

## “The Cure for Immaturity”– Hebrews 5:11-6:3

Brandon Holiski  
Southern Oaks Baptist Church  
September 9, 2018

*[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, [www.welovethegospel.com](http://www.welovethegospel.com)]*

Take a Bible and let's meet in Hebrews 5...

We have some ground to cover this morning. Hopefully you've found our text for this morning. As with the previous weeks, let me read from 5:11 to 6:3. Please follow along as I read. Don't be dull of hearing. This is God's Word...

*“About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. **6** Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And this we will do if God permits.”* (Hebrews 5:11-6:3)

So we have been studying this text for a few weeks now and here is what we have explored thus far:

The Cost of Immaturity  
The Cause of Immaturity  
The Character of Immaturity

Today I was planning to talk about the cure for immaturity...and we are going to do just that. I had you worried there for a second, didn't I?

### **The Cure for Immaturity**

There is a lot that the Bible says about spiritual maturity, but there are two things in particular that this text adds to that counsel. The first one is simple:

#### ***(1) Make Proper Use of the Milk***

Look again at verses 12. *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food...”* He says they need two things, which are really the same thing. They need milk, which means they need to be taught again the basics of the oracles of God. They need to get back to the essentials of the Gospel. They need to relearn the rudimentary teachings of the Christian faith.

These “milk basics” are further defined in the first two verses of chapter 6. The author tells his immature readers that they are not to lay *“again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal*

*judgment.*” These two verses are hotly debated. The heart of the debate is whether this list of elementary doctrines represents fundamentally Jewish teachings or distinctly Christian teachings. There really is no consensus and a strong case could be made for either interpretation. The general thrust of the passage is the same either way, but it’s a question worth considering nonetheless.

This may surprise you, but nothing in this list is without precedent in Judaism. Repentance and faith are every bit as essential to Judaism as they are to Christianity. The “*instructions about washings*” could be a reference to various cleansing rituals of Judaism. There were several rituals associated with “*laying on of hands*” in the Old Testament. There are allusions to “*resurrection*” in the Old Testament, which led to the kinds of speculations that induced the questions raised by the Sadducees to Jesus in Matthew 22. The Sadducees didn’t believe in the resurrection or the immortality of the soul, but this put them at odds with other branches of Judaism, including the Pharisees, who affirmed the validity of both. There was also speculation within Judaism to what “*judgment*” might look like after death. So none of these six items listed in the opening verses of Hebrews 6 are exclusively Christian ideas.

Those who believe that these six items reflect teachings of Judaism are quick to remind us that the original audience consisted of Jewish-Christians. They had been brought up on the teachings of Judaism their whole life in all likelihood and these teachings find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ. For whatever reason they are being tempted to turn away to compromise their newly acquired Christian faith and go back into mainstream Judaism or perhaps adopt a stance that seeks to synchronize the two, where they sought to maintain an association with Christ while maintaining allegiance to the Mosaic Law and religious practice. Perhaps, as Donald Hagner has suggested, “the readers were attempting to somehow remain in Judaism by emphasizing items held in common between Judaism and Christianity.”<sup>1</sup> This would have made their life easier socially, since Judaism was mainstream and Christianity was not. But even this would be a full abandonment of true Christianity. All of these are possibilities and in each case the author would be saying that they must not go back to the shadow of Judaism when the fulfillment of their heritage has been revealed in Christ. D. A. Carson has summarized this approach like this:

“...there is a desire to go back to the old rites, the old traditions, the old covenant in such a way that their true pointing to Christ is not seen, so that one is fixating on the types and not the antitypes, one is fixating on the old covenant and does not see how it is pointing to the new which has now dawned. As a result, the effect of all of this is to relativize the exclusive sufficiency of Christ and all his work.”<sup>2</sup>

If this is the case, then the writer of Hebrews is addressing the same kind of problem that Paul dealt with in Galatians (which we have been discussing in our study on Wednesday nights). Christ alone makes us right with God. This is the heart of the Gospel. To *supplement* that Gospel with any other works (even works of the Old Testament Law) is to *supplant* the Gospel all together.<sup>3</sup> The original audience did not understand this and that very well may be what the author was trying to address here. If so, then the teaching is reminiscent of one of Jesus’ parables.

“No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.<sup>37</sup> And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.<sup>38</sup> But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.<sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’” (Luke 5:36-38)

The point of these illustrations? It’s simple: you can’t mix the old with the new without destroying them both. If you rip a hole in an old shirt, you can repair it by borrowing fabric from a new shirt but not without destroying them both. The new one will be missing the material you cut out of it and the old one will look nice until you wash it and the patch shrinks, creating a new tear. Likewise, if you mix new wine

with old wineskins both are destroyed. Wineskins have an elasticity that deteriorates over time, leaving them brittle as they age. New wine expands as it ferments. So if you add new wine to old, brittle wineskins, eventually they will break open and you lose both the new wine and the old wineskin. Again, you can't mix the old with the new without destroying them both.

Jesus was saying that He is bringing something new, a New Covenant. If you try to patch up the Old Covenant with the New or restrict the New Covenant with the Old, then you destroy both. Yet even though the New is much better, those who are accustomed to the Old often have trouble fully embracing the New. That's why Jesus concludes the parable by saying, "*no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good'*" (Luke 5:38). The writer of Hebrews is trying to get his Jewish-Christian audience to realize that the New Covenant is so much better than the Old Covenant. Indeed, the New has rendered the Old obsolete. Turning back to the Old (as they are being tempted to do) would reveal a failure to grasp the superiority of the New and, at worst, a forfeiture of the New, leaving them poised for eternal peril unless they come to their senses and repent.

That is clearly what the writer of Hebrews is trying to get across with his audience. But it's not entirely clear if he is doing so with the list at the beginning of Hebrews 6. Those who see it as a list of traditional Jewish teachings suggest that the author is trying to get them to stop fixating on the things of their former Judaism, laying again that foundation, but to look forward to what is new in Christ and press on to maturity.

If on the other hand one takes the six items as distinctly Christian teachings, then they probably represent the basics of the Christian faith. It's often suggested that the list is an outline of some "primitive catechism used in Jewish churches to induct converts."<sup>4</sup> In other words, a list of the "basics" that new converts would be taught and affirm before being baptized and accepted into these Jewish churches. This is something that churches these days have gotten away from (and not without consequence, I might add), but the early church commonly "employed creedal formulations as a means of preparing converts for baptism."<sup>5</sup> That list may have been one such formulation (or at least the outline of it).

So what exactly did these "basics" consist of? It helps to think of the list as three pairs.

*First Pair:* Repentance from Dead Works and Faith toward God

*Second Pair:* Instructions on Washings and Laying on of Hands

*Third Pair:* The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment

How does one become a Christian? What is necessary? The work of Christ of course. But that work has an effect within us that manifests as repentance and faith (the first pair). At some point the true Christian became aware of his or her sinfulness before a holy God and realized that only Christ's death in their place and resurrection can make a person right with God. The Christian is one who turns away from their own dead works, that is, their sin and any of their own efforts to make themselves right with God, and trusts instead in Christ alone to save them from their sin and God's judgment. That turning is repentance and that trusting is faith. Both of these realities are present at conversion. When we repent and believe, the Bible speaks of our status changing before God. We are no longer counted guilty before a holy God, but are clothed in Christ's righteousness and found to be innocent. This is the doctrine of justification.<sup>6</sup> And it seems to me that is what the first pair is related to.

The second pair is more complicated to understand. What are we to make of the reference to "*washings*" (ESV)? Perhaps you brought a different translation with you this morning. The NASB reads the same as the ESV, "*washings*"; The NIV translates it "*cleansing rites*"; the HCSB and the CSB reads "*ritual washings*". All of those common translations have footnotes that say it could be read as "*baptisms*," which is the reading that we find in the KJV. It may indeed refer to teachings related to baptism, but it's not the

typical New Testament word for baptism. The word he uses generally describes other ritual washings, including many associated with Judaism. Furthermore the word is plural, which we might not expect if he was referring to Christian baptism.

Two possible interpretations strike me as quite plausible. He may, on the one hand, be referring to some teachings that related to how Christ fulfilled the ceremonial washings connected to their Jewish upbringing or perhaps these were teachings that showed how these rituals were distinct from Christian baptism. On the other hand, he may be referring to teaching that was aimed at distinguishing between the various baptisms of the first century (e.g., Gentile-proselyte baptisms, John the Baptist's baptism of repentance, Christian baptism). It would be easy to understand how Jewish Christians would need to be taught such things to avoid confusion on the front end of their Christian experience.

What about these teachings related to “*laying on of hands*”? In the New Testament we see laying on of hands happening in acts of blessing, healing, and ordination. In each instance the laying on of hands signifies the coming of the Holy Spirit. “Taken together, washing and laying on of hands have to do with our empowerment for the Christian life; that is, they point to our sanctification.”<sup>7</sup> They remind us of the Spirit's role in bring new life and anointing on the Christian. Using baptism imagery, Paul says something similar in Romans 6...

*“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 6:1-4)

Baptism, in part, is an analogy to the new life we have in Christ. A new life where we walk by the Spirit who sanctifies us.

Now consider the third pair—the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. These obviously relate to future things. Jesus is coming back one day to judge the living and the dead. As Paul told the Thessalonians,

*“...we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.”* (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

The more I live in this fallen world the more I find myself longing for that day. It will be the day that ushers in our glorification, the consummation of our glorious salvation.

In light of these considerations, we may look at the three pairs a bit differently:

*Justification:* Repentance from Dead Works and Faith toward God (Soteriology)  
*Sanctification:* Instructions on Washings and Laying on of Hands (Pneumatology)  
*Glorification:* The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment (Eschatology)

It seems to me that the “foundation” that the writer speaks of is related to a basic understanding of our salvation—our justification, sanctification, and glorification. You might say that these basics relate to the way the Christian has been saved in the past (justification), is being saved in the present (sanctification), and will be saved in the future (glorification). The New Testament uses all three tenses—past, present, and future—to describe the Christians salvation. It’s interesting that these three pairs could be understood as corresponding to these aspects of our salvation, isn’t it? And what could be more foundational to Christian people than an understanding of their salvation in Christ? This is just basic theology. In fact, some have understood the pairs in theological terms: the first dealing with soteriology (the doctrine of salvation, here especially conversion), the second with pneumatology (the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and His activity in our lives), and the third with eschatology (the doctrine of the end).

While taking the list as related to the Jewish upbringing is certainly possible, I think this more Christian reading is at least slightly preferable. This “*milk*” they should have firmly grasped by now. These are “*basic principles*” and “*elementary doctrine*” that we must grasp on the way to Christian maturity. They were not ready for “*solid food*” yet because they had not finished absorbing such “*milk*.” So the first thing they needed to do to grow up was internalize and digest the basics first. “*You need milk,*” he says (5:12).

In truth, even mature Christians need to review such things. Like I always tell you, we never graduate from the Gospel. But this is not merely a case of needing some review from the author’s perspective. That word “*again*” in 5:12 and 6:1 is important. His audience needed to be taught *again*. Because of their lazy hearing, they had not internalized the teaching they had received and were therefore ill equipped to teach others. What they need then is not merely to review, but to reenroll. They needed to relearn. And this time, they needed to take the teaching to heart. They needed to put the teaching to practice. This is how we find ourselves established in the faith and able to fulfill the call of discipleship, the call to teach, to pass on what we have learned to others.<sup>8</sup> The author gets that, so he says, “*You need milk...*”

Don’t miss that. The key to growing up spiritually is not initially jumping from the milk of God’s revelation to the meat of God’s revelation. You need to grow with the milk of God’s Word first. You need to do three things—swallow, savor, and sift.<sup>9</sup> Let me explain.

#### *Swallow → Internalize What You Have Receive*

In other words, actively listen to the Word of God, the Word of righteousness (5:13). Take in the promises of the God in the Gospel. Come as often as you can to sit under the teachings of God’s Word. Get online and listen or read again the sermons you are struggling to understand. Ask questions. Talk about what you are hearing. Make it a priority to read the Word of God every single day. Drink the milk. Don’t sit around passively waiting for a bottle. Steward what you have been given. Don’t be “passive and cavalier and indifferent—babes long for milk, and are incredibly focused when they are thirsty.”<sup>10</sup> Take to heart what Peter says,

*“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—<sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.”* (1 Peter 2:2-3)

Let those verses shape your daily devotional time this week and in the weeks to come. But remember, we are not racing to puff up with information. Don’t just stuff your face with milk until you pass out. Savor every drop.

#### *Savor → Enjoy What You Have Received*

When Peter says “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good,” he is alluding to Psalm 34:8, where the psalmist commands us to do this very thing. We must taste and see that the Lord is good. He is satisfying.

His Word is satisfying because it comes from Him. And we must aim to delight in His Word, not just ingest it. Of course, we eat because we have to, but when we sit down and eat a good meal we're usually not thinking of necessity. We're thinking of delight. We are anticipating the dance our taste buds will share with the satisfying flavor of the food. The best meals are savored and enjoyed and so should it be when the Christian engages with the Word of God and the Gospel message it communicates. As one writer put it, "when the promises of God and the God of the promises are tasted, the milk satisfies. And when it satisfies, it transforms your values and priorities,"<sup>11</sup> which leads us nicely into the third step.

### *Sift → Use What You Have Received*

As we swallow and savor the truth of God, something happens to us. We begin to grow. And one of the marks of that growth is what 5:14 refers to—we find our "*powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*" We begin to see the world differently. We can sift through the difficult moral choices with a Gospel-shaped discernment. You make dozens of decisions every hour that there is no chapter and verse in the Bible that explicitly deals with. What should you watch on TV this afternoon? What political positions should you adopt? What should you say and not say on your social media account? What degree should you get in college? Where should you live? What kind of car should you drive? How much of your money should you give away? How should you dress? How should you discipline your children? You get the idea.

None of that is explicitly spelled out in a "Thus says the Lord" kind of way in the Bible. So how do you navigate those decisions? It takes discernment. It takes sifting through the options that present themselves. The writer assumes that these are moral choices, meaning there are often good and evil options to choose from, and so we will need spiritual discernment to make decisions that please the Lord in each of these matters. So how do we obtain this discernment? I agree with John Piper,

"It comes from habitually (by regular practice) nourishing and shaping your spiritual senses (the word in verse 14 doesn't mean physical senses) by the Word of God until that word becomes a 'word of righteousness'—a discerning power, a word producing righteousness in the mature. Discernment is what you do naturally when the milk of God's promises is so savored and so satisfying that it gives you the mind of Christ. This is the remedy for 'dullness of hearing.' *Drink with delight until the desires of your heart are so transformed as to become the discernment of good and evil.* Then you will be mature and ready for meat."<sup>12</sup>

So then how do we go the way of Christian maturity? We first make proper use of the milk. We must learn to take what we have been given, swallow it down regularly, savor it thankfully, and sift through good and evil as we digest the milk of God's truth—in this case the basic truths of our salvation in Christ, our justification before God, our sanctification by the Spirit, and the glorious hopes connected to the return of Christ—and put into practice the implications of such things as we are made aware of them.

That's what it means to make proper use of the milk. But, of course, that's not all we are called to. Sooner or later, growing up means getting off the bottle. So the author gives them a second thing they need in 6:1. It's a bit obscured in English, but there's really one instruction in that verse that is explained by two participles. He says we must "*go on to maturity,*" but what does that look like? It looks like leaving the "*elementary doctrine of Christ*" and not "*laying again a foundation*" of the basics that has already been laid. In other words, in addition to making proper use of the milk, we must...

### ***(2) Move Beyond the Elementary***

Now, wait a second. Doesn't that conflict with what I already said? If that milk consists of the elementary teaching of Christ like the gospel truths of our salvation outlined in those three pairs (justification, sanctification, glorification), then why would he tell us to leave such doctrines? How would that fit with what I said earlier (and often) that we don't graduate from the Gospel?

Here's where we need to be careful. He's not saying that we need to leave behind truth of the Gospel. In fact, I believe He's saying quite the opposite. He's saying we need to press deeper into the Gospel. How so? Well, think about his image of a "*foundation*." Why would you lay a foundation? To build upon it. You don't lay a foundation as an end in itself. No one takes an architectural tour to explore the great foundations of the world with nothing built atop them. In fact, if you see an empty foundation you assume something is either wrong or incomplete.

Like just outside these walls there was once a house. That house was vacant for years and was more or less destroyed by a tree. When the structure was removed there remained a foundation. Several people in our church got tired of looking at that foundation and thought something should be built on top of it. It's not right to leave a foundation to itself. So they took it upon themselves to raise money to build the garage unit that now sits upon that foundation. No one on the staff orchestrated that. We didn't request it. We didn't funnel any funds from the budget to build it. But through the generous and unsolicited gifts of many amazing and anonymous people the funds came in to construct that structure. And through the tireless efforts of men like Dennie Burks, Jim Bearden, Bob Carter, Richard Weaver, David Tidmore, Kirk Wilson, Trey Greer, and I'm sure there were several others, that amazing structure was put together at no cost to the church. That's pretty amazing and we are most thankful for those generous efforts.

But how did it get from an empty foundation to a large structure? It began with some guys saying, "You know, something's just not right with an empty foundation" and some thought was given to what to build upon it. And when it came time to build, no one said, "We should lay a new foundation." Why? Because there was nothing wrong with the foundation. Nothing except what was missing on top of it.

Perhaps that process is a bit analogous to what the writer of Hebrews is doing here. He's saying, "Come on guys, you should be growing. Drink the milk. That's your foundation. You don't need a new foundation. That foundation you have received is perfectly adequate, so don't go laying again the foundation. Build on the foundation." Does that make sense? He's not telling them to move on from the Gospel per se. He's telling them to move deeper into the Gospel and discover what springs up from that foundation. He's not saying we graduate from the Gospel. He's saying we must advance in the Gospel. And you advance by making proper use of the milk so that you can advance beyond the elementary with the meat of God's truth.

Just like we wean our children off the bottle by introducing solid food incrementally, so too we grow in spiritual maturity as we transition slowly but surely from milk to meat and we do the same thing with the meat as we did with the milk—swallow it, savor it, and sift through the decisions of life with its practical applications.

I think it will be increasingly clear as we move through this book that when the author says "*leave the elementary doctrine of Christ*" he doesn't mean "leave" in the sense of abandon that doctrine for something else, but rather leave behind the basics of that doctrine for the more advanced layers of that same doctrine. It's like advancing from Doctrine of Christ 101 to Doctrine of Christ 201. One of the reasons I am convinced of that is the context. In 5:11 he says, "*About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*" About what? In the context, it's about Melchizedek and his relationship to Christ. That's the "meat" or "*solid food*" he has in mind. And, fortunately for us, he does get into it in chapters 7 to 10.

What we discover there though is that the teachings about Melchizedek and Christ's work are connected to the six items listed in chapter 6 as examples of the "elementary" and "foundation." For the sake of time, an example will have to suffice. As the author is dishing out "solid food" a few chapters from now, we read,

*"For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,<sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Hebrews 9:13-14)*

Sound familiar? He's "not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works..." He's building upon that foundation, helping us see how the work of Christ cleanses us from those dead works. Or consider these forthcoming verses...

*"By this [the preparations and rituals offered up by Israel's high priests] the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing<sup>9</sup> (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,<sup>10</sup> but deal only with food and drink and various washings [same words as 6:2], regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation." (Hebrews 9:8-10; cf. 9:19)*

*"and since we have a great priest over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (10:22)*

So he's not done with teaching about various "washings" in reference to Christ. And what of the "laying on of hands"? Well in the Old Testament we see the laying on of hands as key to the appointment of priests (Numbers 8:10) and the writer of Hebrews is going to have much to say about the appointment of Christ to serve as our Great High Priest by the oath of God and the power of His indestructible life (Hebrews 5:1-6; 7:5, 15-28). So there is a relationship between the "foundational teaching" he calls elementary in Hebrews 6 and the "advance instruction" the author gives in the coming chapters. He doesn't leave the elementary behind in the sense of abandonment. He leaves it behind in terms of advancement.

Therefore, we can conclude that "the author is not asking the community to discard one aspect of Christian instruction for another but to build upon the solid foundation already laid for them."<sup>13</sup> Or, in the words of David Allen,

*"The meaning here is not that of abandoning the basic teachings of Christianity, but rather the necessity of recognizing the foundational character of these teachings and thus the impropriety of going over the same ground. The readers are exhorted to move on to another level, a level commensurate with those who are mature, a level of 'fuller appreciation and application of the teaching.'"<sup>14</sup>*

He's still talking the same Gospel truth. He's always talking Gospel truth. He's thinking of Gospel truth when he encourages them to go the way of maturity by making proper use of the milk and moving beyond the elementary too. He's going to keep serving them Gospel truth, even as it increasingly takes on a more solid consistency. And by doing so, he's helping them (and us) build on the basic foundation of their (or our) first exposure to that truth with beautiful layer upon layer of deeper Gospel truth. And as we savor that we will cry out with Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33).



There's still one more thing I believe we need to see in these verse (which is often neglected), but we will get to it next week, Lord willing (pun intended). You'll see what I mean next week...

Let's pray...

---

<sup>1</sup> Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews* (NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990), 87.

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Carson, "Jesus Is Better: Don't Apostatize," in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Heb 5:11-6:20.

<sup>3</sup> Josh Moody, *No Other Gospel: 31 Reasons from Galatians Why Justification by Faith Alone Is the Only Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 132-133.

<sup>4</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, vol. 1 (PW; Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), 154.

<sup>5</sup> Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews* (REC; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 181.

<sup>6</sup> "Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity. An error about justification is dangerous, like a defect in a foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life. To have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring is damnable." Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958), 226; also quoted in Phillips, 181.

<sup>7</sup> Phillips, 181-182.

<sup>8</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (CCE; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 80.

<sup>9</sup> While the wording is changed, the counsel offered here and in the related material that follows is based on the advice that John Piper offered in a sermon titled, "By This Time You Ought to Be Teachers," preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church on September 29, 1996, and accessed at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/by-this-time-you-ought-to-be-teachers>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.; italics his.

<sup>13</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 140.

<sup>14</sup> David L. Allen, *Hebrews* (NAC; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 339-340.