

Rally Time: From Spiritual Immaturity to Spiritual Victory (Hebrews 5:11- 6:20)

The writer of Hebrews is like a coach pausing the game to rebuke the Hebrew Christians for their immaturity and rally them to persevere for the purpose of the reward, which is victory in a mature, spiritual life.

“Spiritual maturity is not an automatic result of time. It results from focused listening to the word of God and living out that word in fellowship with the community.” (NLT Study Bible)

1. The Rebuke

Writer is rebuking the Hebrews because they are spiritually immature and are not maturing the way they should.

We see the first sign of spiritual immaturity...

A. “not listening”

It wasn't that the message was too complicated. They just didn't want to listen.

This was not an ear problem, but a heart problem. A divided heart leads to a hardened heart.

“Dullness usually comes first, then the desire to give up. When the Word of God starts to seem dull, we should regard it as a serious warning sign.” (Blue Letter Bible Commentary)

Not listening is a sign of immaturity.

B. “not being teachers”

We are to be funnels. We are to teach we what we learn.

Basic principles are important, but they were never meant to be the end of our biblical learning process. The goal is to continue learning, advancing, and teaching is a way that we can do that.

Those who have been Christians for any length of time should be growing and strengthening their skills. They should be building spiritual structures on the foundation.

If we're not growing in our knowledge of biblical truths and teaching what we're learning to others, it is a sign of spiritual immaturity.

C. “satisfied with wrong things”

So many churches are filled with people who are satisfied living on milk when they should be longing for hearty meat!

Babies appropriately are satisfied with baby things. Adults should not be satisfied with baby things.

“If you’re not hungry for the Word of God... it’s probably because you’ve been eating so long at the table of the world!” (Daniel Jerkins)

When you’re seeking after Jesus, your desires become His desires. His delights are your delights. You will be satisfied with the right things because they are His things.

If we’re not longing for a deepening in our study and love for God’s word, it is a sign of spiritual immaturity.

d. “dulled senses”

The more we use our physical senses, the stronger they become. The same is true with our spiritual senses. The more we use them, the stronger they become.

When we don’t use discernment, it is a sign of dulled senses that is stemming from immaturity. The opposite is also true, when we decide to use godly discernment, we naturally mature.

These Hebrew Christians showed their spiritual immaturity by lack of discernment between good and evil and in their contemplation of giving up with Jesus.

Discernment leads to growth which leads to spiritual maturity.

If we’re not discerning well, it is a sign of spiritual immaturity.

True repentance leads to a changed life.

The Hebrews were tempted to retreat to Judaism. If they retreat that means they never truly repented and gave their life to Jesus.

Once you’re saved you are always saved. You are safe and secure forever.

Writer is showing the difference between falling and falling away.

-falling- giving in to sin

-falling away- rejecting Jesus

This is the difference in Peter and Judas.

-Peter fell... believer that made a mistake

-Judas fell away... never a true believer- rejected Jesus

If you reject Jesus (fall away) there is no hope because there is no repentance.

God looks for what grows in us in terms of maturity.

-fruit= true repentance and faith

-no fruit, thorns= no repentance and no faith

True repentance leads to a desire to want to know Jesus more. This looks like learning the word and obeying the word. You cannot obey what you do not know.

Knowing the Bible is also a form of protection from falling away.

When we really bear fruit, it is because we abide in Jesus.

2. The Rally

To rally- revive, come back

The writer to the Hebrews is encouraging them like a coach... it's rally time! You're behind but victory is possible! Keep on! Don't give up! Persevere!

The rally is important because this change in attitude and in hope would keep the Hebrew Christians from becoming lazy, sluggish, and dull of hearing.

As a part of this rally speech, the writer is saying, "Think about the players who have played this game before you. Instead of being discouraged and wanting to quit, imitate those heroes of the game! Think about Abraham and his faith and patience."

The writer wants these spiritually immature to find spiritual victory.

They have 2 options though...

-press on toward maturity- in knowledge, faith, hope....holiness

-drift away- indifference and dullness....destruction

3. The Reward

"order of Melchizedek"- priestly leadership over God's people

This oath that God made to Abraham showed that God's promises are unchanging. Because he's unchanging and keeps his promises... he is a sure thing!

"The purpose of an anchor is to keep a ship safe and secure at a desired location or to help control the ship during bad weather. However, to accomplish these vital purposes, just having an anchor is not enough. The anchor must be solid, dependable, and used properly at the right time and place." (Google)

These Hebrew Christians were facing "bad weather" and needed encouragement. The writer is reminding them as believers, we have Jesus as an anchor for our souls. At salvation you were attached to this dependable, steadfast, Hope, but just knowing we have anchor isn't enough. It is only when we utilize this anchor that makes the difference.

Unlike a boat's anchor, we are not anchored downward. We are anchored upward in heaven. Anchored to Jesus which means that we are anchored to move forward into hope and share that hope with the world around us.

These Christians needed the reminder that Jesus was our forerunner. He went before us and made a way. We aren't to stand still but continue on because of what he's done, what he's doing and what he's going to do!

Because Jesus is our hope and our anchor, we can persevere and mature in our faith no matter the storms that come. And we can experience true victory that is spiritual maturity.

Sometimes in our spiritual life rebuking and rallying are necessary for the purpose of the reward: Jesus! Spiritual maturity is knowing and loving Jesus more.

Resources: blueletterbible.org, gty.org, biblegateway.com, CSB Women's Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, thegospelcoalition.org, versebyverseministry.org, openbible.info.org

Homework Questions

How is the Hebrew writer like a coach?

What are some things he is rebuking the Hebrew Christians for?

Why is rebuking necessary?

How is being “dull of hearing” a heart problem?

What are some signs of immaturity?

Why is it important to identify these signs?

Explain what could be considered spiritual “milk?” Spiritual “meat?”

Why is it important that we recognize the difference?

Why do you think many church go-ers are deceived by this concept of “milk and meat?”

In what ways does spiritual immaturity harm a church?

Define true repentance in your own words.

What is the difference in falling and falling away according to Hebrews 6:6?

Read John 15:5-6. What is the promise for abiding in Jesus? What is the consequence for not?

Why is a rally needed in our spiritual lives?

How can we practically help others rally?

Define in your own words the purpose of an anchor.

How is Jesus an anchor for our souls?

What is our reward in spiritual maturity?

Personal Reflection Questions: (please describe the evidence to your Yes/No answers)

*Are there any signs of spiritual immaturity in my life?

*Has there ever been a time that I loved God more or desired His word more?

*Do I discern good and evil based on the authority of God’s word?

*Have I truly repented?

*Am I abiding in Jesus and bearing fruit?

*Am I pressing on toward maturity?