

Hebrews: Growing In Christ
Sunday, August 16, 2015

Hebrews 12:1-17

I. Introduction

“Therefore”

Think about it: The message of Hebrews has pointed us to the fact that Jesus is better than the angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron the High Priest, that he has a better rest, he has established a better covenant, and he offered a better sacrifice in a better temple.

The evidence to support this is Hebrews 11. It was a chapter about faith. It was about the OT saints were looking forward to a promise that was never fulfilled in their lifetime. Now on the basis of their testimony, we are given an exhortation!

II. The Call to Endure (v.1-3)

The Encouragement: *“since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses”*
It means that they have borne witness through the testimony of their lives that there is a future promise which can be obtained through faith.

The Event: *“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*

The Christian life is likened to a race. Notice that it is NOT a sprint. But that is not the picture of the Christian life. How do I know that? Because the Christian life has to be run with endurance.

Endurance - Greek word means "to remain under" - to endure.

Are you here today and gone tomorrow? Or is your commitment to Christ long-term?

The Encumbrances: *“Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely.”*

Notice that there are TWO things which are mentioned as being laid aside.

1) Every weight and 2) the sin which so easily clings to us

The End: *“looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith”*

“A constant view of the glory of Christ will revive our souls and cause our spiritual lives to flourish and thrive...The more we behold the glory of Christ by faith now, the more spiritual and the more heavenly will be the state of our souls. The reason why the spiritual life in our souls decays and withers is because we fill our minds full of other things...But when the mind is filled with thoughts of Christ and his glory, these things will be expelled...This is how our spiritual life is revived.”

John Owen

The Example: *Jesus... who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God*

We have already seen a veritable cloud of witnesses to the life of enduring faith. Now we have one more. It is Jesus Himself.

“Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary or fainthearted.”

The reason that this is told to us is twofold: First it is that we might not grow weary. Suffering can wear you down. More than merely a physical weariness, it brings with it a weariness of the soul. Secondly, this is given to us that we might not lose heart.

The Call to Discipline (v.4-11)

v.4-6 - This passage has says some hard things. It has some teachings which are easily stated but which are hard to live.

This also includes the discipline instilled by a coach toward the athletes who are training for an event. It is not that they are transgressing - it is that they need training to prepare for what lies ahead.

v.7,8 – Discipline shows love and ownership!. **Here is the point. The fact that you are disciplined by God is an evidence that you belong to Him.**

v.9-11 – Discipline produces fruit. Discipline is good for us. It brings about a specific result. God is producing something in your life. But they do yield a crop which is worth the trouble. Notice what is the crop. It is the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Your biggest problems don't come from the world. They come from God. If you are a Christian, then you can take comfort in knowing that nothing comes into your life that does not first go through a nail-scarred hand. When tragedy comes and when things go wrong, the Father says, "It is Me."

v.12,13 – Discipline produces perseverance. The writer brings encouragement, by saying in light of this lift of your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees. God is at work in you because you are His child.

IV. The Call to Holiness (v.14-17)

“Strive” – it is a sustained and determined pursuit; as someone hunting for prey.

What are we striving for?

- 1) Peace – Our relationship with one another
- 2) Holiness – our relationship with God.
“See to it” – be on guard against dangers
 - 1) no one fails to obtain the grace of God
 - 2) no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble and become defiled
 - 3) no one is sexual immoral or unholy