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September Memory Verse, 1 Thessalonians 4:15 (NKJV)

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

Chapter 5

At the end of chapter 4, the author of Hebrews introduced the idea of Jesus being our great High Priest.

You see, the mission of the priest was two-fold. He was to go before God to represent the people before God. Here is a holy, righteous God. Here is a sinful people. A sinful person could not approach the holy, righteous God. So the priest would take the sacrifice and he would go before God for the person, make the way, and he would represent that person before God. Then, as he came out from the offering of the sacrifice, he would then represent God to the people. He was a mediator. He was a go-between between God and man.

In the Jewish mind, there would be an immediate objection. How could Jesus be our High Priest when He is from the tribe of Judah? And we know the tribe of Levi was to be the priestly tribe.

Now, the priesthoods were known as orders, the Levitical order. But there was another order of priesthood in the Old Testament and that was known as the Melchisedec order. And so the author of Hebrews is going to show that Jesus is our High Priest. He is not after the Levitical order, not of the tribe of Levi, but He is after the Melchisedec order. And in, again, chapter 7 he will be showing the superiority of the Melchisedec order over the Levitical order of priesthood.

For every high priest that is taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God ([Hbr 5:1](#)),

The high priest represented the people before God. That was his duty. I could not come directly to God. I would have to come to the priest with my offering and I would have to lay my hands upon the head of my sacrifice,

and confess on to the head of the ox or the lamb all of my sin. The priest would then kill the ox or lamb and he would take and offer it as a sacrifice unto God for me.

that he may offer both the gifts and the sacrifices for sin: this man needed to have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with weaknesses ([Hbr 5:1-2](#)).

Because he was taken from among men, he understood the weaknesses of man, and so he would be compassionate towards the penitent or towards the sinner, for he himself was guilty of sin.

It is interesting that before he could actually offer any sacrifice for my sins, he had to, first of all, offer sacrifices for his own sin. He had to, first of all, take care of himself, and then he would come and take care of me.

And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, also for himself, to offer for sins ([Hbr 5:3](#)).

He not only had to bring the sacrifice me, but he had to do it for himself. He was a man, and as a man, a sinner. And as a sinner, he needed to have sacrifices for his own sin, so he had to offer first for himself.

And no man would take this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron ([Hbr 5:4](#)).

It was not something that you could just say, "Well, I'm going to be the high priest." It was an honor that a man didn't just take upon himself. It was something that was ordained or appointed of God. Unfortunately, in time it became, more or less, a political position and a political appointment. That was only an indictment against the lack of spirituality that the whole system had practically degraded into. As so often man's organization, setting up the hierarchy and all, degrades into something less than it originally was, into a political institution instead of a spiritual organism. One of the problems with most of the major denominational churches today is that they have become political systems rather than spiritual organisms.

So the high priest was taken from among man to offer the gifts and the sacrifices for man. He had to have compassion, and this he possessed because he also was a man and familiar with the weaknesses of man. And

so, because he himself was a man, he had to offer sacrifices for himself. It is a position that is ordained of God and man did not take it unto himself.

So also Christ glorified not himself ([Hbr 5:5](#))

He didn't take on this position as our great High Priest on His own.

that is making himself the high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee [[Psalm 2](#)]. Also said in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec [[Psalm 110](#)] ([Hbr 5:5-6](#)).

God who said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," also said to Him, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." And so speaking of Jesus,

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared ([Hbr 5:7](#));

Now, this is a reference to Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane when He wept before God, prayed. He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him.

Even though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience ([Hbr 5:8](#));

It was obedience to the Father in going to the cross. Submitting now unto the will of the Father. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. He had to go through that suffering. The path of the cross is a path of suffering.

Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered.

And being made perfect [complete], he became the author of eternal salvation ([Hbr 5:9](#))

We are told also in Hebrews that He is the author and the finisher of our faith. Now, "He is the author of our eternal salvation." He has made salvation possible for us because He went to the cross, because He was obedient to the will of the Father, because He learned this obedience and submitted to the Father. He was then able to bring to us eternal salvation.

He could not have brought it to us had He not gone to the cross. But now it's complete, our salvation is complete.

[And so he was] called of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of which we have many things to say, which are hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing ([Hbr 5:10-11](#)).

Now these people were on the fence. They had come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ from their Judaistic backgrounds. They had this deep-ingrained traditions of their fathers. All their lives they were accustomed to going to the temple, participating in the temple worship, very moving, very dramatic, deeply instilled. And now they saw a better way. Now they came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and some of them were on the fence. They didn't know if they wanted to go all the way with Jesus or whether or not they wanted to go back to the temple worship, go back to the high priest, take my sacrifice again back to the priest that he might offer it for me. So they were dull of hearing.

For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and you've become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat ([Hbr 5:12](#)).

They had been around, they had heard. They needed to be going on, but they needed to have the first principles rehearsed over again. They should have been at the stage where they could go out and teach others, but they had need that he just go back and give them the bottle again. "You're not ready to take the meat yet. Though the time has come you should be able to digest some meat by now," but there was an arrested spiritual development.

Oh, watch out for that. That is one of the most common diseases within the church, arrested spiritual development. A person comes to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and then they hit a plateau and they just hang there. They never go on. If you talk to them, they're still talking about the same things they were talking about twenty-five years ago; arrested spiritual development. They're no further along in spiritual maturity than they were twenty-five years ago. You see them and they're still drinking bottles. "Entertain us, do a dance, do a jig, sing a song, play a harp, do something to entertain me."

Every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe ([Hbr 5:13](#)).

Paul, in the Corinthian epistle, talked about carnal Christianity. He said they were babes in Christ. Arrested spiritual development is a common ailment within the church.

But strong meat belongs to them that are mature, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil ([Hbr 5:14](#)).

Growing in the Word, it gives you discernment. And you can immediately begin to discern some of these milky little scintillating kind of doctrinal trivias.

Chapter 6

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, [that is the primaries, the word at the beginning of the gospel of Christ] let us go on to maturity; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit ([Hbr 6:1-3](#)).

Let's leave these basic principles, doctrines of salvation and redemption. Let's go on into maturity. Let's go on into a mature experience with God. Let's develop in our walk with the Lord. Let's mature. Let's grow up.

Preaching is for the unconverted. What the converted needs is teaching. Leaving these first principles, the doctrine of Christ, going on into the full maturity, not going back over and over again the foundations of faith, but building on that foundation the whole knowledge of God through the Word.

The author here says something that is difficult to understand.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame ([Hbr 6:4-6](#)).

I know that this is a passage of scripture that Satan loves to use. Satan loves to use scripture. He came to Eve with scripture, "Hath God said you could eat of any of the trees?" He came to Jesus with scripture. "It is written He will give His angels charge over Thee to carry Thee in all Thy ways lest at any time You dash Your foot against a stone." He came to Jesus with scriptures, but what Jesus then did was balance scripture with scripture. Taking a scripture out of its context, you can make it mean something else. Taking scripture and isolating it, you can make it mean something else. We must compare scriptures with scriptures.

What do we know that the scripture teaches? That a man may fail, that a man may even blaspheme and still find forgiveness. For we remember that Jesus said to Peter, "Before the cock crows, you are going to deny Me three times." Peter said, "If they would kill me, I would never deny You." After the cock crowed twice, Jesus turned over and looked at Peter and Peter realized he had denied Him three times. The last time was blasphemy, saying, "I don't know the man." And he went out and he wept bitterly, but Peter found forgiveness. He found restoration and he became one of the pillars of the early church, an apostle, a leader of men.

We know that God is gracious. We know that God is merciful. We know that God is long-suffering. We know that He is patient and He has not rewarded us according to our iniquities. But as high as the heaven is above the earth so high is the mercies of God towards those who fear Him. Satan often uses this verse to a person who has backslidden. He says, "Man, you are out. Do you see what it says here in Hebrews? You've had it. That was the unpardonable sin that you committed and there is no way to renew you to repentance. You are out of the game." This is one of those scriptures that we have to deal with often as a pastor as people come and they have... you can tell it, you can see it in their eyes, and they say, "I think I've committed the unpardonable sin." We even have them calling on the phone long distance. "I believe I've committed the unpardonable sin." And I always tell them, "I know you haven't." "Well, how do you know?" "Because you called." If you committed the unpardonable sin you wouldn't care. The Holy Spirit wouldn't be dealing with you at all. You'd be so cold, callous and indifferent that you wouldn't even care if you did. The fact that you're concerned and care is the sign that you haven't. God's Spirit is still dealing

with you. But Satan loves to use this as a club over people's head and he beats them to death with it.

There are those who suggest that he is writing to Jews who have been enlightened with the knowledge of Jesus Christ but who halted short of a full faith in Christ. And halting short of the full faith in Christ, they went back to the practices of Judaism, and thus, it was impossible to renew them unto repentance as they crucified the Son of God afresh, putting Him to open shame. I cannot accept that position totally. It seems to me where he refers to being "enlightened and tasting of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come," it sounds to me like they had a pretty good dose.

Now, the biggest problem I have with this, because I can understand it, because I have seen that experience and it is confirmed by the words of Jesus. Of course there is that among thorns; it grows up but it is choked and never bears fruit. And I've seen a lot of Christians that don't bear fruit. I mean, there is the growth there. They're there, but there is no fruit coming forth from their lives. The difficulty that I have with the passage is this impossibility of renewing them again unto repentance. And I will frankly confess to you I don't understand what it means. I'm sorry. I cannot give to you some glorious revelation that I have and this is what the text is saying, because I do know that Jesus said, "Whoever will come unto Me I will in no wise cast out." And I know tonight that no matter what your background may be, what exposure you may have had to the gospel in the past or what you have done in the past, I do know that if you will just come to Jesus Christ, He will in no wise cast you out. So this verse would not, then, be applicable to you.

For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth the vegetables that are fit for them by whom it is dressed [or for the people who planted the vegetables, the people who took care of the garden], receiveth the blessing from God: But that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned ([Hbr 6:7-8](#)).

So there is, again, the idea and he goes back to the parable of the sower and the seeds. There are those seeds that bring forth vegetables, bring forth the fruit for those, and it is blessed. They are blessed. The earth is

blessed. The good ground that brings forth the vegetables for the person who have dressed the garden or planted the garden. But the thorns and the briers, they're a curse, and they are going to be gathered and burned.

And now, here the writer, is saying, But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you ([Hbr 6:9](#)),

In other words, "This doesn't really apply to you. We're persuaded better things of you." He doesn't seek to make a personal application to them of this particular curse that he is talking about.

and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. [It is important that I give this warning but I am persuaded better things of you.] For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward his name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister ([Hbr 6:9-10](#)).

God won't forget you. You're His child. You may be failing. You may be a babe. You may have arrested spiritual development. You may have slipped and fallen, but God won't forget you. He remembers you and that work of love.

And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end ([Hbr 6:11](#)):

Be diligent in the things of the Lord that you might have the full assurance of the hope. This full assurance is a glorious thing. I have full assurance in my hope of salvation. I have no questions, no qualms, no doubts. I am fully assured that I am eternally secure in the arms of Jesus.

I have the full assurance of that hope of eternal salvation, and how I thank God for it. I did not always have it, and so it means a lot more to me having it now, when I didn't have it for so many years. Because I was depending for many years upon myself and my own works and my own efforts. As long as I was depending upon myself, I never had the full assurance of the hope.

So be not sluggish ([Hbr 6:12](#)),

Now, this doesn't create a sluggishness in me, but even a greater determination to give of myself completely and fully to the things of the Lord.

Be not sluggish, but be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises ([Hbr 6:12](#)).

God has given to us His word that He will do just about anything for us that we might need or want. How many rich and precious promises! The Spirit can minister to us as we read the promises of God. I think we need to be reminded of the promises of God.

Now, there are promises that God has given that we have not entered into. Remember back in chapter 4, "Let us beware, lest a promise having given to us of rest that we should fail from entering into it." There are many promises that God has given to us that we haven't really laid claim to yet. And so we live in fear. We live in anxiety. Though there is a promise that we can take and we could just accept that promise of God and say, "Well, God, You've promised."

When you're under stress, when the pressure is on, when tomorrow is going to be one rough day, it is good to remind yourself of the promises of God. "Lord, You promised that it would be well with me." Then resting in the promises.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no [higher or] greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee ([Hbr 6:13-14](#)).

God made a promise to Abraham and then He confirmed the promise with an oath. "And so, after Abraham patiently endured, he obtained the promise." How long did he patiently endure? Over thirty-five years. "Oh God, I don't have that much time left." We are so impatient, aren't we? We want God to do it right now. We want immediate results. And usually we have a time limit set, at the most a week, for God to work. "But after he waited patiently he obtained the promise." God did give to Sarah a son, as He promised He would, even when the likelihood of having a son became humanly totally impossible.

Impossible is a word that we can use and talk about. Because we face it all the time. With our human limitations, we are always running up against impossible situations. But when you introduce God into the factor, the moment God is introduced into the factor, then you have to eliminate the word *impossible*. There is nothing impossible with God. In fact, I'll tell you

there is nothing hard for God. There is nothing that puts God under pressure or strains Him in the least. So when God is introduced the word *impossibility* has to be deleted.

Difficulty must always be measured by the capacity of the agent that is doing the work. "Let's get out and build the church of Jesus Christ." Oh, that's difficult. It may even be impossible. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." No strain, He is able to do it. So difficulty measured by the capacity of the agent doing the work. Who is doing the work? Is God doing the work? Then you've got to throw away the word *difficult*. If it is up to me, oh yes, it is difficult. It may even be impossible. That's why I dare not trust in myself or rely upon myself and my own resources or my own talents and capacities. I dare not trust in that. I must trust in the Lord, because then I can eliminate difficult and impossible in these kind of things. God is able... able to what? Able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or think

Now men take an oath by something that is greater: and the purpose of an oath is to confirmation what is said and it is intended to end all strife ([Hbr 6:16](#)).

Here I am saying, "Well, I'm going to do it for you." "How do I know you are going to do it?" "Well, I'm going to do it. I promise you I'll do it." "How do I know?" "Well, I'm just telling you I'm going to." And here we are striving about whether or not I'm going to do it. Finally, I say, "Man, I swear on the Bible I'm going to do it." "Well, all right, good." Ends the strife, that's the purpose for taking an oath, to end the strife.

People are concerned if I have to go to court and witness, "Do I swear before God I'm going to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" When Jesus said swear not at all. Can I as a Christian, then, swear by God I'm going to tell the truth? When Jesus said swear not at all, in the context He was saying "Let your yes be a yes and let your no be a no. Be a man of your word so that you don't have to take an oath to prove to a person that what you are saying is true. If you say yes then let it be yes. If you say no then let it be no. Be a person of your word

Now God, willing more abundantly to assure unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel ([Hbr 6:17](#)),

How God is unchanging. He will not change. He will not say something and then renege on it. He will not make a promise to you and then back down on it. God wants to abundantly assure you of this. Willing more abundantly to assure you of this unchanging character and nature of God, the immutability of God and of His counsels. His counsels are His words, His promises. He confirms with an oath.

And so there are two unchanging things, in which it was impossible for God to lie ([Hbr 6:18](#)),

The two unchanging things: God's Word, it doesn't change. The Word of God is forever established and settled in heaven. "Heaven and earth will pass away but God's Word cannot pass away, will not pass away" ([Matthew 24:35](#)).

The oath is the second thing, when God made the oath to confirm the Word and His counsels. Now you have two unchanging things. Having made an oath, you can't change. And we know that it is impossible for God to lie, therefore, the result is that:

we have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us ([Hbr 6:18](#))

What great comfort we have. What great confidence we have. What a strong consolation we have when I can just take the Word of God and say, "Here, God has said it, and that settles it. It is going to be. Here is the Word of God and the promise of God and I flee to this refuge

Which hope we have as an anchor to our soul ([Hbr 6:19](#)),

My soul is anchored in this. I cannot be moved. I cannot be swayed. My soul is anchored in this hope.

that is both sure and steadfast ([Hbr 6:19](#)),

That glorious hymn of the church, "We have an anchor that keeps our soul steadfast and sure though the billows roll. Anchored to the rock that cannot move, founded firm and deep in my Savior's love." Oh, the anchor for our soul. I don't get tossed by the storm. I don't get wrecked by the storm. My soul is anchored in the promises of God.

and which entereth into that within the veil ([Hbr 6:19](#));

Commentary on Hebrews Chapters 5 and 6, by Chuck Smith 9.29.24

I come right into God's presence. Again, back to coming boldly to the throne of grace that we might find mercy and grace in our time of need. Within the veil I can come right into the Father, because Jesus has made the way. My great High Priest has entered into heaven for me. By Him and through Him I can come boldly now right to the Father within the veil and stand upon the Word.

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made the high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec ([Hbr 6:20](#)).

And next week as we go into chapter 7, we will really get into this order of Melchisedec in comparison with that of Levi and showing the complete superiority of our High Priest and the priesthood of Jesus over that of the Levitical order. That goes on in the next couple of chapters. In fact, it goes on into chapter 10. Next week chapter 7 and 8.

Is your soul anchored in the Word of God tonight and the promises of God to you? Is that your place of refuge? Do you have that strong consolation, comfort, assurance? Hey, God is going to do it. He's promised. He has given His Word. How grateful we are and should be for Jesus Christ who has made us the heirs of the promises. Who has made it possible for us to lay hold upon these glorious promises of God, becoming a child through our faith in Him.

May the Lord bless you and may you just grow and develop into a full maturity in your walk and in your relationship with Him. May there be that work of the Spirit in your life this week. And in the maturing processes as you grow up in all things in Christ into the full assurance of the faith, rooted and grounded in His Word and in His love. May you begin to comprehend the length, the breadth, the depth, the height of God's love and the commitment that God has made to you of His resources and of Himself that you may abound in all things through Christ Jesus. God bless you!