

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 27TH, 2025 // HEBREWS

ENDURANCE (HEBREWS 12:1-11) "A LARGE CLOUD OF WITNESSES"

In Chapter 11, the author defined faith and gave many examples of those in the past who remained faithful until their death.

- In Chapter 12, the author will encourage the audience to **find the strength** necessary to follow the example of the faithful witnesses previously discussed **based on Jesus' example**.

"LAY ASIDE EVERY HINDRANCE... AND SIN"

Sinful thoughts, attitudes, and practices will hold us back and must be addressed through repentance while **looking for anything that may impede progress in the Christian life**.

- We are to evaluate and "lay aside" things in our lives that may not be sin, but are still **"hindering" us from growing, maturing, and running effectively the race God has for us**.

"THE SIN THAT SO EASILY ENSNARES US"

The Greek word for "ensnares" can also be translated three other ways: *"easily avoided," "admired,"* and *"dangerous."*

- There are sins that easily trap because **we fail to use common sense to avoid them**, or we have **allowed our feelings or opinions to become the barometer of right and wrong**.

WE NEED ENDURANCE

We are to **"run with endurance the race that lies before us."**

- The path has been set by God, not us, and we are not to deviate from it. We are to **follow the path faithfully** that is set before us. Running the race with endurance will take **effort and commitment** if we are to finish the race.
- Acts 20:24

"KEEPING OUR EYES ON JESUS"

Jesus endured the cross because He could see the joy beyond it. He despised the shame of the cross, yet He endured because His path to victory was through the cross.

- We keep our eyes focused on Jesus and nothing else: **He is our focus, inspiration, and example**. We trust Him as the **"pioneer and perfecter of our faith"** (Hebrews 12:2; Philippians 1:6).

"SO THAT YOU WON'T GROW WEARY AND GIVE UP"

Christ has endured "hostility" above and beyond what is expected of us. **Jesus never asks more of us than He has experienced**. Our suffering has not reached the point of us "shedding [our] blood" as Christ did.

- We draw encouragement from knowing **we follow the path Christ walked** (Romans 8:17) and **He knows exactly what we are going through**.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

The author quotes Proverbs 3:11-12 to remind the readers that God's discipline is not a sign of rejection, but a sign of affection as His children.

- Only prideful children believe they don't need discipline, and "illegitimate children" reject it and are therefore "without" it. **God uses discipline as correction and a means to produce holiness in His children**.

A SUPERIOR DISCIPLINE TO HUMAN FATHERS

Human fathers' discipline is based on limited knowledge of what they deem right. Their time is also limited in that their children grow up and are no longer under them.

- God's discipline comes from a place of **perfect love for His children** and **perfect knowledge**. **We never "grow up" to a place beyond His discipline**.

STRAIGHT PATHS (HEBREWS 12:12-17)

MOVING FORWARD

The author has given multiple reasons to be strong in the Lord, fight off discouragement, and not give up; now he tells the audience to just do it!

- **"Strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees, and make straight paths for your feet"** is a readiness to **put aside discouragement and get to work**.

PURSUE PEACE AND HOLINESS

We are to look inward as we **pursue peace with everyone** (Romans 12:18) and address things in our lives that are not in line with God's holy standard. We find communion with God through loving Him and others (Matthew 22:37-40).

- Then we are to look outward to **"make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God."**

ADDRESSING BITTERNESS

Jesus shared a parable where we were the soil and the seeds were the gospel (Matthew 13). Here, using a similar analogy, the author tells us to ensure **"no root of bitterness springs up."**

- Roots infiltrate the soil and eventually break through the ground. If we allow bitterness in us to go unaddressed, it will eventually "spring up" **to the detriment of those around us**.

ADDRESS IMMORALITY AND IRREVERENCE

Esau sold his spiritual heritage (intimacy with God), which means he gave up lasting sustenance for the immediate gratification of a single meal (Genesis 25:29-34; 27:30-40).

- Esau did not receive back what he squandered because he sought to gain it back with his tears. **God is good to receive back those who repent and seek Him**, but He is not moved by just tears.

WE HAVE DIRECTION (HEBREWS 12:18-24) CONTRASTING COVENANTS

This section contrasts the people's access and approach to God under the old covenant (the law given to Moses at Mt. Sinai) with the access and approach to God under the new covenant (through Jesus).

- The point is this: Since there are **greater privileges given to Believers**, there should be a **greater response from Believers**.

10 COMMANDMENTS RECEIVED AT MT. SINAI

Verses 18-21 describe that Mt. Sinai (**a literal mountain that could be touched**) was fenced off and the Israelites and their animals were forbidden to touch it (Exodus 19:10-25; 20:18-21).

- The voice of God speaking at Mt. Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:23-27) filled their hearts with dread and had Moses **"trembling with fear."**

A DIFFERENT MOUNTAIN

Verse 22 says that those under the new covenant come to a different mountain, Mt. Zion, and to the city of the living God.

- Mt. Zion represents true worship of God and the heavenly Jerusalem represents God's people in community with Him. God is accessible, through Christ, and **we can worship Him and receive grace from Him now and for all eternity**.

A CONSUMING FIRE (HEBREWS 12:25-29) "DO NOT REJECT THE ONE WHO SPEAKS"

The generation that refused God's message given to them through Moses on earth did not escape the consequences of their rejection (Hebrews 3:14-19).

- Neither will those in this generation who refuse God's heavenly message through Christ escape the consequences of their rejection.

"YET ONCE MORE"

In giving the old covenant, God shook the earth (Exodus 19:18). Verse 26 is a quote from Haggai 2:6 showing God intends to shake not only the earth but the heavens as well.

- This event is referring to the end of all things where God undoes creation (2 Peter 3:10-12; Isaiah 34:4), **leaving the unshakable eternal Kingdom** (Revelation 21:1).

HOW DO WE RESPOND?

We must approach God with thankfulness, reverence, and awe.

- Fire is often used in Scripture as a depiction of God's wrath and judgment. But here, the author says, "our God is a consuming fire" as a comfort; **God poured out His wrath on Jesus at the cross, effectively consuming the guilt of all who place their faith in Him**.

GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

- A fire that is ignored will do one of two things: It will burn out of control, leading to devastation and destruction, or it will eventually go out.
- Irreverence or indifference to God leads us down a path to destruction.
- If we are passive in our relationship with God, it will end up dying out.