



Hebrews 5:11-6:20 : Growing to maturity

Note that this passage is hard, and may well bring up serious pastoral issues for people - wondering about their own salvation, or that of other people. Be prepared to work hard at keeping the discussion gentle and sensitive. It is important not to disappear down abstract theological rabbit holes which have the potential to leave people with tender consciences anxious about their own state before God.

It might be good to start with a quick recap - what have been the main themes of Hebrews so far? What have we learned about the recipients of this letter and the challenges they were facing?

The rebuke - 5:11-6:3

- How would you summarise the problem for the Hebrew Christians?
- What do you think it looks like to move 'forward to maturity'?
- Is there anything holding you back in this regard?

The warning - 6:4-12

- What do you think it means to fall away (v5)?

- What is it about falling away that makes a return to repentance 'impossible'?
- Why do you think this warning is here, if the author is actually confident about the Hebrew Christians' salvation (as indicated in v9)?
- How do these verses make you feel? (Worried, for yourself or others? Sad?) How can we process those feelings helpfully?

The encouragement - 6:13-20

- Why did God swear an oath to Abraham, and what does that have to do with us?
- What is our hope?
- How can we take hold of Jesus and find security in him in the week ahead?

Thoughts for Junior Church

A lot of this passage is really, really hard for kids - and for sensitive children, the warning in particular may be very difficult to present in a way which will be helpful (and not upsetting). I would recommend focusing on 5:11-14 and 6:13-20. You could think about:

Growing up - how is growing up as a Christian like (and perhaps unlike) growing up as a child? Most children will understand the move from milk to solid food; it would be good to whet their appetites for the depths of the gospel which they will be able to experience as they get older.

Jesus our Anchor - how do anchors work? When might you be really glad of an anchor? How is Jesus like an anchor?

Jesus our Forerunner - Jesus has gone ahead of us into heaven, and is with God the Father. (You could use the architecture of the temple to illustrate this - it will come in handy in future weeks, I expect!) We can be sure that he will take us to be with him. John 14:3 might be a useful cross-reference.