

**(Hebrews 6:4-6)** (4) For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, (5) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, (6) if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

Clearly, the warning is for those believers who have “become dull of hearing”. The Greek for ‘dull’ means *sluggish*, (literally) *lazy*, or (figuratively) *stupid (although I don’t know how one can be figuratively ‘stupid’)*. I gave 5 different examples of how/why they’re “hearing” became “dull”, that is, they became neglectful of the Word of God and God the Word. It seems they were having great issue with Melchizedek, and Jesus being a High Priest of his type instead of Aaron’s. In their experience, the Aaronic Priesthood was the ONLY priesthood and therefore Jesus could not be a High Priest. So, because they were “dull of hearing” they began to rethink their belief in Jesus as the Messiah; and, add to that fierce persecutions, wouldn’t it be easier to just go back to traditional Judaism.

This is the issue: leaving the Source of **the** Great Salvation, abandoning the Person who paid Your debt to God for your own sin, and returning to a religion of dead works and ineffectual sacrifices. They were leaving the Perfect Messiah who became their High Priest FOREVER! This Perfect GOD:MAN could intercede and advocate for you in the very throne room of God. You can boldly come to this place in your time of need because you know you will not be alone when you are face-to-Face with the Creator of the universe.

The issue we landed on last week exists because we are not God. When we read His Word, we do so through the lens of our sinful humanity. And there lies the questions we have:

1. How are we saved?
2. Can we lose our salvation?

For this issue, we discussed two of the most widely known positions: **Calvinism** and **Arminianism**. Simply put it’s “ALL OF GOD” verses “ALL OF MAN”.

I taught that both have their “theology” that begins with a statement of belief and then logically all subsequent statement are declared.

So, I taught that the Calvinists believe that

1. Man is totally depraved and could not possibly come to God by himself.

Therefore:

2. The Choice is God’s alone and unconditional; not based on anything man has or has not done. They say is not even based on foreknowledge.
3. Since God does the choosing, salvation is for the elect only.
4. The elect will always come to God because for them, the call of the Holy Spirit is irresistible.
5. Finally, all of the elect will persevere to the end because, being of God, they cannot choose to walk away. It would be impossible!

And I taught that the Arminians believe that

1. Man has the ability, even after the fall, to choose, of his/her free will, to come to God.

Therefore:

2. Salvation is conditional on man’s free-will response
3. Salvation is for everyone, the “whosoever” of the world
4. A person can, of his/her free will resist the call of the Holy Spirit

5. A person can, of his/her free will, turn their back on God and therefore, lose the salvation they chose.

One says the decision of salvation is God's alone. He, before the foundation of the world, chose who wanted to save and those He didn't. The chosen or elect will come to Him because He has already assured that they cannot resist the Holy Spirit's Gracious invitation. They are eternally secure because what God has done no man can undo.

The other says the decision of salvation is man's alone. He alone determines whether or not he wants to be saved and he alone determines if he wants to abandon his salvation. Man's free-will is honored by God in all cases where a choice must be made. These are eternally secure as long as they don't leave Him.

I truly believe that salvation is a mystery that's best left in the hands of God. God obviously created man with a free-will; the scriptures testify of this AND our own experiences in life and the history of life also, make it plain that it is so. The mystery, in my mind, is how does a sinner come to God? If it's ALL OF God wouldn't He be violating our free-will, which, by the way, He designed and created in us. And, if there were only so many chosen for salvation, doesn't that mean that some were not and they end up in eternal punishment. If I am a sinner and a slave to sin, how could I decide? Yes, this is a mystery.

But I side with the Arminians. While I don't believe that there is a spark of goodness in us, I do believe God created us with the ability to think and feel and to be affected by His Word. When presented with the Gospel, when Jesus is revealed to us, there is Someone else involved: The Holy Spirit. He makes His case, so to speak, by shining a light on our sin, declaring to us that our own righteousness is useless, and telling us the Truth: There is a God in heaven who will judge the actions of all men. Having the truth, we can choose life or death. But, all along, He is wooing us not just with the Truth but with LOVE that says "I love you so much that I'll take the punishment for your sin so that you can live with me forevermore". "I have made a way for you; I have cleared the path of all obstructions". "Are you willing to come to Me and stay with me NO MATTER WHAT you see with your physical eyes". "Will you trust me with your very life?" "I want you! And I want you forever!"

In other words,

**John 3:14-21 NKJV** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (15) that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (18) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. (21) But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

**BUT CAN I LOSE MY SALVATION?** Why would you want to abandon so great a salvation? Why would you want to come to believe that His promises of security will be taken away? And, hasn't He done something that is as mysterious as it is mysterious?

John 14:16-17 NKJV And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— (17) the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

And He whom He sends to be in us will remain in us!

2 Corinthians 1:19-22 NKJV (19) For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. (20) For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. (21) Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, (22) who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1:13-14 NKJV In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

**Can you lose your salvation? No**, unless you want to abandon Him who would never abandon you. **No**, unless you reject Him and forsake Him in Whom is no condemnation. My contention is, if you have come to Him by His grace, fully convinced that He is able to do all that He told us, and you remain His Love, abide in Him by His powerful presence, you will never reject Him.

Romans 4:20-25 NKJV He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, (21) and **being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.** (22) And therefore "IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (23) Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, (24) but also for us. **It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,** (25) who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

If you believe that this is just one of many religions, think again, seek His forgiveness and come to Him because He first came for you! We don't do religion, we have a living relationship with Jesus. He is always ever-present! We cling to the One who is LIFE and who alone can satisfy all our deepest needs, if we would stay yielded to Him.

Hebrews 12:2 NKJV looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Can you lose your salvation? No**, you can't lose it by a single horrendous sin. But, if you remain in your sin by lusting after it, repeating it, making it a habit you are in danger! But He will always provide a way of escape – take it and run from that which is only temporary and flee into His arms. Only He can forgive and according to my Bible, He is always faithful to do so.

**Can you lose your salvation? No**, you cannot lose it in some crisis of faith that has you backsliding. You know **if** you are. Seek help. Were not the Father's arms opened wide when his child came running back home after living in sin and filth?

But Pastor Stu, doesn't it say it would be impossible to renew them to repentance? Yes, but read the verse carefully:

**“And have fallen away,** to renew them again to repentance, **since** they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and, put *Him* to an open shame.

**“since they crucify again the Son of God AND put Him to open shame”**

This **is** apostasy. It is an **attitude of the heart** where you crucify Jesus again AND openly shame Him. They would be just like the unbelieving Jews (and Gentiles) who viciously and brutally murdered the Son of God by hanging Him on a cross meant only for criminals.

You can't crucify Jesus again **except in your heart**; This is NOT a crucifixion leading to salvation. This is hanging Jesus on a cross, nailing His hands and feet to the stake, stripping Him of His clothing, cheering that He is being killed, shaming Him with jeers and taunts and then proudly walking away thinking you have done God a great service.

**Therefore, would it be impossible “to renew them again to repentance”?**

So, yes, while nothing is impossible for God, this isn't a matter of ability but a decision to not grant them repentance. For only God understands the matters of the heart.

**Let's go on to see if there is any edification in the subsequent verses:**

(Hebrews 6:7 NKJV) For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, *[it]* receives blessing from God; (Hebrews 6:8 NKJV) but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and **near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.**

What if this is talking about how God's good seed is planted and watered but somehow bears thorns and briers instead of good fruit? The rains were good, the seed was good but it fell upon stony hearts, anxious hearts, shallow hearts... and up came thorns and briers. These are rejected and NEAR to being cursed and therefore its end will be fire.

This is very much related to what Jesus said in John 15:

**John 15:6 NKJV** If anyone **does not abide** in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is **withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.**

As a believer, we need to abide in the True Vine as a branch that knows that **it cannot live without Him**. Abiding is remaining; abiding is yielding to the nourishment provided ONLY by the vine; abiding is, in practical terms staying in His Word and talking with Him continually!

(Hebrews 6:9 NKJV) But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

Having described those that were falling or had fallen away from Jesus, the author tells them that he has confidence in them – that they will heed the warnings, repent of any sin of unbelief and remain in Jesus for the duration. Perhaps he feels a bit heavy handed and wanted to ensure many of the faithful that he is confident that there awaits better things for them.

(Hebrews 6:10 NKJV) For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

God never forgets the loving labor of these saints who continue to minister to the saints. This isn't "works unto salvation" but works after salvation. A sinner's work is burned up, a saint's work, whose aim is to glorify Him, is rewarded.

(Hebrews 6:11 NKJV) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, (Hebrews 6:12 NKJV) that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

He's already warned of sluggishness! The warning is real.

We are to be fully convinced of the hope we have. We are to be patient and guard our faith keeping it until we go home.

(Hebrews 6:13 NKJV) For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, (Hebrews 6:14 NKJV) saying, "SURELY BLESSING I WILL BLESS YOU, AND MULTIPLYING I WILL MULTIPLY YOU."

(Hebrews 6:15 NKJV) And so, **after he had patiently endured**, he obtained the promise.

Abraham had to wait until it was impossible for him and Sarah to bear a child on their own. He did so and received the "child of promise". But even before Isaac was born, when Abram was called to leave his land, his family and his gods, God told him:

Genesis 12:3 NKJV I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And **in** you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

And to Isaac the promise was repeated:

Genesis 26:3-5 NKJV Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. (4) And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; (5) because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

It is repeated again by God in a dream given to Jacob in Genesis 28:12-14

(Hebrews 6:16 NKJV) For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. (Hebrews 6:17 NKJV) Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, (Hebrews 6:18 NKJV) that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.

His promises are sure! He cannot lie! His promises lead us to a strong, enduring and an everlasting life after we have sought Him for refuge from ourselves. He is our hope!

(Hebrews 6:19 NKJV) This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence *behind* the veil, (Hebrews 6:20 NKJV) where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

This hope is NOT wishful thinking. This hope IS built on promises that become an anchor for our souls; this hope grounds us in His love; this hope keeps us still; AND allows us to enter into His Presence behind the veil to meet God, through our High Priest who lives eternally because He is of the order of Melchizedek.

This story, this life with Jesus is made perfect and sure by Him. If we learned anything in this chapter, it is:

1. Staying close to Jesus by prayer and His Words must be done diligently; The Spirit of Christ within us enables us, empowers us to do just that. Remaining in the True Vine is done in submission and, as we mature, it is done with delight!
2. You can live your life in such a manner that you will drift ever so slowly away until your heart is given over to your desires for sin and self. If this is you STOP IT NOW! He is not asking anything of you that He does not empower you to do! Humble yourself and seek godly help!

But more importantly, we learned more about Him. His faithfulness, His Promises, His love, His Grace. It was He who inspired the author to warn us. It was He who provides all we need to live the life He gave us – now and forever.

Is there assurance? Is there Hope? YES AND AMEN!!!

### **I can cry out:**

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels, descending, bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

**Folks put all controversies, all debates, all arguments, all prideful clinging to what you believe to be true, put that aside and simply trust Him. Let's go on, not leaning on our own understanding. Give Him glory and He will keep us on the pathway that first led us to Him and it is sure to lead us home.**