**Move on in maturity! (Hebrews 5:11-6:3)**

Introduction

Stunted growth

A tree by streams of water vs bush in the wastelands

Warn

The BIG POINT: **Don’t be sluggish listeners, but open your ears!**

Wider context: the priesthood of Melchizedek

“…you no longer try to understand” (v.11, NIV2011)

“…you are slow to learn” (v11, NIV1984)

*Nothroi* = lazy, sluggish (cf. 6:12)

“…you are spiritually dull and don’t seem to listen” (v.11, NLT)

The issue: not intelligence, but inclination

Writer has repeatedly encouraged Christians to tune in to God’s voice

(eg. 2:1, 3:7, 13)

Consequences (6:8).

Don’t ignore the warning signs!

Warning signs we’re stuck in spiritual immaturity:

i. You’re unteachable (5:11)

A sense of apathy. You don’t care

A lack of humility. You don’t want to know

ii. You’re still a baby needing milk, not a chef giving out steak (5:12)

What’s appropriate and what’s not

Too high expectations?

Taste how good the Lord really is

How does this fit with being gospel-centred?

iii. You’re unable to discern between good and evil (5:13-14)

Able to tell what’s good and what’s bad

Move on in maturity…anchored in Christ (6:1-3)!

*→ how that will begin to look in KEC: A roadmap, not a menu*

**On New Year’s resolutions – Adrian Reynolds** (slightly adapted)

Resolutions! Don’t you just hate them? And what should grace-filled, Spirit-led Christians have to do with them anyway? But it’s actually a strange view of Christianity that sees no place for godly resolutions.

*It’s certainly a strange view historically*. Perhaps most famously, Jonathan Edwards, the early 18th-century revival preacher and pastor, made 65 of them!

*It’s also a strange view biblically*. For many Bible writers resolve to do things. Here’s Paul, for example: ‘For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified’ (1 Cor. 2:2). Or, how about ‘so we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it’ (2 Cor. 5:9).

There’s no reason why making resolutions should be anti-gospel. Of course, as with many things, they could be. It’s always possible to reduce any kind of action into a form of self-righteousness or self-justification that is contrary to the good news of grace held out to us in Jesus Christ. But believing in grace and the continued work of the Spirit in us does not negate the doing of things. Edwards explains this tension well in his introduction to his resolutions: ‘Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God’s help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ’s sake.’

It is therefore sub-biblical to rob Christianity of command, law and resolution. We don’t relate to these things in the same way we did before conversion. Nor do we ever rely on them to gain us acceptance and righteousness before a holy God. Only the Spirit’s work to join us to Christ can achieve that! But neither do we neglect them or give up the pursuit of holiness held out to us in the pages of Scripture. And what better time of year than its beginning to commit afresh to God, and to resolve?

**Three areas for resolve**

I always think it’s worth doing this in three respects. *First*, I want to always resolve to grow in my walk with Christ Jesus. That means a deepening relationship with my God. It means prayer. It means meditation on God’s Word and finding time to do these things well.

*Second*, I also want to resolve to serve others. That means a deepening relationship with others, especially, but not only, those in my church family. It means putting myself out for them. It means thinking of them before myself and considering their interests above mine.

And *third*, I want to resolve to be more self-aware. That means a deepening relationship with myself, by which I mean a more honest evaluation of my faults, and willingness to confess them. It means allowing others to minister to me so that I myself might be more Christlike in word, thought and action.

Such resolutions are, with God’s help, not anti-gospel at all but precisely the kind of life God is pleased to honour. So, my prayer – with Edwards, and perhaps with you too – is this: I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these resolutions.