

STRUCTURE

5:11–6:8

Confrontation
and Warning

Confrontation about Current Condition (5:11–14)

Call (6:1–3)

Warning about a Certainty (6:4–8)

6:9–20

Comfort and
Encouragement

Confidence about Core Condition (6:9–10)

Call (6:11–12)

Reassurance about a Certainty (6:13–20)

UNIFYING THEME

Don't let your current sluggishness in hearing [God's Son speech] lead you to fall away beyond restore, but rather build on the foundation of the gospel you've received and let God carry you along to maturity in Christ by diligently cultivating full assurance of hope until the end in Jesus, who has secured our hope.

PASTOR'S AIM

The pastor aims:

to **warn** those who are not maturing in Christ of the danger and outcome of falling away from Christ and

to **encourage** those who genuinely have fled in faith to God for refuge to hold fast to that hope set before them until the end, with full assurance.

Sample Response to Hebrews 5:11–6:20 | Mary Hannah

Context

The pastor turns in **Heb 4:14–5:10** to focus on Jesus's high-priesthood after the order of Melchizedek;

but, in **Heb 5:11–6:20**, the pastor notes that it's hard to explain to them the nature of Christ's priesthood because of their dullness of hearing; the pastor's excursus culminates in a high-priestly focus (6:19–20);

finally, in **Heb 7:1ff** the pastor resumes his main exposition of Jesus's high priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

Confrontation about Current Condition (5:11–14) Though **you** should have matured in Christ by now, you've become dull/sluggish of hearing (see 2:1) and thus need to be re-taught the beginning principles of the Scriptures because you remain *unskilled* in the word about righteousness and *untrained* in distinguishing good from evil.

Educational Illustrations

- Teacher vs. Student
- Child (*milk*) vs. Adult (*solid food*)—levels of education

Call (6:1–3): So, let **us** build on—*rather than lay again (by reverting to Judaism)*—the beginning doctrine of Christ (including initiating experiences of repentance and faith and instructions about what it means to follow Christ), God permitting us, and be carried along to maturity!

*Implicit analogy:
exodus generation in
wilderness!*

Warning about a Certainty (6:4–8): **Those** who are initiated into Christian experience and its benefits but without genuine, persevering faith such that they ultimately squander Christ's saving grace by falling away cannot be restored to repentance because, by their apostasy, they are crucifying and publicly shaming the Son of God.

Implicit logic between **5:11–6:3** and **6:4–8**: *If you don't strive to mature in Christ, then how will you know whether you're a genuine believer or on the path of apostasy? And there's a great deal at stake in the matter of growing in persevering faith vs. spiritually coasting in sluggishness that could develop into apostasy. In fact, the consequences are ultimate: final blessing and final curse!*

Confidence about Core Condition (6:9–10): For **you**, dear friends, **we're** confident of better things (*than the pattern of those who fall away*), the things of salvation, because God will justly honor your past and present obedience in his name, which testifies to your faith's genuineness.

God's justice

Call (6:11–12): [Implicit] **We** desire that **each of you** just as diligently cultivate genuine, fruitful faith to have full assurance of hope *until the end*, such that you won't be sluggish in hearing but will imitate those patiently faith-full who inherit the promises.

Reassurance about a Certainty (6:13–20): As seen in his dealings with Abraham after the test involving Isaac, God promised his children their inheritance and swore by himself they would obtain it to give **us** refugees strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us, which is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul: that Jesus, our forerunner and high priest, grants us access to God in heaven.

God's faithfulness