**Spiritual Infantilism - Spiritual Stanley Epidemic**

Message that could cause attendance to decline - on the fence Christians - Sunday morning Christian - live the rest of the week like you want - this section of scriptures doesn’t allow for that.

Hebrews - 5:10 Priesthood of Jesus Christ - Melchizedek - need to be mature

Hard for the audience to understand Jesus as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek because they have become dull of hearing

Become slack and lazy in their spiritual life -

Difficult for them to understand - so before he moves forward he wants to rattle their cage - give them a wake up call -

Parenthetical teaching - on the danger of settling and backsliding - prep them

Major theme of the book is preventing a falling away - because that is the context of the book - the author is writing to people endanger of falling away from Jesus Christ.

Then author will go back to Melchizedek in Chapter 7

Outline

- 5:11-14 - the case of arrested development - spiritual infancy
- 6:1-3 - a call to press on toward spiritual maturity
- 6:4-8 - a cautionary warning about falling away - spiritual apostasy
- 6:9-12 - expresses a confident hope and encouragement to spiritual progress

**Hbr 5:11** of whom we have much to say, and **hard to explain**, since you have become **dull of hearing**.

Whom - Jesus and Melchizedek

I want to tell you more - hard to explain because you will have a hard time understanding

Become Dull = slothful - slow - lazy - or stupid - Greek writing - Lion without the use of limbs - numbness - Novocain

The were not that way by nature but by **choice**

Everything we need to grow, and be on a path to maturity - we already have - everything we need is available to us.

**2Pe 1:3** as His divine power has given to us all things that [pertain] to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,
The Hebrews - didn’t take advantage of the resources available to grow and mature.

Remember - they are suffering under persecution - experiencing the persecution - lost bearing - storm is rising - not ready for it.

Things are getting tough - and uncomfortable to be a Christian - they had become dull in hearing - previously they were alive and moving forward in growth and maturity

**1Pe 5:8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

**1Cr 9:25** Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

Though they were growing once - now they had stopped growing - and now they were stunted - arrested development

Conflict is the norm for the Christian - spiritual battle - uphill battle - power of the holy spirit - struggle but we are not alone

Dull - comes from not and to push. They are no longer moving forward.

Jesus - low priority, last on the schedule, don’t push for righteousness, push obedience, follow - mission - settle continually

Arrested development - heartbreaking thing - God’s children see His children stop growing -

Pathetic - keep acting like a child

We are called to a childlike faith - but we are to leave the childish things behind us.

We are to be mature yet childlike.

Jesus - redemptive thing about Christianity - Jesus redeems our difficulties - and uses them for our growth. Jesus redeems the drama of life - the unavoidable circumstance and he uses them for our good.

**Rom 8:28** 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.

OK Father - here is a mess - how are you going to make good out of this - beauty for ashes, oil of joy for morning.

**Rom 5:3** And not only [that], but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

**Rom 5:4** and perseverance, character; and character, hope.
Growth is the opportunity to know Jesus more - not give more, not serve more, not be at church more - growth = you know the person of Jesus Christ More, conformed to His likeness.

Goal is an intimate love relationship with Jesus

**Gal 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **Gal 5:23** gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Stopping - no longer moving forward - brought about a dulling

People often when things - get difficult - believe the lie that it is God’s fault - or unwillingness to help - get mad at God

**Hbr 5:12** For though by this time you **ought to be teachers**, you need [someone] to **teach you again the first principles** of the oracles of God; and you have come **to need milk and not solid food**.

Heb 10:32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings:- you experienced persecution before

Ought to be teachers - not everyone a pastor teacher - not preacher fest - they were to be mature - Greek mind set - able to teach - meant they had a mature grasp on the concept they are not novices - Stanley in video - learning how to take care of a baby - not be one.

Should be developed - mature - spiritual eating disorder - ability to digest doctrine weakened - once ate solid food

**2Ti 2:24** And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, **2Ti 2:25** in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, **2Ti 2:26** and [that] they may come to their senses [and escape] the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to [do] his will.

Servant = all of us - doesn’t have to teach - need to be able to teach.

Every Christian ought to be able to articulate the foundations of the faith

Don’t have to be a great teacher - what if somebody needs help - their only help is the gospel of Jesus Christ

Can you articulate to them the basic truths

**Character** - kind and gentle

**Protocol** - teaching and correcting
Hard for you - American Church - pastor is the professional - staff get paid - you do the work - consumer mentality - not Biblical - *feeding a baby illustration airplane, boat, train, superhero*

**Every member is a minister** - desire every member a deacon - we are royal priesthood - we are all on mission

The job of every generation is to discern where the holy spirit is moving/working and get there (RT Kendall)

Look what is at stake! - God may grant those in opposition repentance unto salvation

Can't afford to pass the buck of ministry - when peoples lives are on the line.

Too serious for a somebody else some other time attitude

Elementary principles - or the ABCs - foundations - you should be teaching these things and you are back in first grade - **instead of what was obscure becoming clear - what was clear is becoming obscure.**

Beginning with Chapter 6 - we get some of the ABCs, spoken in a Jewish context

Hbr 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary [principles] of Christ, **let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,**

Elementary teaching about Jesus - correct identity and the scope of the work that Jesus has accomplished

Can't work out way into heaven

Repentance from dead works - because of the work of the cross they have been made righteous - no longer trying to be righteous - gifted righteous

Faith toward God - Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, Eph 2:9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Hbr 6:2 of the **doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.**


**Laying on of hands** - practice of our salvation - send into ministry - healing - impart ministry and the gifts of the Holy spirit - people going out on mission -

**Resurrection from the dead** - the future hope of our salvation - we will be bodily resurrected

There is not only a resurrection of the righteous but the wicked also - Revelation 20 - eternal judgment - There is a judge and there is judgement
Much of this the church doesn’t teach or teaches incorrectly - Hell
Church should be sharp - grasping - tuned - senses sharp

1. Correctly identifying the work and person of Jesus Christ
2. Calling people to repentance and righteousness
3. Baptizing people - salvation and Holy Spirit
4. Sending people out
5. Anointing people for healing
6. Asking the Lord for Spiritual Gifts
7. Looking forward to the return of Christ and the resurrection
8. Warning people of Hell

The point is not to progress beyond the point where we stop talking about these things - or that we never need to be taught again - point - we need to be comprehending, grasping, assimilating, and applying - what we have been taught

That is what they failed to do

**Use it or lose it**

If you are not practicing these things - if you are not able to articulate these things - then it is like they are **stuck in elementary school**

There is nothing wrong with being in elementary school - if you are supposed to be there. Weird if the 26 year old is in third grade.

Not talking about intellectual limitation - **they were there because of choice**.

Writer is busting the readers for having **heard the spiritual truths and never having made them a part of their life**.

If there has been no measurable change in your life - if there has been no **slow and steady progress** - slow is fine - no growth = dull of hearing

Development arrested = hearer of the word - not a doer - Jam 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Come to need milk and not solid food - it is good for a baby to nurse and have a bottle - truly weird for a 29 year old Stanley to have a bottle.

You used to eat food - digressed back to a state where you need milk

Richard Baxter - “Make it your work with diligence to apply the word as you are hearing it . . . Cast not all upon the minister, as those that will go no further than they are carried as by force.... You have work to do as well as the preacher and should be all the time as busy as he . . . you must open your mouths and digest it, for another cannot digest it for you . . . therefore be all the while at work, and abhor an idle heart in hearing.”
You have a responsibility to handle accurately the word of God as much as I do.

Billy Graham said the biggest sin in America is listening to sermons

Fat with sermons - emaciated with action - Dull in hearing - limited self to habitual infancy

Adult that needs milk from a bottle is an anomaly - deviates from the standard, not normal

It is a Refusal to grow - willingness to be dull

**Maturity** - integrate doctrine and duty - concerned about what the bible has to say and you are passionate about doing it.

Satan enjoys seeing Christians getting a head knowledge

Normal = right teaching and right living

Satan enjoying people getting a head knowledge of victory - without heart experience - believers are lulled into a sense of false security - Satan finds them an easy prey

Ultimate test of **spiritual maturity is obedience** - the way that we obey the Lord - not singing and lifting hands - how will we respond to difficult circumstances

Lots of people say they love me - Jesus said pick up your cross and follow me.

Obedience to the King = maturity.

**Hbr 5:13** For everyone who partakes [only] of milk [is] **unskilled in the word of righteousness**, for he is a babe.

Milk drinkers - are unskilled - not tested - A baby lacks the ability to make sound decision - immature person has no successful experience in applying the scriptures

Biblical problem solving in their life - Never endeavored to live Biblically - to think Biblically - to see things biblically - to act biblically

They haven’t processed biblically - decisions are based on pragmatism - easiest way out - not biblicism - Concerned with what it practical - not with what is holy - Look for what suits them - not what honors God

This Mindset - Christian will remain in a place of spiritual immaturity - development is arrested - not for lack of ability - **lack of integrity**

That person needs to be told what to do and how to do it just like a child - Coerced or cajoled or enticed - bribed to follow through.
Mature Christians - make biblical decisions - and trusts in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit when it comes to followthrough. They don’t need their hands held - to deal with life biblically - and they have follow through.

**Hbr 5:14** But *solid food* belongs to those who are of **full age**, [that is], those who **by reason of use** have their **senses exercised to discern both good and evil**.

Mature Christian can handle solid food - in other words they can get in the word and get from it wisdom for Holy Living -

**by reason of use** = **by constant use** - exercise machines - yard sales - hardly used -

**senses exercised** - **trained themselves** - strength - quickness - reflexes

They can grasp doctrine and make decisions - Need both together

**2Ti 2:15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Senses are trained by the word of God - capacity to make intelligent Christian decisions - even if they aren’t very smart - biblical wisdom

Make mistakes - learn from them - dog returning to vomit - growth - moving out - taking ht eland - walking in the promise

Appreciates how the Bible speaks today - always relevant to their life - nothing more relevant than Jesus and the Gospel - makes us relevant

Senses trained - Cultivated a keen sense of caution in the presence of moral danger.

Make decisions between good results and bad results

**Hbr 6:1** Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary [principles] of Christ, **let us go on to perfection**.

Move on from the ABCs and press on toward maturity

In the Christian life we are either moving forward or backward - climbing or falling - winning or losing - static status quo Christianity - is a delusion - dullness = fall

Stay sharp - stay focused - press on to maturity

**Hbr 6:3** And this we will **[fn]** do if God permits.

Get back to our study of Jesus High Priest - order of Melchizedek