

Jesus is Better than Any Alternatives

(Hebrews 10:26-39)

"Thank you, so much!"

"Well Done"

"I love You"

Some things are worth repeating. Again and again!

Even 'tough love' things are also worth repeating, for the safety & well-being of loved ones:

"Stranger danger! Kids, be alert for strangers - especially if they're slowly driving vans!"

On the more theological end of the spectrum, we repeat truths for tough trials,

"At least this did not catch God by surprise. He's in control, take comfort in that."

"Jesus understands – He sympathises with you."

*"you have need of **endurance**,*

so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised" (10:36)

I mention repetition, because if you been with us the whole series through the book of Hebrews, you're thinking: *"Haven't we heard that last one in Hebrews, a few times?"*

Yes we have. But the writer of Hebrews thinks it crucial to *keep reminding* us of a truth, and this is his last weighty challenge about the need to persevere in the faith, to cross the finish line of faith in order to receive promised prize.

If it's any comfort, the writer of Hebrews isn't the only one repeating himself! Peter

*"Therefore I intend always to **REMIN**D you of these qualities, **EVEN THOUGH** you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of **REMIN**DER" (2 Pet 1:12-13)*

And Peter's reminders aren't just "generally" relevant to our topic. They're spot on topic.

What are "these qualities", and their outcome? He lists the qualities in verses 5-7,

*"In your faith supply, virtue . . . knowledge . . . self-control . . . **ENDURANCE** and **brotherly affection** (philadelphia)"*

And what is the "outcome"? Peter continues:

*"Brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you **PRACTICE** these qualities you will **NOT FALL**, but you will receive an abundant welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! **Therefore** I intend always to **REMIN**D you of these qualities"*

Endurance and brotherly love stirring one another to **keep on** in the faith, despite the difficulties and doubts, **affirming** the genuineness of our salvation.

So, yes, chapters 3-4 urged us to strive to Enter the promised land, not merely Exit Egypt. And again in chapter 6, the writer pressed home the need to persevere in faith, a *faith* that bears *fruit*.

And it's worth repeating yet again, because he *really wants us* to attain the prize!

*"you have need of **endurance**,*

so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised!"

As C. S. Lewis wrote,

"There is a kind of happiness & wonder that makes you serious."¹

¹ Lewis, *The Last Battle* (Volume 7 of The Chronicles of Narnia).

That's 'eyes on the prize' serious! Some call this *serious happiness*, "awe")

Worth repeating again not only because the author repeats is, but also because our culture is SO **non**-enduring! So **ir**-responsible, **anti**-commitment, consumer-oriented:

"Try it for 30-days, obligation-free!"

We see this throughout our society:

- Pregnant! Couldn't be bothered with personal responsibility/consequences! I'll abort.
- Marriage covenant! Pfffft! Trade in your spouse for a new model.
Or save yourself those legal fees of divorce . . . don't even both with a spouse/marriage and just shack up! No obligation, no lawyer fees!
- Above all, if you're gonna be *religious/spiritual*, make sure *you pick a god* that **SUITS** you! Your tastes, your freedoms, your kingdom, your "out" clause!

The "god" to which our culture invites us is more like the simplistic donkey in *The Last Battle* (from *The Chronicles of Narnia*). Hidden away in a barn, the donkey named Puzzle, appears only for a few seconds at night by a dim fire, wearing the costume of a lion. Many are fooled, but the donkey is a poor substitute for the real lion, Aslan, the Christ.

Dead gods and donkey gods cause no dread.

But the Living God is another matter altogether.

As one commentator put it,

*God will not be "tamed" by our postmodern [disgust] for **truth**, nor by our aversion to the concept of **judgment**. We must adjust ourselves to Him or face the consequences.²*

So the writer of Hebrews places before us once again the *weightiness* of who God is, but also the *glory* of knowing Him, and the *worth* of enduring in faith to be with Him!

"Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a **great reward!**" (10:35)

Some things are worth repeating, and some things are worth waiting for!

Main Idea:

Those who endure by faith in Christ may live confident of a great reward!

Our Title: *Jesus is Better than ANY Alternatives!*

Outline:

- Just Judgment of God on those who forfeit the faith (10:26-31)
- Joyous Reward of God for those endure in the faith (10:32-39)

Setting the CONTEXT, we're moving onto a section that connects directly with 10:19-25, which we looked at last time, but v. 26 begins a new section in Hebrews, a large section.

And just as a 'picture frame' draws you into to gaze at a 'portrait',
the author's *appeals to persevere in faith* function as his 'frame'

that draws you into his portrait: Examples of Enduring Faith that spur us on!

The 'frame' is obvious at the very end of chapter 10 & very start of chapter 12

² George Guthrie, *Hebrews*, NIVAC series.

• 10:32, 36, 39

“you’ve **endured** a hard struggle with sufferings.... you [still] have need of **endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised!... we’re not those who shrink back and are destroyed”

• 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses ... let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Founder & Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him **endured** the cross....”

Right in the centre is the ‘portrait’, chapter 11:

The “Cloud of Witnesses”, EXAMPLES of enduring faith!

In contrast to the bad example of the generation in the wilderness from Heb 3 & 4, In chapter 11 the writer motivates us with good examples of enduring faith! Yeah!

The ‘link’ is obvious, as chapter 10 ends quoting Habakkuk,

“My righteous one shall live **BY FAITH**” (10:38)

Then, “*by faith*” occurs 20x in chapter 11! It’s one huge illustration/portrait of what it looks like to live by faith that endures/finishes the race & obtains the prize of eternal life.

The preaching calendar has changed a bit, as I now have a couple extra weeks in Hebrews. So today, instead of leap frogging into chapter 11; we’ll finish chapter 10.

We’ll return to chapter 11 in a few weeks after our missionary Thomas Hemphill preaches here as well as Paul Tripp while he’s out here for a conference at Qld Theological College.

JUST JUDGMENT OF GOD ON THOSE WHO FORFEIT THE FAITH (10:26-31)

The link with the previous section is clear, as v. 25 states,

“[do] **not neglect** to meet together, as is the habit of some, but **encourage** one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”

[the Day of reckoning, the day of Jesus’ return to judge the living and the dead]

Chapter 3 verse 13, using the same verb “encourage”, said

We “**ENCOURAGE** one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”

If we ignore this encouragement, this fellowship, and instead “*neglect meeting together*”, what happens? Instead of preventing the hardening of sin’s deceitfulness, we **fuel** it, v. 26!

“For if we **GO ON SINNING** deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” (10:26-27)

What’s the writer’s motive in sharing these strong words of warning?: **Love**

If someone you love is inside a burning house, you speak up to guide them to the way out!

So, a ‘whiff’ of the sulphur of judgment is meant to prompt in the readers & in us, a grateful deep inhaling of the aromas of God’s heavenly grace in Jesus Christ.

What sort of sin is this? The description is 3-fold in v.26

- 1] it's "ongoing"
- 2] it's "deliberate"
- 3] it occurs "after receiving the knowledge of the truth"

The last phrase means "hearing the gospel":

"God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

"in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth"³

Since this sin occurs "after" they've become well-acquainted with the gospel, it's not describing a first time visitor to church, but established "church goers" – like most of us.

Since it's "ongoing", it's not a slip up, even a *wilful* slip up.

Since it's "deliberate", it's NOT someone sinning in *ignorance*, nor is it someone hearing a dodgy gospel about a counterfeit Jesus.

There is *still hope* for them, if they hear to the true good news about the true Jesus – like Paul. God opened Paul's eyes and the persecutor of Christ became a preacher of Christ!

Today we'd call Paul a 'terrorist'; he murdered Christians!

But his enormous sins were forgiven in Christ! There's hope for us & our sins!

You see, it's not the *enormity* of sin, but the **finality** of this sin that's the issue.

This is a **definitive** sin.

Verse 28 forms a comparison with "setting aside" the law of Moses.

That's chucking the lot, rejecting the whole deal, the whole covenant. Numbers 15:30,

"Anyone who sins DEFIANTLY . . . blasphemes the Lord & must be cut off from the Israel."

(to stop the cancer spreading)

Notice the escalation of consequence between old & new covenant: (10:28-31)

*²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be **deserved** by the one who has trampled underfoot/treated as dirt the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (10:28-31)

This is the WORST possible *outcome*, because it describes the WORST possible *sin*: rejecting the ONLY possible *way* to heaven.

It's the kiss of Judas: betrayal, rejection, saying "**no way**" to Jesus and the new covenant in His blood – the *better* sacrifice, the *only* sacrifice that actually deals with sins and opens the door to heaven. (9:26; 10:18).

I think this passage is describing the same definitive sin we saw in Hebrews 6.

And since chapter 10 adds the detail of "outraging/insulting the Spirit of grace" (v.29), to me it confirms this is what Jesus called the "**blasphemy of the Holy Spirit**", which is the only unpardonable sin.

Jesus taught the **Holy Spirit** "*convicts the world of sin, righteousness & judgment*" (Jn 16:8) and also "bears witness to [Jesus]" (Jn 15:26), that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

So the Holy Spirit shows us our SIN as well as our SAVIOUR,

our need for righteousness & Jesus the Righteous One!

In the 'unpardonable sin'/'blasphemy of the Spirit passage' (Matt 12:26-32; Mark 3:22-30),

³ 1 Tim 2:4 and 2 Tim 2:25

Jesus was doing ministry, revealing His credentials as the promised Messiah/Christ/Saviour. As Jesus did amazing ministry through the *power of the Holy Spirit*, some were saying Jesus was *empowered by Satan!* Blasphemy! Right before their eyes was powerful testimony by God's Spirit that Jesus is Messiah/Saviour, yet in the full light of day, they fully turned to darkness.

To forsake God's **precious** Son – whom we've become *gloriously acquainted* with throughout this book – and insult the Spirit's testimony that Jesus is the Christ⁴, is to invite the judgment of God. As long as this sin, this blasphemy is ongoing, one has *no hope*.

This is why we must ENCOURAGE one another that Jesus **IS** Better! Better than ANY alternatives: comfort, popularity, other gods. By our speech and our life priorities, we must encourage each other to be *awestruck* by Jesus, because there's no turning back!

For those who've not yet come to Jesus, it's a call to seek Him while He may be found, before your hearts are completely hardened by sin.

Lesson: Avoiding Sin "Hardening" us by awareness of HOW hardening often begins.

I read an blog this week that was alarming, reminding me it's not just the world, but even sections of 'Christendom' that undermine endurance, distort Jesus, twist God's grace & truth.

The blog is titled, *No Longer Afraid—The Day My Heart Outgrew Conservative Evangelicalism* ('Evangelical' lit. means: 'proclaiming good news' of Jesus)

In this guy's seemingly sincere effort to guard God's grace from "legalism" he's actually exchanged God's grace with "license", man-made *counterfeit* grace.

Before quoting it and commenting, it'll be helpful to give a quick preface or concession.

Sometimes the way we evangelicals "define" words can be unhelpful or even misguided. Especially when we formulate our own theological terms, we need to be humble & clear about what we mean by our terms.

And, sometimes, not just the words we use but the ways we uphold truths can be less than stellar. Sometimes downright pig-headed and unloving. We always need to speak the truth in love . . . even more so in our sceptical, post-Christian era.

That said, this guy makes is so clear how the process of sin's hardening begins:

Abandon God's people and undermine God's word.

"No Longer Afraid:

I used to be, but today is a brand new day . . .

Call it a spiritual emancipation, a soul-revolution, or a new found courage to walk away . . .

Conservative Evangelical Christianity—with all due respect, I'm no longer afraid."

I'm No Longer Afraid To Walk Away from You and "Church" Altogether –

If a bridge can be burned, it wasn't worth it or its destination My heart has outgrown your imprisonment of mine.

⁴ Contrasting the old way with the new, the shadowy way of bulls & goats & tabernacle with the new way of Jesus' sacrifice, the author writes,

"By this the Holy Spirit indicates the way into the holy places" (Heb 9:8)

The Holy Spirit indicates **Jesus** "is The Way, the Truth, the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Jesus" (John 14:6)

There's the abandoning God's people, forsaking gathering together (10:25).

I'm No Longer Afraid to Speak and Live My Truth

You can see the "subjective" centre – **My** Truth. What about GOD's Truth? His Answer:

I'm No Longer Afraid To Break Free from the Chains of Biblical Inerrancy -

*For He is the Word **WITHIN ME** that reveals and guides me ABOVE ALL things . . . My heart has outgrown your Scripture idolatry.*

There's the undermining of God's word.

Then we start "doing what's right in our own eyes."

Here we see the Gospel-twisting outcome of abandoning God's people, undermining His word

God Didn't Kill Jesus, Religious Villains Did The Trick –

Jesus didn't die to save you from an angry God, but to save you from living a life believing He is or ever could be angry with you. Jesus didn't die because it is was required to forgive you.

This guy – a pastor of 22 years! – has he read our passage? Or the book of Hebrews?, which says, "*without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.*"

Or Isaiah 53, the great Messianic passage about the Suffering Servant, that "*it was the Lord's desire to crush His Servant*" – because the cross meant salvation for the world?

Or Mark 3:5,

*"Jesus looked around at them with **ANGER**, grieved at their hardness of heart" (Mk 3:5)*

The Bible doesn't teach,

"God says **NO** to anger"

It says,

"God is **SLOW** to Anger"

Much of the contemporary church has lost true awe, reverence for God . . .

I'm No Longer Afraid To Go to the Hell of Your Faith –

My heart has outgrown your hell and the god you've fabricated to send me there.

. . . [I've heard] I should be trembling in fear and confessing sins

Actually, that is **precisely** what the author of Hebrews writes we should be doing, if we don't have Jesus, the real Jesus.

This guy keeps misrepresenting evangelical Christianity, putting words in our mouth:

*'God is loving, but also just—and His will is to torture you eternally if you don't love Him back in return **in precisely all the right ways**'*

Precisely all the right ways?! That's the very **OPPOSITE** of what true evangelicals teach.

A few weeks ago in Hebrews we learned:

Just like old testaments believers, believers today are faulty! We are faulty.

And that is why the old covenant was not enough,

why the writer of Hebrews also called the old covenant 'faulty'. 8:7-8

*If that first covenant had been **FAULTLESS**, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For God finds fault with them when He says . . .*

KEY:

The old covenant was *faulty* (8:7) because it continued finding fault with the people (8:8)

Because the old covenant did not ultimately **DEAL** with our faults, with our sins.

But **Jesus** is *faultless*, Jesus is *faithful!*

That's why in the New Covenant God says, "*I will remember their sins NO MORE!*" (8:12)

The good news: although we're still faulty, God "finds" no fault in us, because by His faultless sacrifice Jesus paid our price!

Jesus is our confidence of great reward!

JOYOUS REWARD OF GOD FOR THOSE ENDURE IN THE FAITH (10:32-39)

A little "sneak peek" into chapter 11 . . . which 'echoes' a truth of 10:23,

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for HE who promised is faithful.

By faith Sarah received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered HIM faithful who had promised!" (11:11)

The promise Sarah referred to is very special promise God made to Abraham, in Genesis 12, that all nations would be blessed through Abraham & Sarah's offspring:

1 descendant in particular: the **Messiah**, the **Christ**.

When God formalised His promise by making a covenant (lit. "cutting") a covenant with Abe, God cut some animals in half⁵, as in those days that's what two people/two parties did when forming a covenant, as each person would walk between the carcasses, expressing,

"Treat me like this animal, if I fail to keep the terms of our covenant!"

[in my childhood days, kids said, 'Cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye!']

In that day, one party would walk through, and then the other would do the same.

"Treat me like this animal, if I fail to keep the terms of our covenant!"

Please catch this:

When God made the covenant with Abraham, ONLY God walked through the split animals. The covenant promise of Messiah coming to bless the world was unilateral, unconditional.

HE who promised is faithful!

By His action of being the only party to walk through the carcasses, God was saying,

If I fail – I die.

If you fail – I die!

This is exactly what Jesus did on the cross for us!

We failed – but He died in our place!

The good news is very opposite of:

"if you don't love Him back in return — in precisely all the right ways – you'll be judged.

NO! Jesus was judged for us because we do not love God in all the right ways.

The confidence of our reward is that HE who promised is faithful!

Faith is not 'believing in ourselves'.

Faith is not relying on our achievements/merit.

Faith is relying on Jesus' faithfulness!

Jesus is faithful, even when we are not!

⁵ This occurred in Genesis chapter 15. Be sure to read Jeremiah 34:18 (in the OLD covenant).

This is why we need to cling to Christ, persevere at trusting *in Jesus*.

So we need to encourage one another with “reminders” of many ways that Jesus is Better!

See, if you don’t help me to be freshly, regularly awestruck by Jesus, I will start becoming like the *“I’m no longer afraid guy”*, when I should be afraid of becoming like him!

And if a pastor slips away from God’s people & word, certainly lay people can, too!

Can we please invite one another to speak wonderful words of life into each other’s lives?

Remember, Jesus knows your pain of alienation/rejection/injustice even more deeply than you

Thank you, brother, for your brotherly love.

That ugly sin of yours—Jesus has sent it as far as East is from West, He remembers it no more!

Thank you, sister, how I needed to hear that.

Introverts you can do this really effectively in 1-on-1 conversations.

So after a strong warning of judgment, now the writer provides encouragement in vv 32-39

Remember, he’s not schizophrenic!

[We saw this in chapter 6 – some in the congregation were *unskilled in God’s word* – spiritually lazy milk-drinking babies, whose *apathy* was veering towards *apostasy*.

Others, he said, are serving each other, maturing, bearing fruit: [2 ‘legs’ of faith & fruit]

“Beloved, in your case, we feel sure of better things – things belonging to salvation!

. . . land that produces a useful crop will receive a blessing from God” (6:9, 7)

Any congregation has a mix of true believers who *possess* faith, and others who only *profess* faith.

As with Jesus’ parable of the *Wheat & Tares*, sometimes it’s hard to tell the difference.

a warning to some

encouragement to others]

So it is in chapter 10.

Verse 25 said *“do not neglect to meet together as is the habit of SOME”* (not all)

[and the author is humble enough to write “we” in the warning of v. 26,

“if we go on sinning deliberately”. None of us are beyond sin’s deceptiveness!]

Now of others, he commends their spiritual endurance & fruitfulness: 32-35,

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward!

You’re weren’t ashamed of Jesus in public then! Don’t be now!

You reminded each other of The Day drawing near, and viewed your possessions in light of eternity. So keep on laying up treasures in heaven & meeting each other’s needs!

We might need encouragement to endure by faith through **PHYSICAL/HEALTH** trials

This week, some at GBC have had eye problems, heart problems.

Some years ago a gentleman wrote article was entitled, *"My Wife Pushes Me Around."* You'd think the article dealt with a husband being pushed around by an overbearing wife!

Then you see a picture of the writer beside the title. He was in a wheelchair, and his wife stood behind him. She literally pushed him around, and he was grateful.

Les Tarr was a pastor for 22 years. Tubercular meningitis suddenly left him paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair.

He could have just packed in the ministry, *"this is what I get for 22 faithful years?!"*

He could have even packed in the faith from discouragement.

But the practical & spiritual encouragement his family and church family were unfailing sources of strength as he faced his severe trial & new limitations. As he journeyed with Jesus along the new difficult path, he saw God opening new doors of ministry for him. He found opportunities in Christian writing, teaching in a seminary, as well as flourishing ministry of encouragement to the physically ailing!

Les could have just asked, *"why me, God?!"*, and wallowed in misery in his trial. But the people of God encouraged Les to endure in faithful service, they fanned the flame of God gifting. Basically, they reminded him that Jesus is Better than any alternative!

He testified: *"As simply as I can express it, I contend that God worked a miracle inside me. He did not lift me out of the wheelchair, but He has given the grace and the strength to be thankful and contented to serve Him in the wheelchair. And to be grateful that people care enough to push me around."*

God's grace, through God's people, met his needs and kept him going, persevering

This is what we need, brothers and sisters! Until Jesus returns.

And Come Lord Jesus! Come!

But as much as WW3 seems too close for comfort, the return of Jesus in our lifetime may not happen. Odds are, we'll need to endure in an increasingly hostile, anti-Christian world.

So the writer continues, verse 36-39

For you have [still!!!] need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For [citing the prophet Habakkuk]

"Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; and my righteous one shall live by faith, & if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

We don't "drift" into perseverance & spiritual maturity.

The forces of this fallen world pull Christians downward, grabbing at spiritual coattails in order to hold us back from true Christian growth.

Our author knows that progress in the Christian life does not just "happen"; either we choose to press on & move ahead, or we stagnate spiritually until we start sliding back down the hill.

We might need to endure by faith through a **SPIRITUAL** crisis.

500 years ago, in 1517, when Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses to effectively start the Reformation, that same year Luther had been teaching the book of Hebrews to his theology students in Wittenberg – an exceptionally difficult time.

During this crisis, the message of Hebrews came to him with startling relevance & deep assurance. Teaching through chapter 10 – this chapter – and its invitation into the sanctuary of heaven because Jesus opened the way, Luther writes:

“Christ crossed over first of all, and He smooths the exceedingly rough road ... For he who relies on Christ through faith is CARRIED ON THE SHOULDERS CHRIST.”

As persecution of believers escalates as it did in Luther’s day, Christians will do well to recall Luther’s encouragement, that we are *‘carried on the shoulders of Christ’*.

He who promised is Faithful!

Faithful is He who paid our price and paved the way for us!

Those who endure by faith in Christ may live confident of a great reward!

Charles Spurgeon said this of genuine saving faith:

“A little faith will take your soul to heaven; but a great faith will bring heaven to your soul”

I’d add, “ . . . *bring heaven to your fellowship!”*

May our fellowship of God’s people be a place which, whatever the hazards, the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it.

➤ Gospel Invitation:

Being the 4th warning passage! . . . it’s appropriate to plead with those not yet Christians:

You don’t need to “have a fearful expectation of judgment” of “falling into the hands of the living God”!

Instead, you can be welcomed by the embrace of the Living God – like the Prodigal son, like Paul the persecutor, or any other unworthy sinner, who repents & trust in the astounding grace of God found in the faultless sacrifice of the Son.

Will you – today – cry out to this God of grace & mercy, and confess you need for Jesus, and you desire not to live in your predicament for even one more day, and RELY on Him in repentant faith, gaining a *confidence which has a great reward, an abiding one?!*

PRAYER

CLOSING SONG:

By Faith (Getty)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jesus is Better than ANY Alternatives

Those who endure by faith in Christ may live confident of a great reward!

- 1] In what notable ways does our culture tend to devalue enduring through commitments or responsibilities?
- 2] Why do you think the author gives yet another warning about 'enduring in the faith' (2:1-4, 3:7-4:7, 6:4-8, now 10:26-31). How real a risk is forfeiting the faith today? How important is enduring?

Just Judgment of God on those who Forfeit the faith (10:26-31)

- 3a] How does the complex nature of the sin in v.26 ('ongoing', 'deliberate', after gospel reception) make it definitive? (How does this kind of sin in particular nullify the sacrifice for sins?)
 - b] How does the comparison with Mosaic covenant (10:28, cp. Num 15:30) help the argument?
 - c] Do you think this sin is the same as that of 6:4-6? What sounds similar?
 - d] In your own words, try to describe one or two real-life expressions of this sin. What does it look like?
- 4] What brings a church pastor to think that evangelicals teach if Christians:
"don't love God back in return in precisely all the right ways"
 that *"God's will is to torture us eternally"*?
 What do you think he experienced in his church life? How can we prevent that at GBC?
 How is *"license"* the wrong response to *"legalism"*?

Joyous Reward of God for those Endure in the faith (10:32-39)

- 5] So why's the opposite true? (the opposite of what that 'I'm not afraid' pastor said).
 Who lived in *"precisely all the right ways"*?
 Finish the lines: " who promised is faithful" (10:23)
"she considered faithful who had promised" (11:11)
- 6] The "promise" referred to in Question 5 and Heb 11:11 related to Messiah descending through Abraham and Sarah. God solemnized this promise with a covenant. When ancients made (lit., 'cut') a covenant, what did the symbol of cutting animals & walking through them communicate? So, in Genesis 15 (God's covenant with Abraham about Messiah being promised to descend from Abe and bless the world), how did God's action communicate:
If I fail – I die.
If you fail – I die!
 And what does this have to do with Jesus the Messiah, and the Cross?
- 7] In light of Qs 5 & 6, what is "faith", the thing we endure in?
- 8] We discussed "assurance of salvation" a couple of times now, because the writer has. Do you still struggle with assurance? If so, what "leg" – faith or fruit – causes bigger angst? What do you think God wants you to focus on? Or is 'Whom should your focus be on' a better Q?
- 9] When we are feeling slack, feeling like neglecting fellowship (10:26), what truths about Jesus being "Better" can we encourage one another with?
 Verse 32 suggests, *"recall your **early** days"* in the faith, then describes previous endurance.
 So what was it about Jesus that spurred you on at your conversion?
 What do stories like the pastor "pushed around" in his wheel chair do to stoke you up?
 What does Luther's line do for you?:
"he who relies on Christ through faith is carried on the shoulders Christ"