

Hebrews 10:32-39; "DETOUR: Steering Clear of Apostasy" March 16, 2025

- I. Welcome & Review
 - A. Good morning! Ohayougozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni.
 1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.* Deterrence
 - B. Before we continue any further, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School classrooms.
 1. *(2nd Service; Remember to dismiss the Bible English class.)*
 - C. As the children make their way out, will the rest of you please open up your Bible and make your way to Hebrews chapter 10.
 1. This morning, we're going to continue from where we left of last week. If you were with us last week, you'll recall that the author of Hebrews shared the fourth of his five solemn warnings found in this letter.
 2. The fourth warning we looked at last week was a very strong one and I believe is probably the scariest of them all. It was a warning against apostasy; a turning from one's faith in Christ.
 3. The author was writing to a group of people who were experiencing various levels of persecution from authorities as well as pressure from family to abandon their faith in Christ and go back to their Jewish roots submitting themselves to the Law of Moses.
 4. Knowing the difficulties they were facing and the temptation to just give up and go back to their old ways of living, the author gave a very stern warning against apostasy that involved four different things.
 - a. It involved purposefully and intentionally continuing in sin
 - b. It involved an expectation of judgment
 - c. It involved the complete rejection of Christ
 - d. And lastly it involved the justice of God
 5. The author warns them, very sternly, that rejecting Christ and His sacrifice would leave them with no possible means of ever having their sins forgiven or removed. They would be destined to give an account for their own sins, their own actions, before the great white throne judgment of Christ and they would be found guilty.
 6. And as such, they would have to pay the penalty for their sins themselves; meaning not just death and separation from God, but eternal torment in a place the Bible calls hell.
 - D. If you were with us last week, I'm very glad that you came back this week.
 1. Because the author, as he has done before, follows up his strong and scary warning with a word of encouragement and reassurance.
 2. Last week's study and text was a very challenging exhortation. This week's study and text is a very comforting encouragement. And I'm glad you are all here to receive it.
 - E. Our text this morning is going to be Hebrews chapter 10 verses 32-39 and the title our study is going to be "**DETOUR: Steering Clear of Apostasy**".

1. Hopefully you all have made your way to the book of Hebrews by now. At this time, I'd like to invite you all to rise to your feet in honor of the Lord and His Word.
2. I'm going to read through our text from my Bible, do your best to follow along in your own Bible. The author wraps up chapter 10 with the following, beginning in verse 32... (R & P)

II. Intro

- A. Our text this morning starts out with an extremely important word; it's a small word, but it is a significant one. I checked a number of other Bible translations to ensure it was not just in the NKJV, but in the others as well.
 1. It definitely is in the original Greek. And it is in most the English translations I looked up other than the NIV, the NLT, and the CSB.
 2. But it's in the NKJV, the KJV, the NASB, the ESV, the LSB, and a number of others.
 3. It's the word "but". And "but" is a very important word. While we may think it is a small and insignificant word, it is a vitally important word when it comes to understanding what the author is writing.
 4. "But" is a word of contrast. It is the Greek word "de" and it is a particle that is used here in verse 32 as an adversative particle. The author uses this word in contrast to what he just said.
 5. Which is extremely important. Because he just gave them a very stern warning against apostasy. He told them how if someone rejected Christ they would have to answer for their own sins and how God will judge His own people and that it would be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, especially when you have rejected and despised God's every attempt to save you. That is a fearful thing, a very horrifying and dreadful thing.
 6. "But..." the author starts out verse 32. God will judge His people and it will be a fearful and horrifying thing, "but..." the author speaks now of something in contrast to God's judgment.
 7. The word in the Greek means "but", or "on the contrary", or "on the other hand". It's a word that is oh, so important for us to understand.
 8. We don't have to face the judgment. Falling into the hands of the living God doesn't have to be a fearful and horrifying idea.
 9. There is a way to avoid and steer clear of this danger of apostasy and that is what the author is going to lay out for us here in our text.
- B. In our study, we're going to break up our text into three different sections with each section showing us what is involved in avoiding apostasy all together.
 1. How can we heed this warning, this danger of apostasy, and ensure we take the detour that steers us completely clear of it?
 2. Take a look at our opening section in verses 32-34 as we note one of the ways we can do so.

III. Hebrews 10:32-34; Understanding Our Past

- A. The first thing the author tells his audience to do is to recall the former days, to remember what it was like, after they were illuminated. We see here that one of the keys to avoiding apostasy has to do with **understanding our past**.
1. The word “illuminated” can also be translated as “enlightened”. And the idea seems to be quite simple. The author is asking his audience to remember what it was like after they were enlightened by the gospel of Christ, to remember what it was like after the light of the Lord shone upon them, and they came to faith in Christ.
 2. Much like Saul of Tarsus, who had the light of the Lord shone upon him when he came to faith in Christ, so too these people had the light of the Lord shone upon them, perhaps not in such a tangible manner as Saul of Tarsus, but nonetheless, they were enlightened, illuminated to the truth of Christ and all He had done for them.
- B. Now in directing his audience to remember their past, he brings up a season when they had endured a great struggle with sufferings. And he notes four different aspects of their past suffering. Note them with me.
1. Number 1, the author mentions how his audience had, in part, been made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations.
 - a. The idea behind being made a spectacle, carries with it the idea of public shame and scorn. It involved being turned into a bit of entertainment for the general public.
 - b. The Greek word used here is the word “theatrizo”. This comes from the root of the word “theater” and speaks of being brought up on stage for all to see and being disgraced before a general audience.
 - c. Some of the people the author was writing to had faced public beatings, scourging, and other forms of tribulations. The word “tribulations” here speaks of begin crushed.
 - d. Other faced public scorn and disgrace through reproaches. This speaks more of verbal insults than it does physical attacks. But the shame and humiliation they experienced was just the same.
 - e. Because of their faith in Christ, these people were brought before others and made a mockery of. Much like our Savior was before He went to the cross of Calvary.
 - f. They made a mockery of Him. They dressed Him up in royal attire, they crowned Him with a crown of thorns, and then proceeded to beat Him and mock Him; calling for Him to prophesy who it was who hit Him. They mockingly presented him to the people saying “Here is your king”. He was openly mocked and beaten and it would seem that the people the author is writing to have endured similar type actions; being made a spectacle and mockery for their faith in Christ.
 - g. Of course, this should come as no surprise to us. For this is exactly what Jesus said would happen. He told His disciples that “A servant

is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” (Jn. 15:20a)

- h. So these people had suffered through public shame and abuse as part of their faith in Christ. But there was more.
2. Number 2, some of his audience also suffered because they became companions of those who were so treated.
 - a. Those that didn’t experience this sort of public shame and assault, often still struggled as they came along side these people and offered them aid and support. They became companions of such people, reaching out to them and ministering to them.
 - b. And as a result, they were often lumped together with them in the overall contempt that was shown towards them by the general public.
 3. Number 3, some of the audience even befriended people who were not only publicly ridiculed but also those who were imprisoned because of their faith in Christ. And this too caused them to experience certain sufferings.
 - a. Now the NKJV, says that the audience had compassion on the actual author who had been imprisoned for his faith in Christ.
 - b. Other translations simply read that they had compassion upon prisoners and do not explicitly identify the author as one of those prisoners. Either way, these people ended up not only associating with criminals, but coming alongside them, ministering to them, and comforting them with compassion.
 - c. They sympathized with these prisoners. The Greek word here is “sympatheo” and it literally means to suffer with. Instead of shunning these prisoners and keeping their distance from them, they came alongside them and they shared in their suffering together.
 - d. They were there to help one another, to have compassion for those who were bound as criminals because of their faith in Christ.
 4. Lastly, number 4 we see that they suffered through the plundering of their own goods, their own possessions being taken from them because of their faith in Christ.
 - a. This may be a reference to them being kicked out of their own homes, and being run out of town.
 - b. We know that this did happen in Rome under the authority of Claudius Caesar. We read of it in the book of Acts when Paul met a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome). (Acts 18:2)
 - c. It could be that like Aquila and Priscilla, some of these people were forced out of Rome, forced to abandon their own homes, and their goods were plundered and seized by those who ransacked their homes after their departure.

- d. But note the attitudes these people had when they experienced such attacks, such struggles and persecution. It says that they joyfully accepted it; they were glad to do so.
 - e. It reminds me of the apostles and their response after being imprisoned and beaten for preaching the name of Jesus in the temple. We read in Acts 5 that they departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His [Christ's] name." (Acts 5:41)
 - f. Jesus Himself said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Mt. 5:10-12)
 - g. Paul wrote in Romans how we as followers of Christ can glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Rom. 5:3-5)
5. All of these struggles and sufferings had a maturing effect upon them. They grew in their faith; they grew in their perseverance and their character was molded and shaped and their hope was made sure; all because they experienced this sort of suffering.
- C. And here is the key you guys. It says in verse 32 that they "endured a great struggle with sufferings". They remained faithful, they stood their ground.
1. That is what is meant by the word "endured". It literally means to remain under. The Greek word is "hypomeno" [hoop-om-en-o]; "hupo" means "under" and "meno" means to remain. Putting them together it means to remain under. They endured. They remained under that suffering, they didn't run and flee. They didn't try to escape it.
 2. They stood their ground, and they did not abandon their faith, they did not abandon their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who were experiencing similar struggles and sufferings. They stuck it out. They allowed God to work in and through those situations, proving Himself faithful.
 3. God used those sufferings to mold and shape these people. To grow them and mature them in their faith. And God will do the same in our lives too. He will grow us and mature us through sufferings as long as we are willing to endure and allow God the opportunity to prove Himself faithful.
 4. How do we steer clear of apostasy. Well, one way is by looking back in the past and **remembering the faithfulness of God**.
 - a. God has seen us through so much, He's proven Himself faithful time and time again. And we can look back upon God's past faithfulness

- and use it as a way to keep us following after Him no matter what may come our way. God's past faithfulness assures us that He will continue to be faithful.
 - b. No matter what, God always remains faithful. It is part of His nature. It is who He is, and He cannot deny Himself.
5. The author wanted his audience to recall these things as a way to spur them on in their present circumstances. God had already proven Himself faithful, God had already brought them through so much.
 6. They could look back and recall how God was with them. How they were actually able to rejoice during their sufferings.
 7. These people were facing similar persecutions once again. And the author wanted them to look back and be reminded of the joy they once had in seeing God work in and through them during those times of great struggle, those seasons of suffering.
 8. God was with them, God did a great thing through them.
 - a. I mean, they rejoiced when their goods were plundered from them. Who does that, right?
 - b. I'll tell you who. It's people who are completely committed to Christ. People who are more concerned with their possessions in heaven than they are their possessions here on earth. People who are focused upon the eternal in heaven and not the temporal here on earth.
- D. And that leads us to our next section of verses and another important way for us to steer clear of this danger of apostasy. Read vs 35-38 with me.
- IV. Hebrews 10:35-38; Understanding Our Future
- A. After drawing the audience's attention to the past and God's faithfulness in seeing them through and helping them to endure, the author then draws the audience's attention to what awaits us and the importance of **understanding our future**.
1. At the end of verse 34 the author spoke of how they could rejoice in their sufferings because they knew that they had a better and an enduring possession for themselves in heaven.
 2. It's important that we understand the significance of what is said there. We have a better and an enduring possession in heaven. You see we have to understand that the sufferings we experience are temporary. They are but for a moment, but the enduring possession in heaven is eternal. It will last forever.
 3. So whenever we go through difficulties and are tempted to throw in the towel, we must remember our eternal possessions awaiting us in heaven. We must keep an eternal perspective.
 4. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while

we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Co. 4:16-18)

- B. Within these verses encouraging us to look to the future we see and understand that our confidence comes with great reward, a better and enduring reward. And that future reward involves a couple things worth noting here.
1. First of all, we understand that our future reward involves our future inheritance in Christ. Verse 36 describes how we need endurance, so that after having done the will of God, we may receive the promise.
 - a. Earlier in Hebrews 9 we read of the ministry of Christ and how He is "the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (Heb. 9:15)
 - b. Paul encourages us in Colossians that whatever we do, we are to do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord we will receive the reward of the inheritance; for we serve the Lord Christ." (Col. 3:23-24)
 - c. We have an eternal inheritance awaiting us in heaven. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." (Rom. 8:16-17)
 - d. Because of our faith in Christ, we have become joint heirs with Him. Christ is the firstfruits, He has ascended to the Lord in heaven. And one day we too will do the same. And so we dare not cast aside our confidence. We keep the course looking to that eternal inheritance.
 2. But there is another aspect to understanding our future that ought to help keep us from the danger of apostasy and that has to do with the return of the Lord.
 - a. Verses 37 & 38 are an allusion and reference to some of the words of Habakkuk the prophet. Habakkuk was given a message from the Lord to declare to the people regarding a future vision that was sure to pass. The immediate context dealt with the judgment of God upon the Israelites, but we see here that it also involved the coming judgment of Christ at His return.
 - b. Habakkuk 2 states, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Thought it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by faith." (Hab. 2:3-4)
 - c. The author of Hebrews replaces the impersonal "it" with the personal pronoun "He". Instead of "it" coming, the author speaks of how "He" is coming. Jesus is coming.

- d. And because we know that Jesus is going to come back it ought to impact how we live our lives.
- e. When addressing the church in Thessalonica, the apostle Paul spoke of the return of Christ and the Day of the Lord, exhorting them, "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Thes. 5:6-9)
- f. Because we know Christ is coming back, we live sober lives; lives that are ready for the Lord to come back. We aren't tempted to give up, or to indulge the flesh, because we want to be busy about the work He has called us to until the day of His return.
- g. We live by faith. As vs. 38 of our text states, "The just shall live by faith."
- h. This phrase first spoken through the Lord by Habakkuk is repeated three times in the NT and each time it is repeated the emphasis is different.
 - i. In Romans 1 the emphasis is upon faith. Paul the apostle, who wrote the book of Romans spoke of not being ashamed of the gospel for it was the power of God to salvation and "in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" (Rom. 1:17)
 - ii. In his letter to the church in the region of Galatia the apostle Paul quoted the same verse, but emphasized the first part of it; the just, stating, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.'" (Gal. 3:11)
 - iii. And here in Hebrews the author quotes this same verse, and the emphasis really is upon living, it is upon continuing to live for the Lord despite the circumstances, despite the sufferings. We show that we have been justified by continuing to live by faith.
- i. We don't give up; we don't draw back as it states in verse 38. We continue to live our lives of faith even when we don't understand everything that is going on in our lives.
- j. These people were facing great persecution, they were feeling all sorts of pressure to turn from their faith. The temptation to think that their lives would be so much easier if they simply renounced their faith in Christ was very real.
- k. We too may go through certain seasons, certain circumstances where we may feel the same temptation. That life would be easier somehow if we just gave in to the pressure and gave up following Christ. But the just shall live by faith. We must continue. As it states in verse 36, "We have need of endurance."

3. That word endurance is the noun form of the verb to endure that we already noted from our first few verses. It's the word "hypomone" [hoop-om-on-ay]. And according to my lexicon "Hupomone is associated with hope and refers to the quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial."
 - a. This is what we need. We need endurance. We need to have this quality of character that does not allow ourselves to surrender, to give up, or throw in the towel when things get tough.
 - b. We need endurance. And I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but the Bible actually tells us how we get this "endurance" and you may not like it.
 - c. James 1 states, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" [your translation may read "endurance"; it's the same Greek word in our text, hupomone]. (**James 1:2-3**)
 - d. James continues saying "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (**James. 1:4**)
 - e. How do we get this endurance that we so desperately need? It's through the testing of our faith. It's through trial and tribulations.
 - f. The enemy comes against us and tries to tempt us to give up, to surrender, but the Lord uses those same situations to strengthen us, to grow us and mature us.
 - g. What the enemy means for evil, in all the trials and tribulations we face, God turns it around for His glory and our good.
 - h. It's very challenging to consider it pure joy when we fall into various trials and face tribulations and attacks from the enemy. But through faith in Christ, we can do so, knowing that this is all part of the work God wants to do in us and through us that we may become complete, lacking nothing. God has a plan. He's going to work through these difficulties to perfect us and mature us.
4. So, we see that remembering **our great reward in heaven**, our inheritance through Christ and the return of Christ, is something that will help us continue to live by faith and steer clear of apostasy.

C. Let's take a look at our last verse and note one more important key to steering clear of apostasy. Read vs. 39 with me.

V. Hebrews 10:39; Understanding Our Present

- A. We are to understand our past and the faithfulness of God, our future and our reward that awaits us, but it is also extremely important that we **understand our present situation** as well.
- B. Verse 39 is kind of wordy in the English. In the original Greek there are only 12 words. But in most English translations there are over 20 words.
 1. The only verb in the Greek is the verb "eimi"; it is the verb "to be".

2. The phrase "of those who draw back" is one word in the Greek; it's a noun that is only used this one time in the NT. It is the noun form of the verb to withdraw or retreat.
3. The phrase "of those who believe" is also one word in the Greek; it too is a noun and is a description of who the author stated his audience was. It's the word faith and describes a person of faith.
4. And this is so very important for us to understand what the author is saying in context to both his challenging exhortation and his comforting encouragement.
5. He brought a very challenging exhortation; a strong warning against turning from the faith and the horrifying outcome it would lead to.
 - a. But then, in our text today, he offers up a comforting encouragement to his audience. Encouraging them to remember the past and to remember the future.
6. And here at the end he draws a bold conclusion regarding the present.
 - a. He affirms his belief in them. That they are not retreaters, they are not apostates, but they are believers, they are of the faith.
7. You see, as important as it is to remember the past and God's faithfulness, and to remember the future and our eternal reward, it's also extremely important to remember who we are today.
 - a. I'm currently reading through a book with a group of guys that lays out the importance of understanding our identity in Christ. Who we are is much more important than what we do. Our identity in Christ shapes us and defines us.
 - b. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17 we are a new creation; the old things have passed away and all things have become new. (**2 Co. 5:17**)
 - i. Whatever we once were, we are no longer. In Christ we are a new creation. We have a fresh start. All the old stuff that weighed us down, the sins and weights of this world are all removed in and through Christ.
 - c. In Ephesians chapter 1 the apostle Paul writes about the many things we are in Christ.
 - i. I won't read the whole chapter to you, but in it we see that in Christ we are "blessed", we are "chosen", we are "holy and blameless before Him". We are "predestined" and we are "adopted" as Sons (& daughters) of God.
 - ii. We are recipients of His grace and we are accepted by God. We are "redeemed" and "forgiven". We are "saved" and we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit". All of these things are who we are in and through our relationship with Christ.
 - d. We are servants who have been bought with a price. God paid a pretty steep price to purchase us. It costs Him the blood of His one and only begotten Son.

- i. And if God was willing to pay such a high price for us, don't you think He will do everything in His power to keep us? To protect us? To ensure that we end up with Him in heaven?
 - ii. Of course He will.
- e. We are children of God. We have been adopted into His family.
 - i. As our Father, God will look after us. He will protect us. He will do everything He can to ensure our safe arrival in heaven.
- f. We are the beloved of God.
 - i. God loves us. And that means something.
 - ii. Paul writes in Romans, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,'" (Rom. 8:35-36)
 - iii. "Yet in all these things we are *more than* conquerors through Him who loved us [we aren't those who retreat, we don't draw back; we are more than conquerors]. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:37-39)
- 8. It's important that we remember who we are in Christ and whose we are. We are the Lord's. God has us. We will make it to the end, we will endure, we won't turn back. God will see us through. We can count on Him.
 - a. Deuteronomy 31 states "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." (Dt. 31:6)
 - b. We need not be afraid of apostasy. We can be strong and of good courage because God is the One who goes before us, and He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will not abandon us or orphan us.
 - c. Of this we can be certain of. Amen? Amen. Let's pray.