

Hebrews

Chapter 12

Hebrews 12:1-2

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Cloud Of Witnesses

- The cloud or group of witnesses that the Hebrew writer is referring to is the champions of faith listed in chapter 11.
- The word that is used for “cloud” is “*nephos*” and means a “multitude of persons or things.”
- Some people believe based from this passage that people in heaven can see what’s happening here on earth and are cheering us on in the faith. This idea is inclusive and is difficult to prove.
- We think of people in heaven to be happy and free from trouble but if those in heaven could see us on earth it is hard to think that they are free from their burdens if they can observe us in all our struggles.

Lay Aside Every Weight

- When athletes would train to run a race they would put weights on their bodies to help them with their endurance.
- When they were in the race they were now free from the burden of the weight and could run light and free.
- There are things that may not be sin but are merely hindrances that can keep us from running effectively the race God has for us.
- There are legitimate things in life that hold us back in the race: Friends, family, financial security, worry, etc. .

Psalm 119:37

Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, *And* revive me in Your way.

Worthless Things

- **Worthless** because they are meaningless.
- **Worthless** because they do not last.
- **Worthless** because they do not help any one.
- **Worthless** because they do not build the spiritual life.
- **Worthless** because they distract from things that are truly worthy.
- **Worthless** because they have nothing to do with the abundant life that Jesus desires for us.
- **Worthless** because in the end it is the purpose and design of God that will be accomplished

MATT 11:28-29:

- **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.** Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me,** for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find **rest for your souls.** For **My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**”

JESUS SAYS FOUR THINGS ABOUT ENTERING INTO REST:

- COME AND HE WILL GIVE REST
 - WE COME TO HIM IN ALL THINGS
 - WE LET HIM IN ALL OF OUR ACTIVITIES
- LEARN FROM HIM
- YOU WILL FIND REST
- HIS YOKE IS EASY (BETTER) AND HIS BURDEN IS LIGHT

God's Rest

- God's rest is not the Promised Land nor is it heaven but it is in all the promises that God wants to give us
- When we trust in the promises of God making them food for our souls we enter into the rest of God
- "For we who have believed do enter that rest..."-Heb 4:3
- The opposite of God's rest is to not trust Him and His promises thus causing us to wander aimlessly through life

Lay Aside Every Sin

- The words **easily ensnares** translate a difficult ancient Greek word **eperistaton** which can be translated four ways: "easily avoided," "admired," "besetting, obsessing," or "dangerous."
- The sin that I believe the Hebrew writer is referring to here is unbelief since we just came out of the examples of faith in Chapter Eleven.
- This has been a theme and warning to the Hebrew believers of the early church.

Hebrews 3:12-15

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief** in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Mixing Hearing And Faith

- Faith is **not a work** but is **the means** by which we receive the message of the gospel
- The ability to believe is a gift given by God to all people
- "...God has dealt to each one **a measure of faith**."-Rom 12:3
- **Faith is given to man so that man can train his ear to hear what God has said.**
- There is no profit in faith if we do not hear what God has said.
- "...but the word which they heard did not profit them..."- Heb 4:2

Unbelief

- **Unbelief is the act of the will to not trust God to do what He says He will do!**
- We know that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"-Rom. 10:17
- It is an antagonistic slap in the face of God to willfully chose not to believe Him
- We might have occasional moments of doubt when we are troubled in faith but unbelief willfully opposes faith.

“ONE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN IS THAT IT MAKES THE SINNER PITY HIMSELF INSTEAD OF CAUSING HIM TO TURN TO GOD. ONE OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF NEW LIFE IS THAT THE INDIVIDUAL TAKES SIDES WITH GOD AGAINST HIMSELF.” (BARNHOUSE)

Every Sin That Easily Ensnares

- As the notes above show there are four ways to translate “easily ensnares” and the Hebrew writer is encouraging to lay aside every sin.
- Some sins can be ***easily avoided*** but are not.
- Some sins are ***admired*** yet must be laid aside.
- Some sins are ***obsessing*** and thus especially harmful.
- Some sins are more ***dangerous*** than others are.
- We must remember that even though the Hebrew writer is admonishing to lay aside the sin that so easily entangles it is not our battle to be won. Jesus is the victor over sin in our lives. However it is an ongoing battle that we are in as the spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit.

- “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”-**Galatians 5:17**
- “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become †the righteousness of God in Him.”-2 Corinthians 5:21

There is Three Types Of Sin

- There is the **sin that is of the will**. Committing sin knowing it is wrong.
- “Also **keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me;** Then I will be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression.”-Psalm 19:12-13
- There is **the sin of ignorance**. A person doesn't know the action that they are doing is wrong.
- There is the **sin that controls from within** and we are powerless to overcome.-Romans 7

Jesus Has Purged Our Sins

- The word for "purge" is "*Katherismos*" which means a "cleansing" or "a washing"-**Hebrews 1:3**
- The relationship between God and man was broken the moment of the Fall.
- Jesus provided our cleansing
- Jesus was our cleansing
- Jesus continues to be our cleansing
- **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**-Rom 5:8

1 JOHN 2:1-2

“MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS I WRITE TO YOU, SO THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN. AND **IF ANYONE SINS**, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS. AND **HE HIMSELF IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS, AND NOT FOR OURS ONLY BUT ALSO FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.**”

“...AND IF ANYONE SINS....”

WHAT THEN?

- We are **not condemned**
- We are **not reminded** of what we have done and that we should turn our thoughts inward.
- We are **not reminded** of our humiliation.
- We are **reminded** of what Jesus has done; therefore we turn our thoughts upon Him in repentance.
- **We are reminded of His propitiation**

The Race Set Before Us

- The word for **“race”** is **“agona”** we get our word “agony” from it.
- It means “struggle, contest, or race”
- Sometimes we wish we had somebody else’s race to run but it is the race that is set before each of us.
- “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, **so that I may finish my race with joy.....**”-Acts 20:22-24
- Paul recognized that it was his race to run and each of us must accept responsibility for the course that God has laid out for each of us.

Finish Well

- “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”-2 Timothy 4:7-8
- “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”-1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- Disqualified in this context is not loss of salvation but loss of the reward

Looking To Jesus

- The battle or race we are in is an endurance race not a sprint.
- It was demonstrated to us by Abraham in Chapter 6:15, “And so, after he had patiently endured, he [Abraham] obtained the promise.”
- Abraham also is our example to look beyond this world and its circumstances to Jesus.
- “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”-Romans 4:20-21
- “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”-John 8:56

- We can only run the race as we look to Jesus and have our eyes fixed on Him.
- **We fix our eyes on what He has done not what we do!**
- "The Greek word for 'looking' is a much fuller word than we can find in the English language. It has a preposition in it which turns the look away from everything else. You are to look from all beside to Jesus. Fix not thy gaze upon the cloud of witnesses; they will hinder thee if they take away thine eye from Jesus. Look not on the weights and the besetting sin-these thou hast laid aside; look away from them. Do not even look upon the race-course, or the competitors, but look to Jesus and so start in the race." (Spurgeon)
- If the focus of our thinking is upon failure then failure becomes our point of reference.

- If the focus of our thinking is upon our own victories then pride comes in and tells us, " we have it all together"
- Pride is a troubling problem for the believer in that of all the sins that capitalize on my weaknesses pride glorifies in my victories.
- Pride steps in and begins to make us think that we are some kind of spiritual giant and that we have it all together
- If we change the core of our thinking to contemplate the Lord he becomes our point of reference.
- Sometimes what we call "failure" is really just a necessary struggle in God's economy called learning!

Jesus is The Author Of Faith

- "Our Lord is here made the *Archegos*, the Author and Captain or Perfecter of faith. Jesus is the One Who Himself had perfect faith! Thayer well translates Archegos, 'One who takes the lead in anything, and thus affords an example, a predecessor in the matter,'" adding of Christ, 'Who in the pre-eminence of His faith far surpassed the examples commemorated in Chapter 11.'" -Newell
- Jesus is not only the source of our salvation but the source of our faith as well.
- He is the Author of the story that God is writing in history and we join Him as we follow Him in faith.

Jesus is the Finisher Of Faith

- We can be, ".....confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;" -Php. 1:6
- " For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I **know** whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day." -**2 Timothy 1:12**
- "**Oida**": Know, literally to understand based on facts. Always in the perfect tense which is a **past experience that is affecting the present**

God Will Complete His Work In You

- Jesus will complete His redemptive work in the believer's life
- There is no procrastination with Jesus!
- Jesus always brings a life out of ruins!
- Jesus turns failure into newness of life!
- Jesus is always at work in our life!
- Jesus never gives up!
- Nothing is wasted in the economy of God

The Joy Set Before Him

- Jesus did not consider the cross a joy.
- Jesus said, "A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world."-**John 16:21**
- "Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."-**Matthew 26:38-39**
- Jesus looked beyond the cross to the joyful moment when the salvation of many believers would be born!

- "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. **He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,** for He shall bear their iniquities."-Isaiah 53:10-11

His Joy Became Our Joy

- "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."-John 15:11
- "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."-John 17:13
- "The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him."-Psalm 28:7

JOY AND STRENGTH



†
**The Joy
Of The
Lord
Is My
Strength**

**JOY IS A STATE OF BEING THAT
COMES OUT BELIEVING IN JESUS**



STRENGTH = DEFENSE SYSTEM

PROVERBS 17:22
"A joyful heart is good medicine,
But a broken spirit dries up the bones."

IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH THEN THE ONE THING THE DEVIL WOULD WANT TO TAKE AWAY FROM A BELIEVER IS JOY!

HINDERANCES TO JOY IN OUR LIVES

- RELYING ON CIRCUMSTANCES
- RELYING ON THINGS
- RELYING ON PEOPLE
- SEEING GOD AS AN ABSTRACT IDEA, THEOLOGY, RELIGION, OR A FORMULA TO BE MASTERED
- TURN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIVING GOD INTO A DUTY, A TASK TO BE DONE, A ROUTINE, A CHECK LIST TO BE ACCOMPLISHED
- KEEPING BUSY AND DISTRACTED

ONE OF THE DEVILS BIGGEST LIES IS TO DECEIVE US INTO THINKING THAT THE THINGS THAT DO NOT MATTER, MATTER THE MOST

- When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.
- Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
- My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! –Horatio Spafford

Despising The Shame Of The Cross

- The shame of the cross was found in Jesus being so holy and pure yet had to endure the sin of all mankind.
- "For He made **Him who knew no sin to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."-**2 Corinthians 5:21**
- Daniel 12, says that shame is one of the elements of hell: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."-**Daniel 12:2**
- Jesus endured the shame of hell to accomplish our redemption.

- "Jesus bore a shameful accusation: blasphemy.
- Jesus bore shameful mocking.
- Jesus bore a shameful beating.
- Jesus wore a shameful crown.
- Jesus wore a shameful robe.
- Jesus bore shameful mocking even as He prayed on the cross."-Guzik
- Charles Spurgeon boldly spoke to people who follow Jesus yet do not endure ridicule and shame: "Yet you are a coward. Yes, put it down in English you are a coward. If anybody called you so you would turn red in the face; and perhaps you are not a coward in reference to any other subject. What a shameful thing it is that while you are bold about everything else you are cowardly about Jesus Christ. Brave for the world and cowardly towards Christ!"

A Main Point In The Book Of Hebrews

- "The main thing is that the main thing remains the main thing." Lee Iacocca
- "Now **this is the main point** of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens..."- **Hebrews 8:1-2**
- Jesus being at the "right hand" is definitely one of the main themes of the New Testament it is spoken of 21 times and 5 times in Hebrews alone.

Some Key Reasons It is Important To Remember This Main Point

- It resulted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."-- Acts 2:32-33
- Jesus is now interceding on behalf of the believer.

Hebrews 12:3-4

“For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”

Consider Jesus

- We are encouraged in this passage to consider or fix our eyes on Jesus Who endured.
- In the difficulties of life. When we are barely hanging on and discouraged we are to focus our attention to Jesus.
- It is an endurance race and as we fix our eyes on Jesus we can know that He doesn't ask more of us than He has Himself experienced.
- It is astonishing to think that there is a God in Heaven who by His own choosing and experience knows what believers are going through and can help during our most difficult times of life not simply just feel bad for us!

Strife Against Sin

- The word for strife in original Greek is “*antagōnizomai*”. It is only used here in the New Testament and means “to struggle and fight”.
- The believer is in a struggle with sin but not many have had to fight against sin as the heroes of faith and Jesus Who shed His blood that we might be saved.
- This is the reason for the discipline that the Lord brings into our lives is to train our senses to discern between good and evil.

The Training Of The Senses

- The reason that we should grow up into the word of righteousness and quit always laying the foundation of repentance is so that we can train our senses.
- False guilt is always focused on self and is a stunt to our growth in the Lord constantly revisiting over and over the past.
- Babies need be to told they're O.K. all the time.
- The mature Christian has trained his senses to discern the difference between what is of God and what is not of God.
- Our unshakable position in Jesus becomes an anchor to face the constant bombardment of voices both within our own head and from people.

Hebrews 12:5-6

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”

Have You Forgotten

- The passage the Hebrew writer is quoting comes from Proverbs 3:11-12.
- The Hebrew Christians had forgotten that the Word of God spoke about the chastening of the Lord.
- Most of the difficulties in life can be traced to these three words, “have you forgotten”.
- “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”-**Romans 15:4**
- The Word of God is the most important item we have in the struggle of life yet so many neglect it and thus have forgotten the basic principles that it teaches.

Discipline

- According to the 1828, Webster dictionary discipline means: “To instruct or educate ; to inform the mind; to prepare by instruction in correct principles and habits.”
- God is instructing us as believers with habits and principles to conform us into the image of His Son.
- Discipline always has a purpose for God’s children.
- “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.....”-Romans 8:28-29

Hebrews 12:7-8

“If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.”

Who Are God's Sons?

- Everybody on this earth is caught in the struggles of life through trial and tribulation, through loss and defeat, and through wrong choices.
- How do we know that we are child of God enduring the struggle verses an illegitimate child?
- "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."-**Galatians 3:26**
- **If we have repented of our sins and trust alone in Christ for salvation then we are sons of God.**

A Change In Attitude

- A change in attitude occurs in the life of a child of God.
- A child of God takes side with God against himself and his sin while a non-child of God is against Him.
- A child of God is growing closer to God through the struggles of life while a non-child of God is growing more bitter against God.

David's Attitude

- "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge."-**Psalm 51:3-4**
- Paul had the same attitude: "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man."- Romans 7:22

God Disciplines His Sons

- The correction that God brings into our lives is never to punish us or make us pay for our sins because that has already been dealt with on the cross.
- The correction that God brings into our lives is to train us to live the life of a believer in relationship to us as a father is to son.
- The correction that God brings into our lives is as a loving Father Who cares for His son.
- For some people it would be difficult to see the discipline of God as love from the Father because their earthly fathers have been abusive and harsh.

Imperfect Love

- Our idea of love has become so distorted by a culture that is a product of sin. Our first experience with love originates with our parents but they are human and can influence our lives with their imperfect love



What Is Perfect Love?

- 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.-- Rom 5:8
- "...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.-- Rom 5:5
- 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,---Rom 8:15-16

Psalms 103

- "Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies..."
- "8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
- "10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.
- "12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

Illegitimate Sons

- A son who does not have a father to correct him does whatever he wants to without any discipline or training.
- It is not love to allow a son to run free without any consequences.
- People who refuse to submit to the Father in faith and allow Him to train them results in unrighteous acts as described in Romans 1:18-32

Fatherless Homes

- **Poverty:** Children in father-absent homes are almost four times more likely to be poor.
- **Addictions:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, "Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse."
- **Emotional:** Children of single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to commit suicide.
- **Education:** 71% of high school dropouts are fatherless.
- **Sexual Activity:** Adolescents in father-absence homes were more likely to report being sexually active compared to adolescents living with their fathers.
- **Crime:** Crime rates are higher in fatherless neighborhoods.

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Hebrews 12:9-11

"Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?"

For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

The Perfect Discipline

- Our human fathers disciplined in the best way that they knew how to do.
- However, no matter how good a father you may have had or no matter how bad a father you may have had they disciplined their children by imperfect measures.
- The perfect discipline that God brings into the life of His children is perfect because He knows His children with perfect wisdom.

The Reason For Discipline

- God uses discipline to draw His children into a more abundant life in relationship with Him.
- God takes all the disappointments in life and teaches us through them to trust Him more and more everyday.
- We should never reject or despise God and His discipline because that would put us on equal ground thinking we know better what we need than He does.
- As we submit to His discipline He makes us better with more lasting results that only He can accomplish in the life of His children.

Life Lessons From Peter's Journey

- 2 Peter 3:18
"...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."
- "Grow": "to cause to grow by action."
- Just like plants will not grow without nutrients and water the believer will not grow in a relationship with the Lord without discipline.

Fruitful Growth

- "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. **For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."-2 Peter 1:5-11

Cost Of Discipleship

- The failing of so many believers today in the church is that we want to have a vibrant walk with the Lord but we are unwilling to put forth the effort and commitment that is required to produce the kind of life that we envision in the Scriptures. We intend to have the walk but avoid the cost of discipleship that would make it a reality.
- We cannot skip over the discipline for an easy shortcut to the believing lifestyle but must be in "subjection to the Father of spirits and live."
- To be in subjection to the Father is to submit to His instruction in our lives because Father knows best.

The Call Of Peter

Matt 4:18-20

- "And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.
- *Poieō* : "To produce, construct, form, or fashion" someone or something.
- A disciple is a person who is trained through discipline to believe, live and act as the Master that is followed.

A Lesson In Faith

Luke 22:31-32

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, **that your faith should not fail;** and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

1 Peter 1:3-9

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **who are kept by the power of God** through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, **receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.**"

Peter Learned

1. We are kept by the power of God through faith.
2. Salvation will be revealed in its time.
3. Trials demonstrate the genuineness of faith.
4. Faith is the most valuable commodity in this world.
5. Faith in Jesus produces an inexpressible Joy.
6. The end of faith is the salvation (healing) of our souls.

A Lesson In Self Control

- Matt 16:21-23
From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. **Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"** But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for **you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.**"

1 Peter 3:13-19

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. **"And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always be ready to give a defense** to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

"For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit..."

Peter Learned

1. Some suffer for righteousness but no need to be afraid or be troubled by it.
2. Set apart the Lord in our hearts so we will be about the Lord's business.
3. Always be prepared to give a reason of your hope from the Word.
4. People are watching how we live.
5. The best thing is to do the will of God even if you have to suffer for it.
6. Jesus suffered for our sins, but lives, so that we can have a relationship with God.

Lesson In Humility

Matt 26:31-36

"Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

Peter answered and said to Him, "**Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.**" Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "**Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!**" And so said all the disciples.

1 Peter 5:5-7

"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. **Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."** Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Peter Learned Through Pride

1. Submission is a Good thing.
2. Clothe yourself in Humility.
3. God resists the proud.
4. Grace is given to the Humble.
5. God is the One Who exalts.
6. Cast all you cares upon Him which is the ultimate submission and humility.

A Lesson in Failure

Matt 26:69-75

"Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied it before them all, saying, "**I do not know what you are saying.**" And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But again he denied with an oath, "**I do not know the Man!**"

And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." **Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!"** Immediately a rooster crowed. And **Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him,** "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and **wept bitterly.**"

1 Peter 5:8-11

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. **But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.**"

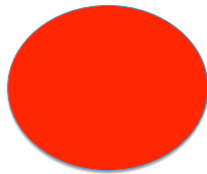
Peter Learned Through Failure

1. We need to be watchful because the devil seeks to devour.
2. Resist the devil by being steadfast in faith.
3. All believers are going through the same things.
4. God will perfect us by His grace.
5. God will establish us by His grace.
6. God will strengthen us by His grace.
7. God will settle us by His Grace.

The Fruit Of Discipline

- The fruit of discipline though painful results in a greater understanding of Who God is.
- God is producing within us His ideas and thoughts within our lives.
- After a time of painful trial we see from God's perspective.
- If we understood everything that happens then we probably would not resent it. But we cannot see nor comprehend the big answers.
- It is to see that God is not cruel or unjust, it is that we cannot see or know the whole of the story.

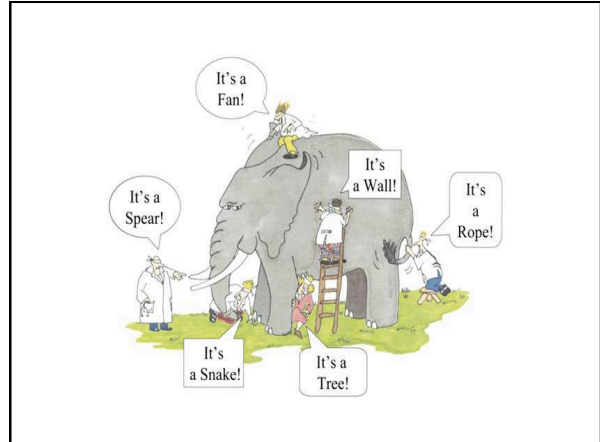
What Do You See?



Job 42:1-5

- "Then Job answered the LORD and said: I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' **Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.** Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' **"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You."**

Perspective



TRIALS WILL EXPOSE A HOUSE BUILT ON A ROCK FOUNDATION OR ON SANDY SOIL

- JAMES 1:2-4

"CONSIDER IT ALL JOY, MY BRETHREN, WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS, KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES ENDURANCE."



Hebrews 12:12-13

“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.”

Stay Strong

- The description given here in Hebrews 12:12, is of a believer who doesn't have end game in his thoughts about the Lord's discipline.
- His hands are hanging down at his side in discouragement.
- He has feeble or wobbly knees that hinder his walking an indication of being afraid.
- He feet are not setting his direction straight on the path and he is prone to wander giving possibility of a dislocated limb.
- The exhortation given to the believer is to strengthen these items so that we don't misunderstand the blessed end of the Lord's discipline.

These Verses Are From The O.T

- “Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, ‘Be strong, do not fear!’”-**Isaiah 35:3-4**
- “Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.”-**Proverbs 4:26-27**

A Person Keeps On The Path By Striving With A Focused Heart!



Psalm 119:10

With my **whole** heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

- The Bible tells us in Philippians 2, that we live in a crooked and perverse generation in which it is hard to follow in the steps of Jesus.
- We need to give ourselves wholeheartedly to following Him and seeking His way for our lives.
- Paul said, “You are our epistle written in our hearts, **known and read by all men;**”-2 **Corinthians 3:2**
- People are watching our lives and there is a danger that as we are going through trials we become full of self pity.

God Desires Our Healing

- The end game of God’s discipline is for our healing.
- “For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope....For we were **saved** in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”
- The word for “saved” is “sozo” which means, “to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health”.

Hebrews 12:14-15

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;”

Pursue Peace

- The word for “pursue” means to follow someone like in chase or a battle. It carries the same idea of those who are being persecuted are followed and hunted.
- Peace in this world will not come easy especially **peace** will all men.
- The condition of the believer’s life that calls for discipline frequently involves our relationship with others.
- The problem may not be the crookedness of this generation but the crankiness of people.

- In order to live in peace with our fellow man the believer needs to have forgiveness.
- Believer's are to be forgiving of one another and to settle our differences in loving and peaceful way.
- "All my close friends abhor me, and those whom I love have turned against me."-**Job 19:19**
- "And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before."-**Job 42:10**
- The Lord restored Job's losses only after he had prayed for his friends.

What are the benefits of forgiveness?

- Letting go of grudges and bitterness makes way for compassion, kindness and peace. Forgiveness can lead to:
- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
- Less stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety and chronic pain
- Lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/forgiveness/MH00131>

"If you're unforgiving, you may pay the price repeatedly by bringing anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience. Your life may become so wrapped up in the wrong that you can't enjoy the present. You may become depressed or anxious. You may feel that your life lacks meaning or purpose, or that you're at odds with your spiritual beliefs. You may lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others."

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/forgiveness/MH00131>

Pursue Holiness

- A better translation than the word holiness here would be sanctification.
- We know that we are **justified by faith** before the Lord.
- This is our complete position before the Lord unto salvation.
- However, the believer needs to pursue after the moment by moment sanctification of the heart.
- A lack of daily practicing of sanctification is a critical obstacle in our relationship with the Lord.

Understanding Sanctification

- Sanctification is not perfection of behavior as some church traditions claim.
- “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus....And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”-1 Corinthians 1:1;3:1,3

- Jesus in His prayer said, “And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that **they also may be sanctified** by the truth.”-John 17:19
- “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who **became** for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and **sanctification** and redemption”.-1 Corinthians 1:30
- Some believer’s seem to think that by being sanctified that they no longer engage in the ways of the world, thus they live in an attitude of denial toward their sin.
- They forget that pride is a deadly disease in the life of a believer.

Falling Short Of Grace

- A person who in this context falls from grace is not a loss of salvation but a shortcoming of grace towards his fellow man.
- “For it is good that the heart be established by grace”-Hebrews 13:9
- “For I say, through the **grace** given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”-Romans 12:3
- “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold **grace** of God.”-1 Peter 4:10

- “.....LEARN TO SEE YOURSELF AS GOD SEES YOU AND NOT AS YOU SEE YOURSELF IN THE DISTORTED MIRROR OF YOUR OWN SELF-IMPORTANCE. THIS IS THE GREATEST AND MOST USEFUL LESSON WE CAN LEARN: TO KNOW OURSELVES FOR WHAT WE TRULY ARE, TO ADMIT FREELY OUR WEAKNESSES AND FAILINGS, AND TO HOLD A HUMBLE OPINION OF OURSELVES BECAUSE OF THEM. NOT TO DWELL ON OURSELVES AND ALWAYS THINK WELL AND HIGHLY OF OTHERS IS GREAT WISDOM AND PERFECTION.” -IMITATION OF CHRIST, ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Root Of Bitterness

- A root of bitterness remains hidden beneath the soil only to spring up at an unexpected moment; or a tire that blows unexpectedly at a weakened spot in the tire letting all the air out and exposing the weakness. Bitterness will slowly take the life out every relationship.
- "Bitterness corrupts many, rooted in a sense of personal hurt, and many hold on to the bitterness with amazing stubbornness. What they must do is remember the grace of God extended to them, and start extending that grace towards others - loving the undeserving."Guzik

Hebrews 12:16-17

"lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears."

The Profane Person

- The Hebrew writer presents an example of the opposite of persuing sanctification through the life of Esau.
- Esau was not concerned with the things of God but only lived in the present seeking immediate satisfaction.
- Esau treated spiritual things as being of no account and proved it by selling his birthright for a bowl of soup.
- Esau is likened to a fornicator although his offense was spiritual not moral.
- Esau cared nothing of what God was doing in history and thus was labeled a fornicator offering his body for his own purposes rather than for God.

There Are Two Options

- We can focus on the good life here and now or on the promised joys of heaven.
- Unfortunately many that profess Christ as Savior live with their minds on the things on earth rather than setting their minds on the things above.
- Our focus is on what Christ can do for us here and now. Heaven is a nice extra **but it does not govern how we live day to day.**

Focused On Earthly Things

- The profane person is focused like Esau on earthly things.
- “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—**who set their mind on earthly things.** —**Philippians 3:18-19**

Consequences

- The person whose mind is on the earthly things does not see the consequences that ungodly choices bring into life.
- There is always consequences when living outside the protection of God’s grace.
- Not all choices bring permanent consequences.
- In this case the consequences were permanent for Esau.
- “It is not a question of forgiveness. God's forgiveness is always open to the penitent. Esau could have come back to God. But he could not undo his act.” (Morris)

Hebrews 12:18-24

“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.

(For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)
 “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

The Earthly Mountain

- The Hebrew writer is taking the Hebrew believers back to when the Old covenant was confirmed at the giving of the Law.
- They are reminded of the awesomeness of the presence of God and the fear that those present felt.
- They can be thankful that they do not have to endure what their fathers endured.

Contrast Between The Two Mountains

- Mount Sinai was marked by fear and terror - Mount Zion is a place of love and forgiveness.
- Mount Sinai is in the desert - Mount Zion is the city of the Living God
- Mount Sinai spoke of earthly things - Mount Zion speaks of heavenly things.
- At Mount Sinai, only Moses was allowed to draw near to God - at Mount Zion, an **innumerable company**, and a **general assembly** is invited to draw near.

- Mount Sinai was characterized by guilty men in fear - Mount Zion features **just men made perfect**.
- At Mount Sinai, Moses was the mediator - at Mount Zion, Jesus is the mediator.
- Mount Sinai brings an Old Covenant, which was ratified by the blood of animals - Mount Zion brings a New Covenant, which is ratified by the blood of God's precious Son.
- Mount Sinai was all about exclusion, keeping people away from the mountain - Mount Zion is all about invitation.
- Mount Sinai is all about Law - Mount Zion is all about grace.

A New Relationship

- When Jesus came into the world and died on the cross for the redemption of mankind He satisfied the Old covenant.
- Now man is able to approach God through the blood of Jesus.
- The point the Hebrew writer is attempting to communicate is that there is no reason to go back to the Old covenant where only fear can be expected.
- The cross of Christ has made it so that there is a new relationship with God Who is approachable through grace.

Hebrews 12:25-26

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.”

Refusing To Hear The Voice Of God

- God's plea from Hebrews 3 and Psalm 95 is to **"not harden your heart"** to the voice of God
- The word for "harden" literally means to be stubborn or refuse to hear
- This is not a one time, sudden sin. This is a long process that involves an attitude or behavior over a period of time.
- The effects from not listening to God in the garden did not happen until many years later

The Gradual Process Of A Hardened Heart

- "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."-Matt 13:22
- Over a period of time the heart from the effects of not listening to the word of the Lord becomes callous to what God is saying
- **God is speaking but we are not listening**
- A believer would not want this to happen therefore we need to be sensitive to this warning in Hebrews.

Some Reasons We Stop Listening to God

- Like a game of hide-and-seek we get bored and give up looking for Him
- We look to people who say they speak for God and witness their judgmental flawed lives instead looking to God Himself
- We know what God will say and like going to the doctor or dentist we don't want to hear it
- It never occurred to us that God is speaking at all!

Hebrews 12:27-29

“Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”

Shake The Earth Once More

- The shaking of the earth is referring to the day when God will remove all the kingdoms of the earth that man has put his hope.
- “Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: ‘I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms.”-**Haggai 2:21**
- Anything and everything that is not from God will be removed at the end of days.

The Millennium Period

- Millennialism--1,000 year reign of Christ-- Revelation 20:1-6
- Mille--1000; annum--year
- Christ will reign over the nations of the earth and Israel will enjoy the blessings promised through the prophets. There is more prophecy in the scripture concerning the millennium than any other period.
- God’s purpose **on earth** will be fully realized during the millennial period

Jesus Is The Faithful Witness

- When we know the character of God we know that He can be relied upon
- **The Lord is in control of the world** and we can rely upon Him fulfilling the things which He said He would do in His word
- In looking at the landscape of history we can see that God is moving His plan of redemption in a specific direction and will fulfill faithfully that which He has promised

Psalm Two is a commentary on the whole history of God's redemptive work, man's rejection of God's plan, man's struggle and frustration to replace God's plan with a human kingdom, and finally God dealing with man and establishing His eternal kingdom and reign.

Unshakeable Kingdom

- "Glory be to God, our kingdom cannot be moved! Not even dynamite can touch our dominion: no power in the world, and no power in hell, can shake the kingdom which the Lord has given to his saints. With Jesus as our monarch we fear no revolution and no anarchy: for the Lord hath established this kingdom upon a rock, and it cannot be moved or removed." (Spurgeon)
- This is part of the whole gospel message: creation to redemption, Jesus dying on the cross and rising again, the restoration of the Jewish nation and the coming reign of Jesus upon the throne from Jerusalem.

Let Us Have Grace

- Some wrongly argue that "too much" grace gives license and breeds disrespect towards God. Actually, grace gives us **reverence and godly fear**.
- "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..." - **Titus 2:11-13**

God Is A Consuming Fire

- “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”-2 Peter 3:10-13
- The truth that God is a consuming fire is a comfort for the believer.

- We realize that the Father has poured out His consuming fire of judgment upon the Son in our place.
- When God did this He completely consumed the guilt of the sin in all who believe in Jesus.
- The penalty of sin was consumed by Jesus at the cross.
- “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but **the wrath of God abides on him.**”- **John 3:36**