

Hebrews (5)

Heb 5:11 - 6:12. Interrupt for Special bulletin.

Vs 11. On this topic we have much to say and it is difficult to explain, since you have become sluggish in hearing. For though you should in fact be teachers by this time, you need someone to teach you the beginning elements of God's utterances. You have gone back to needing milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced in the message of righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, whose perceptions are trained by practice to discern both good and evil.

Sluggish in hearing is a little confusing because normally if we are awake we hear something. So I think what is implied here is the idea of listening, paying attention, to what is said. It is quite possible that most people did not have a tape recorder to capture the speeches of the teachers so they would try to memorize most of or at least the key points of the teaching. You can't do that and talk. Becoming a teacher is a good goal but comes with some requirements. The first being knowledgeable about the subject. Some subjects are easy and some require more time. In these verses milk and solid food are used to illustrate the difference. And it is not just anything to be taught but it is the message of righteousness. And to teach this one needs to know what is beneficial, pleasant, helpful, encouraging and also that which is harmful, destructive, and malicious.

Most everything we are doing in life started with some training. Being able to discern requires our perception to become skilled.

Vs 6:1-3. Therefore we must progress beyond the elementary instructions about Christ and move on to maturity, not laying this foundation again: repentance from dead works and faith in God, teaching about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this is what we intend to do, if God permits.

In these verses we have those subjects that can be called foundational. They can be explained to anyone at any age with the proper wording.

(A) First is repentance from dead works: dead works would define any activity that would be used to gain salvation, which is the goal of most every known religion. So repentance from them means to stop doing that and do what is a necessity which is the next item.

(B) Then faith in God. This includes acknowledging the Creator God and agreeing to His plan of salvation which is believing Jesus died on the cross as a substitute for your punishment. This can be called redemption.

(C) Baptism follows naturally. To proclaim that the previous action has been accepted, baptism is the public statement.

(D) Laying on of hands can mean both healing and anointing for ministry.

(E) Resurrection and judgement finishes the list. The critical Resurrection that must be accepted is Jesus coming out of the grave and living for all of eternity. The fact that every person ever born will be resurrected and judged by God is the final foundational point.

Vs 4-12. The next verses show what growth could look like and also a warning about what a decision to follow Jesus would mean.

Here are some subjects that help us advance to the higher stages of Christian experience. The mind is: (a) enlightened; then. (b) tastes the gift of heaven, or has some experience of it; then. (c) it is made to partake of the influences of the Holy Spirit; then. (d) there is experience of the excellence and loveliness of the Word of God; and, (e) finally there is a participation of the full "powers" of the new dispensation; of the extraordinary energy which God puts forth in the gospel to sanctify and save the soul.

Vs 11-12 But we passionately want each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of your hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and perseverance inherit the promises.

Again we see that there is the challenge to maintain a determination to continue onward in our Christian living in spite of the circumstance both in our personal lives and in the society around us. As we have learned from the prophets of the past and the disciples during this time in history, there is always a need to stay committed to Jesus.

So what has been the purpose of the special bulletin? First is not to get lazy about our relationship with God but to continue to mature in knowledge about biblical theology. Next would be to speak encouraging words to each other and be available to help as needed.