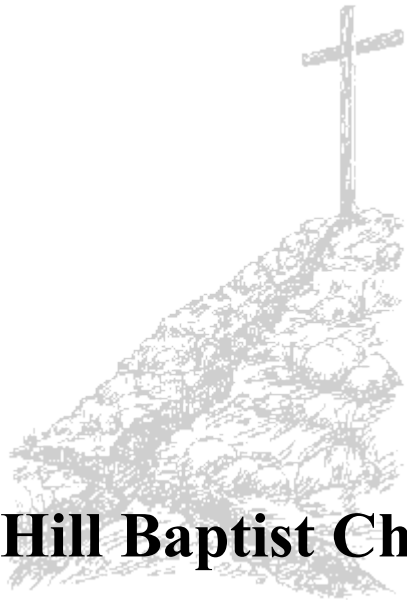


# Follow Jesus And Overcome!

Hebrews 6:4-9



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**FOCAL** Hebrews 6:4-9 (KJV) "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, {5} And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, {6} If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. {7} For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: {8} But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. {9} But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

As we move into a New Year the Lord bids you and charges you to follow Him and Him alone. In our world today there are many voices, many who say *follow me*, but these voices lead not toward God but away from Him. Our Savior said:

John 10:27-30 (KJV) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: {28} And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. {29} My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. {30} I and my Father are one."

What a precious promise, that salvation is ours. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them

**out of my hand"**. Once in Christ you are surely His, and salvation is a Great Gift of God that cannot be lost. The Bible tells you that

**You cannot lose your salvation.**

But dear Saints, if you know Christ you are Saints,

**You can lose your repentance**

that overcoming *state of mind* that the Christian should have. Though, like the writer of Hebrews, **I am persuaded better things of you all**, because I love you I must warn you about *what the Bible calls hardness of heart*. But first of all, let's see what our text says a Christian is.

### **1. A Christian Is Designed For Victorious Living In a Debased, Sinful World**

What is a Christian? Our text tells us that "Christian" is not just a title, but "Christian" denotes a *supernatural being saved by Grace!* What is a Christian? Is he or she perfect?

**FOCAL** Hebrews 6:4-5 (KJV) "... for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, {5} And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,"

A Christian is **enlightened**<sup>1</sup>, he has seen the Light and

1 photizo {pronounced fo-tid'-zo}

that light is Christ. The Apostle writes:

**2 Corinthians 4:6 (KJV) "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."**

Every saved person was at one point an *unsaved* person, a person who had no relationship with God. There was a time when we all walked as if we were blind in this devil's world, following our whims and desires. **The Christian is *not perfect*, but he has *bound himself to Perfection* and that *Perfection is Jesus Christ our Lord*.** Oh but Jesus was that Precious Light that shined out of the darkness of this world and illuminated our hearts. **The Christian is not immortal because of his own power, but we have bound ourselves to The Immortal One, Jesus Christ the Savior.**

1. The Christian is *not perfect*, but he has \_\_\_\_\_ and that *Perfection is Jesus Christ our Lord*. We have bound ourselves to The Immortal One, \_\_\_\_\_ the Savior.

The Christian is also someone who has "**tasted<sup>2</sup> of the heavenly gift**". What a wonderful description of Christianity! The Apostle uses the *exact same word*<sup>3</sup> in:

**1 Peter 2:2-3 (KJV) "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:**

2 Aorist Middle Participle *geuomai* {pronounced ghyoo'-om-ahee}, to perceive the flavor of a thing, to taste, to experience by eating  
3 In Peter this is the Aorist Middle *Indicative*, not a *Participle* as in our Hebrews text (see previous footnote), otherwise, it is exactly the same word.

**{3} If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."**

The Christian is someone who has met the Lord and *tasted* of His Grace. Oh, what a joy it was the day we laid down that burden at His feet. To feel our sins washed away, and our lives made new - what a sweet taste that was, the freedom of salvation! Yes, we who have been saved have **tasted of the Heavenly gift**, that free gift given by Grace. As the Prophet said:

**Jeremiah 15:16 (KJV) "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts."**

The Christian is *enlightened* - he sees Jesus, the Light of the world (**John 1:9; 8:12**), and just as a camper is comforted by the flickering flame of the campfire, the believer is comforted by the twinkling Light of Jesus!

2. The Christian is \_\_\_\_\_ - he sees Jesus, the Light of the world (**John 1:9; 8:12**), and just as a camper is comforted by the flickering flame of the campfire, the believer is comforted by the twinkling Light of Jesus!

The Christian has *tasted* of the Grace of God, and his burdens were lifted at Calvary. As we sing:

**Cast your cares on Jesus today,  
Leave your worries and fears;  
Burdens are lifted at Calvary,  
Jesus is very near!**

**Burdens are lifted at Calvary,  
Calvary, Calvary,  
Burdens are lifted at Calvary,  
Jesus is very near!**

What more can we say of the Christian? Oh, can Grace be any greater than the quenching of our sins? Yes Beloved, for we are "**were made partakers<sup>4</sup> of the Holy Ghost**". Oh what a wonderful thing, we are brought into

3. What more can we say of the Christian? Oh, can Grace be any greater than the quenching of our sins? Yes Beloved, for we are "**were made \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Ghost**".

*union with God* for God has now *come into us* and has joined in *partnership with us*. This is what Jesus promised us, and what He has promised He fulfills! When Jesus got ready to go away from His disciples they all protested. No Lord, you must stay! But Jesus said:

**John 16:7 (KJV) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."**

Oh little Flock, I must go away, so the Spirit of God can come to you. God will come and *partner* with you, He will *indwell* you, He will *live in* you. You do not do My work by yourself, but are *in partnership with God* in all that you do for Him. The Spirit of Christ is in you:

<sup>4</sup> metochos {pronounced met'-okh-os}, partners, sharers in office or work

**Romans 8:9 (KJV) "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."**

and you stand in a greater place than Israel of old ever stood in. God is in you, and you are in God, if Christ has saved you. Because you are partners with God the next great Gift, "**tasted the good word of God**", is also true. The believer is given power to understand the *deeper things* of God, to understand spiritual truths. Those who are unsaved, the ones the Bible calls *natural men* cannot understand the deeper things of God:

**1 Corinthians 2:14 (KJV) "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."**

Because God the Holy Spirit is in you, you can

4. If you are in Christ Christ is in you, and you - because you have "**tasted of the ... powers of the world to come**" - you are able to \_\_\_\_\_ the trials of this world. Christians are designed by God to walk as \_\_\_\_\_ in this life, not losers, not the defeated.

understand the things of God. It is not a matter of *talent* but it is a matter of *spirituality*, whether you are in Christ or not. **If you are in Christ Christ is in you, and you - because you have "tasted of the ... powers of the world to come" - you are able to *overcome* the trials of this**

**world. Christians are designed by God to walk as *victors* in this life, not losers, not the defeated.** As the Apostle says:

**1 John 5:4-5 (KJV) "For [whoever] is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. {5} Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"**

But Beloved, I want you to know that your salvation, a thing that God *graciously and freely* gave you, is forever promised. But our text does warn us that *it is possible* to - even though saved - to move into a state of *defeated living*.

## **2. A Christian *Can* Slip Away From Victory And Into Defeated Living**

**FOCAL** Hebrews 6:4, 6 (KJV) "**{4} For it is impossible ... {6} If they shall fall away<sup>5</sup>, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.**

The Christian way of life is designed by God to be a *victorious* way of life. The Christian, indwelt by the Spirit of God, given the fantastic gift of the Word of God, brought into a Great Family in Heaven:

**1 Peter 1:3-5 (KJV) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his**

5 Aorist Active Participle, parapipto {pronounced par-ap-ip'-to}, to slip or deviate, to slide into error

**abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, {4} To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, {5} Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."**

If you are saved your inheritance in Heaven is "reserved" for you. Jesus Christ has already called that Great Hotel and your reservation number is being held, written in the Blood of the Lamb. One day you will be with Him and will sing around the Throne His praises, saved by Grace!

But it is possible for the Christian, saved, designed for victory in this life, to allow his or her mind to be drawn away into the things of this world. To be drawn into *defeated living*, to be drawn away into a *pattern of life* that God - Who is Love - never wanted you to move into. You see, the word we translate *repentance* in our King James text is the Greek word *metanoia*: *meta* (to change) and *noia* (the mind). A saved person, our text warns us, can move outward into the world, becoming *worldly* in their minds. The Bible uses the word *hardened* to describe this state. Believers can become *hardened* or *worldly* in their thought patterns, and can - sadly - *find themselves among the briars and thorns of this world*, burned up in the same destructive behavior that the unbeliever chases after.

Beloved, sin will never leave you where it finds you, but will draw you into deeper bands of loss. The riptide of sin has often taken the Christian far away from the

shores of the Promised Land and has drawn them outward into the deep waters of despair. The Christian is

5. Beloved, sin will never leave you where it finds you, but will draw you into deeper bands of loss. The riptide of sin has often taken the Christian far away from the \_\_\_\_\_ and has drawn them outward into the deep waters of despair.

designed for victory, and salvation is by the Grace of God. But Beloved, you must continue to follow Jesus Christ your Savior if you expect to rise above the terrors of *this world*. If you want to rise *on eagles wings* above all things on the power of Jesus, you must not mire yourself in the things of this world. When King David, blessed saint of God that he was, lowered himself from the *eagle's height* of Christ to contemplate another man's wife, he suffered terribly for his sinfulness. David, anguished from shaming his Lord, cried out:

**Psalms 51:11-12 (KJV) "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. {12} Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."**

David discovered the truth that his son Solomon learned from the Lord, that

**Proverbs 6:27-29 (KJV) "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? {28} Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? {29} So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent."**

sin has consequences, and the person who continues to walk the pathway of sin, though he be a saint, will be drawn into the mud just as surely as the unsaved are.

There is a *famine in the land*, a famine of hatred, of lovelessness, of sexual perversion, of selfishness. The Christian, fed by the very Hand of God, should walk apart from this famine. Yet if we who are saved allow ourselves, like the Prodigal Son, to walk and have our being among the world:

6. There is a *famine in the land*, a famine of \_\_\_\_\_, of lovelessness, of \_\_\_\_\_, of selfishness. The Christian, fed by the very Hand of God, should walk apart from this famine.

**Luke 15:13-16 (KJV) "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. {14} And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. {15} And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. {16} And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."**

then instead of living in victory, we will find ourselves living in defeat, eating the husks of life instead of the manna of Heaven. Rather than move into this terrible estate we, like the Prodigal, need to realize that *we belong to God*. He is our Father, and He loves us, and

bids us come to Him. If we have wandered away, when we return to Him we see that He has not changed. He Who loves us loves us still. He who cares for us sees us returning to Him in the distance and then, like the Father in our Lord's parable, *runs to us*. He cleans us up, clothes us in finest apparel, kills the fatted calf, and restores us from whence we have fallen.

### **3. How Do I Prevent Myself From Sliding Into The State Of The Prodigal?**

**FOCAL** Hebrews 6:8-9 (KJV) "But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. {9} But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

All right, Pastor, I'm convinced! Now how do I live my life *victoriously*? How can I prevent myself from falling into the state that the Prodigal Son found himself in? Though I know I cannot lose my salvation, how can I prevent myself from falling into the hopeless defeated life that the world follows?

#### **a. Put Away The Old Man:**

We are told in Ephesians:

**Ephesians 4:22-24 (KJV) "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; {23} And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; {24} And that ye put on the new man, which after God is**

**created in righteousness and true holiness."**

Let's just look at that first sentence: "**put off concerning the former conversation the old man**". The *New American Standard* renders our text this way:

**... In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self ...**

You see, when we started out today we talked about all the things the Christ was given at the point of salvation. You have been given so much, as believers! You are in partnership with God the Holy Spirit! He lives inside you, and loves you, and wants only the best for you. So *lay aside* every burden of that old way of life. Put away that old defeated way of living. Listen Beloved - stop listening to *Oprah* and *Doctor Phil*, to *Maury* and the other talk show talking heads. Put away those old defeated thoughts, the old way of life, and recognize that - if you are in Jesus - you are a *new creature* designed to rise above defeated living.

Jesus Christ delivered you from the power of darkness:

**Colossians 1:13 (KJV) "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"**

and you are - even now - *in the Kingdom of Christ*. You belong to Him, not to Satan! You belong to Power, to Victory, to Majesty. You are "**lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus**

**Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). Realizer that you are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).**

The Devil wants you to believe that you are powerless, but Christ says you are strong. The devil wants you to be weak, but Christ says you have been delivered. So put away that old man! Say no to the *pigpen* and draw close to God your Father.

### **b. Put on The New Man:**

The Christian must not only *put away* the old man, but we *put on the new man*. Ephesians tells us:

**Ephesians 4:22-24 (KJV) "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; {23} And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; {24} And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."**

Putting on the *new man* means walking in love toward God and toward your fellow believers. Remember, *we are members one of another*. We're all in this together! We walk *together* as the Body of Christ, doing His work in the world - a work of love! The Scripture tells the believer over and over again to *put off* the old garment, the old worldliness, and *put on* Christ.

**Romans 13:12-14 (KJV) "The night is far spent, the**

**day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. {13} Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. {14} But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."**

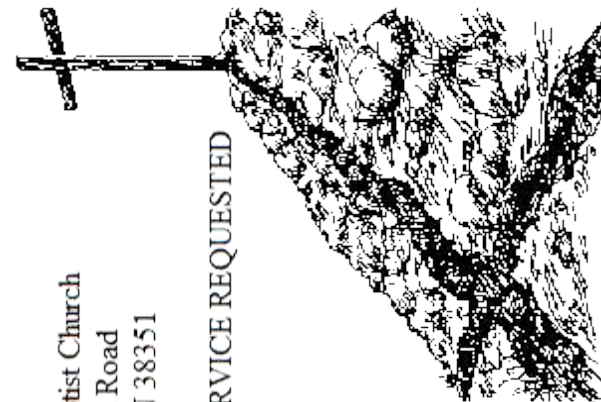
Off with the old - on with the new! In this New Year put away things that corrupt your minds from Christ. Put away the *television* and *movies* that pollute your mind with the things of this world, and *put on* the things of Christ. Put away *anger and bitterness*, and draw near to Love and Christ. Reach outward in missions, and tell others of that Great Love that brought you into eternal life. Remember Him Who put on a *borrowed robe* and a *crown of thorns* so that you could be brought into the Family of God. Be renewed in your minds by committing to Him Who saved you that you will spend some time *every day* in His Word and in prayer to Him.

Oh the riches Of God's Grace toward us! The Devil doesn't want you to know the *power of God* that is within your grasp, blessed Flock, a power to walk victoriously in this world.

I am persuaded, dear Church of Christ, that you will

**Philippians 2:5 (KJV) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"**

and that you will draw near to the One Who loves you, and loves you still. Through Him and for Him, for the glory of Christ we beseech you - walk in Him!



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