In those verses the Lord Jesus Christ compares Himself to the vine, the disciples to the branches and the Father to the vinedresser.

Later on we will look at some verses from this passage, but during the Bible study you may read this whole passage to see how those verses relate to the ones we see here.

Hebrews 6:9

- **But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.**

After that serious warning the writer of Hebrews now consoles the ones he is writing to.

In this verse he expresses his conviction that the warning in the previous verses will not apply to them, even though he found it necessary to remind them of those things.

But let's continue.

Hebrews 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.**

Here we see, that, even though they had stopped growing spiritually, they still were ministering to fellow believers.

And he assures them that God will not forget nor overlook these things. You can see that also in Matthew 10:42 and in Matthew 25:34-40.

But let's go on.

Hebrews 6:11-12

- And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Here the writer expresses his desire and that of his co-workers for the readers of his letter. And he tells them that they should be moving forward so that they may indeed be co-heirs with Christ.

He makes his point clear by referring to the life of Abraham, as we can see in the next verses.

Hebrews 6:13-14

- **For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”**

God promised Abraham great things, but they didn't always happen immediately. As a matter of fact, many of the promises only were fulfilled after his death.

We see that also expressed in the next verses.

Hebrews 6:15-16

- **And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.**
- **For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute.**

The fact, that several things did not happen during his lifetime, didn't mean that they were not going to happen.

As we go through the Scriptures, we see that all the promises that Abraham received from God were fulfilled.

The same is true for us. We too have received promises from God, but not all of them may be fulfilled during our life here on earth.

Let's continue.

Hebrews 6:17-18

- **Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.**

These verses again stress the point that the Word of God is indeed Yes and Amen as we can read in 2Corinthians 1:20. It is fully trustworthy beyond anything else.

That is the reason why we can such a great hope and why we don't have to be afraid that we will be disappointed in that hope.

But let's go on.

Hebrews 6:19-20

- **This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**

When a ship has dropped its anchors in a good place, they keep it in place, and it cannot drift away, even though the waves and wind will try to do that.

We too need that anchor in our life and the anchor is our hope in God in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one interceding for us with God the Father as He is at the right hand of Him.

In the remaining slides I want to look at several things I consider essential for spiritual growth.

Let's start with the first item.

Hebrews 11:6

- **But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

This is the first and most essential thing.

Things went wrong when Adam and Eve believed the serpent rather than God.

In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read the following:

For by grace you have been saved through **faith**, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

It's also good to notice what our attitude should be in seeking God. We should do that diligently, in other words: with all our heart, soul and mind!

But let's go to the next item.

John 15:4-5

- **“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**
- **“I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

We must accept the fact, that we cannot live the life of a disciple of Christ in our own strength.

This is also true for spiritual growth! We must maintain that close and intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, even in such a way that we can say together with the apostle Paul:

It is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me.

Following Jesus means we bring everything in our lives under His control. Proverbs 3:5-6 say it in the following way:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Let's go to the next item.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- **Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

If there is one thing lacking in the life of many churches and the individual life of disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is prayer!

Many people will attend regularly the Sunday services. However, less people will be involved regularly in Bible studies. And even less people will show up for prayer meetings.

So, why are we surprised that Christianity in many countries in the western free countries is in such a weak condition?

But let's go to the next item.

Romans 12:1

- **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.***

This verse already points out that being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ needs to have a serious impact on the way we live our lives.

1 Corinthians 10:31 tells us:

Therefore, whether **you** eat or drink, or **whatever you do, do** all to the glory of God.

Let's continue with the next verse in Romans.

Romans 12:2

- **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

I have mentioned this before, but we cannot say it enough:

We need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

In the verses on the next slide we get some good information on how that needs to take place.

Ephesians 5:25-27

- **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**

Maybe you think: what have these verses to do with spiritual growth.

But the fact is that each one of us needs to be sanctified and cleansed with the washing of the Word, just as we need that as a community of disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to read and study the Scriptures as God will use them to cleanse us, change us and transform us.

Let's go to the next item.

Matthew 5:14; 16

- **“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.**
- **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

Some very clear words from the Lord Jesus Christ saying that our faith in God should be reflected in every aspect of our lives.

In the way we live our lives, people around us should be able to see how God intended us to live together as human beings.  
We are to set the right example!

James also talked about this in his letter in the verses 1:22-25 and 2:14-26.

Let's go to the last item.

Matthew 24:13 / Mark 13:13

- **“But he who endures to the end shall be saved.**
- **“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.**

The Lord Jesus Christ didn’t promise us a life without any trouble in this world. To the contrary, He clearly said that in this world we will have trouble (John 16:33).

He Himself is our basis for having peace in this world despite any problems we may experience.

These verses indicate we need to hang in, even when the going gets tough.

Let’s look at a summary of all these points.

## The road to spiritual maturity

- **Have faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ**
- **Abide in the Lord Jesus Christ**
- **Pray without ceasing**
- **Be transformed by the renewal of your mind / be washed by the Word**
- **Walk in the ways of God / apply the Word of God in your life**
- **Endure/persevere when meeting opposition/persecution because you walk in God's ways and not in the ways of the world.**

When we look at this list it is good to realize that we cannot do this in our own strength.

We need to depend on God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's is the basis for our growth to spiritual maturity: dependency on God and on Christ.

In Christ we have all we need!

Let's pray.