

Moving BEYOND the elementary

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Heb 6:1-3 (Peshitta text)

Therefore, let us leave the elementary word of Christ, and let us go on to perfection.

Years ago, an old Pentecostal preacher, who I had grown to highly respect, taught us that "whenever we find a; **"therefore"** in the Bible, we should always search for the reason it was **"there for"**. In all the years of my Bible studies, I have found that to be wise council.

"**Therefore**", once again, wisdom dictates that; to fully understand the often controversial writings contained within Hebrews chapter 6: we should, **first**, pursue the reason that Hebrews 6:1 starts out with a "**Therefore**".

Since the letter to the Hebrews was not originally written with chapter divisions, we can assume that a continuity of thought continues on in chapter 6; from chapter 5; and therefore, we should read the thoughts written previous to the "**Therefore**", in chapter 6:1. to insure context and continuity, as much as possible.

Here, below, is; **Hebrews 5: verses 6 through 14** and without Chapter headings or verse numbers, continuing through to and including; **Hebrews 6: verses 1 through 6** (Peshitta text):

"And he said also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Even when he was clothed in flesh, he offered prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death; and verily he was heard.

And, though he was a good Son, because of fear and suffering which he endured, he learned obedience.

And he grew to be perfect and became the author of life everlasting to all who obey him;

So he was called by God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

*Now concerning this very Melchisedec we have much to say, **BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN BECAUSE YOU ARE DULL OF COMPREHENSION.***

By now you should be teachers because you have been a long time in training; but even now you need to be taught the primary writings of the word of god; but you are still in need of milk, and not strong meat. For every man whose food is milk is unfamiliar with the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongs to those who are full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

***Therefore,** let us leave the elementary word of Christ, and let us go on to perfection.*

Why do you again lay another foundation for the repentance from past deeds and for faith in God? And for the doctrine of baptisms and for the laying on of hands and for the resurrection of the dead and for eternal judgment?

If the Lord permits, **this** we will do.

But **THIS is impossible** for those who have once been baptized and have tasted the gift from heaven and have received the Holy Spirit. And have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. For, for them to sin again **and be renewed again** by repentance, they crucify the Son of God a second time and put him to open shame."

I came to Christ in denomination legalism. My early understanding of born again by faith, righteousness and ultimately my eternal destiny was all unbelievably distorted by legalistic doctrine, teaching, and lack of teaching and misunderstanding of the true meaning of God's Grace through Jesus Christ. For years I tried to do, do, do, what was right, right, right in the sight of God. I had no idea that it was impossible, by my own efforts, to ever succeed.

So, without a proper **FOUNDATION**, I tried to "gut it out". I, in my own strength, tried to do what is right & failed, miserably. Then, I would repent every Sunday, or so, at the altar and try to get "saved" again. The following weeks I would fail again to "**keep the law**" and on some following Sunday, hit the altar and try "**to repent again unto salvation**".

Of course, I failed and the more I tried the more I failed. I finally gave up. Perhaps just before I died, I could succeed and thereby squeak into heaven.

Christians may talk today of freedom from that kind of legalism, but it still exists, as it apparently did even within the early church. Today, legalistic doctrine in a variety of forms is still boldly proclaimed by some. However, too often, legalism in the body of Christ is much more subtle, yet still applied by individual Christians in various ways, to various degrees. Why? Because the doctrines of men have tried

to build on **another foundation** other than **FAITH in Christ** to work in believers to both will and do His good pleasure.

Flesh and blood just can't understand that by our own works we CANNOT clean ourselves up on the inside, any more than we can affect our new birth in the Spirit. This "clean up" inside of believers is **His** work, and it is appropriated by FAITH. Anything else is "works" of the flesh...or returning to trying to keep "THE LAW", just as some of the early Church was doing before us.

1Co 3:10-11 *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid **the foundation**, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. **For other foundation can no man lay** than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

1Co 3:10-16 (Gods Word) *As a skilled and experienced builder, I used the gift that God gave me to lay the foundation for that building. However, someone else is building on it. Each person must be careful how he builds on it.*

*After all, no one can lay any other foundation than the one that is already laid, and **that foundation** is Jesus Christ. People may build on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, **wood, hay, or straw.***

The day will make what each one does clearly visible because fire will reveal it. That fire will determine what kind of work each person has done.

If what a person has built survives, he will receive a reward.

*If **his work is burned up**, he will suffer the loss. **However, he will be saved, though it will be like going through a fire.***

Don't you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

The Hebrews of the early church were not unlike the Galatian Jews who Paul wrote to regarding their spiritual beginnings and their subsequent backsliding attempts to clean themselves up on the inside by returning to the works of their flesh to accomplish this. However, this was nothing more than a return to their old Jewish law.

Gal 2:15-21 (Peshitta text)

For if we who are of Jewish origin and not sinners of the Gentiles know that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith in Christ and not by works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no human being be justified.

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore our Lord Jesus Christ a minister of sin? Far be it.

*For **if I build again** the things which I destroyed, I will prove myself to be a transgressor of the law.*

For through the law I am dead to the law, that I might live to God.

I am crucified with Christ; henceforth it is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life which now I live in the flesh I live by the of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness comes by means of the law, then Christ died in vain.

(Paul continues his thought process, without interruption in Gal 3:1-11 (Peshitta text))

O Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you from your faith after Jesus Christ, crucified, has been pictured before your eyes?

This only I want to know from you, did you receive the Spirit through the works of the law or through obedience to faith?

Are you so foolish, after having begun with spiritual things, to end now with things of the flesh?

Have you believed all these things in vain? I hope that it is to no purpose.

Does he therefore who gives you the Spirit and works miracles among you do these things by the works of the law or by obedience to faith?

Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness,

You must know, therefore, that those who trust in faith are the children of Abraham.

Because God knew in advance that the Gentiles would be declared righteous through faith, he first preached to Abraham, as it is said in the Holy Scripture, "In you shall all the Gentiles be blessed".

So then, it is the believers who are blessed through Abraham the faithful.

FOR THOSE WHO RELY ON THE WORKS OF THE LAW ARE STILL UNDER THE CURSE; FOR AS IT IS WRITTEN, "CURSED IS EVERY ONE WHO DOES NOT PRACTICE EVERYTHING WHICH IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW."

BUT THAT NO MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW BEFORE GOD, IS EVIDENT; FOR AS IT IS WRITTEN, "THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH".

Christians, today, still fall into the same trap as the Hebrews and Galatians of the early church.

Our flesh is contrary to and is in all out warfare with our spirit man and prefers the "**do it yourself**" method of keeping the rules of God's new government within us. The prophet Isaiah foretold of this;

*Isaiah 28:12-14 (NIV) "This is the resting place, let the weary rest"; and, "This is the place of repose"- but they would not listen. So then, the word of the Lord to them will become: **Do, and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there- So that they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured**".*

We Christians have often failed to understand that we cannot change our hearts by our own efforts. We can try, try, try to do, do, do, what is right, right, right, by gritting our teeth and making every effort to prevail. Yet, if we only try to work out our righteousness through the works of our flesh, we will never attain to His righteousness. We will fail, fail, fail, and then fall back into the same trap we were in and then be recaptured again by the same lusts of our flesh and still must suffer the chastening and correction, in this life, which is the consequences of our sin.

***Gal 6:7-8** Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

The **true grace** of Jesus Christ is the one and only source of entering into "**this resting place**", accessing this "**place of repose**" and ceasing from our "**do it yourself**" righteousness.

Only by inviting and permitting the Holy Spirit to work in us to do what we cannot do, can we ever attain to "**His righteousness**" and thereby, progressively, come to perfection and even, eventually, unto the measure of the **stature** of Christ, if we continue to press on, in faith. We can no more clean ourselves up unto **His righteousness** than we could affect our new birth in the Spirit. This is all **His** work.

He works in us to change our "want to" and empowers us to "do His good pleasure". We turn it all over to Him and REST while we see ourselves righteous, by faith, until He completes the job and we, in fact, manifest His life and nature.

***Matthew 6:33** But seek ye first the kingdom of God,(his rule within us) and **His righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

***Eph 4:13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the **stature** of the fullness of Christ:*

True grace does not negate the righteousness which comes by faith. The righteousness that comes by faith is that righteousness which is hoped for, but waits in faith for **true grace** to progressively produce. For faith is only the substance of things **hoped for**, but not yet seen.

When we truly commit a problem to Him to clean up and believe, in faith, that He can and will do it, we are righteous by faith until what we hope for is manifest. Remember the principle; *"It takes time from planting until harvest."* However long that takes, we must remember ...**"He is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day"**.

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Many Christians, perhaps like the Hebrews and Galatians before us, have lost the vision and thus even the hope of ever coming to the perfection and the full stature and measure of Christ that Paul wrote of in Ephesians the fourth chapter (4:13 above).

The hope of our calling in Christ is to actually, in fact, attain to ***His manifest righteousness***. We are to grow in true grace to become, by God's design, mature sons of God, beyond the righteousness which is by faith only, and actually come to manifest outwardly to the world a righteousness that is from the heart. This is "***His righteousness***".

Paul must have understood this and it is apparent that he taught and encouraged the early church that **righteousness was first by faith** but was to be followed, in **time**, if pursued correctly, to manifest perfection and maturity in Christ. This perfection would be then manifest to the world from a totally cleansed servants heart. Even Paul did not claim to have attained that goal, but he saw it as possible in Christ, and pressed toward that goal.

Php 3:12-16(Phillips) Yet, my brothers, I do not consider myself to have "arrived", spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me. My brothers, I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now. But I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead I go straight for the goal - my reward the honour of being called by God in Christ.

*All of us who are spiritually adult should set ourselves this sort of ambition, and if at present you cannot see this, yet you will find that this is the attitude which God is leading you to adopt. **It is important that we go forward in the light of such truth** as we have ourselves attained to. (Phillips translation) Php 3:12-16*

It is God's goal that we go on, beyond the elementary doctrines of Christ, to perfection in Christ in this earth, showing forth His righteousness from within our hearts to a dark and dying world and thereby allowing Christ in us to truly be the manifestation of God's wisdom, power and love to the world, through us. We are to be His servants, obeying from the heart, only doing and saying those things we see the Father do. Christ in us, the hope of glorifying the Father again, even as Christ did.

Creation is waiting for this full manifestation of the Sons of God. Can we see then, what the true hope of our calling is?

Eph 1:17-19 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power...

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