

Subject: Keeping converts faithful to Christ

Text: Heb. 6:1-6

Method: Topical

**Title: On to Perfection**

General Purpose: Exhort to steadfastness in the faith.

Special Purpose: Exhort and warn concerning the reality of apostasy and address realistic alternatives that the church provides for edification.

**Introduction:**

- A. The possibility of apostasy (falling away from Christ and the faith) is real and must be dealt with biblically if the church is to remain strong (see 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Heb. 6:1-6).
- B. When Christians become unfaithful they return to a world without Christ and empty of spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 2:20-22)
- C. Knowing why they leave will help in finding the solution

**I. Tempted and drawn away by own lusts (Jas. 1:13-16; Lk. 8:13)**

- A. For example, Luke 15:11-32
- B. How is one tempted? See Gen. 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:3; Mat. 4:1-11; 1 Thes. 3:5; 1 Jn. 2:16.
- C. Must warn and equip to overcome temptation
  1. The scriptures can help (Acts 20:27-31; 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 2:18; Jas. 1:2-3; 2 Pt. 2:9)
  2. Jesus can help (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15-16; Rev. 3:10)

**II. Love of the world (Lk. 8:14)**

- A. Demas was once faithful (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24), but went back to the world (2 Tim. 4:10)
- B. Church must provide a desirable alternative within the doctrine of Christ (Acts 2:41-47; 4:32; Mat. 16:26; Col. 3:1-2; Jas. 4:4)

**III. Ignorance of the word (Hos. 4:1-7; Isa. 5:20; Jer. 6:16; Lk. 8:12)**

- A. Ignorance breeds error (Mat. 22:23-33, especially v. 29)
- B. Ignorance results from one or both of the following:
  1. Teaching failure (1 Tim. 1:5-7; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; 1 Jn. 4:1)
  2. Learning failure (Heb. 5:9-6:6)
- C. Must develop good, organized, goal oriented Bible study habits (2 Tim. 2:15), instill early love and respect for the word of God (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4)

**IV. Poor examples to imitate and follow (Compare 2 Chron. 17:3-5 with 2 Chron. 22:2-4)**

- A. To set good example, must follow good example (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 2:21)
- B. Christians must provide good example, and pattern to be followed (1 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7-8; 1 Pet. 2:11-17)

**V. Respect for elders and authority lacking**

- A. Those who fail to submit fall away and are condemned (2 Pet. 2:9-13)
- B. Must learn to respect authority
  1. In the church (1 Tim. 3:15; Mat. 28:18; Col. 1:18; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Tim. 2:8-15)
    - a. Early evangelists saw it as important to establish elders to lead each congregation (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5-9)
    - b. The elders shared directive authority with the apostles (Acts 15:2)
    - c. Elders were given responsibility to oversee and feed the church (Acts 20:28)
    - d. Therefore, elders are the ones referred to "which have the rule over you," and whose faith we are to follow, and as "them that have the rule over you," who must be obeyed, and "who watch for your souls."
  2. In civil society (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17)
  3. In the home (Eph. 6:1-3; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; Eph. 5:21-33)

## **VI. Inadequate understanding of, and appreciation for tradition**

- A. Greek: "*paradosis*" - to hand down, give over; what has been transmitted by way of precept, doctrine
- B. There are two classes of tradition to be considered:
  - 1. Human tradition, which is acceptable only in areas of expedience (that which aids in the fulfillment of a command, or the carrying out of an approved example, without altering the command or example) in so much as it does not contradict, or otherwise violate the command or example (Mat. 15:8-13; Mk. 7:6-9; Col. 2:6-9)
  - 2. Apostolic (Divine) tradition, which is binding upon all believers (2 Thes. 2:15-17; 3:6)
- C. The church can survive and thrive in any tradition; such as Indian, American, European, Asian, African, so long as those traditions do not violate, abrogate, invalidate, or contradict any Divine authority as expressed in the Bible
- D. Traditions which aid in the carrying out of Biblical instruction, or which have no effect on Biblical instruction (are morally, doctrinally and spiritually neutral), may be kept and practiced freely
- E. Traditions which violate, abrogate, invalidate, or contradict Biblical instruction must be abandoned

## **VII. Irrational, unbiblical view of change**

- A. Some things must change (Mat. 20:28-32; Rom. 12:1-2)
- B. Some things must not change (1 Pet. 1:24-25; Rev. 22:18-19)
  - 1. It is in error to conform the scriptures to our pre-conceptions (2 Tim. 4:3-4)
  - 2. It is proper to conform ourselves to the teaching of the scriptures (1 Pet. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

## **VIII. Lack of involvement in the work of the church (Heb. 6:9-12; Eph. 2:10)**

- A. Every Christian has something to offer in the way of service (Rom. 12:4-8)
  - 1. The Lord requires service of each of us according to the ability He had given us (Mat. 25:15)
  - 2. When each is involved the church is edified (Eph. 4:11-16)
  - 3. When too many are not serving according to their ability, the entire church suffers (1 Cor. 12:14-26)
- B. People who are not busy for the Lord become troublesome, meddlesome busybodies (2 Thes. 3:10-15; 1 Tim. 5:13) who ultimately fall into apostasy (1 Tim. 5:15)

## **Conclusion:**

- A. If we are to remain faithful, and help others to remain faithful, we must:
  - 1. Warn, teach, prepare and assist them in overcoming temptation
  - 2. Provide a realistic, warm, working alternative to the carnal world -- a faithful, joyous, wholesome, encouraging, instructing, laboring church
  - 3. Instill an early love and respect for God's word -- encourage structured, goal oriented reading and study
  - 4. Provide a consistent, godly example of life application of the word of God that others can imitate and follow
  - 5. Develop and encourage respect for authority in the spiritual, civil and family realms; nurture loving, lasting relationships between the old and the young
  - 6. Positively teach and reinforce godly, biblical tradition
    - a. Abandon contradictory, profane human tradition.
    - b. Do not be critical of tradition which is spiritually, morally and doctrinally neutral, for this is important to preserving identity and security, and to preserving a link between generations
    - c. Not all tradition is bad
  - 7. Teach a rational, biblical view of change -- not all change is good

8. Integrate and involve every member into the activities of the church
  - a. Leave no one wondering where they fit in, or if they are loved and needed
  - b. Jesus needs and wants every one of us, regardless of greater or lesser ability
  - c. Every Christian is important to Christ

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