**Sermon Title: Enemies of Courage, Part 4**

 **The Enemy Known as Regression or Falling Away**

**Sermon Text: Hebrews 6:1-8**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to the warning about the danger of falling away/regression.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 principles related to the warning of falling away/regression.**

**Introduction:** Though they were Hebrews who professed faith in Yahweh, many of the Hebrews ultimately rejected Him, and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and His revelation, thereby providing proof that they were not genuine believers. The author of Hebrews does not want to see the same outcome for his readers. The focus of this section is on advancement, rather than regressing and falling away.

**I. The reign of immaturity multiplies regression. Vv.1-3**

**II. The rejection of illumination maintains regression. Vv.4-6**

**III. The rule of the illustration marks regression. Vv.7-8**

**I. The reign of immaturity multiplies regression. Vv.1-3**

 A. The necessity of **leaving** initial lessons about Christ. V.1a

 These are the foundational beginning teachings about Christ.

 B. The necessity for **pressing** forward to maturity in Christ. V.1b

 Salvation by faith in Messiah, Jesus Christ alone, not in foundational types, that were meant to point people to Christ. The verb is passive, so as to indicate “let us be carried to salvation.”

 C. The necessity of **laying** aside foundational principles pointing to Christ. V.1c

 1. Repentance from dead works.

 This idea of turning from works that lead to death. Christ’s atoning sacrifice is the only work that saves man from their own self-righteous works.

 **Hebrews 9:14** how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

 **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

 2. Faith directed only toward the Father is unacceptable without faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. (**James 2:14-20**)

 **Acts 4:12** "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

 3. The doctrines of washings.

 This may refer to Old Testament ceremonial washings.

 **Hebrews 9:10** *concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

 4. The laying on of hands.

 Ordinations, healings, sacrifices, etc.

 5. The resurrection of the dead.

 6. Eternal judgment.

 Verse 3 is a conventional phrase acknowledges the need for God’s help in learning and teaching Christian doctrine. IT’s use suggests that the material to follow is difficult, as indeed it is.

 **John 6:44** "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

**II. The rejection of illumination maintains regression. Vv.4-6**

 A. The principle of being **enlightened**. V.4a

 This is a warning about those who have once been enlightened, that is to have had the knowledge of Christ disclosed in the gospel message (**Hebrews 10:26**) and publically professed in baptism.

 **John 1:9** That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

 **2 Corinthians 4:4-6** whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. **5** For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. **6** For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

 The Scriptures clearly teaches that those whom God has truly saved will persevere in the faith to the end (**Hebrews 3:14**).

 **John 10:28-29** "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. **29** "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand.

 **Romans 8:28-30** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. **29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. **30** Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

 Therefore understanding the gospel is not equal to regeneration.

 B. The principle of having **tasted** the heavenly gift. V.4b

 This is the idea of consciously expressing something. (**1 Peter 2:1-3**)

 **Hebrews 2:9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

 **Matthew 5:45** "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

 **Acts 17:25** "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

 C. The principle of partaking of the work of the Spirit. v.4c

 1. They **witness** the miraculous miracles of God.

 **Hebrews 2:4** God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

 2. The **experienced** the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

 **John 16:8** "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

 3. The **testified** of the miraculous ministry of Jesus Christ (Messiah).

 (**Matthew 12:28-32; Book of Hebrews**)

 **Luke 14:14** "And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

 **Luke 14:18** "But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him,`I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'

 4. The **resisted** without experiencing salvation, regeneration, New Birth, Justification, etc.

 (**Acts 7:51-54**)

 5. They **tasted** the goodness of God’s Word. V.5a

 1) The example of Simon Magnus. (**Acts 8:9-24**)

 2) The example of false disciples (**John 6:60-66**)

 3) The example of illegitimate hearts. (**Matthew 13:3-9**)

 4) The example of New Borns. (**1 Peter 2:1-3**)

 6. They **knew** the powers of the age to come. V.5b

 This may refer to the signs and wonders that accompanied the introduction of the gospel during the apostolic age.

 (**Hebrews 2:4; Ezekiel 2:19-22; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 4:7-21**)

 Thus the fact that many who once seemed to be true Christians fall away should not surprise us! (Children of Israel in the wilderness.)

 (**Hebrews 3:7-4:7**)

 D. The principles **result** of falling away. V.6

 1. There is a falling away or regression that is **irreversible**. V.6a

 **1 John 5:16** If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does* not *lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. (1Jo 5:16 NKJ)

 It is a sign of severe unfaithfulness and apostasy as exemplify in **Ezekiel 14:13; 18:24; 20:27**. The decision to reject Christ and the need for salvation, if made stubbornly and without repentance, cannot be revised, according to **1 John 2:19**.

 **1 John 2:19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

 Judas Iscariot is the New Testament illustration of this, someone who did not have transforming saving faith, but tested the powers of the gospel age. (**Matthew 26:47-49**) He participated in the power and message of the kingdom, but did not enter in.

 2. There is crucifying of Christ again. V.6b

 **Acts 18:5-6** When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. **6** But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

**III. The rule of the illustration marks regression. Vv.7-8**

 According to Old Testament prophetic imagery the ground is God’s people and the rain falling on it is the Word of God or the Spirit of God. (**Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 13:18-23**)

 **Isaiah 44:3-4** For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring; **4** They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.'

 **Isaiah 55:10-11** "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, **11** So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

 The imagery supports the idea that those who fall away or regress from Christ were never actually saved to begin with. Habitual faith and lifestyle, as well as habitual unbelief and lifestyle cannot be separated.