

# Not slothful in following on. (Quality: Very good)

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 6 and the 12th verse.
- That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
- Chapter 6, verse 12, the Epistle to the Hebrews. I judge this to be a word which all sinners following on to know the Lord need to be reminded of again and again.
- As you desire them to be between your soul and God.
- It may be sometimes as you have read the word of God going through the Epistle to the Hebrews, you have lighted on this chapter.
- [ 1 : 5 8 ] And in the first half of it, the context, there is that which is very solemn to contemplate. And the heading of the page is, the danger of falling away.
- And these godly Hebrews, making up the Church of Christ in Judea, were in a special danger of falling away.
- In the Gospels, you will remember, it is said that there were those disciples who were attached to Jesus Christ. And they followed him a while.
- And then on one occasion, he set forth the truth, as he alone could do it, in the awfulness of its divine sovereignty.
- And he declared, it is the spirit that quickeneth, and the flesh profiteth nothing. And then the word of God goes on.
- [ 3 : 1 2 ] This is a hard saying, said some of the disciples. Who can hear it from that? Many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.
- And now to do that is called apostasy. And that is the danger the Apostle Paul is seeking to bring before these godly Hebrews at this time, in the epistle to the Hebrews, the great danger of becoming apostates.
- And you might say, what is it to be an apostate? A backslider is one who has been in the way, straight out of it, and by grace is brought back again.
- Think of the petition of the psalmist. I have gone astray like a lost sheep. But I do not forget thy commandments.
- The backslider, although he has turned aside for the time from the way of God, and is captivated by either the world, the flesh, or the devil, he still knows deep down in his heart where he is and what he has professed to be.
- [ 4 : 3 8 ] And sooner or later, he will be brought into a solemn concern that he might be brought back again unto God and live the life of the righteous.
- And now an apostate is one who makes up his mind deliberately, and he behaves willfully in turning his back on God and godliness to have no more to do with God or godliness, but go back into the world and live as worldlings do.

And now the apostle Paul warns these godly Hebrews of the great danger of being left to behave like that.

And he goes to great lengths to show in how far some may go and look like being disciples for a while, and then they give it all up, and as I have said, turn their backs on God and godliness.

But there is one verse which is very pleasing to me in the immediate context. The apostle Paul says to these godly Hebrews, but beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

[ 6 : 15 ] For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

There were those fruits which said to the apostle Paul that they could only be borne by those who possess the root of the matter within.

And mark the word in, it is to do with love. He that loveth is born of God, and that which you do for God, feeling in your heart, a love in doing it, because of who he is, and his people, who they are, that bespeaks you to be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Love is the fulfilling of the law. And we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. And now, it is well to have before our mind's eye this danger of falling away.

You and I, by the grace of God, we humbly hope, will be favored to endure unto the end in our profession of Jesus' name. But you who are in life's afternoon and life's morning may live to see that there are many who will become apostates as the world becomes yet more wicked and the times become more perilous.

[ 8 : 13 ] And remember, the tender word of Jesus when he saw the disciples turning their backs upon him and his truth, and he had shown them great kindness and befriended them, and he said to his own immediate disciples, and will ye also go away?

And dear Peter, had it in his heart to supply a beautiful answer. Lord, if we should go away, where should we go?

To whom can we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and assure thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And now I want, as the Lord should help me, to look at this word from two or three viewpoints. And first of all, it might be well to look at the opening sentence, that ye be not slothful.

A very solemn word to contemplate regarding religion, and living in accordance with a profession of the name of Jesus.

[ 9 : 37 ] O very solemn, O very solemn, if any with names on church folds, professing to follow the Lord Jesus in their everyday life, should be left to be slothful.

and now, godly scholars tell us that it has this meaning also, and the apostle Paul refers to it in this same epistle to the Hebrews, speaks about them that are dull of hearing.

men. And dear friends, it is very solemn to contemplate when you think how long you have lived, and how much you have heard from the pulpit concerning the gospel of the grace of God, and how little of it in proportion to what you have heard, you have been concerned to reduce to practice.

And now, preacher and people alike must all plead guilty here. There are times when you may hear the gospel, and you listen, and deep down in your heart you feel, oh, that is just what I want in my soul's experience, and that is the life I desire to live, and to follow on to know the Lord.

But, when the next day dawns, duties to do, difficulties to face, life's responsibilities descend upon you, and your mind is churned up by what you are by nature, and you are dull of hearing, and reducing to practice what you have heard, and you come in the category, then, of being slow-ful.

[ 11 : 45 ] And in the immediate context, the Apostle Paul uses another word, and you must not balk at it, dear friends, neither preacher of people, and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.

As though the Apostle Paul said, I have told you, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, although I have showed you the danger of falling away.

I entertain in my heart a hope concerning you that you are indeed desirous to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, but I would counsel you to exercise diligence that your hope may yet be established, strengthened, brightened, and that you might come to the full assurance of hope, and know beyond all questioning, matters are right between your soul and God.

And now that is really the setting of the subject, that you be not slothful. And it means this, as I interpret it, as grace is given, do not take things for granted regarding your soul's welfare.

It may be, and it is the truth with many of you under Union Chapel Roof, that you have come up to worship herein from baby days onward, but you must not build up your hope of heaven on the strength of regularity in being found in your accustomed seat whenever the doors are open for the worship of God.

[ 14 : 00 ] Do not take things for granted like that. And then I judge it means this, and I would like to say this with great caution, and yet it must be said that you be not slothful.

Do not settle down on your past experience. In my ministerial life, journeying about among the causes of truth, as I have done here and there, up and down our land, I have come in touch with some who could tell you a little of the dealings of God with their souls, but it was so many years back that they could tell out.

And when you sought to get somewhat of what their present experience was, then they seemed to have nothing to tell as to how they were following on to know the Lord, then, and now there is a danger.

Nor can the best experience past the life of faith maintain. No, no, it will not do to settle down on your past experience and in telling out the dealings of God with your soul to go up to the time when you followed the Lord in the baptismal waters and your name was inscribed on the church roll.

Oh, farther than this you must go as grace is given that you be not slothful. I've thought of the Apostle Paul, and I have no doubt some of you have, in how he worded one of his desires that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings and be made conformable to his death.

[ 16 : 16 ] Dear friends, that I may know him. And now, if there was a man on the earth at that time that did know him, above many, many, professing the name of Jesus, it was the Apostle Paul.

But, he still wanted to know yet more, than shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

And now, that is the meaning, that you be not slothful. And the Apostle Peter, gives the same injunction, wherefore the brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

And there is a word in the Proverbs which you might have overlooked. The soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

There is so much within and without arising from what one is by nature and the world and the spirit of it and attempting devil that seeks at all times to oppose us in following on to know the Lord.

[ 17 : 38 ] And you do need divine aid that you be not slothful. And then ere I come to open up the subject from another viewpoint, there is a word in the preceding chapter, which to me is very solemn to consider, but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.

Do listen, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, who by reason of use, it is their everyday behavior to have their senses exercised in following on to know the Lord.

And he speaks in the context to that verse, for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God and to become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat.

As though the apostle Paul said, here are you having your names on the church roll many years some of you, for it might have been at least thirty to forty years beyond the days of Pentecost when the epistle to the Hebrews was sent and it is as though the apostle says here are you having made such a long profession and as yet you know but very little more than what is the ABC of the things of God there remain very much more land in the land of promise yet to be possessed that you be not slow for oh you and I need more grace to be more diligent in the things of God to get down into the deep things of

God and to climb the heavenly heights to know my Jesus crucified by far excels all things beside that you be not slothful and now the apostle Paul goes on and it is very simple how it is worded but it is very deep to get the experience of it as you walk it out followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises followers and now I would like to help you as the Lord to help me how do you feel how do you react in your soul's experience when you hear of one and another who enters into the rest that remain for the people of

[ 21 : 06 ] God and especially those among whom you may have lived and moved those that are known to you sometimes when you hear of those farther off who have gone out of time into eternity you may have the immediate reaction as to whether they did possess a hope a good hope and died in the full assurance of it but when there are those round about you and all that is mortal of them is laid in the grave and you may go and stand by it and you hear the preacher say concerning the one laid therein ensuring certain hope of a joyful resurrection to the life everlasting sin do you find in your heart a response a well enough a concern to be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises do you go on your way with that feeling be this religion mine oh it is good to have such a feeling because the dead know not anything about it it is the living who will lay these things to heart and now let us look at this wording followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises the apostle

Paul uses the illustration of Abraham and how God made promises to him and then he declares and so after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise and now what does it mean to be a follower of them the meaning is that you will be taught of God as they were and being taught of God as they were you will often feel as they felt and you will tread in the same steps that they trod and you will find in your soul somewhat of the same exercises and you will enter into somewhat of what their experiences were as in their day they desired to live right and at the last to die right and endured in their profession of

Jesus name followers I like how that is worded followers in their convictions of sin there will be that inevitably whatever modernist preachers may say in trying to cut the word of God to pieces and declare this is not to be received and that is not to be believed it still remains the Holy Ghost will make the soul feel its sad condition for the sick and not the whole need the good physician and when you are following on to know the Lord and sometimes troubled as you look within conscious of your sinnership your guiltiness before God you will find in the sacred pages there is that set forth which describes how you feel and you will be able to walk it may be with

Job when he said behold I am vile or it may be with Isaiah when he said from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it but wounds and bruises putrefying sores or it might be with the apostle Paul when he said oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death conscious of what a sinner he really was you will find too not only in the word of God you will find when you look through the hymns that the godly have composed that they tell out what their inner experience was and sometimes what they say describes just how you feel and you and the hymn writer can walk in agreement in the things of god and that bespeaks you to be a follower of them in their convictions of sin maybe in the early days of the dealings of god i know it was so with me i felt quite surprised in the early dealings of god with me to find some hymns that were in our hymn book and i wondered that such language had been printed and strange to say it was language that was used by some hymn writers who in other pages climbed the heavenly heights and strung their hearts to joyful notes but then at another time it was indeed on a mournful string and as i was but young in the things of god i had to wait a while to get the explanation of that but as you journey on through life you can understand how the hymn writers wrote different hymns at different times and you see the same thing in the

Psalms of David for he takes down his heart and he says oh give thanks unto the lord for he is good for his mercy endureth forever but then another time he takes it down and he says leave not my soul destitute take not thy holy spirit from me and he tells out what is the truth according to his soul's experience at whatever time it was and that is how you will feel as you become a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises and how you will follow them too in their confessions of sin and how glad you will be to follow them in the petitions that they recorded before God how you will say as

[ 28 : 36 ] David did show me a token for good remember me oh Lord with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people oh visit me with thy salvation and glad you will be to use scripture language before the throne of grace and plead it but in doing that it bespeaks you to be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises then you will also be a follower of them in what their troubles are because the psalmist says good Asaph they are not in trouble as other men godly men which you know every man the plague of his own heart man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward but when a sinner is born again he is born to uncommon troubles and he comes then into soul troubles and he finds as he journeys on through life that his soul reacts to the things in the world at large and sometimes he is in heaviness through much temptation and then there is what one is by nature within and he cannot always heed the word the apostle

Paul gave to these godly Hebrews take heed therefore brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God all he can say is Lord I believe oh help my unbelief but he does desire even then to follow on and then much might be said about these troubles but I not go into them in any detail they are as I have said soul troubles when you feel I would but cannot pray and when as regards being a follower you feel like Peter did long ago and Peter followed afar off when you feel to come oh so short in all that you would be and do in living the life of the righteous and these things bring sorrows upon you and you can say sometimes like the psalmist did

I am poor and sorrowful let thy salvation oh lord set me up on high not only so you will be a follower of them in what their fears were and their faintings and their trials but there is one viewpoint of this following I want to emphasize and now if you and I are indeed followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises then you will be like Bunyan's pilgrim you will have that deep down in your heart there is no discouragement shall make him once relent his first vowed intent to be a pilgrim and this question of following on to know the Lord sometimes is seen from this viewpoint think of

Ruth and as you read in the book of Ruth when Naomi saw that Ruth's mind was made up to go with her and that her great concern was thy people should be my people thy God should be my God she left off trying to argue with her to go back to the land she was born in because she could discern that she had become a follower and desired to be an Israelite indeed and I thought to as I pondered this subject there is this type of following you see it with dear Job in all that he suffered and his sufferings were beyond words to describe and they came upon him in one day and yet when his friends misjudged him and sought to give their views of the dealings of

God with him there was this deep down in Job's heart I would seek unto God and unto God would I commit my cause and one great word he declares though he slay me yet I will trust in him and now that is what it really is to be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises you see it too even with Jonah when he was in the whale's belly and worse still as he tells us in the book of Jonah for it was Jonah that told us there out of the belly of hell cried I and what did he say though I am cast out of thy sight I will look again toward thy holy temple and now that is following those feeble desires and wishes so weak also tis

[ 34 : 49 ] Jesus inspires and bids you still see that he be not slothful but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises much might be said under that heading but then let us look at this word promises and now in one viewpoint of it all these promises are comprehended in one this is the promise which he hath promised us eternal life but then there were things promised to Abraham as I hinted at earlier on in the sermon and he waited on God to see those things fulfilled in some measure although he did not see some of them fully fulfilled but they are being fulfilled and they will be ere time shall cease to be as you read in the eleventh chapter where it tells us these all died in faith not having received the promises in the full fulfillment of them and that is the meaning but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced them and believed they would be fulfilled and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country yes oh if you are one of these followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises you will have a feeling like this we have no abiding city here then let us live as pilgrims do let not the world our rest appear but let us haste from all below but then you and

I have not just the life to live that Abraham was called to live before the word of God was gathered together not even one page of it for Abraham to read we have the word of God in the fullness of it and that is to us as it were the land of promise so that when you look at the promises in the plural you can interpret this without the preacher going into too many details when you try to pray what do you pray for and now do let your consciences tell you that when you do go aside into secret places and try to pray you have an aim you have an urge in your breast you have something that you do indeed desire the Lord will do for you do for your never dying soul that you might be fitted not only for time but eternity too and now there is a word like this and they shall be all taught of

God and that word will allure you and you will be saying sometimes before God realizing how ignorant you are of God and godliness lead me in thy truth and teach me oh what a mercy it is to be taught of God to have just a little religion that is given to us by revelation and not gathered together by dint of education another promise is and that is to rejoice in hope of life eternal and as you hope in God so you wait upon him that he will strengthen your hope and brighten it and enable you to feel it is a good hope through grace and that it will avail you while you live and when you die another promise is you do desire to know the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered and that you desire to ask him for well now every time you draw near to

God it comes in your petitions that you might realize in your own soul's experience the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin yes and then there is this that you will be concerned to inherit out of the promises and that is to get good for your soul and all that comes upon you in life's journey and do you know it is a great mark I can assure you it is a sure mark of a sinner being born again when things come into his life her life as the case may be which were looked not for events that before so that your life can never be the same again because of it and yet instead of you reacting to it as it comes into your life and being it may be rebellious because it has been ordered to come upon you you desire the

Lord to make it a blessing indeed for your soul that you may get good out of it and that will recompense you whatever suffering may come through the dealings of God with you at that time let my soul live and it shall praise thee let thy judgments help me oh dear friends I've told you not a few times that sanctified troubles are a very blessed evidence of being a pilgrim to Canaan bound and you will desire this as you follow on to know the Lord you will desire wisdom that you might enter into that word of the psalmist who so is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the

[ 42 : 10 ] Lord and this will be in your petitions too as you follow on that you may follow on to the end that you may be amongst those people of whom the saviour said either shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved oh how you will feel at times Lord hast thou made me know thy ways conduct me in thy fear and grant me such supplies of grace that I may persevere and there will be this as I read to you in the chapter which I read in this following on and to be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises wherefore seeing we also encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses some of whom we have known in our journey through life who have lived well and died well let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto

Jesus looking off all beside and remembering as you think of these dear old testament pilgrims and what many of them endured and yet they were helped to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises thy grace sufficed saints of old it made them strong it made them bold and it suffices still that ye be not slothful but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises it means to be steadfast in believing to hope against hope and it means that the concern of your soul is of such importance before your mind's eyes that whatever opposition you may meet you desire as grace is given still to press on follow on to know the Lord and endure whatever scorn or criticism from the world there may be believing that it is of unspeakable importance to have a part and a lot in the salvation of God brethren those who come to bliss come through sore temptations may we all remember in this pray for faith and patience amen to guess please because