

## 26—Hebrews 10:32-39—Living in Light of the Coming Resurrection

### I. Introduction

- A. It's Resurrection Sunday! The birth of Christ on Christmas and the death of Christ on Good Friday are incomplete without the resurrection. If the resurrection did not happen, then we are still in our sin and most to be pitied.
  - 1. The amount of evidence for the resurrection is staggering. There over 500 witnesses that have been documented. That is hard to dispute. Anyone seeking to overturn the truth of the resurrection of Christ must explain it away with things that do not line up with the historical evidence.
  - 2. But one thing they do not attempt to defend is how his disciples are very different AFTER the resurrection. Peter went from being afraid of a slave girl who recognized him to speaking out boldly in Jerusalem under great threat of his life. Eventually, the leaders arrest Peter and John. When they are released, (Acts 5:41) Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.
    - a) They do not count it worthy to suffer for Jesus if he is dead.
- B. So, what does Hebrews 10:32-39 have to do with Resurrection Sunday?
  - 1. The preacher tells them to remember how they endured the plundering of their possessions because they knew they had a superior possession coming later.
  - 2. In other words, they too had lived in light of the coming resurrection but they need to continue to believe in that hope in the present to lay hold of the reward in the future.

### II. Main Point

- A. I think that's the main point—remembering their faith in the past so that they will persevere in the present as they rest in the hope of the resurrection.

### III. Outline

- A. Their Faithful Past
- B. Needing to Endure the Present
- C. Hoping in the Future Resurrection

### IV. Exposition

- A. As we move on in chapter 10, God's merciful warning is still ringing in their ears as he now attempts to remind them of their changed lives that gave evidence of faith in the past. This text points out their own examples of faith while in two weeks we will be hearing the preacher remind them of the outcome of the faith in those who went before them. But for now they need to remember their faithful past for Christ.
  - 1. After the warning, if WE go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth and concluding that God will judge his people if they shrink back from such a great salvation, the preacher reminds them that their lives had given evidence of faith in the past.
  - 2. He says, "Remember the former days, after they were enlightened."
    - a) It's worth noting that the preacher knows their past. He has seen a significant portion of their journey with Christ. He can speak to them from actual experiences they have been through.
      - (1) We should see the goodness of this. We should help each other by way of reminders.
      - (2) Remind each other of the evidence of faith in the past. Tell them to remember when they endured this or that. The Lord saw you through it and he is with you now. Keep trusting.
    - b) In this case, he reminds them how they endured a hard struggle of sufferings. And he doesn't just stop with the general statement. He gives specific struggles of sufferings.
      - (1) In their case, the preacher reminds them of these particular struggles:
        - (a) Sometimes being publicly exposed to insults and afflictions themselves.
        - (b) And sometimes they were partners with those who were treated that way.
          - i) This isn't some act of random violence that has nothing to do with their identity as followers of Christ.
          - ii) In other words, they had personally been exposed to insults and affliction directly and indirectly because of their belief in Jesus.
          - iii) I believe the example that follows will explain this.

- (c) As a side note, our explanation of the gospel has often left out the fact that when you come to Jesus for salvation he demands that you follow him your whole life. It is understood that he is now Lord of your life and whatever he commands us to do is not an option. But rather we gladly submit to the one who has paid our debt.
  - i) But not to repay him but because we love him more than anything because of who he is and what he has done for us.
  - ii) To follow Jesus will cost you in this life. Saving faith involves the dying to self and living for Christ.
  - iii) To follow Jesus will involve sufferings in this life but eternal life of no suffering awaits the believer.
    - (1) Luke 14:26-27 <sup>26</sup> If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.
      - (a) This is the demand for all not just missionaries.
      - (b) If this is true, then there must be something better coming. Something that so far exceeds this life that it cannot be compared with it.
- (2) So, these followers of Christ had suffered insults and afflictions. The very thing Jesus promised would happen has come about.
  - (a) Jesus said in John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.
  - (b) Specifically, some of those they were partnered with were being put in prison.
    - i) Much like the Apostle Paul was doing in the book of Acts to all those Jews who were turning to Christ, they too were put in jail for their faith.
    - ii) The reason this book was written was clearly they were being threatened with imprisonment for their faith in Christ now or even worse.
    - iii) What the preacher wants them to recall is how they had compassion on those who were imprisoned.
      - (1) As is the case in many parts of the world, if you do not have someone on the outside bringing you food then you will either die or you will have to physically take it from someone else inside.
      - iv) These believers on the outside showed compassion to those who had been arrested.
      - v) That means they are publicly identifying (partnered) with them as they took care of them.
- 3. Likely connected to what happened here, they also had their own property taken from them.
  - a) Notice there in verse 34—they received this plundering of their property with joy.
    - (1) How on earth does someone do that?
      - (a) If the resurrection is true, then the very presence of God awaits us forever.
      - (b) When you have a superior possession that no matter what they do to you they cannot take it away then you can joyfully accept the taking of your temporary possessions.
        - (1) In other words, they may take your earthly inheritance but they cannot take your eternal inheritance in heaven.
      - ii) And why is it superior? One obvious reason is because it lasts forever. It is an enduring possession purchased by the blood of Christ.
      - iii) And that possession is where God himself is!
        - (1) In his presence there is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore.
        - (2) Indeed, we will receive what Jesus purchased for us—an indestructible life!
    - (c) What makes people defy nature like this?
      - i) We are by nature a people who love comfort, pleasures, power, money for possessions, and fame. We all want to be made much of.
        - (1) Yet all of those things are temporary. Death takes them away.
        - (2) What if we had something far better than we could imagine that lasts forever?

- (3) C.S. Lewis did not believe God existed.
  - (a) Yet, Lewis pursued joy in all the beautiful things of this world.
  - (b) But his pursuit was always lacking because he thought the joy was in the things he loved but he came to realize these things pointed to the source of all beauty and joy.
  - (c) Lewis writes: “The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things — the beauty, the memory of our own past — are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself, they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of the tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.” (C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*)
    - ii) These believers needed to remember that love they had for Christ in the beginning that defied their own nature—to let those temporary possession go with joy because they have a better possession, a lasting one.
    - iii) They need to continue to long for the actual source of the beauty and joy they desire —God himself.
    - iv) The aroma of these flowers point us to the one who created them so beautifully. The One who made them must be much more amazing, right?

B. We’ve heard the reminder of their past but they must endure in the present. Those past acts of faith are meant to fuel the present struggles. Their faith needs to endure in the present.

1. Similar to what I mentioned earlier about the demand to follow Christ and following Christ will bring about sufferings, so too in our circles there has not been a clear teaching on the necessity for enduring faith.
  - a) The church has suffered due to the lack of clarity here.
    - (1) We have this easy believism that doesn’t demand repentance or the lordship of Christ.
    - (2) Dietrich Bonhoeffer said this in his day, “Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”
2. Verse 35 teaches clearly the need to have enduring faith. In light of their present trouble, he concludes that they have need of endurance.
  - a) Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.
    - (1) Living in light of the reward of the resurrection is essential to enduring in faith in the present.
    - (2) The recalling of past enduring faith is there so that they may not give up on Christ to avoid temporary afflictions.
      - (a) Easier said that done, right? For sure! But it is the truth. And we are not left to ourselves to endure in our own strength.
      - (b) We have the Holy Spirit of God Almighty within us.
      - (c) God promises to sustain us to the end (1 Cor. 1:8-9). Jude says that to those who are called, beloved by God and kept for Jesus Christ (Jude 1-2).
      - (d) Jesus has promised to be with us. The one who has all authority in heaven and on earth is watching over your life.
      - (e) “The faithfulness of God guarantees that he will keep safe forever all who he has called.”
3. Is this teaching of enduring faith true? Does it have a biblical basis?
  - a) Implied in our own statement of faith: We believe that only born-again believers endure to the end and that they are kept by the power of God through faith in Jesus Christ—is the fact that we must endure in faith to the end.
  - b) Jesus said in Matthew 24:13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

- (1) He taught in the parable of the sower: Mark 4:17 And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.
- c) Paul continues that teaching in 2 Timothy 2:12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.
- d) John records the letters from Jesus to the seven churches and each of them end like this:
  - (1) Revelation 2:7 To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'
  - (2) ...2:11 The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'
  - (3) ...2:17 To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'
  - (4) ...2:25-26 <sup>25</sup> Only hold fast what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup> The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations
  - (5) ...3:5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
  - (6) ...3:11-12 <sup>11</sup> I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. <sup>12</sup> The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.
  - (7) ...3:21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.
- 4. "True faith is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy [Spirit] works by the gospel in my heart"
  - a) All of those promises that Jesus made to the seven churches include a description of the reward.
  - b) So too the book of Hebrews.
    - (1) The all important purpose of enduring faith shines through in the middle of verse 36—so that having done the will of God you may receive what is promised.
    - (2) What has been promised? Eternal redemption and with it eternal inheritance.
    - (3) We will forever be in the presence of our God as it was meant to be.
- C. We've heard their reminder of the past to be the reason for their endurance in the present that will result in great reward in the future, but now the ground for our future hope rests in the coming of the resurrected Lord Jesus.
  - 1. Verses 37 and 38 are set off with quotes and there are a mixture of references he is pulling from. It's incredible how all these different themes in their own context support this unified message.
  - 2. He begins by reminding them of just how quickly it will be in verse 37—for, yet a little while.
    - a) This phrase—for a little while—is likely a quote from Isaiah 26:20.
      - (1) "In Isaiah the Lord promises he will come soon and vindicate his people and judge his enemies. Judah must keep trusting the Lord in the midst of their adversity, knowing that the Lord will intervene on their behalf soon. In the same way, this congregation should realize that their time of being exiles and sojourners is brief compared to the unending reward promised to them." (Schreiner 334).
    - b) The next part—and the coming one will come and will not delay—comes from Habakkuk 2:3.
      - (1) If you went and read this from Habakkuk you would notice a difference. The changes the preacher made reflect the reality of the first coming of Christ. The way it is understood in the OT described the coming judgment of God on Judah but here in Hebrews what is coming is Jesus. He is coming again.
        - (a) For those who throw away their authorization into heaven by the blood of Christ will have to answer for their trampling of Jesus when he returns.
    - c) However, as verse 39 says—but my righteous one shall live by faith—a quote from Habakkuk 2:4.
      - (1) It doesn't say a one-time profession of faith but rather to live continually by faith—like those in the next chapter of Hebrews—the great cloud of witnesses.

- (2) It is enduring faith that saves and then God will delight in the one who trusts him.
- (3) But if not—if he shrinks back, God will not take pleasure in him.
- d) Again, as is the pattern of the preacher, he warns and exhorts but then ends by declaring who they are.
  - (1) But we ourselves are not of those who are shrinking back into destruction, but of faith into preservation of the soul.
    - (a) I want us all to be people who live everyday by faith in Christ and preserve their souls forever.
- e) I was trying to explain this in family devotion Friday morning to my kids.
  - (1) This past week, Joshua participated in student congress at the state capitol.
    - (a) I asked him why was he confident to enter the chamber and participate in the passing of bills?
      - i) The reason he could do that was because he had met all the requirements. He signed up. Paid the fee. In other words, he was authorized to enter the chambers and act as a congressman.
      - ii) However, getting to the capitol had its challenges. The traffic was terrible. It was raining and cold. The bus was late picking them up. He missed the deadline to sign in upon arrival.
      - iii) He could have realistically thought that the other students would make fun of this questions and reject his beliefs.
      - iv) All of that was a temptation to shrink back and quit. But he didn't.
    - (b) We all fail to live up to God's expectations but we don't let go of Jesus. Even if you feel some distance between you and God you must not shrink back. Christ is near! Abandon your sin but do not abandon Jesus.
      - i) Be who you are in Christ now in the power of the Holy Spirit.
      - ii) Jesus is coming and those who are persevere to the end will be raised with him to life eternal.
- f) Do you want temporary joy or eternal joy?
  - (1) Do you want Jesus? Forgiveness? To be with God forever?
  - (2) Repentant and believe in Christ. Come follow Jesus to the end. You will not be disappointed.