

~Hebrews~

Lesson 33 – The Endurance of Believing

Last week we finished chapter 11 of Hebrews and we are moving on into chapter 12

- The hall of faith chapter was filled with amazing exploits of faith
 - And, as we have been learning, faith is the foundation of our hope in Jesus
 - It is a future hope of an eternal life with Him
 - Our hope ought not be on the temporal, but on the Eternal
 - We saw in every example in chapter 11, these exploits focused our attention on the Eternal things of God, namely Jesus and our Salvation in Him

Now as we continue the study of Hebrews and move into chapter 12, we must use what we learned in chapter 11 and build on this foundation of faith.

- The final two verses of chapter 11, verses 39-40, tell us that all these great heroes of faith died, not having received the promise, that they would not be made perfect without us.

Hebrews 11:39-40

³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,
⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

- We learned that the Promise was given to Jesus when He was resurrected, Acts 2:32-33
 - And through His High Priestly ministry, Jesus is now sharing His inheritance with the saints and bestowing the Promise unto all those who believe in Him.

Colossians 1:12-14

¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

- *God having provided something better*, provided Himself as the sacrifice for sin
 - He provided a **better covenant**, Heb 7:22, **a better hope**, Heb 7:19, **established on better promises**, Heb 8:6.
 - Completing and perfecting the Way to Eternal Salvation through Him, Heb 2:10, 5:9, 7:28
 - That we, Old and New Testament saints, might be made perfect in Him through the cross, and His Resurrection, Heb 11:40

The exploits of faith now lead us into chapter 12

- Let's read these opening verses

Hebrews 12:1-4

¹ 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, ² 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.

³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

Before we start drawing out each verse from chapter 12, I want to give you an outline of the entire chapter.

- We are going to be spending the next few weeks on this chapter, but it is important to have an understanding of the context

This letter to the Hebrew Christians has always been about leading them back to Jesus.

- Admonishing them to endure and persevere for the eternal hope of living and being with Jesus forever
 - This chapter is urging the Hebrew Christians to believe, to press on and not succumb to the persecutions of the enemy
 - He tells them in v.2, “*run with endurance, the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus...*”
 - This is what all the heroes of faith were doing
 - running with endurance by faith, believing and looking to the Promise...looking to Jesus.

I want you to see the heart of Paul as he wraps up this letter to the Hebrews.

- He is encouraging them by examples of Old Testament saints and by Jesus Himself.
 - Telling them to look to Jesus as the supreme leader and believe in Him as their Savior.
- From the beginning, Paul has been leading them back to Jesus by encouragement, rebuke, training, and love
 - we see chapter 12 summarize these efforts.

Chapter 12 Outline

- First Encouragement- verses 1 ~ 4
 - Verse 1 begins by saying, “*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, marturon, μαρτύρων*”
 - We are surrounded by these great heroes of faith and their testimonies
 - Verse 2-4- Look to Jesus and His examples
 - Jesus is not asking us to do anything that He hasn’t already done
- Endurance of Discipline and Training- verses 5 ~ 11
 - The entire letter to the Hebrew Christians has been to admonish them to not forsake Jesus and not to fall back under the Law
 - This is a letter of instruction by love, 2 Tim 3:16, John 15
- Second Encouragement with warnings- v. 12 – 24
 - Stand up, strengthen yourselves, v. 12 – 14
 - Warning to look carefully lest a root of bitterness spring up, v. 15 ~ 17
 - Knowing that we have a better covenant with Jesus, v. 18 ~ 24
- Final Warnings- verses 25 – 29
 - Do not refuse Him, v. 25 ~ 27
 - Reverence and fear God with a godly fear, v. 28 – 29

Chapter 12 and on into the final chapter is a summarizing of the entire letter of Hebrews.

- So let’s start drawing out the meaning of the first 4 verses.

Hebrews 12:1

^aTherefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ^blet us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, ^cand let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

a) *Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...*

- Verse 1 starts with, *therefore*, relating back to the discussion on faith.

- By faith, we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Matt 16:16
 - He is our hope in which we stand on the foundation of faith
 - Jesus is our Messiah, and we are surrounded by the witnesses of faith to encourage us
- There are many people who teach that these Old Testament saints are crowded around to watch us live this life
 - As if we are in an arena and the crowd are the saints of God
 - But if you have an understanding of Scripture, you know that those in heaven are not interested in this world
 - Their only focus is Jesus
 - The cloud of witnesses is their testimony that God has given to us through His Word
 - We have around us the testimony of those who lived by faith.
- There is a Greek word that has not been translated in our English Bibles
 - It doesn't change the meaning, but it does strengthen the statement
 - Below is an interlinear look at the English/Greek words

Therefore, we also, (not translated) since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses
 Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔχοντες περιχέμενον ἡμῖν τοσοῦτον νέφος μαρτύρων,

This Greek word that is not translated is- echontes, ἔχοντες

- It is a present active participle meaning to have or possess.

A better translation would be, “*Therefore, we also, since we have around us a great cloud of testimonies...*”

- We are surrounded by the testimonies, and we actually possess this witness, these testimonies, by the Word of God
 - Through the Word of God, we have around us the witness of these heroes of faith because we have their written record in the Bible

b) ...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us...

- **lay aside**- apothemenoi, ἀποθέμενοι, to put off, as in to lay aside a garment
 - this word is in the middle voice meaning it is the subject acting on himself
 - we are the ones doing the putting off and laying aside by the power of the Holy Spirit
- This word “**weight**” is the word for bulk or mass.
 - This can be applied to the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things,
 - This could include: materialism, sexual immorality, ambition in this world
 - but the context in which Paul is telling the Hebrews to lay aside is the legalism of the Law, dead works
 - there was a massive amount of legalistic “bulk” that was over the Jewish people
 - The Jews in the 1st century had developed a “works based” earning of your salvation
 - they incorporated rituals, and ceremonies, and traditions as the way to God
 - Paul is telling them to lay this aside and run the race by faith and not by works
- And then he adds, “**and the sin**”
 - I believe Paul is identifying this “sin” as unbelief
 - Paul just finished his discourse on the heroes of faith
 - Admonishing them to believe in Jesus and be made righteous by faith
 - This entire epistle is focused on having faith in Jesus, believing unto eternal life and warning the Hebrew Christians not to fall away from faith
 - Romans tells us, “...*for whatever is not from faith is sin*”, Romans 14:23

- In Hebrews 3:12 Paul gives them a warning saying, “*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the Living God*”
- And in Hebrews 3:19 he says, “*they could not enter in because of unbelief*” speaking of the children of Israel entering into the promise land
- Paul continues in chapter 4 by saying, “*a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it...³ For we who have believed do enter that rest*”
- Then in chapter 6 he says, “*Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ* (those elements of the Law foreshadowing Christ), *let us go on to perfection...*”
 - This is what he is saying in chapter 12, “*put off every weight and sin, looking to Jesus, the perfecter of our faith*”
- And later in the 12th chapter he warns, “*looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness rise up*”, Heb 12:15, “*see that you do not refuse Him who speaks...we shall not escape if we turn away from Him*”, Heb 12:25
- Paul is making his final appeal, warning them to lay aside the Law and believe in Jesus
 - The New Covenant principles are based on having faith and believing in Jesus
 - In Greek, the object of faith, pistis, πίστις, and the action of faith, pisteuo, πιστεύω, are the same word
 - In other words, the noun of faith and the verb of faith, which is believing, are from the same root word
 - Even unbelief is the word, apistos, ἀπίστος, which is the opposite of faith
- I want to show you a couple of places in Scripture that point to the importance of Belief

c) ...*let us run with endurance the race that is set before us*

- *with endurance* -, di hupo-mones, δι' ὑπομονῆς, through under-abiding, steadfastness and endurance
 - we run the race of our calling through an under-abiding in Jesus
 - and our under-abiding in Jesus is put to work by the proven genuineness of our faith
 - James 1:3 says, “our dokimion, δοκίμιον, of faith intensely works, hupo-monen, ὑπομονήν.
 - Our proven genuineness of faith intensely works under-abiding, steadfastness and endurance
 - We must have faith in Jesus to equip us with endurance to run the race of our calling in this life
- ...*the race that is set before us*
 - The calling God has for us in this life is the race He has placed before us, 1 Cor 3:9, 7:17

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 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.** 25 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. 26 **Therefore I run thus:** not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Philippians 3:14 I **press toward the goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race**, I have kept the faith.

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Lesson 33 – The Endurance of Believing

Whosoever Believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God will be Saved**Mark 16:10–18**

¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, **they did not believe.** ¹² After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told it to the rest, but **they did not believe** them either. ¹⁴ Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and **He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe** those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ **He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.** ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those **who believe:** In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

John 3:15–18

¹⁵ that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ “**He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

John 20:27–31

²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. **Do not be unbelieving, but believing.**” ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, **you have believed.** **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**” ³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but **these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**

Hebrews 12:2

² ^alooking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, ^bwho for the joy that was set before Him ^cendured the cross, despising the shame, ^dand has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

a) *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...*

- *Looking unto Jesus* -, aphorontes, ἀφορῶντες, to look upon with expectancy, to view with undivided attention by looking away from every other object

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- ...*the author and finisher of our faith* -,
 - *author*- archegos, ἀρχηγός, the principal leader and founder

Ephesians 1:19-23

¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us **who believe**, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and **gave Him to be head over all things to the church**, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

- *finisher*- , teleiotes, τελειωτής, perfecter and completer
 - Heb 2:10 says it the best- “*through suffering the cross, Jesus, the principal leader, perfecter and completer of salvation, leading many of the sons to glory*”
 - In Heb 12:2, Paul is focused on the Hebrews Christians faith and their believing in Jesus
 - Jesus is the principal leader and the perfecter and completer of our faith, leading unto eternal salvation in Him

b) *...who for the joy that was set before Him...*

- It is at this point that Paul uses Jesus as our example
 - Jesus had joy placed before Him, just as we have our race set before us (same word)
 - Before the foundation of the world it was determined that Jesus would be the Lamb slain for the salvation and reconciliation of all who would believe in Him, Rev 13:8
 - Thus, uniting the family of God in Christ, 2 Cor 5:18-21
 - Jesus rejoiced in suffering the cross because He believed God and looked to the promise of His inheritance, Acts 2:32-33; Ps 2:8, 89:27; Rev 2:26; Dan 7:14

c) *...endured the cross, despising the shame...*

- ...*endured the cross*- hupo-meine, ὑπέμεινε, this is a very similar word to verse 1, an under-abiding
 - Paul just told us to run with endurance the race that is set before us
 - and in correspondence to this joy, Jesus is running the race of the cross with endurance and joy
 - It is joy that is giving Him the strength, and the dokimion, δοκίμιον, of His faith is producing in Him an under-abiding, hupo-meine, ὑπέμεινε, to endure the cross.
- ...*despising the shame*
 - There were two major obstacles in front of Jesus' joy
 - The cross and shame
 - On the cross we know He bore in His body the wrath of God of all sin

- But He also had to endure the agony of shame
 - Shame can create cowards of the most courageous men
 - But Jesus overcame the shame
 - Shame of the disciple's abandonment
 - Shame of the mockery
 - Shame of the torture
 - Paul says he didn't just overcome the shame, He despised it

John Piper wrote this considering the attitude of Jesus toward shame- Jesus spoke to shame like this:

"Listen to me, Shame, do you see that joy in front of me? Compared to that, you are less than nothing. You are not worth comparing to that! I despise you. You think you have power. Compared to the joy before me, you have none. Joy. Joy. Joy. That is my power! Not you, Shame. You are worthless. You are powerless.

You think you are great, because last night you made my disciples run away. You are a fool, Shame. You are a despicable fool. That abandonment, that loneliness, this cross — these tools of yours — they are all my sacred suffering, and it will save my disciples, not destroy them. You are a fool. Your filthy hands fulfill holy prophecy.

Farewell, Shame. I despise you. It is finished."

d) ...and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God...

- this is proof of God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice
 - After the death on the cross, Jesus was resurrected unto glory
 - *God highly exalted Him and gave Him the Name that is above every name*, Phil 2:9

Below is a compilation of Hebrews chapter 1. Read this picturing this is what God said to Jesus as He raised Him out of the pit of hell and exalted Him on the throne.

Heb 1:⁵ You are my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And again, I will be to You a Father, and You shall be to me a Son. ⁶ And again, let all the angels of God worship him. ⁸ Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. ¹⁰ And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands: ¹¹ They shall perish; but you will remain; and they all shall wax old as does a garment; ¹² And as a vesture you will fold them up, and they shall be changed: but you are the same, and your years shall not fail. ¹³ Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies your footstool.

Hebrews 12:3-4

³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

Paul continues to use Jesus as our example

- The Hebrew Christians were being persecuted for believing in Jesus
 - They were facing enormous hostility from the Jews to reject Jesus and fall back under the Law
 - But Paul encourages them by reminding the Hebrew Christians of Jesus' victory over sin
- Paul is reminding them to keep the faith, believe in Jesus, and strive against the sin of unbelief
 - He says "you think you are resisting sin, but have you resisted to the point of sweating blood as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane?"

- Nobody has except our Lord!

So therefore, do not be discouraged, but rather endure, resist sin and BELIEVE.

Look to Jesus and to the joy of
being with Him forever!

Mark 16:10–18

¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, **they did not believe.** ¹² After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told it to the rest, but **they did not believe** them either. ¹⁴ Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and **He rebuked their unbelief** and hardness of heart, because **they did not believe** those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ **He who believes** and is baptized will be saved; but **he who does not believe** will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow **those who believe:** In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

John 3:15–18

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