

Text: Heb. 6:1-8

Title: "Things that do not accompany salvation"

Time: 3/15/2015 pm

Place: NBBC

Introduction: You have heard that oil and water do not mix. It turns out that there are molecular reasons for this fact of life. Water molecules are polar, with a slight positive charge on one end and a slight negative charge on the other, so they can form what are called hydrogen bonds with other polar molecules. Oil molecules are nonpolar, so these bonds cannot be formed between water and oil. In other words, water and oil do not mix (unless you have an emulsifier – and we will not get into that).

In verse 9, we have an important clue to what our author is talking about in verses 1-8 of this chapter. He uses the phrase there, "things that accompany salvation." He begins to discuss those things in verse 9. So what we have beginning in v. 9 are things that accompany salvation.

What we have then in verses 1-8 are things that do not accompany salvation. What we read about in verses 1-8 go together with salvation kind of like water goes together with oil – they don't mix. Said differently, what we read about in the first eight verses is in some important sense not a part of a saved man's life.

This much everyone agrees on when it comes to these verses. The question that still remains is whether they describe a saved person losing his salvation, or someone who is never saved in the first place. I want us to be able to agree together as best we can from this passage this evening that the answer to that question in the mind of our author is that saved people always have the things that accompany salva-

tion, and so they cannot be lost, and the unsaved person never has had the things that accompany salvation, so they have never been saved.

I have titled our study of the first eight verses this evening, "Things that do not accompany salvation," and I want us to notice four of these together.

I. Getting saved repeatedly does not accompany salvation (vv. 1-2).

Illustration: On my way home from the pastors' fellowship in Pennsylvania I attended last week, I had to come back across the Beacon Bridge over the Hudson River. Work crews are doing some construction on the bridge, replacing large concrete sections of the road. Under these roads are the steel girders that hold everything up, the foundation. When the road gets deteriorated over time and needs repair, work crews only install new concrete. They do not tear down the steel structure that forms the foundation of the bridge. That part only needs to be installed only once.

Application: Our author is saying something similar when it comes to the foundational blessings and doctrines of God's work of salvation in our life. It is a foundation that only needs to be laid down once. His phrase for these foundational blessing is literally, "the word of the beginning of Christ" (v. 1). The content of that category of truth involves two things: (1) the elements of true conversion (v. 1, "the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God") and (2) some basic initial teachings (v. 2, "the doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment"). Let's look more carefully at these:

(1) The foundation of conversion (v. 1). In theology *conversion* refers to the two components of a saving response to the gospel. We are saved by faith alone, but the kind of faith that saves always also includes repentance from dead works. It is not a kind of faith that says, "I believe, and I am going to do my best to earn salvation." It is the kind of faith that says, "I believe, and I am going to give up trying to earn salvation by my works." When we believe on God for salvation in Christ, we repent of our own dead works (i.e., our merit through religion; see 9:9, 14).

(2) The doctrine of some basic teachings (v. 2). Once we are saved, some things are pointed out to us rather quickly as part of the beginnings of Christ. This was the milk still needed by these Hebrews (5:12).

First, there is a doctrine or teaching of baptisms. Note the plural here. Christian baptism is, of course, the initial ceremony of a new believer's life according to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). New believers just saved out of Judaism would need special instruction about baptisms (plural), because Judaism had a lot of these (9:10), and now the new convert would need one more that was different from all the others he had known.

Second, the teaching of laying on of hands is a part of the beginnings of Christ. This seems to have involved instruction especially on the nature of the Holy Spirit's presence and work in a new believer's life. In first-century Christianity, which included apostolic miracles, there was some confusion about this. Simon experienced that confusion and needed this initial instruction (Acts 8:14-24). Others likely did as well.

Third, resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment were initial instructions for the new believer. Perhaps these were especially important in order to teach young believers that in view of Christ's bodily resurrection, those who know Him as Savior need never fear eternal judgment. Paul cares for newly saved Thessalonian believers with these doctrines, probably because the persecution they endured caused a confusion that concluded they were in the Great Tribulation period. Perhaps this instruction included some basic instruction about eternal security for the new believer, who might be attacked early on by Satan with doubts about his salvation.

Application: So our author's point, again, is that new believers need this foundation of the conversion experience and this initial doctrine of basic teachings, but they only need to lay that foundation down once. It need not be laid down again. Getting saved repeatedly does not accompany salvation, and each of us as believers should be getting past the thought that we may need to do it all over again.

We should be accepting of the teaching of baptisms and the Holy Spirit's work in our lives and our own eternal security. We need these things to be settled in our hearts so that we can grow on to maturity. Are you wondering whether you need to be saved all over again? Are you struggling with whether baptism should happen or how God's Spirit takes control of our lives each day? Do you have some doubts about eternal security? If so, let's work to get those things settled. If they are settled, let's move on and build on that foundation. We do not need to lay it down again.

II. Refusing to grow in grace does not accompany salvation (vv. 1, 3-8).

Illustration: I have never been a big fan of amusement parks. There are a number of things that bother me about them – too many people; the lines are too long; too noisy; too expensive – but if I am honest I would have to confess that for me, it is also true that some of the rides are just too scary. They give me a helpless and threatened feeling. I do not enjoy strapping myself into a contraption and being hoisted up into the air and frightened out of my wits as I hope that this is somehow going to function correctly and put me back down safely again. I guess I don't understand people who do enjoy that kind of thing.

Application: Well, there is a rollercoaster ride that God wants every believer to ride. It is called spiritual growth in grace. Verse 1 has this command, "let us go on to perfection." The command is in the passive voice in the original language, so its sense is actually, "let us let ourselves be taken on to perfection." The idea is that we have to yield to God's work of spiritual growth in our lives, which carries us up closer and closer to the perfections of Christlikeness.

That work of spiritual growth is sometimes a command we must obey, sometimes a trial we must suffer, sometimes discipline we must endure, or sometimes great blessing designed to encourage our hearts. Verse 3 reiterates God's role in this enterprise – "this we will do if God permits." And then verses 4-8 tell us under what conditions God does and does not allow spiritual growth in grace. Notice with me a few details.

A. God allows growth in grace in the life where repentance is renewable (v. 6). In some lives, it is impossible to renew repentance, and in those lives God does not permit growth on to perfection. The apostle John talks about this kind of life (1 John 1:8-10). The life that says, "I have no sin," is a self-deceived life where confession of sin and renewal of

repentance is impossible. It is a serious condition that the author of Hebrews compares to crucifying Christ all over again and putting Him to an open shame (Heb. 6:6b). When Christ was crucified the first time, His rule was rejected by those who claimed that only Caesar would be their king. Those who still reject His rule in their lives are simply repeating the crucifixion scene all over again.

B. God allows growth in grace in the life where His Word can be received (vv. 4-8). Some lives are unable to receive God's Word. Their response to it is captured by the term translated *fall away* in v. 6. When a life like this is exposed to God's Word, it responds this way. The normal word for *fall away* in the NT is *apostasia*, from which we get our word *apostasy*. That word is used in Heb. 3:12, where it is translated *departing*. That is not the word we have in 6:6. What we have here is the verbal form of the noun normally translated *offence* or *trespass* in the NT. It literally means *to miss the path*, just like the word for *sin* means *to miss the mark*. So we can translate it as the verb *trespass*. Let's read the section that way. I point all this out because there is really nothing in this passage that indicates that a life like this has ever truly repented in the first place – it is impossible to renew them to repentance, in part, because they never repented in the first place.

Illustration: This is made more clear by the illustration of the two fields we find in verses 7-8. What the fields have in common is the blessing of rain from heaven. Both lives are exposed to the blessings of God's Word. But the field of v. 7 bears fruit, and the field of v. 8 bears only thorns and thistles. The field of v. 7 receives God's blessing, and the field of v. 8 is rejected, cursed, and ultimately fit for burning.

Application: So there are two kinds of lives in the world today. God allows growth in grace in one, but not in the other. He allows growth in grace in the life that can receive the rain fruitfully – it enlightens and he believes; it is a gift from heaven and he not only tastes but also swallows and is nourished; it is a sharing of the Holy Ghost, and what is shared is accepted and used; it comes to them as the good Word of God and the miracles that attest that Word, and they welcome it as the Word of God.

But God allows no growth in grace in the life of one that cannot receive the rain fruitfully – it enlightens and he shuts his eyes; it tastes like a gift from heaven, but he spits it out; it is a sharing of the Holy Ghost, and what is shared is given back; it comes to them as the good Word of God and the miracles that attest that Word, and they trespass against it. What kind of life are we living? Are we growing in grace with renewable repentance and a welcoming response to the light of God's Word?

III. Thorns do not accompany salvation (vv. 7-8).

Illustration: You may remember that Jesus told a parable about four different kinds of soils, only one of which was ultimately fruitful (good soil, stony soil, thorny soil, beaten down soil). One was obviously unfruitful (beaten down soil). And two looked like they were doing well for a time, but then proved to be unfruitful. That is a parable about false professions and falling away from original claims.

Application: Here we only have two soils. This is a simpler picture. Rather than determining which of four we fit into, we are only asked by it to pick one of two. We need to take a good hard look at what is coming out of our lives and ask – is it fruit that is useful to the Lord, or is it thorns and

thistles that is not? Thorns and thistles do not accompany salvation. If we find ourselves there, we are not saved.

Conclusion: "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you." Can that be said about you and me? Is it true that those who know us are persuaded that our lives contain things that accompany salvation? If the answer is *no*, the solution is actually very simple. Repent and believe.

"A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction – the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*