**Hebrews 12 Sermon: The Mountain of the Lord**

Review:

**Hebrews 12 Look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.**

Hebrews 12:1-3 If they could do it (given that it was much harder for them and they had so much less than we), so can we. Be steadfast and persevere.

Throw off whatever will hinder you in the race (v. 1). We cannot run well if we are burdened with sin.

**Q: How will we run the race with perseverance?** Answer, by considering the joy which is set before us (v. 2). And by considering Jesus on the cross.

And by accepting hardship as discipline (and therefore as love) from God which will strengthen you for the journey. (v. 4-13) The Hebrew writer spends (relatively) a lot of time on this. He must think we struggle with accepting hardship and discipline from God.

Romans 5:3 And James 1:2-4, 12 trials = maturity = receiving the crown of life.

Endure hardship because:

a. Those who came before you did. (v. 1)

b. It is relatively minor compared to what Jesus endured. (v. 4)

c. It is actually an expression of God’s love.

If you cannot adopt this attitude toward trial and discipline, you will not make it.

Attitudes toward discipline:

a. accept it with resignation

b. accept it and get over it as soon as possible

c. accept it with a woe is me attitude

d. accept it with resentment as punishment

e. accept it as coming from a loving father.

**Q: What is your attitude toward the Lord’s discipline?**

12:14-17 (Live at peace with all people and) do not allow bitterness to take root or disappointment at the sins and mistakes for others take your focus from the goal.

If you do not think this could happen to you, you are naïve and probably have not lived long!

You could lose your salvation, as did Esau over a silly little thing.

Envy and bitterness is almost always over something small. (but even if it is not…)

“bitter root” Deut 29:18 no root among you that produces poison (in that case it was idolatry).

Genesis 25:28-34 Essau to Jacob: I am famished! Sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew. “What good is my birthright to me? [birthright is the right to receive a double portion of the inheritance]

**Q: How might we find ourselves in this position?**

**Q: Are there any roots festering in your life right now—roots that you need to dig up right away?**

[Genesis 27:1-39 Jacob stole the blessing.] Genesis 27:41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob. The grudge was so deep that he could no longer “change his mind”

v. 17 Afterward he could not repent *metanoia.*  v. 17 Notice, we can reach a point of no return. If the Holy Spirit leaves is that, too, is “once for all.”

**Question: Any examples that you have seen of this (people selling their salvation for something seemingly very small)?**

For a girlfriend or boyfriend, for a job, for a degree, for a good retirement, to watch a football game, in order to look more beautiful….

v. 14 Live holy (*hagiasmos*) lives. [normally, holy is *hagios*] Different, separate (reminds of aliens and strangers). Do you dare to be different?

Heb 12:14-17 in not necessarily just talking about relationships. An exhortation: be holy. Do not let a pernicious sin into your life, or you might lose it, as did Esau. Do not sell your inheritance for a bowl of lentil soup!

**Hebrews 12:18-24**  A recapitulation of the apologetic argument. A better covenant.

You have not come to a mountain that cannot be touched and that is burning with fire—to terrifying Mt. Sinai. This is the most holy event in the entire history of the Jews. He saved this for last.

Exodus 19:10-13, 16 The giving of the Law to Moses. [Also Deut 4:11.]

You Christians have not come to the First Covenant. No, you have come to something far, far greater. You have come to Jesus.

For them: FEAR! (12:21)

For us: ACCESS! (12:22-24)

Heb 12:25-29 A recapitulation of the admonitions.

Therefore: “do not refuse him who speaks. Worship him with reverence and fear, for God is a consuming fire. If there was punishment for those who refused to listen to the former revelation, there will be even further punishment to those who refuse the warning from heaven.

**LISTEN Pay Attention**

v. 26-27 Once more I will shake both the earth and the heavens.

From Haggai 2:6

The first shaking: Sinai

The second shaking: Giving of the new covenant/establishment of God’s church

A prophecy of the church/kingdom of God and of the return of Christ. “the removal of the created things.

Jesus is coming. Heaven awaits you!

We are receiving an unshakable kingdom!!!!!

12:28 The summary of the summary.

Note his final thought (the sermon is coming to an end) Our God is a consuming fire!

Ch 13. Final exhortations. The book and the sermon are already done. The writer is making some final comments and giving advice.

Unlike the rest of the book, this section seems a bit unrehearsed.

Unlike the rest of the book, this has the feeling of a letter.

Six essential qualities of the Christian life:

1. Brotherly love Heb 13:1

2. Hospitality Heb 13:2

3. Sympathy for those in trouble. Heb 13:3

4. Sexual purity Heb 13: 4

5. Christian contentment. Heb 13:5-6

6. Respect for spiritual leaders and the mature. Heb 13:7-8, 17

1. Brotherly love. Heb 13:1 Love one another (1 Pet 1:22)

This summarize several of the points already made in the book.

Heb 3:12-14 Encourage one another. (so we will not be hardened)

Heb 10:24-25 Spur one another on. Meet together. (so we can hold unswervingly)

Perhaps surprisingly, Hebrews has more than its share of “one another” passages! (but maybe not too surprising, as this is key to our staying faithful)

2. Hospitality Heb 13:2 Entertain strangers. Probably principally a reference to Christians who came through town or moved to that city. They often came with letters of reference.

Note the situation in 1st century Rome. Inns were filthy, dangerous and expensive.

This is part of our evangelism.

(Genesis 18:1f and Judges 13:3f for entertaining angels unaware)

3. Sympathy for those in trouble. Heb 13:3

Many fellow-Christians were in prison. Heb 10:33 The Hebrews had already received this treatment and treated their brothers and sisters this way, so they are simply being reminded.

For us: Let us remember that those who are despised by the world are our friends. Jesus was “the friend of sinners.”

Tertullian: “If there happen to be any in the mines or banished to the islands or shut up in prisons for nothing but fidelity to the cause of God’s church, they become the nurslings of their confession.”

As early as the second century, Ignatius had to admonish the churches against using too much of church funds to purchase the freedom of slaves.

4th century, Emperor Licinius, in response to the work of Christians, passed a law. “No one is to show kindness to sufferers in prison by supplying them with food, and that no one was to show mercy to those starving in prison.”

Do you understand that this is a huge part of our evangelism program? Matthew 9:35-38

4. Sexual Purity. Heb 13:4 Avoid adultery and sexual immorality.

5. Contentment about things of the world. Heb 13:5-6 1 Timothy 5:6-10 Godliness with contentment is great gain…. If we have food and clothing we will be content with that.

**Q: Can you say that about yourself?**

6. Respect for leaders Heb 13:7-8, 17.

v. 7 Follow the example of the spiritually mature. Great advice. Do not be afraid to teach this principle. It will help people to remain faithful.

v. 8 Jesus Christ is the same… A strange statement. Why? Show respect to leaders (who, of course, come and go) because of respect to Jesus.

Heb 13:17 Golden Rule Membership. Judges 5:1

Heb 13:9-16 Warning against returning to Jewish ways of thinking. Avoid the heresy of the Judaizers.

v. 9 Uses the example of kosher foods.

v. 10We have our own altar. Might be a reference to Gnostic concerns.

v. 11-13 Jesus suffered outside the camp. The point: do not be intimidated by fear of losing your place with your fellow Jews who are not Christians (or perhaps with theJudaizing Christians) into following their traditions.

Similar idea: John 9:22.

v. 13 Let us, like Jesus, experience “disgrace” if being different means we will be persecuted.

For us: Do not be attracted to the things of the world. Do not give in to peer pressure. Like he already said “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Heb 13:18-19. Oh, and by the way, don’t forget to pray for us!

“so I may be restored to you. A slight hint about the immediate situation. The immediate audience is friends with whom he formerly lived. (but the author probably intends the letter to be distributed more widely)

13:20-21 Doxology

13:22-25 Post Script