

How Are We to Know Where We Are to Go?

Hebrews 10:39

“But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.”

For the previous twelve verses (vs. 26-38), the writer had been describing those who profess faith in Christ but shrink back under persecution. Some profess Christianity but are not Christ’s (Matt. 7:22). Some have a spoken spirituality (“Lord”), a doctrinal mentality (“**did we not prophecy in your name?**”) and a personal morality (“**did we not do many wonderful things?**”), and yet face eternal destruction. With the people of Matthew 7 in mind, and the verse before us, how are we to know where we are to go?

I. You can be absolutely certain that you rest in God’s favor.

“But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction.” How can the writer of Hebrews be so sure?

A. True Christianity places faith in God, not faith in oneself.

This is the message of Hebrews. The content of Hebrews is Christ; His person and work is central.

The more you say, “Look at me,” the less likely God’s favor rests on you. I must look to Christ.

“Look to Me, and be saved...: for I am God, and there is no one else” (Isa. 45:22; see Num. 21).

B. God has done for us in Christ what we cannot do ourselves.

The more you comprehend the person and work of Christ, the closer you draw near to God.

“Therefore, since we have confidence [in Him]... let us draw near to God” (Hebrews 10:19-22).

The professing believers in Matt. 7:22, all of whom were under wrath, put trust in themselves.

II. You can be absolutely certain of His favor because of Christ’s faithfulness to His promises.

“But (we) are those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.” The object of our faith secures us.

The world gets this reversed. The natural course of man when in trouble is to make promises to God.

The gospel, however, takes the sinner and turns the eye of faith toward all the promises of God.

“For God so loved the world that He gave us His Son, that whoever trusts Him will not perish, but will have life eternal” (John 3:16). Have you come to trust the life, death, and resurrection of Christ?

A. The preservation of your soul is guaranteed by Christ in the gospels.

“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:39). *“I give eternal life to them and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one”* (John 10:28-30).

B. The preservation of your soul is pictured by Christ in the gospels.

(Turn to John 21). Peter is one of seven disciples fishing all night in the Sea of Galilee, catching nothing. Peter has denied knowing Christ in Caiaphas’ courtyard at a charcoal fire. Jesus appears on the shores of Galilee, building a charcoal fire. Initially unrecognized, He shouts that the disciples should cast their nets to the other side of the boat. Peter and the disciples caught such a great number that *“they were not able to haul it in”* (v. 6). John said to Peter, “It is the Lord” (v. 7). Hearing this, Peter *“threw himself”* (Greek, “to plunge without caring where”) into the water to get to Jesus. Do you not imagine that Peter is thinking about his curse and denial?

The Bible gives us the specific number of fish caught – **153**. Why this number? In the Hebrew alphabet, letters double as numbers. This is true in Greek as well, but not English. In Hebrew 153 is the *gematria* for *Beni Ha Elohim* (“Sons of God”). It is important to the power of Jesus to hold on to what He catches. We can never be the fish that got away! The net will not tear. The 153 fish testify that the sons of God captured by His grace will never be lost from His grip.