

PASTOR'S PACKET

BETTER THINGS

Convinced of better things concerning you

Hebrews 6:9-20

THE LIBRARY

A resource for your church, given freely

BISHOP ROBERT W. LYONS, JR.

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A WORD TO FELLOW PASTORS

Pastor's Letter

Better Things

■ A WORD TO FELLOW PASTORS

To the pastor holding this packet:

You know the weight of the warning passages in Hebrews. You have preached them, or avoided them, and either way you have felt their edge. Hebrews 6:4-8 is the hardest of them. And then comes verse 9, and the whole letter turns on a single word: "but." But beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you. This series lives in that turn. I built it for my house first, and then I built it again so it could be dropped into yours. Nothing in the teaching material assumes my context. The titles are suggestions. The voice is meant to become yours.

The packet moves as one motion through your week. The **Series Arc** gives you the whole shape at a glance. The **Preaching Guide** is your study layer: for each of the five weeks it carries the argument of the text, the key terms, and a preaching note. It is preparation, not a manuscript. The **Leader Guide** equips your facilitators. The **Student Guide** is what the group works through together. The **Weekly Companion** goes home with every believer, with a journal prompt, deeper readings, and reflection questions to keep the text working between gatherings.

This is not a program. It is an attempt to move a congregation from the edge of the apostasy warning to the threshold of the better things, and then through the veil to the High Priest who is interceding for them right now. Preach the message on Sunday. Let your groups carry it into community during the week. Use the whole kit, or use the part that serves your context. If your people leave this series anchored to the One within the veil, the kit has done its work.

It is an honor to put this in your hands. Preach it well.

Serving,

A handwritten signature in black ink, with a red cross-like mark at the beginning, reading "Robert Warren Lyons, Jr.".

Bishop Robert Warren Lyons, Jr.

Presiding Bishop, Covenant Reformation of Churches and Ministries

Forged and first preached at The MarketPlace Movement, Dayton, Ohio.

DROP-IN SERIES OVERVIEW

Series Arc

Better Things

■ THE SERIES IN ONE PARAGRAPH

Hebrews 6 holds the sternest warning in the letter and then turns on a single word. After the apostasy warning of verses 4-8, verse 9 says: "But beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, things that accompany salvation." The word "better" appears here for the first time and runs through the rest of the letter like a spine: better hope, better covenant, better promises, better sacrifice, better country, better resurrection. This series follows that turn. The drift question asked what a soul loses by falling away. This series asks what a soul gains by pressing forward, and it ends where the chapter ends: the hope that anchors within the veil, where the forerunner has already gone in.

■ WHERE IT SITS IN HEBREWS

The series occupies the pivot of the letter's central argument.

- Hebrews 5:1-10 introduces the Melchizedek priesthood.
- Hebrews 5:11-6:8 interrupts it: the readers are dull of hearing, immature, and in danger, and the apostasy warning lands.
- **Hebrews 6:9-20 is the pivot:** better things, the call to full assurance, the oath sworn to Abraham, the two immutable things, and the anchor within the veil.
- Hebrews 7:1 resumes the interrupted argument: "For this Melchizedek..."

Chapter 6 is the recalibration chapter. The author stopped because the readers could not yet receive what Chapter 7 carries. This series preaches the passage that prepares a congregation to receive it. That makes it a strong standalone series and a natural on-ramp into a Hebrews 7 series afterward.

■ THE MOVEMENT OF THE SERIES

The arc moves in one direction: from warning, to assurance, to anchor. Week 1 names the better things and the Spirit who makes them real. Week 2 grounds the call in the character of God who does not forget. Week 3 holds up Abraham as the model of faith and patience. Week 4 secures the soul with two unchangeable things. Week 5 brings the congregation to the anchor within the veil and the forerunner who went in ahead of them. A church that walks this arc ends in a settled place.

■ THE FIVE WEEKS

Week 1 -- Better Things (Hebrews 6:9)

The hinge of the letter. The turn from warning to promise, the first of the "better" cascade, and the Spirit as the empowering agent who makes the better things operational rather than merely positional.

Week 2 -- The Work Is on Record (Hebrews 6:10-12)

God is not unjust so as to forget your work and love. The call to move from sluggishness to full assurance, and to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Week 3 -- No Higher Ground (Hebrews 6:13-15)

God swore by Himself because there was none greater. Abraham as the model of aimed, patient endurance that obtains the promise on the other side of the wait.

Week 4 -- It Is Impossible for God to Lie (Hebrews 6:16-18)

The promise and the oath as two immutable things. The security of the soul rests not on a strong commitment God makes against His nature but on His nature itself. The refuge for those who have fled to lay hold of the hope.

Week 5 -- The Forerunner Has Already Gone In (Hebrews 6:19-20)

The anchor of the soul cast upward and inward, within the veil. The forerunner who entered first so that we could follow, and the bridge into the Melchizedek priesthood of Chapter 7.

■ SUGGESTED RHYTHM

The kit is built to move as one motion through the week, but it flexes to your context:

- **Sunday message** from the week's text (the Preaching Guide carries the study layer).
- **Optional midweek deepening** for a Bible study or prayer gathering, going further into the same text.
- **Small groups** during the week, using the Leader Guide and Student Guide.
- **Personal study** for every believer with the Weekly Companion between gatherings.

Run all four layers or only the ones that fit your church. The series stands on the Sunday messages alone and grows richer as you add the others.

■ ADAPTING THIS TO YOUR CONTEXT

The message titles here are suggestions, not requirements. Preach the texts in your own voice and frame them for your own congregation. The Preaching Guide gives you the exegetical backbone for each week so the substance holds wherever you take it. Set the calendar to your own season; the arc does not depend on any particular launch date. What should not change is the destination: a people anchored to the High Priest within the veil.

WEEKLY TEACHING PREP

Preaching Guide

Better Things

This guide is your study layer, not a manuscript. For each of the five weeks it carries the argument of the text, the key terms worth knowing, suggested movements, and a preaching note. Work through it in your own study, then preach from what you carry, in your own voice, to your own people. The Greek terms are given in transliteration so you can speak to them without assuming the language from the pulpit.

— WEEK 1 —

■ BETTER THINGS

Hebrews 6:9 / Acts 2:1-4, 37-41

The Argument

Verse 9 is the hinge of the letter. After the apostasy warning of verses 4-8, the author pivots hard: "But beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, things that accompany salvation." The contrast is deliberate. Everything the warning described, the author does not believe is this congregation's trajectory. The word "better" appears here for the first time and becomes the spine of the rest of the letter.

The better things are not a bonus tier of the Christian life. They accompany salvation, they are inseparable from what salvation is designed to produce at full growth. Acts 2 is what this looks like when the Spirit makes it operational: a frightened community moved from locked doors to bold proclamation in a single day. The Spirit is the empowering agent who turns what is positionally true into what is experientially real.

Key Terms

- *kreitton* (better) -- the first of the comparative cascade that runs through Hebrews: better hope, covenant, promises, sacrifice, country, resurrection.
- *echomena soterias* (things that accompany salvation) -- they cleave to salvation; inseparable from it, not optional add-ons.
- *exousia* and *dunamis* (authority and power) -- Acts 1:8; the commission was already granted, the power to execute it arrived when the Spirit came.

Suggested Movements

1. The hard turn of verse 9; the weight of the word "but" after the warning.
2. "Better" introduced; preview the cascade it opens across the letter.
3. Things that accompany salvation; what it means that they are inseparable, not extra.
4. The Spirit as empowering agent; positional truth made operational.
5. Land it: you are not at the edge of the warning, you are at the threshold of the better things. Press forward.

Preaching Note

Do not soften the warning to get to the comfort. The power of verse 9 is that it follows verses 4-8 honestly. Let the warning stand, then let the "but" do its full work.

— WEEK 2 —

■ THE WORK IS ON RECORD

Hebrews 6:10-12

The Argument

Before calling the readers forward, the author grounds the call in the character of God: "God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you have shown toward His name." The argument is from character, not sentiment. It would be a violation of who God is to forget what has been done for His name. The work is on record, and the present tense matters, they are still doing it.

From there the call rises: press toward full assurance of hope, not the partial assurance of early faith but the settled certainty that has been tested and proven. Do not drift into sluggishness; become imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Faith without patience grabs; patience without faith waits passively. The combination is the posture that inherits.

Key Terms

- *plerophoria* (full assurance) -- complete certainty of hope; the destination, not the starting point.
- *nothroi* (sluggish, dull) -- the same word used in 5:11 for the readers' condition; the danger is settling back into it.
- *makrothumia* (patience, long-suffering) -- active endurance that does not release the promise under the pressure of time.

Suggested Movements

1. God's character as the foundation; it would be unjust for Him to forget.
2. Your work and love are on record; the present-tense ministry He still sees.
3. Full assurance versus partial assurance; the tested hope as the goal.
4. From sluggish to imitator; the direction of the soul matters.
5. Faith and patience together; the inheriting posture; land on what your people are still holding.

Preaching Note

This text pastors the faithful but weary. Many in the room have served unseen for years. Let them hear that the invisible labor is not forgotten before you call them higher.

— WEEK 3 —

■ NO HIGHER GROUND

Hebrews 6:13-15**The Argument**

The author turns to Abraham as the model of the faith-and-patience combination he just named. When God made the promise, He swore by Himself, because there was no one greater to swear by. The oath submitted the promise to the highest possible guarantee, and the guarantee rests on God's own character. Abraham waited, and the text says he obtained the promise, he hit the target. The patience was not resignation; it was aimed.

The preaching weight is direct: the same God who swore by Himself to Abraham has made a promise to you in Christ. The pattern holds. The promise will come, it will be obtained, and the obtaining will be on the other side of the patience the wait requires. The only question is whether your people will still be holding the promise when the time of obtaining arrives.

Key Terms

- *epetuchen* (he obtained) -- he attained it, hit the target; the patience was active and aimed.
- Swearing by Himself -- God submits the promise to the highest oath; there is no higher ground to appeal to.
- The Aqedah (Genesis 22) -- the binding of Isaac, where the oath was sworn after the test, not before it.

Suggested Movements

1. Abraham as the lived example of last week's faith and patience.
2. The divine oath; God swears by Himself because there is none greater.
3. The length of the wait; patience aimed at the promise, not resignation.
4. He obtained it; the wait was not wasted, it was the road.
5. Application: the promise your people hold is under the same oath, secured by the same character.

Preaching Note

This is the week to be honest about long waits. Resist the urge to resolve every wait from the pulpit. Name the pattern, hold up Abraham, and let the oath carry the weight.

— WEEK 4 —

■ IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE

Hebrews 6:16-18

The Argument

The promise alone would be enough. The oath seals it beyond dispute. Together they form two immutable things, two realities that cannot change, in which it is impossible for God to lie. This is not a claim about a strong commitment God makes against His nature. It is a claim about His nature itself. The promise is safe because its failure would require God to be something He cannot be.

Those who have taken refuge in this hope are held by both. The word for the encouragement they receive shares its root with the Comforter. The Spirit is not only the source of the better things; He is the strong encouragement in Person, inhabiting the refuge with every soul who has fled to lay hold of the hope set before them.

Key Terms

- *duo pragmaton ametatheton* (two immutable things) -- the promise and the oath, both unchangeable.
- *adunaton pseudesthai* (impossible to lie) -- ontological impossibility, not merely a choice; God cannot act against His own nature.
- *hoi kataphugontes* (those who have fled for refuge) -- the language of the cities of refuge; safety reached by running, not merely by knowing.

Suggested Movements

1. The promise plus the oath; two immutable things.
2. Why God cannot lie; nature, not willpower.
3. Those who have fled for refuge; the running is the act of faith.
4. The strong encouragement; the Comforter inhabits the refuge.
5. Land it: your people are held by what cannot be shaken.

Preaching Note

The background image is the cities of refuge (Numbers 35). A brief sketch of how they worked makes "those who have fled for refuge" land with force. Keep it brief enough to serve the text, not replace it.

— WEEK 5 —

■ THE FORERUNNER HAS ALREADY GONE IN

Hebrews 6:19-20

The Argument

The anchor of the soul is not cast downward, as a ship's anchor, but upward and inward, into the inner place beyond the veil. The security of the soul does not rest on what is beneath it but on who is ahead of it. Jesus entered within the veil as a forerunner, one who goes in first so that others may follow. He did not go in for Himself. He went in for us, and the access He opened is access for His people.

This is the moment the letter has been building toward since 5:10. The forerunner within the veil is a high priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. The series closes here and opens the door to Chapter 7. A congregation that has walked from the warning to the better things now stands anchored to the One who is interceding for them within the veil.

Key Terms

- *prodromos* (forerunner) -- a scout or advance runner who enters first to prepare the way for those who follow.
- The veil -- the curtain barring access to the Most Holy Place, torn from top to bottom at the cross; God opened what He had closed.
- The Melchizedek bridge -- "a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"; the resumption of the argument paused at 5:10.

Suggested Movements

1. The anchor cast upward and inward; security from above, not below.
2. Within the veil; the torn curtain and the opened access.
3. The forerunner; He went in so we could follow.
4. The Melchizedek bridge; what the drift would have caused them to miss.
5. Close the arc: the forerunner has already gone in, the anchor holds, press forward.

Preaching Note

This is the destination of the whole series. Preach it as arrival. If you are continuing into a Hebrews 7 series, end with the open door of verse 20; if this stands alone, land fully on the anchor that holds.

This Preaching Guide is part of the Better Things series packet. Preach from what you carry, not from the page.

FOR GROUP LEADERS ONLY

Leader Guide

Better Things

■ HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each session is structured in five parts:

1. **Leader Preparation** -- Personal questions to answer before the meeting. Do not skip this.
2. **Teaching Notes** -- Exegetical background that equips you to guide without lecturing. Read it; do not reproduce it verbatim.
3. **Facilitation Guide** -- The structure and timing for the session.
4. **Discussion Questions** -- The questions for the group, with facilitation notes for each.
5. **Application and Accountability** -- The closing commitment mechanism. Hold this line every week.

Each session runs 60 to 90 minutes. The time allocations below are targets, not ceilings. If Phase Two is producing genuine engagement, do not cut it to protect the clock. Cut the opening instead. Never cut the application commitment.



— SESSION 1 —

■ "BETTER THINGS"

Week of: May 24, 2026 (Pentecost Sunday week)

Sunday Text: Hebrews 6:9 / Acts 2:1–4, 37–41

Devotional Bridge: Days 9 and 10 (The Cost of the Crown / Ready for the Room)



Leader Preparation

Answer these questions personally before the session. Write your answers down.

1. What did you commit to on Day Nine of the devotional (the "never-again / from now on" promises)? Are those commitments still standing? What has tested them in the days since?
2. What happened for you personally on Pentecost Sunday? What word landed? What shifted?
3. When you hear the phrase "better things," what specific area of your life comes to mind first? Why?

4. What would it mean for the people in your group to press forward rather than manage their current spiritual condition?

Come to the meeting with your own "better thing" named and ready to share. You go first.

Teaching Notes

The structure of Hebrews 6. The author of Hebrews introduced the Melchizedek priesthood in Chapter 5, verse 10, and immediately stopped. He stopped because in verse 11 he said the readers had become "dull of hearing" (*nothroi* in the Greek). Chapter 6 is not a detour. It is the author clearing the ground so the revelation can be received. Verses 4 through 8 are the apostasy warning. Verse 9 is the pivot: *alla* (but). Hard contrast. Everything in the warning was real. And yet the author's conviction about this congregation is not the apostasy trajectory. It is the better things trajectory.

Kreitona. The Greek word translated "better things" in verse 9 is *kreitona*, and it is the first instance of the comparative that runs through the rest of the letter like a spine: better hope (7:19), better covenant (7:22), better promises (8:6), better sacrifices (9:23), better country (11:16), better resurrection (11:35). What opens in verse 9 is not a warm pastoral encouragement. It is the threshold of the entire cascade. Every "better" that follows in the letter is contained in embryonic form in verse 9.

Echomena soterías. "Things that accompany salvation" translates the Greek *echomena soterías*, literally "things that cling to salvation." The verb *echomai* carries the same attachment force as the Hebrew *dabaq* (to cleave), the same word used for Ruth cleaving to Naomi. These are not peripheral blessings. They are inseparable from the full experience of what salvation produces when it is pressed toward maturity.

Acts 2 as the demonstration. Acts 1:8 is the *exousia* grant: "you shall be My witnesses." That is the legal authority, already established. Acts 2 is when the *dunamis* arrived and the authority became operational. The disciples had the commission before Pentecost. Pentecost is when it became executable. The "better things" of Hebrews 6:9 follow the same architecture: they are positional before they are experiential. The Spirit is the empowering agent who makes the positional experiential.

The key phrase for this session: The question is not whether the better things are available. They are. The question is whether the group will press forward to inhabit them.

Facilitation Guide

Phase One: The Bridge (15 minutes)

Open with this question before anything else:

"We all just came through ten days together. Pentecost Sunday was this past week. What did you bring out of those ten days, and what happened to it on Sunday?"

Let two or three people respond without redirecting. You are listening for two things: what the devotional did in them, and whether the Sunday message connected. Do not evaluate the responses. Receive them.

Then make the bridge explicit: "The ten days were personal preparation. Sunday was the revelation. This room is where we find out what we do with it. That is what we are here for over the next five weeks."

Phase Two: The Text in Community (30 to 40 minutes)

Walk through the discussion questions below. See facilitation notes for each.

Phase Three: The Commitment (15 minutes)

This is the anchor of the series. Explain the structure to the group in this first session, because they will carry it for all five weeks:

"Every session closes with a named commitment. Not a general intention. A specific, stated next step that you write down, say out loud to the person next to you, and bring back next week with a report. This is not accountability as pressure. It is accountability as community. You are not doing this alone."

Go first. State your "better thing" and the specific step you are taking this week. Then invite the group.

Discussion Questions

Question 1: The devotional asked you on Day Ten: "What has changed in you over these ten days?" What was your honest answer? Has anything tested that answer since Sunday?

Facilitation note: This question surfaces where people actually are, not where they think they should be. Do not let the group give spiritual performance answers. If someone says "nothing changed," receive it honestly and let the group respond to that rather than correcting it yourself.

Question 2: Hebrews 6:9 says the author is "convinced of better things concerning you -- things that accompany salvation." What is the difference between things that accompany salvation and things that are merely available to Christians?

Facilitation note: The goal here is the word "accompany" (cleave to, inseparable from). Push toward this: if the better things accompany salvation, then the person who has pressed toward maturity in salvation has access to them. They are not a bonus tier. They are what salvation produces at full growth. If the group gets there, follow with: "So what does it mean if they are not present?"

Question 3: Acts 1:8 gave the disciples the authority ("you shall be My witnesses"). Acts 2 gave them the power. They had the commission for ten days before Pentecost and did not move on it. What was different after the Spirit came?

Facilitation note: The distinction between having authority and having power operative is the key to this question. Do not let the group land on "they were afraid before." That is true but not the full answer. The commission was already real. Pentecost made the commission executable. Push toward application: "What in your own life are you authorized to do that you have not yet received the power to execute? What would it look like for the Spirit to make that operational?"

Question 4: What is one "better thing" in your life right now that you know is available but that you have not yet fully pressed into? Name it as specifically as you can.

Facilitation note: This is the bridge into the application commitment. The group may get vague here. Help them get specific: "Not better in general. One specific thing. Better in your family? Better in your finances? Better in your faith? Better in your relationships?" Specificity is what makes the commitment in Phase Three meaningful.

Application and Accountability

Each participant writes down:

1. The "better thing" they are pressing toward in this season (specific, not general)
2. One step they are taking this week toward it
3. The name of one person in the group who will ask them about it next week

Exchange that name with the person. That person is their accountability partner for the series, not just this session.

Collect the written commitments (or have participants photograph them) and keep them. You will reference them in Session 5 to close the arc.

Closing Prayer Direction: Pray over the commitments specifically. Not a generic closing prayer. Name what the group is pressing toward: "God, these people are pressing toward better things. They are not at the apostasy threshold. They are at the threshold of what you promised. Meet them at the specific step they are taking this week."

Looking Ahead

Session 2 text: Hebrews 6:10–12. Read it before next week. The question this passage raises is: what does God actually see when He looks at the history of your labor in His name? And what does the gap between "full assurance" and partial assurance feel like from the inside? Come ready to name what sustained work you have been tempted to abandon.

— SESSION 2 —

■ "GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN"

Week of: May 31, 2026

Sunday Text: Hebrews 6:10–12

Devotional Bridge: Days 3 and 4 (The Upper Room Posture / The Condition of the Vessel)

Leader Preparation

1. Where in your life have you done sustained work for God that has gone unnamed, unnoticed, and unrewarded by anyone visible? How do you actually feel about that?
2. What does "full assurance of hope" (*plerophoria*) feel like as a lived experience versus a theological category you understand? Are you currently in *plerophoria* or in partial assurance?
3. The passage warns against becoming "sluggish" (*nothroi*) -- the same word used in 5:11 for the readers who could not receive the Melchizedek revelation. Where in your current spiritual life do you recognize the signs of *nothroi*?
4. Who in your group needs to hear that their work is on record? Come ready to say that to them specifically.

Teaching Notes

Verse 10 is a justice claim. The author does not say God will notice your work. He says God *is not unjust* so as to forget it. He is not making a pastoral encouragement here. He is making a claim about the character of God: it would be an injustice for God to forget what has been done in His name, and God is not unjust. The labor and love of verse 10 are on record not because God is sentimental but because He is just.

"Work" and "love." The two things mentioned are *ergon* (work, the doing) and *agape* (love, the motivating force behind the doing). Both are specified: the work that has been done, and the love shown toward His name. This is significant because it covers both the visible act and the invisible motivation. God does not only record the output. He records what drove the output.

Plerophoria. Verse 11 calls for *plerophoria* -- translated "full assurance." The word is compound: *plero* (fullness) + *phoria* (carrying). It is the experience of carrying the hope in its full weight, not as a theory but as a settled reality. The opposite of *plerophoria* is not doubt. It is partial assurance -- the condition of the person who knows the truth but is not fully persuaded by it at the level of lived experience. Romans 15:13 connects *plerophoria* to the Spirit directly: "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Nothroi to mimétai. Verse 12 gives the direction: do not be *nothroi* (sluggish), but become *mimétai* (imitators) of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The same word used in 5:11 for the readers' condition is the thing they are being warned against settling into again. The direction of press is from dullness toward imitation. And the imitators are the people Hebrews 11 will profile: people who held to the promise through the duration of the wait.

The devotional connection: Day Three asked about corporate prayer and the upper room posture. Day Four asked about the condition of the vessel -- what has the Spirit been convicting you about? Both days were about the work of consecration. Verse 10 is God's word back to those who did that work: it is on record. It is not forgotten.

Facilitation Guide

Phase One: The Bridge (15 minutes)

Start with the accountability thread: "Last week you named a 'better thing' and a specific step. Who wants to share how that went?" Receive two or three reports. Do not evaluate. Let the room feel the accountability working.

Then make the bridge: "The devotional asked you about the condition of the vessel and the posture of the upper room. You did the work of consecration. Hebrews 6:10 says that work is on record. Today we are going to sit in that."

Phase Two: The Text in Community (30 to 40 minutes)

Walk through the discussion questions below.

Phase Three: The Commitment (15 minutes)

Same structure as Session 1. Accountability partner checks in first. Then new commitment for the week.

Discussion Questions

Question 1: Devotional Day Three asked, "What relational fractures in your community need to be addressed?" and Day Four asked what the Spirit has been convicting you about. Did anything surface in those ten days that you have been slow to act on? What is it?

Facilitation note: This question is intentionally unsettling. Some people will have real answers they have been carrying for weeks. Create space for honest response. Do not rush to resolve what gets surfaced. Receive it and let the group respond to one another.

Question 2: Verse 10 says God is not unjust so as to forget your work and your love. What does it do to you to hear that the sustained, invisible labor you have done is not forgotten but recorded by a God of justice?

Facilitation note: Push past the initial answer here. Many people will give the correct theological answer. Follow up with: "Does that truth actually change how you feel about the work that goes unnoticed? Or do you know it without it changing anything?" The gap between knowing and plerophoria is exactly what this text is about.

Question 3: Verse 11 calls for "full assurance of hope" (plerophoria). What is the difference between knowing that the better things are real and being fully persuaded by that knowledge at the level of how you actually live?

Facilitation note: The goal is to surface where the group is living in partial assurance. Push for specificity: "In what specific area of your life are you operating on partial assurance right now? Where do you believe the truth but are not yet living as if it is true?"

Question 4: Verse 12 says: do not be sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Who is a person in your life -- present or past -- whose combination of faith and patience you could actually imitate? What would imitating them look like right now in your specific circumstances?

Facilitation note: This is the bridge to application. Concrete imitators (real people) produce concrete imitation. Vague examples produce vague application. Push for a real name.

Application and Accountability

Each participant writes down:

1. One sustained work or act of love that they have been tempted to abandon -- and the decision this week to continue it
2. One person, living or deceased, whose faith and patience they will consciously imitate this week in a specific way

Accountability partner: follow up mid-week if possible. One text or call. "Are you still at it?"

Closing Prayer Direction: Pray over the work that is on record. Name the invisible labor in the room. "God, you see what this room has done in your name that no one else has recorded. We declare that it is not forgotten. We choose to continue."

Looking Ahead

Session 3 text: Hebrews 6:13–15 and Genesis 22:1–18. The Abraham arc. Read both before next week. The question coming is: where are you in the space between the promise and the oath? The promise comes first. The oath follows the test. Come ready to identify where you are on that arc in at least one area of your life.

— SESSION 3 —

■ "NO HIGHER GROUND"

Week of: June 7, 2026

Sunday Text: Hebrews 6:13–15

Devotional Bridge: Days 1 and 2 (The Promise That Holds Us / The Weight of Witness)

Leader Preparation

1. What promise of God are you currently standing on that has not yet produced the fulfillment you are waiting for? How long have you been waiting?
2. The devotional's Day One asked: "What does waiting actually look like for you practically?" What is your honest answer now, weeks later?
3. The text says Abraham "obtained the promise" through patient endurance. What has the period of waiting produced in you? Is it *plerophoria* (proven, deepened assurance) or erosion?
4. Is there a test in your current life that might be the threshold before the oath? Come ready to share, even if you are not certain.

Teaching Notes

The oath sworn after the test. Hebrews 6:13–15 is built on Genesis 22. God promised Abraham a son in Genesis 12. The fulfillment came in Genesis 21 with the birth of Isaac. And then God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22. After Abraham obeyed through to the final moment, God stopped him and spoke the oath: "By Myself I have sworn..." (Genesis 22:16). The promise came first. The test came after the fulfillment. The oath came after the test. This is the sequence the author of Hebrews is pointing to.

Swearing by Himself. "Since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself." The standard for oaths in human courts is to swear by something greater than yourself to secure the oath's reliability. God has nothing greater than Himself to swear by. So the oath rests entirely on His own character. The reliability of the promise is the reliability of who He is. If He can change, the oath is vulnerable. He cannot change. The oath is therefore unbreakable.

"Now I know." Genesis 22:12 is the phrase the Sunday message will have carried: "for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son." The test was not for God's information. God already knew. The test was the confirmation and crystallization of what Abraham's faith actually was. The *plerophoria* of Abraham's faith was proven through the test, and the proven faith became the ground on which the oath was

sworn. The test produced something in Abraham that made him the heir of the oath.

Patience (makrothumia). Verse 15: "and so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise." The Greek is *makrothumia* -- long-suffering, the posture that does not shorten the wait by abandoning the promise. It is not passive. It is the active decision to hold to the promise regardless of how long the duration extends. The distinction between *makrothumia* and passive waiting is that *makrothumia* is a choice renewed daily.

The devotional connection: Day One ("The Promise That Holds Us") asked participants to anchor in what God has already spoken, before they can see the fulfillment. Day Two ("The Weight of Witness") connected the promise to the mission. Abraham's promise was always bigger than Abraham. His patience with the promise produced a lineage that eventually carried the Messiah. The "weight of witness" is always connected to the promise that outlasts the individual.

Facilitation Guide

Phase One: The Bridge (15 minutes)

Accountability thread first: two or three reports on last week's commitment. Keep it moving.

Bridge question: "The devotional opened with this line: 'The promise preceded the experience. The word came before the fire.' Where in your life right now is the promise preceding the experience? You are standing on something you cannot yet touch."

Let two or three responses land before moving to the text.

Phase Two: The Text in Community (30 to 40 minutes)

Phase Three: The Commitment (15 minutes)

Discussion Questions

Question 1: Abraham received the promise in Genesis 12, the fulfillment in Genesis 21, and the oath in Genesis 22 -- after the test. That is a span of decades. What is your honest reaction to that sequence? Does the Abraham arc feel encouraging or does it feel like too long a wait?

Facilitation note: Both responses are valid. Do not correct the second one. A person who is honest about the exhaustion of waiting is farther along in faith than a person who performs patience they do not actually have. Receive the honest answer and let the room hold it.

Question 2: Verse 12 from last week said to be imitators of those who through "faith and patience" inherit the promises. Verse 15 says Abraham "patiently waited." What is the difference between patient waiting and passive resignation?

Facilitation note: This is the key distinction of the session. Active makrothumia renews the choice to hold the promise daily. Passive resignation has simply stopped expecting. The person in passive resignation often looks identical to the person in makrothumia from the outside. The difference is internal: is the promise still live in you?

Question 3: The text says the test in Genesis 22 came after the fulfillment of the promise, not before it. Abraham had Isaac before God asked for Isaac back. What does it do to your understanding of testing to consider that the hardest tests may come after the fulfillment, not before?

Facilitation note: This often lands in a place the group has not considered. Many people frame tests as the prerequisite to fulfillment. The Abraham arc reverses that: the fulfillment came, then the test. The test was not an obstacle to the promise. It was the confirmation that the promise had produced something real in the person who received it. Follow up: "What has a period of testing confirmed in you about what the promise has already produced?"

Question 4: Where are you on the Abraham arc right now, in at least one area of your life? Are you in the season of promise (you have heard it but not yet seen it), the season of fulfillment (you have received what was promised), or the season of testing (you are being asked to hold to what you have already received)?

Facilitation note: Be precise. These are three distinct seasons with distinct spiritual postures. Do not let the group be vague. Name the area of life (family, calling, provision, health, relationship) and the season. The specificity is where the application lives.

Application and Accountability

Each participant:

1. Names where they are on the Abraham arc in one specific area of life
2. Names one thing they will do this week to actively renew the choice to hold the promise -- not passively wait, but consciously choose again
3. Shares it with their accountability partner before the next session

Closing Prayer Direction: Pray for the people in the room who are in the longest wait. Name the specific areas if the group has shared them. "God, you swore by yourself. That oath has not expired. We stand on it today, in the specific circumstances of this room."

Looking Ahead

Session 4 text: Hebrews 6:16–18 and Numbers 35:9–15 (cities of refuge). Read both. The city of refuge is the background for the word "refuge" in verse 18. Three things the city of refuge provided: immediate access, presence of the community, safety that did not depend on the fugitive's strength. Come ready to identify what you are actually running to when your world shakes.

— SESSION 4 —

■ "TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS"

Week of: June 14, 2026

Sunday Text: Hebrews 6:16–18

Devotional Bridge: Days 5 and 6 (Halfway Here / The Wind Before the Fire)

Leader Preparation

1. The devotional's Day Five asked: "What are you still striving to control that you need to release?" What was your answer then? What is your answer now?
2. What is your functional city of refuge? When circumstances shake you, where do you actually run first? Be honest.
3. The two immutable things are God's promise and God's oath -- both grounded in His character, not your performance. Where do you most need to rest in that rather than striving to secure it yourself?
4. What would it look like for your group members to leave this session running to the right city?

Teaching Notes

Two immutable things. Verse 18 identifies two unchangeable things: God's promise (which He will not break) and God's oath (sworn by Himself). The argument is cumulative: a promise is reliable because God does not lie. An oath sworn by God is doubly secured because it calls on the highest possible authority. The point is not that two is a magic number. The point is that the security the soul is being offered does not rest on anything that can be shaken. It rests entirely on who God is.

"It is impossible for God to lie." The Greek *adunaton* means without capacity. This is not a statement of God's ethical choices. It is a statement about His nature. Lying is ontologically impossible for the God who is truth. Numbers 23:19 is the background text: "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent." The reliability of the two immutable things is the reliability of God's own being.

Hoi kataphugontes. Verse 18: "we who have taken refuge." The Greek participle *kataphugontes* comes from the same root as the word used for someone fleeing to a city of refuge (Numbers 35). The cities of refuge in Israel provided three things: immediate access upon arrival (no trial before entry), the presence of the Levitical

community (you were not alone in the city), and safety that did not depend on the fugitive's strength (the city's walls held, not the fugitive's fitness). The soul who takes refuge in the two immutable things receives the same structure: immediate access, community, and security that does not depend on personal performance.

The Parakletos in the refuge. The Spirit given as *arrabōn* (deposit, first installment -- Ephesians 1:13–14) inhabits the refuge. The soul who has taken refuge is not alone in the waiting. The Spirit is present within the refuge as the down payment on everything the oath has secured. Quenching and grieving the Spirit are, from this angle, the soul's refusal to remain in the city.

The devotional connection: Day Five ("Halfway Here") called for the release of striving -- "cease striving and know that I am God." Day Six ("The Wind Before the Fire") called for attentiveness to what God is already doing. Both days were about the posture of the person who has stopped trying to secure their own safety and is learning to recognize what God is already providing. Hebrews 6:18 is the theological foundation for that posture.

Facilitation Guide

Phase One: The Bridge (15 minutes)

Accountability thread: reports on the specific commitments from Session 3. Who renewed the choice to hold the promise? What happened?

Bridge: "Day Five of the devotional asked you to release what you are striving to control. Day Six asked you to notice what the Spirit is already doing. Today's text tells us what we actually have when we release: two things that cannot be shaken. The question today is honest: what are you running to when things shake?"

Phase Two: The Text in Community (30 to 40 minutes)

Phase Three: The Commitment (15 minutes)

Discussion Questions

Question 1: The devotional's Day Five asked: "What does trust look like for you at this exact moment in your life?" What was your answer then? Has it changed?

Facilitation note: The gap between the devotional answer and the current answer reveals what the two weeks since Pentecost Sunday have done to that trust. Surface the gap honestly before moving to the text.

Question 2: Verse 18 says we "have taken refuge" in the two immutable things -- God's promise and God's oath. The cities of refuge in Israel provided immediate access, community, and safety that did not depend on the fugitive's strength. Which of those three is hardest for you to receive right now, and why?

Facilitation note: These three dimensions map onto distinct struggles. Immediate access: the person who does not believe they qualify to run to God right now. Community: the person who is isolated and not letting the body carry them. Safety independent of personal strength: the person who cannot stop performing to maintain their standing. Listen for which one the group gravitates toward.

Question 3: The text says it is impossible for God to lie -- not that God chooses not to lie, but that lying is impossible for His nature. What difference does that ontological claim make to the way you hold His promises?

Facilitation note: The move from "God usually keeps His word" to "God is constitutionally incapable of breaking it" is significant. Push the group there. If they are holding promises tentatively -- as if God might change His mind -- they have not yet received the full weight of what "impossible" means.

Question 4: When circumstances shake you, what do you actually run to first? Not what you know you should run to. What you actually reach for? Name it honestly.

Facilitation note: This is a confession question. Make it safe by going first. Name your own functional refuge that is not the two immutable things. The group will not go where the leader has not already gone.

Application and Accountability

Each participant:

1. Names one thing they have been using as a functional anchor that can be shaken (a relationship, a financial cushion, a person's approval, a plan)
2. Names the specific replacement practice this week: when the impulse to run to that thing comes, what is the specific action they will take instead? (Open the text to Hebrews 6:17–18 and read it out loud; call their accountability partner; pray a specific prayer they have written out in advance)
3. Reports to their accountability partner before the next session

Closing Prayer Direction: Pray the two immutable things back to God. Name His promise and His oath. "You have sworn by yourself. What cannot be shaken is holding this room right now. We choose the city of refuge. We choose to stay inside the walls. We release what we have been striving to hold."

Looking Ahead

Session 5 text: Hebrews 6:19–20. This closes the arc. Read also Exodus 26:31–35 (the paroketh, the veil) and Genesis 14:18–20 (Melchizedek). The forerunner has already gone in. Session 5 will ask the group to name what their life looks like when it is anchored to something that cannot move, and what specific practice carries that anchor forward when the series is over. Come ready to close.

SESSION 5

"THE ANCHOR WITHIN THE VEIL"

Week of: June 21, 2026

Sunday Text: Hebrews 6:19–20

Devotional Bridge: Days 7 and 8 (The Fire That Remains / All Flesh)

Leader Preparation

1. The devotional's Day Seven (Isaiah 6) said: "The purging and the sending belong together. The fire that cleanses is the fire that commissions." Over these five weeks, what has been purged? What is the sending that you can now see more clearly?
2. The anchor within the veil is a metaphor for hope fixed on what is invisible (Christ within the veil, interceding now). How is your hope currently anchored? What is it actually resting on?
3. What has this five-week series produced in you as a leader? What has changed in your preparation, your expectation, or your practice of leading?
4. How will you close this group in a way that does not leave the commitments of Session 1 behind? The first commitments are returning to the table in Session 5.

Teaching Notes

The anchor. Verse 19: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil." The anchor in ancient maritime culture was the stabilizing mechanism that kept a ship fixed in position when external forces (wind, current, tide) attempted to move it. The anchor did not fight the forces. It simply held to something strong enough that the forces could not prevail. The hope described in Hebrews 6:19 is anchor hope: it does not suppress the storm. It holds to what the storm cannot move.

Within the veil. The veil (*paroketh* in the Hebrew, described in Exodus 26:31–35) was the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle. It was the threshold of God's immediate presence. Only the high priest crossed it, once per year, on the Day of Atonement. The veil was torn from top to bottom at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:51) -- torn from above, not from below. The access was God's doing, not humanity's achievement. Hebrews 9:1–8 describes the former architecture of the veil as a sign that the way into the holy places was not yet opened. The veil's tearing is the opening of what was previously closed.

Prodromos. Verse 20: "where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." The Greek *prodromos* is a military and athletic term: the one who goes in first to prepare the way for others. Jesus entered the Most Holy Place not as the final visitor but as the first of many. His entry was representative. He is within the veil on our behalf, interceding now. The hope that enters within the veil is the hope that is anchored to the One already inside.

Melchizedek -- the threshold of what comes next. The mention of Melchizedek in verse 20 is not a casual closing flourish. It is the resumption of the argument interrupted in Chapter 5. The author stopped in 5:10 because the readers could not receive the Melchizedek revelation. He has spent Chapters 5:11–6:20 preparing them to receive it. Chapter 7 opens with "For this Melchizedek..." -- the interrupted argument resumes. The congregation that has pressed through the apostasy warning and received the better things is now ready for the capstone revelation of the letter. That is the reward for pressing forward.

The devotional connection: Day Seven (Isaiah 6) connected purging to sending. Day Eight ("All Flesh") broke open the scope of the promise -- not for the elite, but for all. The veil that was once a barrier is now torn. The anchor within the veil is available to all flesh. The sending that follows is for all people. The five-week arc closes here: Spirit poured out (Session 1), labor remembered (Session 2), promise sworn (Session 3), refuge secured (Session 4), anchor within the veil (Session 5). Press forward to what is on the other side.

Facilitation Guide

Phase One: The Bridge (15 minutes)

Start with the Session 1 commitments. Return the written "better things" to each participant. Ask: "Five weeks ago you named a 'better thing' you were pressing toward and a specific step you were taking. Read what you wrote. What has happened?"

Give the group time with this. Do not rush. This is the accountability arc completing.

Then make the bridge: "The devotional asked you what the fire was for. Day Seven said the purging and the sending belong together. Today we close by asking: what is the sending that these five weeks have prepared you for?"

Phase Two: The Text in Community (30 to 40 minutes)

Phase Three: The Commitment (15 minutes)

This final commitment extends beyond the series. Build it accordingly.

Discussion Questions

Question 1: The devotional's Day Seven asked: "What is the sending God has been preparing you for? What is the mission that the fire is meant to serve?" Five weeks later, do you have a clearer answer than you did on that day? What has clarified?

Facilitation note: Some group members will have significant clarity. Others will have more questions than when they started. Both are valid. Do not create pressure for tidy conclusions. The person who has more questions than five weeks ago may be the one who has gone deepest.

Question 2: An anchor does not fight the storm. It holds to something strong enough that the storm cannot prevail. What is the difference between anchored hope and optimism? Between hope that is fixed and hope that is merely hopeful?

Facilitation note: The goal is to distinguish genuine anchor hope (fixed on the High Priest within the veil, on what is real and unshakeable) from positive thinking or general spiritual confidence. Anchor hope is not about expecting things to get better. It is about being held by something that does not change regardless of whether things get better.

Question 3: The forerunner (*prodromos*) entered the Most Holy Place first, as our representative. Christ is within the veil right now, interceding for the people in this room. What changes about the way you pray when you actually believe that your High Priest is actively interceding on your behalf at this moment?

Facilitation note: This often surfaces a gap between doctrinal knowledge and lived experience. Many people know the theology of intercession and do not pray as if it is currently happening. Push gently: "If you fully believed that Christ is interceding for you right now in the presence of God, would your prayer life look different than it does? How?"

Question 4: The series ends here, but the anchor does not. What is one practice you will carry forward from this five-week series that reflects an anchor rather than a coping mechanism?

Facilitation note: This must be specific. Not "I will pray more." What specific practice, on what specific occasion, anchors to what specific reality? Push for precision before closing.

Application and Accountability

Return the Session 1 "better thing" commitments. Each participant:

1. Reports on the full arc: what did they name in Session 1, and what has happened over the five weeks?
2. Names the one practice they are carrying forward (from Question 4)
3. Names one person -- inside or outside this group -- who they will carry what they have learned into, someone who needs the anchor

The group closes with a commitment to one another: "We do not close this room and leave what happened here inside it. We carry the anchor."

Closing Prayer Direction: This is the capstone prayer of the arc. It should be substantial. Pray over the "better things" named in Session 1 and held through five weeks. Name the anchor. Name the forerunner. Name the intercession happening right now within the veil. "You are within the veil on behalf of this room. Your intercession is active. Your oath is sworn. The anchor holds. We leave this series held."



MPM SMALL GROUPS

Student Guide

Better Things

■ A WORD BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You just came through ten days of preparation. You fasted, you answered the Selah questions, and on Day Nine you made specific commitments. You arrived at Pentecost Sunday with something in your hands.

This small group is where those commitments meet community. What you worked through personally in the devotional, and what you heard from the Sunday message, comes into this room to be tested, practiced, and held together with other people who are pressing in the same direction.

Every session has three parts: a connection to what you brought from the devotional and the Sunday message, a discussion of the text, and a named commitment you will say out loud and bring back to the table the following week. The commitment is not optional. It is the mechanism.

Bring your Student Guide to every session. Write in it. What you write down is more likely to be carried forward than what you only heard.



— SESSION 1 —

■ "BETTER THINGS"

Week of May 24, 2026

Text: Hebrews 6:9 / Acts 2:1–4, 37–41



The Text

"But beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way." -- Hebrews 6:9 (NASB95)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." -- Acts 1:8 (NASB95)



Devotional Bridge

Day Nine of the devotional asked you to make specific commitments -- "never-again" and "from now on" promises. Day Ten asked: "What are you believing God for as you walk into Pentecost Sunday worship?"

Before discussion: Write your answers to these two questions here.

What did you carry out of the ten days?

—

What happened to that on Pentecost Sunday?

—

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between things that are *available* to Christians and things that *accompany* salvation -- things that are inseparable from what salvation is designed to produce at full growth?
2. Acts 1:8 gave the disciples the authority ("you shall be My witnesses") before Pentecost. Acts 2 gave them the power. They had the commission for ten days before the Spirit came and did not move on it. What was different after? What does that say about what the Spirit makes possible in your own life?
3. When you hear the phrase "better things," what specific area of your life comes to mind first? Why that area?
4. What is one "better thing" you are pressing toward in this season that you can name specifically?

My Commitment This Week

The "better thing" I am pressing toward:

—

The specific step I am taking this week:

—

The person in this group who will ask me about it next week:

—

Between Sessions

Read Hebrews 6:10–12 before the next session. Notice the words "full assurance" in verse 11. Ask yourself honestly: in what area of your life do you have partial assurance rather than full assurance -- you know the truth but are not yet living as if you fully believe it?

Closing Prayer

God, we are at the threshold of the better things. The Spirit has been poured out. The commission is real. We press forward -- not managing our current condition but pressing toward what You have said is available to us. We carry what we committed to out of these ten days. Hold us to it. Amen.



— SESSION 2 —

■ "GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN"

Week of May 31, 2026

Text: Hebrews 6:10–12



The Text

"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." -- Hebrews 6:10–12 (NASB95)



Devotional Bridge

Day Three asked about the upper room posture -- "What does 'one accord' require of you specifically right now?" Day Four asked what the Spirit has been convicting you about that you have been slow to address.

Before discussion: Write briefly here.

What did you bring from those two days that you have not yet fully acted on?

—



Accountability Report

Last week's commitment: Did you take the step you named? What happened?

—

Discussion Questions

1. Verse 10 says God "is not unjust so as to forget your work and your love." He records both the work (what you did) and the love behind it (what drove you). What sustained, invisible labor have you done in God's name that has gone unrecognized by anyone visible? How does verse 10 speak to that?
2. What is the difference between knowing that God sees your work and being fully persuaded by that knowledge -- to the point where it changes how you feel about the work that goes unnoticed?
3. Verse 11 calls for "full assurance of hope." In what specific area of your life are you operating on partial assurance right now? You believe the truth but are not yet living as if you fully believe it.
4. Verse 12 says: do not be sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Who is a person -- present or past -- whose combination of faith and patience you could actually imitate? What would imitating them look like in your specific circumstances this week?

My Commitment This Week

One sustained work or act of love I have been tempted to abandon -- and my decision to continue:

—

The person whose faith and patience I will consciously imitate this week, and specifically how:

—

Between Sessions

Read Hebrews 6:13–15 and Genesis 22:1–18 before the next session. Pay attention to the sequence: God gave the promise in Genesis 12, the fulfillment came in Genesis 21, and the oath came in Genesis 22 -- after the test. Ask yourself: where am I on that arc in at least one area of my life?

Closing Prayer

God, you are not unjust. What has been done in your name in this room -- visible and invisible, recognized and unnoticed -- is on record. We choose to continue. We choose to press toward full assurance rather than settling for partial. We are imitators of those who inherited the promise. We will not be sluggish. Amen.

SESSION 3

"NO HIGHER GROUND"

Week of June 7, 2026

Text: Hebrews 6:13–15 / Genesis 22:1–18

The Text

"For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, 'I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.' And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise." -- Hebrews 6:13–15 (NASB95)

"By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore..." -- Genesis 22:16–17 (NASB95)

Devotional Bridge

Day One asked: "What promise from God's Word are you standing on right now?" and "What does waiting actually look like for you practically?"

Before discussion: Write your answers here.

What promise are you currently standing on?

—

What has the waiting produced in you so far?

—

Accountability Report

Last week's commitment: report to the group.

Discussion Questions

1. Abraham received the promise in Genesis 12, the fulfillment in Genesis 21, and the oath in Genesis 22 -- decades apart. What is your honest reaction to that sequence? Does it encourage you or exhaust you?
2. "Patiently waited" translates the Greek *makrothumia* -- an active choice to hold the promise regardless of how long the wait extends. What is the difference between patient waiting as an active daily choice and passive resignation that has simply stopped expecting?
3. The hardest test in Abraham's story came after the fulfillment, not before it. God gave Isaac and then asked for Isaac back. What does it do to your understanding of testing to consider that some of the deepest tests come after God has already given you what He promised?
4. Where are you on the Abraham arc right now in at least one specific area of your life? Are you in the season of promise (you have heard it but not seen it), fulfillment (you have received what was promised), or testing (you are being asked to hold to what you have already received)?

My Commitment This Week

Where I am on the Abraham arc (specific area of life):

The one thing I will do this week to actively renew my choice to hold the promise -- not passively wait, but consciously choose again:

Between Sessions

Read Hebrews 6:16–18 and Numbers 35:9–15 before the next session. The cities of refuge are the background for the word "refuge" in verse 18. Note what the city of refuge provided: immediate access upon arrival, presence of the community, and safety that did not depend on the fugitive's strength. Come ready to identify what you actually run to when circumstances shake you.

Closing Prayer

God, you swore by yourself. There is nothing higher. The oath is secured by who you are. We stand on that today -- in the specific season we are each in, in the specific waiting we are each enduring. Give us the active patience that holds, not the passive resignation that has stopped expecting. Amen.

— SESSION 4 —

■ "TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS"

Week of June 14, 2026

Text: Hebrews 6:16–18

The Text

"For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us." -- Hebrews 6:16–18 (NASB95)

Devotional Bridge

Day Five asked: "What are you still striving to control that you need to release before Pentecost Sunday?" Day Six asked: "What is God saying to you in the silence that the noise has been covering?"

Before discussion: What are your honest answers to those questions now, several weeks later?

What am I still striving to control?

—

What has the silence been revealing?

—

Accountability Report

Last week's commitment: report to the group.

Discussion Questions

1. The cities of refuge in Israel provided three things: immediate access upon arrival (no trial before entry), presence of the community (you were not alone), and safety that did not depend on your own strength. Which of these three is hardest for you to receive right now, and why?
2. Verse 18 says it is "impossible for God to lie" -- not that He chooses not to lie, but that it is impossible for His nature. What is the difference between a God who usually keeps His promises and a God for whom promise-breaking is ontologically impossible?
3. What do you actually run to first when circumstances shake you? Not what you know you should run to. What you actually reach for.
4. What is one thing you have been using as a functional anchor that can be shaken -- a relationship, a financial cushion, a person's approval, a plan? Name it.

My Commitment This Week

The functional anchor I am replacing:

The specific practice I will use this week as a replacement when the impulse comes to run to the wrong thing:

Between Sessions

Read Hebrews 6:19–20 before the next session. Also read Hebrews 9:1–8. The veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Only the high priest crossed it, once per year. Christ entered it as our forerunner -- first in, on our behalf, interceding now. Come ready to name what your life looks like when it is anchored to something that cannot move.

Closing Prayer

God, you have sworn by yourself. Your promise and your oath are the two things that cannot be shaken. We choose the city of refuge. We release our grip on what we have been striving to secure. The walls of the refuge hold -- not our strength, not our performance, not our plans. We rest in what you have immutably secured. Amen.

SESSION 5

"THE ANCHOR WITHIN THE VEIL"

Week of June 21, 2026

Text: Hebrews 6:19–20

The Text

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." -- Hebrews 6:19–20 (NASB95)

Devotional Bridge

Day Seven ("The Fire That Remains") said: "The fire does not produce something new. It exposes what needed to be dealt with so that what was new could begin." Day Eight ("All Flesh") broke open the scope of the promise: all flesh, not just the prepared or the elite.

Before discussion: Write here.

What has been purged in you over these five weeks?

—

What sending are you beginning to see more clearly?

—

Accountability Report -- The Full Arc

Your group leader is returning the "better thing" you wrote down in Session 1. Read it.

What did you name in Session 1, and what has happened over these five weeks?

—

Discussion Questions

1. Day Seven asked: "What is the sending God has been preparing you for?" Five weeks later, do you have a clearer answer? What has clarified?
2. An anchor does not fight the storm. It holds to something strong enough that the storm cannot prevail. What is the difference between hope that is anchored to the forerunner within the veil and hope that is simply optimistic about the future?
3. Christ is within the veil right now, interceding for you. Not as a past act. As a present, ongoing reality. If you fully believed that your High Priest is actively interceding on your behalf at this moment, what would be different about the way you pray?
4. What is one practice you will carry forward from these five weeks that reflects an anchor rather than a coping mechanism? Be specific about what it is, when you will do it, and what it is anchored to.

My Commitment Going Forward

The practice I am carrying out of this series:

—

One person outside this group who I will carry what I have learned into -- someone who needs the anchor:

—

A Closing Word

The series asked one question from five angles: what do you access when you press forward?

Session 1: The Spirit who empowers the better things.

Session 2: The God who does not forget.

Session 3: The oath sworn by the One who cannot lie.

Session 4: The refuge secured by two immutable things.

Session 5: The forerunner already within the veil.

He is in there now. He is interceding now. The anchor holds. Press forward.

Closing Prayer

Father, we close this arc held. We entered this series at the threshold of the better things, and we leave it anchored to the One within the veil. The fire has done its work. The sending is clearer. The anchor is fixed. We carry this forward -- not as a spiritual memory of a good season, but as the living posture of people who have found what holds. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Do All to the Glory of God -- 1 Corinthians 10:31

+Bishop Robert Warren Lyons, Jr.

PERSONAL & MIDWEEK STUDY

Weekly Companion

Better Things

This companion carries the weekly walk for the Better Things series. Each week holds the Sunday teaching in brief, the Wednesday depth-dive, and your own work for the days in between: a journal prompt, deeper readings, and reflection questions. Use it at whatever pace your week allows. You do not have to finish every part. The text is doing the work. Give it room.

— WEEK 1 —

■ BETTER THINGS

Hebrews 6:9 / Acts 2:1-4, 37-41 · May 24, 2026

Sunday Teaching

Verse 9 is the hinge of the letter. The word "but" carries the full weight of the turn: after the stark warning of verses 4-8, the author says we are convinced of better things concerning you. The word "better" appears here for the first time in Hebrews and runs through the rest of the letter: better hope, better covenant, better promises, better sacrifice. Every one of those better things begins here, on Pentecost Sunday.

The disciples behind locked doors at Pentecost are what verse 9 looks like at scale. The Holy Spirit poured out, three thousand added, the community of the better things formed in a single day. The Spirit is not an add-on to salvation. He is the empowering agent who makes the better things operational rather than merely positional.

Wednesday Depth-Dive

A closer look at Acts 2: the three signs of Pentecost and their Old Testament roots, the timing of the Spirit's arrival at the harvest feast, and the *arrabon* (a Greek word meaning "pledge" or "down payment"), the Spirit as the pledge of the inheritance, and what that promises for every believer now.

Your Work This Week

Journal Prompt

The disciples went from locked doors to preaching in the streets on the same day. What room are you locked in right now, and what has kept you there?

Deeper Reading

- **Joel 2:28-29** -- The prophecy Peter quotes on Pentecost morning. Read what God said He would pour out before it happened.
- **Ephesians 1:13-14** -- The Spirit you received is the pledge of the full inheritance. The better things are not the ceiling. They are the down payment.
- **1 Corinthians 2:9-12** -- What eye has not seen, God has revealed through the Spirit. The better things are knowable, not just promised.

Reflection Questions

1. What does pressing forward look like practically in your life this week, not in general but this specific week? What would you have to move toward, and what would you have to leave behind?
2. The author says he is convinced of better things concerning you. What does it do to you to sit with the idea that someone who knows you fully is still convinced of better things about you?
3. Where in your spiritual life are you experiencing the better things as positional (you believe they exist) rather than operational (you are actually living them)? What would it take for that gap to close?
4. The Spirit's arrival at Pentecost was timed to the harvest feast. He came when the calendar reached its appointed fullness. Is there a promise you have been waiting on where you have stopped believing the timing is appointed and started believing it has simply been forgotten?

— WEEK 2 —

■ THE WORK IS ON RECORD

Hebrews 6:10-12 · May 31, 2026

Sunday Teaching

Before calling the readers to press forward, the author anchors the call in something about God's character: it would be an act of injustice for God to forget their work and the love they have shown toward His name. The work is on record. The love is on record. God sees what they are still doing, and He does not forget.

The aim is *plerophoria* (a Greek word meaning "full certainty" or "complete assurance"), the full certainty of hope, not partial assurance. Not the tentative hope of early faith, but the hope that has been tested and proven. The call is to move from sluggish to imitators, those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Wednesday Depth-Dive

What does full assurance actually look like, and what produces it? Romans 5:1-5 maps the progression from justification to proven character to hope. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit (Romans 8:16), and that inner testimony is what transforms hope into full assurance. Wednesday also previews the imitators: real people from Hebrews 11 who held promises they never received in their lifetimes, and still welcomed them from a distance.

Your Work This Week

Journal Prompt

Write down three specific acts of love toward God or His people from the past year that you have either forgotten or minimized. God has not forgotten them. What does it do to you to sit with that?

Deeper Reading

- **Romans 5:1-5** -- The progression from justification to proven character to hope. Full assurance is not where you start. It is where the tested road leads.
- **Psalms 139:1-6** -- God's thorough and specific knowledge of you. The same God who has not forgotten your work knows every detail of your situation.
- **Hebrews 11:13-16** -- The imitators died without receiving the promise and still welcomed it from a distance. Full assurance does not require possession.

Reflection Questions

1. What is the practical difference in your daily life between partial assurance and full assurance of hope? Where does the gap live: in your mind, your emotions, or your behavior?
2. Sluggishness rarely announces itself. It moves in quietly. What are the early signs of spiritual sluggishness in your own life, the ones you recognize before they become visible to others?
3. Faith and patience together inherit the promise. Faith without patience grabs. Patience without faith waits passively. Which side of that combination is harder for you right now: holding the promise, or holding on without letting go?
4. Name one person, living or historical, who models the faith-and-patience combination in a way that challenges you. What is the specific thing about their example that costs you something to look at honestly?

— WEEK 3 —

■ NO HIGHER GROUND

Hebrews 6:13-15 · June 7, 2026

Sunday Teaching

Abraham waited 25 years from the promise to Isaac. When God made the promise, He swore by Himself, because there is nothing greater by which to swear. The oath was the highest possible guarantee, grounded not in something outside God but in His own character and nature.

The word for Abraham obtaining the promise means he hit the target, he attained it. The patience was not resignation. It was aimed. The same God who swore by Himself to Abraham has made a promise to you in Christ. The pattern holds: the promise will come, it will be obtained, on the other side of the patience that the wait requires.

Wednesday Depth-Dive

Genesis 22 and the Aqedah (a Hebrew term for the binding of Isaac), the specific moment the divine oath was sworn, and what it cost. The pattern that runs through all of Scripture: the greatest oath follows the greatest test.

Moriah to Calvary. The Father who did not withhold His own Son has secured the promise at the highest possible price.

Your Work This Week

Journal Prompt

What promise from God are you currently waiting on? Write it down as specifically as you can, not a category like healing or provision or restoration, but the actual thing. How long have you been waiting? Have you been aimed at it, or just enduring?

Deeper Reading

- **Genesis 22:1-18** -- The Aqedah (the binding of Isaac). Read the full account. The oath of verse 16 comes after the test, not before it. Notice where God speaks and where He is silent.
- **Romans 4:18-21** -- Abraham against hope believed in hope, not ignoring the evidence against the promise but not being weakened by it either.
- **James 1:2-4** -- The testing of faith produces endurance. The test is not opposed to the promise. It is the road to it.

Reflection Questions

1. The text says Abraham obtained the promise. He hit the target. The patience was aimed, not resigned. What is the difference between aimed waiting and resigned waiting? Which one describes you right now?
2. The greatest oath followed the greatest cost for Abraham. Has there been a season of great cost in your own life that was followed by something God confirmed or deepened on the other side? What do you make of that pattern in retrospect?
3. God swore by Himself to Abraham because there was nothing greater. The same oath, the same character, the same nature stands behind every promise made to you in Christ. What does it mean to you that the guarantee is not a commitment God makes against His nature? It is His nature itself.
4. What is the promise you have been holding the longest? Has the length of the wait caused you to revise it downward rather than hold it fully? Be honest about what revision has happened, if any.

— WEEK 4 —

■ IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE

Hebrews 6:16-18 · June 14, 2026

Sunday Teaching

The promise alone would be enough. The oath seals it beyond dispute. Together they form two immutable things, two realities that cannot change, in which it is impossible for God to lie. This is not a statement about a strong commitment God makes against His nature. It is a statement about His nature itself. The promise is safe because God's failure would require Him to be something He cannot be.

Those who have taken refuge in this hope are held by both. The word for encouragement here shares its root with the Comforter. The Holy Spirit is not only the source of the better things. He is the strong encouragement in Person, inhabiting the refuge with every soul who has fled to lay hold of the hope set before them.

Wednesday Depth-Dive

The background of "those who have fled for refuge": the Mosaic cities of refuge in Numbers 35. Three things the city provided: protection before the verdict, access only by running, and freedom through the death of the High Priest. Our High Priest has died and risen. The pursuing claim is satisfied. The Comforter inhabits the city with you.

Your Work This Week

Journal Prompt

Those who fled for refuge had to run. They could not be protected by knowing the city existed. They had to get up and go. Write about a time when you actually ran to God rather than just thought about running. What made the difference between knowing and running?

Deeper Reading

- **Numbers 35:9-15** -- The cities of refuge in detail. Read the actual provision. Notice that protection required entering the city, not just knowing it existed.
- **Psalms 46:1-3** -- God as refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, even if the earth gives way.
- **John 14:16-18** -- The Comforter will not leave you as orphans. He inhabits the refuge with you.

Reflection Questions

1. The two immutable things are the promise and the oath. When your faith feels weak, which is harder to hold: that God made a promise, or that it is ontologically impossible for Him to break it? Why is that one harder?
2. The strong encouragement in this passage shares its root with the word for Comforter. The Spirit is not just pointing you toward the refuge. He is inside it with you. What would it look like this week to live as someone who is not alone in the place of safety?
3. Is there a promise you have stopped running toward, something you know is true but have settled for knowing rather than actively laying hold of? Name it specifically if you can.
4. The person who fled to the city of refuge was protected before the verdict was rendered. You did not have to have the outcome settled to be safe inside. Where in your life are you waiting for the outcome to be settled before you will let yourself rest in what God has already provided?

— WEEK 5 —

■ THE FORERUNNER HAS ALREADY GONE IN

Hebrews 6:19-20 · June 21, 2026

Sunday Teaching

The anchor of the soul is not cast downward but upward and inward, into the inner place beyond the veil. The security of the soul does not rest on what is beneath it but on who is ahead of it. Jesus entered within the veil as a *prodromos* (a Greek word for "forerunner" or "advance runner"), one who goes in first so that others can follow. He did not go in for Himself. He went in for us.

This is the moment the letter has been building toward since 5:10: the forerunner within the veil is a high priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. Chapter 7 begins here.

Wednesday Depth-Dive

The veil of the tabernacle, its materials and imagery pointing back to the closed garden of Eden, torn from top to bottom by God Himself at the moment of Christ's death. The identity of Melchizedek in Genesis 14, and the theological weight of the deliberate silence: no genealogy, no birth record, no death. A full setup for what Chapter 7 is about to deliver.

Your Work This Week

Journal Prompt

The anchor is cast upward and inward, not into the ground below you but into the One who is ahead of you. Where are you anchoring your soul this week? Is it holding?

Deeper Reading

- **Hebrews 10:19-22** -- The new and living way through the veil, opened by Christ's flesh. Draw near with a sincere heart and full assurance.
- **Matthew 27:50-51** -- The veil torn from top to bottom at the moment of Christ's death. God opened what He had closed. Read it slowly.
- **Hebrews 7:25** -- He always lives to make intercession. The forerunner did not go in and become unavailable. He is there now, for you, in this moment.

Reflection Questions

1. The forerunner went in so that we could follow. He did not go in and close the door. The access He opened is access for you specifically, not just for the apostles, not just for the mature, but for you. What is the thing in your spiritual life that you have treated as inaccessible, as if the door were still closed?

2. What would change about your prayer life this week if you actually believed that Jesus is making intercession for you right now, within the veil, at this moment, not in a general way but specifically for your situation?
3. The veil was torn from top to bottom. God opened it, not man. The limitation of access was removed by the One who placed it. Is there something in your own life where you have been working to open what only God can open? What does this text say to that?
4. This series opened with disciples behind locked doors and closes with the forerunner already inside the veil. Where are you at the end of these five weeks: still at the locked doors, on the threshold, or pressing forward? Be honest. The answer is not a verdict. It is a starting point.

This Weekly Companion is part of this series packet. Walk it at your own pace; let the text do its work.

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