

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 12- Luke 12:10-12

233- The Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

March 16, 2014

Luke 12:10-12

10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

11 When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;

12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

To the Glory of God

Now this Passage has been misused, misapplied, and misrepresented probably more than any other Passage in the entire Bible. It is used to silence the critics about unbiblical behavior and practices and beliefs concerning the Holy Spirit. When I was first saved in the early 1970's- this Passage was drilled into me to keep me from saying that clearly unbiblical behavior was just that- unbiblical. And yet the subject of blasphemy is very serious- so we need to know what this means.

So what exactly does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit? Some people think it means to deny or to reject anything that anybody does or says that they attribute to the Holy Spirit. And that puts instant credibility on whatever they do or say because it strikes fear into the heart of God-fearing people.

And the worst and the most bizarre and the most destructive activities have been carried out with little or no resistance due to the fact that anyone who honestly loves Jesus and wants to serve the Lord

does not *want* to blaspheme the Holy Spirit- he loves the Holy Spirit and wishes to worship and adore Him. And so out of their respect for the third Person of the Godhead- they are silent about the great sins and excesses and abuses that are done every day- in the Name of the Holy Spirit.

So somebody's tongues, or somebody's encounter with God, or somebody's revelation, or somebody's word of wisdom, or somebody's word of knowledge, or somebody's claim that the Lord led him to do this or led him to do that, or that God spoke this or that to them- all of that is carried out all the time and when honest Christians use the very tests that God the Holy Spirit put into the Bible to see if those things are from God or not- this verse is thrown in their faces in order to shut them down.

So right of jump street- let me say that this verse has absolutely nothing to do with any of that. It is proper and correct to hold what somebody says or teaches to the Authority of Scripture- and no true Christian Leader minds that- he welcomes it. After all- it was God the Holy Spirit Himself that put those tests in the Bible so that we would have confidence in the men whom God has chosen to lead us. So that use of the term "blasphemy" has nothing to do with the context of this passage or its meaning. So let's find out what this does mean. Verse 10 begins with:

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him...

... now think about this. How can we be forgiven for that? Isn't that pretty bad? Yet Jesus says here that we may be forgiven of that blasphemy. And the reality is that there wouldn't be any Christians at all if you couldn't be forgiven of speaking against Jesus. Do you understand that before they were converted- every person is a blasphemer? So what does it mean to blaspheme the Son of Man? It means to reject or to deny Jesus Christ. It means to say or think or act against Jesus Christ. And every single human being on earth is guilty of that. So either the one who speaks against Jesus can be forgiven or else nobody gets saved. Jesus said in **John 16:7-11:**

7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;

11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

... so that is blasphemy- **"because they do not believe in Me"**. And so every sinner is a blasphemer of Jesus Christ. Before I was saved- I was, and before you were saved- you were. That is one of the things that we are saved *from*- the Wrath of God against our blasphemy.

Mark 3:28

"Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter...

... so you can blaspheme God Himself and God will forgive it! And the Truth of the matter is that we have blasphemed God every time we broke His Law. We blasphemed God every time we denied the Sovereignty of God in our life. We blasphemed God every time we argued with God or complained about what God did or used our own logic instead of trusting in what God said.

We blasphemed Jesus Christ when we didn't acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior. And yet we have been forgiven of that. In **Matthew 12:31a** Jesus said,

Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people...

... so the first thing we have to understand is that if God doesn't forgive blasphemy- then nobody is ever going to get saved because all sin is connected to blasphemy in some respect. So that is what Salvation does- it forgives the sinner's blasphemy. And that is true of every human who has ever repented and believed. So the Truth is that every one of us have repented of our blasphemy and been forgiven of it. So right off the bat we need to understand that blasphemy is not some

unique extraordinary evil or some isolated attitude or act or expression that only a few people engage in. It's the normal and natural way of all the human race. For example:

- ✓ It's blasphemy to break God's Law
- ✓ It's blasphemy to ignore God
- ✓ It's blasphemy to reject Jesus Christ

... and everyone who has ever been saved has been forgiven of blasphemy. So blasphemy is forgivable. Now look back to the last part of **Luke 12:10**:

... but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

... now why is that? Isn't God the Father just as Holy as God the Holy Spirit? Isn't Jesus just as Holy as the Father and the Spirit? Aren't they all "one"? Yes. So why is it that you can blaspheme God the Father and God the Son and be forgiven and yet not be forgiven if you blaspheme God the Holy Spirit? Is God the Holy Spirit more sacred than the Father or the Son? No.

All this means is that God the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of Truth and Salvation through Jesus Christ. So if you speak evil against the Truth- or if you reject the Truth that God the Holy Spirit has Authored- in other words- if you reject the Word of God and the Gospel that God the Holy Spirit Authored- then you can't be saved because there's no Salvation other than by hearing and believing the Gospel.

And that's exactly what the Pharisees had done here. They had spun Jesus' Life as though all His Miracles were the result of Jesus being the devil. And we studied that in the last Chapter. They had made up the horrible lie that Jesus was not from God but was doing the supernatural things He was doing because He was of the devil- Beelzebul.

And this was very convenient for the Pharisees to say that- because it gave them an "out" as to why they didn't have to love and obey and follow Jesus. It gave them an excuse as to why they didn't have to deal with the Divine Truth that Jesus taught- how He exposed their hypocrisy and their wickedness, and the fact that they had taken

God's perfect Law and mangled it beyond recognition and it gave them an "out" as to why they could be confronted with their sins by the Incarnate God and yet not repent.

And this is a very common part of human nature. Many times when people are confronted with the Truth of God's Word- they will point to some human failure on the part of some historical Church figure and use that failure as the reason why they don't believe or trust what that person has said-as though their own life is beyond reproach.

For example- people will point to the fact that Martin Luther drank beer and said some things that were wrong and hurtful as to the reason why they reject the Concept of Justification by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone. They will point to the fact that Charles Spurgeon smoked a pipe as to why they reject the Eternality of Salvation, or the use the fact that John Calvin was instrumental in the heretic Servetus being put to death as the reason why they reject the Concept of Sovereign Election.

Now forget the fact that since the water supply was polluted- that *everybody* in Germany drank beer- and that beer had less alcohol content than cough syrup. Forget the fact that every human on earth has said and written things that are wrong and hurtful, and forget the fact that Michael Servetus was, in fact, an ungodly heretic who had committed blasphemy openly and repeatedly, and forget the fact that the civil penalty of Geneva for blasphemy back in the 16th Century was death and that John Calvin had nothing to do with that being the law of the land, and forget the fact that John Calvin did not personally kill the man- he was simply brought in as an expert witness to see if the man had actually committed the crime of blasphemy- which he had- and forget the fact that John Calvin visited Servetus in his prison cell before his death- begging him to repent and turn to Jesus Christ for Salvation and Servetus refused, and forget the fact that as they burned him alive- Servetus denounced the Trinity and the Deity of Jesus Christ with great pride and arrogance.

But more importantly than any of that- forget these men that God used to bring in the revival for the integrity of God's Word- for they were all human beings with clay feet even as we are- the Truth is that the Holy Scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach Justification by Grace through Faith alone- apart from any human works, and the Scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach the Concept of Sovereign Election, and the

Scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach that the concept of “human free will” is a myth and teaches that Salvation is eternal.

And so- in spite of these Truths being controversial, and in spite of these Truths being hard to teach and hard to learn, and in spite of these Truths being offensive to many, many people in the modern Church- we believe these Truths and we preach these Truths openly and proudly and we defend these Truths- not so that we can follow mere men and not so that we can fit into some theological system- but we believe and teach and defend these Truths precisely because we cannot escape them- they are in the Holy Scriptures and the Bible, in fact, teaches these Truths very clearly and it teaches these Truths repeatedly and it does not apologize for teaching these Truths, and so neither do we- and so we embrace these Biblical Truths because we are trying with every fiber of our being to be Biblical- to God’s Glory.

But I will say that the Truth of God’s Word has no business being controversial to anybody who is truly saved, dear friends, and the fact that what God has said could in any way seem to be odd or controversial is a testimony to how far we have fallen and how unbiblical the theology of the modern Church really is.

So with the rise of Pragmatism, and with the almost universal acceptance of the 1700 year old heresy of Pelagianism, and with the deification of Man and the concept of “human free will” becoming sacred and untouchable- what God said clearly and what God said repeatedly in the Holy Bible is frowned on and rejected and explained away and turned down and by-passed and overlooked and outright condemned by some of the biggest names in the modern American Church.

And the Truth is that it isn’t because they don’t understand what the Bible says, but because they don’t like what the Bible says as to why they reject these Truths and they have made up a “god” in their own minds that is *not* the God Who is revealed in Scripture, because these Truths shatter their man-made concept of God and Salvation- and so they come up with pretty lame excuses as to why they cannot trust what these men taught or what they believed in.

And this is exactly what the Pharisees were doing here with Jesus. They had been confronted with Divine Truth and their sins were exposed and their man-made religion had been denounced and their hearts had been laid bare and they either had to bow down or call Jesus a “devil”. They either had to repent or make up a reason; they either

had to fall on their face and beg God to forgive them or they had to harden their hearts and accuse Jesus of being satan.

But what they were doing was not just rejecting the Father because you can't honor the Father without honoring the Son. It was not just dishonoring the Son, but what they were doing was rejecting the testimony to Christ made by God the Holy Spirit. And so they were completely cut off from any chance of being saved.

You see, dear friends- if it is true that everybody who is saved is saved the same way- by hearing and believing the Gospel and by repenting of their sins and by trusting in the finished Work of Jesus Christ- if *that* is the way that every single human being is saved- confessing with their mouth that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh and by believing that God raised Jesus from the dead- and some reject that one single way- then they are completely cut off from any hope of being saved.

So in other words- if there is only one way to Heaven and people reject that one single way- then they have no hope. And once you cut yourself off from the Divine Revelation of Who Jesus is and What Jesus did- you can never be saved.

So just how do we know Who Jesus is? Because God the Holy Spirit Authored the Truth about Him in Scripture. How do we know what Jesus did? Because God the Holy Spirit Authored the Truth about Him. How do we know Jesus was God or that He proved His Divinity by the mighty Miracles that He performed, or that He was God in human flesh or that He died on the Cross or that God raised Him from the dead or that Jesus fulfilled the OT Prophecies concerning the Messiah? We only know these things today because God the Holy Spirit Sovereignly moved upon 40 human writers to pen these things down for us in sacred Scripture. And before these things were written down- God the Holy Spirit moved upon Jesus to do and to say these things.

And when Jesus came into the world in His incarnation- He was subject to the Holy Spirit. He was actually conceived by the Holy Spirit, and at His Baptism- according to **Luke 3:22**- the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. And as He began His Ministry- He was led by the Holy Spirit to fast 40 days and to go into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. And when that temptation was over- Jesus returned to Galilee in the Power of the Spirit. And then He

began to announce Who He was in the synagogue at Nazareth and He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He's anointed Me." And He went through His whole life operating not only in submission to the will of the Father, but in the Power of the Spirit. Listen to Peter's words from **The Acts 10:38**:

You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

... that's why Jesus said, *"If you blasphemed Me, that could be forgiven. But if you blaspheme the Spirit, you can't be forgiven"* because you just cut yourself off from the Revelation of Jesus Christ- which is what you have to believe in order to be saved. You see, there's no way to be forgiven and saved except to believe the Spirit's Testimony of Jesus Christ. So if you reject the Spirit's Testimony of Jesus Christ- there's no way to get the Truth because there's no Truth apart from the Holy Spirit.

Now in the Upper Room in the last Passover, Jesus said many wonderful things to His disciples- but right at the top of the list is **John 14:26**:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

... and then in **John 15:26**:

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

... so God the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of Truth and He is the Revealer of Jesus Christ and so nobody can come to Jesus unless the Holy Spirit draws him.

We must remember, dear friends, that the New Covenant is infinitely superior to the Old in that it is one, single Tri-une God- in all three Persons- Who does all the Work to redeem lost sinners. The Old Covenant was between God and Man and said, *"If you do this then I will do that"*. And so Israel failed in keeping their end of the Covenant precisely because they *did not* and *could not* keep God's Law *perfectly*

and *continuously* in thought, word, and deed- 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

The New Covenant is superior in that it is between God and God, and completely eliminates all human effort. And so God made a Covenant with Himself- in all three Persons- and every vital condition that the New Covenant lays out- God Himself accomplished all by Himself.

For example- it is God the Father Who designed Salvation and chose who He would set His Love on to save. It is God the Son Who achieved the Righteousness that the Law demanded by keeping God's Law perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed 24/7 for 33-1/2 years and Who absorbed all of God's Wrath against sin on behalf of the elect and Who purchased the souls of those whom the Father chose to save.

But it is God the Holy Spirit Who Sovereignly reveals Jesus to these elected sinners, and it is God the Spirit Who reveals their own lost condition to them, and it is God the Holy Spirit Who draws them to Jesus, and He is the One Who Sovereignly regenerates them by giving them eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe.

So if you reject the Testimony and Work of the Holy Spirit- you will never be forgiven because you have cut yourself off from the single way that God has provided to forgive the sins of wicked blasphemers.

And that's what the Pharisees did. They thought they were honoring God but they categorically refused to honor the Son and they categorically rejected both the Testimony and Work of the Holy Spirit in, by, and through Jesus Christ. And the only way they could be forgiven for their blasphemy against Jesus was if they would believe and trust in the Testimony and Work of the Spirit. But because they blasphemed the Spirit and denied the veracity of His Testimony- there was no hope of Salvation for them- because faith comes by hearing the Truth about Jesus Christ and we are born again by the Work of the Spirit with the Word.

Now the Reformers were clear that we are to interpret the Word of God- not by using personal experiences as so many in the modern Church do today- but by using the Word of God to interpret the Word of God, and so I want to do that by asking you to go to another place in the Bible that teaches the same thing that Jesus was saying here in **Luke 12**

and that is another very controversial Passage found in **Hebrews 6**- so please go there with me- **Hebrews 6**.

Now some of you will remember when we were on our “Journey through Hebrews” several years ago- that I talked about this then.

Hebrews has been somewhat of a mysterious Book to many people- partly because we are not sure whom God the Holy Spirit used to write it and partly because of what it seems to say here in Chapter 6. In fact, when the 27 inspired Books of the New Testament were being compiled in a single location back in the 4th Century- there were questions that some had about whether Hebrews should be included in the Canon.

And the reason was because on a shallow reading- it *appears* that the writer is teaching here in Chapter 6- that not only can a person lose his/her Salvation- but people can actually get to a place where they can't ever get it back again. And this is where all the teaching and the sermons come from that say that you can go “too far” with God. And that is a frightening thing and something that has actually gained in popularity as more and more people and churches leave off careful exegesis of the Scriptures and leave off expositional preaching to teach this false doctrine.

I was taught this really bad interpretation myself as a young man back when I was first saved, and to my everlasting shame- I also taught it to many other people for many years. In fact- part of the reason why I wanted to take that Journey through Hebrews and preach through every word of every verse of this magnificent Book is because I wanted to test The Doctrines of Grace with **Hebrews 6**- to see if what I had learned about Sovereign Election and Limited Atonement and the rest of the glorious Truths of the Reformed Faith could stand up under the scrutiny of this Chapter.

I thought I knew what this Chapter taught and did not know how in the world The Doctrines of Grace could survive it. And so even though I didn't tell anybody- I was very fearful as to what I would find when I came to this Chapter.

But to my great amazement- after carefully going through every word of every verse of the first five Chapters of Hebrews- this Chapter was almost anti-climatic as what this Chapter actually says has nothing to do with what I was taught and is in perfect alignment with the rest of the totality of Scripture and is not at odds with it at all.

And so to God's Glory- when I came to this Chapter- I was able with great conviction and boldness to teach what the writer was actually saying and bring great hope and comfort to those genuine believers who struggle with sin in their lives- because this Chapter is one of the most hopeful parts of the entire Bible. So let's read **Hebrews 6:1-8** together, and as we go through this- we will begin to see exactly what Jesus was teaching back in **Luke 12**:

1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

3 And this we will do, if God permits.

4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

Now here is what I said seven years ago as I began to preach this portion of God's Word:

“Theologically and Doctrinally speaking- this is one of them most important Passages of Scripture that I have ever preached from since I started this Church. These next two or three weeks of me preaching in this Passage is going to determine the direction of this Church for years to come. That is how important the right and correct understanding of this Passage is.”¹

... and then I said,

¹ Blair Bradley, *Turning Away and Going On- Part 1; A Journey Through Hebrews*; June 2007

“...the 4th Century Church analyzed this Book [**Hebrews**] very carefully- word by word, verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph, and studied both the literary context of the words that were used in this Epistle and the grammatical style in which it was written as well as the Theology that was being taught so that with all confidence the Church could determine whether the **Epistle to the Hebrews** is the Word of God or not.

It is interesting that back in the 2nd Century- the Church also interviewed those who had been taught this Book for decades to see what affect this Book had had upon their lives and after gathering all of this evidence together the Church rightly concluded that Hebrews belonged in the collection of Books that today we call the Holy Bible, and that these eight verses that we have just read do *not* teach that a truly regenerated soul can lose their Salvation- but, in fact, these eight verses uphold the glory and the majesty of the Doctrine of The Perseverance of the Saints- that the souls whom God has chosen before the foundation of the world, the predestinated people who have been unconditionally elected by God’s Own Good Pleasure without regard to any good or bad that they have done, the favored ones who have been drawn to Jesus by the Father, all of those who have been regenerated by a Sovereign Act of a holy God, all of these people for whom Christ died, all of those in whom the Spirit of God has sealed and dwells, all of those for whom Jesus prays, that by God’s Own Power and for God’s Own Glory- He will keep these souls from falling and will preserve them unto Himself forever.

But these eight verses teach this wonderfully comforting Truth in a very strange way. It teaches the Perseverance of the Saints by telling those who sit in Church and yet are not truly saved to ‘beware’, and it teaches the peaceful fact of God’s Sovereign ‘keeping’ of His true sheep by warning those who are *not* His sheep of the danger of rejecting the Gospel.”²

Now it is a tragedy that people can go to Church for years and hear the glorious Gospel of God over and over again, and they can even be faithful Church members, and yet never really be saved. *That* is the person who is addressed here in these eight verses of **Hebrews 6**.

The writer of Hebrews is specifically talking to those Jews who had heard the Gospel as it was faithfully preached in this small little

² Ibid

Church in Asia Minor late in the first Century and yet they had not confessed Jesus as Lord. But even though this Book was written especially for them- it applies to *anyone*- Jew or Gentile who has the outward trappings of religiosity but is not truly born again.

These are people who *intellectually* understand the Truth of God's saving Grace in Jesus Christ and who perhaps have seen that Grace change the lives of many of their friends and family members- people who may even have made some kind of mental agreement about Jesus- and yet these people turn around and walk away from full Trust and Salvation. These people are given the severest possible warning in these eight verses.

Now the main purpose of this entire Epistle to the Hebrews is to show to the Jews that Christianity in general, and Jesus Christ in particular, is superior to anything and everything that they had under the Old Covenant. So in Chapter 1, the writer begins this Epistle different than any other Epistle in the Bible. By looking at the very first two verses of Hebrews we can see that the writer's name is not mentioned and that he begins his letter by telling his Jewish readers that God no longer speaks to Man through Prophets- but that God speaks today only through His Son.

He then goes on to describe Jesus in glowing terms and tells the people of this small little Church in Asia Minor around the last third of the first century seven things about Jesus. The writer tells us that Jesus is:

1. The Heir of all things that God has made
2. The Instrument by Whom God made the worlds
3. The Brightness or Radiance of God's Glory
4. The express or exact Image or Representation of God's very own Nature
5. That Jesus upholds all things by the Word of His Power
6. That Jesus alone purged our sins
7. That Jesus alone sat down at the "right hand" of Majesty

Over the next several verses, the writer spends great detail showing his Jewish friends that Jesus Christ is far superior to angels and arch angels and cherubims and seraphims. And over the next four chapters- this writer tells us that Jesus is superior to angels and to

Moses and to Joshua and to David and to Aaron- and he introduces us to a very mysterious man named Melchisedec- who lived in Abraham's day.

But periodically, this writer stops discussing the superiority of Jesus Christ and gives exhortations and warnings to those who are listening with their ears but their heart is far from God.

There are a total of five of these warnings throughout this Epistle. The first two are in the first five Chapters and these eight verses that we have just read are the third warning- and there are yet two more to come.

The first warning was in **Hebrews 2:1-4** when this writer told these people- *"Give the more earnest heed so that what you have heard will not slip"*. The second warning came in a section that begins in **Hebrews 3:7** and goes all the way into **Hebrews 4:16**- which is huge Evangelistic section of this Book which begins by telling these interested but unsaved people not to harden their hearts and ends by reminding these Church members whose names are not yet on God's roll up yonder that they can come boldly to the throne of Grace in order to repent.

This third warning actually began back in **Hebrews 5:11** and it goes through the eighth verse of Chapter 6 and there are yet two more that we have not yet studied- but for your reference I will tell you about them now. The fourth warning is found in **Hebrews 10:26-39** and the fifth and last warning is found in **Hebrews 12:25-29**.

Now these warnings are *progressive* in that the writer teaches that every time a person rejects God's demand to repent and be saved- his heart is hardened more and more. Every time that God convicts a person of sin and he refuses to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and he rebels against the Authority of the Scriptures- that person's soul is seared with a hot iron. And so the urgency of this writer's pleas with these rebellious people is to tell them to repent now, be saved today, stop rebelling this day, because the end of these people who hear the Gospel but who constantly and consistently reject the Gospel is truly tragic.

It is tragic because persistent rejection of Jesus Christ may result in such persons' passing the point of no return spiritually- of losing forever the opportunity of Salvation. That is what always happens to one who refuses Jesus Christ. They eventually follow their evil heart of unbelief and turn their back forever on the living God.

Such people often have adopted a *form* of Christianity, but they do not have the reality of it. You see, unlike a knife which become more dull with use- Divine Truth becomes sharper with use- and the only way for us to "use" Divine Truth is to first of all accept it as Divine Truth, and, then, secondly to obey that Truth with gladness of heart.

But Truth that is heard but not believed and trusted becomes dull and meaningless to that individual. Truth that is accepted on some mental level and yet not obeyed becomes despised in our eyes, and Truth which is not obeyed joyfully becomes a burden and a labor.

But Truth which is eagerly accepted into the eyes and into the ears and which goes all the way down into the heart, and Truth that is fully accepted and fully recognized as coming from Father, and which is fully accepted as being Right and Truth which is obeyed earnestly, that you are willing to struggle and suffer and even die to obey with gladness of heart- this Truth becomes a source of the greatest pleasure on earth and the greatest source of contentment and fulfillment that any human can ever know.

But because the infinite reward of accepting and obeying Divine Truth is so great and so majestic and so meaningful- rejecting this same Truth- hearing it but not accepting it, or accepting it on some level- yet not obeying it- is horrific far beyond the most devastating disaster that anyone has ever known.

The more that the Gospel is heard and yet neglected- the more immune to it we become. By not accepting the Gospel when it was still "news," these first century Jews had begun to grow indifferent to it and had become spiritually sluggish, neglectful, and some had already become hard hearted. Because of the disuse of their knowledge of the Gospel- they now found themselves unable to make the right decision about it. They were, in fact, in danger of making a desperately wrong decision, of turning around because of pressure and persecution and completely going back to Judaism.

That was the situation that the unbelieving Jews faced, and it is the theme of **Hebrews 5:11-14**. Spiritually these people who were in the Church but not in the Body were growing dull, hard, and stupid. The solution is given to them in Chapter 6. So let's read **Hebrews 6:1&2** again together:

1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

Now as we read Hebrews- it is very helpful to remember that this Book was not written to Gentile Christians whose only knowledge about God was through Jesus Christ like us. No, this Book was written specifically to the Jews- (that's why it is called The Epistle to the Hebrews) who were well schooled in the Old Testament shadows and types and symbols and rituals and sacrifices and priesthood. And the two key ideas in these first two verses of Chapter 6 are **“leaving”** and **“pressing on to maturity”**.

So the writer tells these Jews that he wants them to leave one thing and press on to something else. Together- these two concepts- “leaving” and “pressing on to maturity” are the first step in these Jews' becoming spiritually mature. They had to leave once and for all their ties with the Old Covenant- with Judaism- with its shadows and symbols and types and animal sacrifices and an inferior priesthood, and fully and without reservation “press on” to Jesus Christ as Savior.

And the writer tells them here to leave the elementary teachings about the Christ, or in other words the partial symbolic shadow of the Old Covenant immediately- without any hesitation. And the “maturity” that this writer refers to here is *not* the spiritual maturity that you and I seek after which is the result of us walking with God for years- no this “maturity” is the final, full, and completed Revelation of God found in the New Covenant through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the word “leaving” in the Greek is *afieemi* (a)fiē/nai) which means: *to forsake, to put away, to let alone, to disregard, to put off*. It refers to a total detachment or a total separation, from a previous location or condition.

The writer is speaking here of this same kind of “leaving” or “separation” by telling these Jewish people that the “elementary” and “vague” and “incomplete” or “immature” teachings about the Messiah that the unbelieving Jews had heard all their lives through Old Testament Scriptures was *inferior* to the New Testament Revelation of Jesus in the Gospel, and so they were to “leave” the Old Testament

teaching about Jesus and “embrace” the “maturity” or the “fullness” of God’s final Revelation which is that God Himself became flesh and dwelt among us and took upon Himself the sins of us all and lived and died and rose again and is now exalted in the Heavens.

The writer was instructing these Jews to “leave” the *partial, incomplete, symbolic, inferior, and immature* things of the Old and to “embrace” the reality of the *superior and mature* things of the New Covenant.

Now as New Testament Christians- we are *never* to leave the basic elementary aspects of the Gospel- no matter how mature we grow in the Faith. We are *never* to leave the Blood and Salvation and Redemption, and we will *never* be so mature that we won’t need forgiveness, and we will *never* reach a place of spiritual maturity where we won’t need to confess sin.

That is *not* what this writer is telling us here because this writer was *not* addressing Gentile believers in **Hebrews 6:1-8**. This writer is only addressing Jewish people here who were schooled in Old Testament Truths and who were *intellectually* interested in the Gospel but were not yet truly saved.

You and I must always hold tight to all that Christ has done for us and the elementary aspects of Christianity are never to be discarded. Remember, the issue that the writer is addressing here is not that of you and me growing in spiritual maturity as a Christian- but of Jews totally *abandoning* Judaism and coming into the first stage of spiritual maturity by *becoming* a Christian in the first place. These first two verses here teach that it is a matter of these Jewish people dropping or leaving and putting away that which they have been holding onto and taking up and pressing on to something entirely new.

Now we need to remember that this passage does not deal with Christian believers at all because at no time does the Word of God suggest anywhere that a Christian should drop or leave the basics of Christianity and go on to something else- because there is nothing else. It is the provisions and principles and signs and symbols and washings and sacrifices and Sabbaths of the Old Covenant of Judaism that these Jews are told to leave.

And it is also very important to note that the writer is not saying here that these Jews should “add” to their “Jewishness” by simply *including* Jesus into their worship, and neither does he tell them to add

some New Testament Truths to their Judaism. No, he tells them clearly to leave what they've got- to abandon the principles about the Messiah that Moses and the prophets taught them- to utterly cast immature and elementary shadows and symbols and types away as though they were inferior- which they are.

So it is not a question of them *adding* something to what they already had. It is a question of these Jews totally *abandoning* the inferior Revelation they have in animal sacrifices and *obtaining* a Revelation that is far better and far superior in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so this is precisely what the Holy Spirit is telling these Jewish listeners here to do- for them to *abandon* the shadows, the types, the pictures, and the sacrifices of the old economy and come to the reality of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. A paraphrase of what the writer is asking these Jews to do here in these first two verses could be summed up as:

- ✓ Leave the attributes of the Messiah and press on to the Messiah Himself
- ✓ Leave the inferior Old Covenant and embrace the superior New Covenant

But just what were the incomplete Old Covenant attributes that the writer is telling these Jews to leave? This writer says that the foundation of our faith- the Old Covenant- had six features that are pointed out in verses 1-2. These are:

1. Repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. Instruction or doctrine about ceremonial washings
4. Laying on of hands
5. The resurrection of the dead, and
6. Eternal judgment.

Now these are not, as is often interpreted, elementary foundational *Christian* Truths that are to be abandoned in order to go on to some super spiritual status- no, no, no, these are all *Old Testament* Truths that this writer is telling these Jews to leave or abandon in order to press on to Jesus Christ- Who is far superior.

And while it is true that all of these Old Testament attributes were instituted by God and all of them pointed to Christ- it is also true that all of them combined are totally inferior to Christ Himself, and all of them are inferior to the final Revelation of God to Man as revealed through the Gospel. So we must respect and admire all that the Old Testament saints had- but we are never to leave Christ and go back down the mountain and discard Christ and the Gospel so that we could have what they had.

Now the next three verses are really the crux of the issue of what Jesus was talking about in **Luke 12**- so let's read **Hebrews 6:4-6** together:

4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,
5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,
6 and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

Now the writer of Hebrews says that the Jews who are being addressed here had five great advantages over the average person who is presented with the Truth about Jesus Christ. And those five advantages are summarized here in verses 4&5:

1. They Had Been Enlightened
2. They Had Tasted of the Heavenly Gift
3. They Were Made Partakers of the Holy Ghost
4. They Had Tasted the Good Word of God
5. They Had Tasted of the Powers of the World to Come

... and Lord willing- we will go over this in great detail next week and see how all this ties in with what Jesus was talking about in **Luke 12**.

Amen. Let's pray.