

## ~Hebrews~

## Lesson 36 – The Exhortation to Pursue Peace and Holiness

Last week we learned about the paideia, παιδεία, the correction and instruction of God

- We learned that God instructs and corrects us because He loves us.
  - It is a special privilege we as Christians have with our Father to be trained by the God of the universe
  - We learned that He trains us for our profit, for two main reasons:
    - That we might be partakers of His holiness, Heb 12:10
    - And bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness, Heb 12:11
- Now in our text today, Hebrews 12:12-17, Paul is exhorting the Hebrew Christians to take what he has taught them and put it into action.
  - The first three verses, 12-14 are imperative commands of exhortation, and the last three verses, 15-17, are the warnings that follow
    - These are serious warning, those that will “[cut to the heart](#)” as we spoke on last week
      - This is the correction and instruction of the Lord
      - Let us not be fearful and despise and be discouraged, but rather rejoice, beloved, when we hear the correction of God

## Hebrews 12:12-17

<sup>12</sup> Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, <sup>13</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

<sup>15</sup> 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; <sup>16</sup> lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. <sup>17</sup> 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.

- Paul begins this exhortation with a “therefore” in verse 12
  - This means he is referring back to what he just previously mentioned in verses 3-11.
  - He is saying, “therefore, because you missed it on a couple of points, and you are in need of correction, namely:
    - that you have not resisted the hostility of sinners. You have not resisted the sin of unbelief unto bloodshed, v.3-4
      - you are wavering and almost rejecting Jesus and going back under the Law to avoid persecution from sinners
    - And, you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons of God, v.5
      - Do not despise the correction and instruction of the Lord, nor be discouraged when He convicts you
      - He is doing this because He loves you and is drawing you into His holiness so that you will bear fruit for the kingdom
        - But you will only be partakers of His holiness and bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness if you are trained by the paideia, παιδεία, the correction and instruction of God

- Therefore...

## Hebrews 12:12-14

<sup>12</sup> Therefore **strengthen** the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, <sup>13</sup> and **make (commit)** straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.  
<sup>14</sup> **Pursue** peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

- Paul gives three imperative commands of exhortation (in red):
  - 1) **Strengthen** the hands which hang down and the feeble knees, v.12
  - 2) **Make (commit)** straight paths for your feet, v.13
  - 3) **Pursue** peace with all *people* and holiness, v.14

Let's begin drawing out these commands starting with the first two

## Hebrews 12:12-13

<sup>12</sup> Therefore **†strengthen** the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, <sup>13</sup> and **†make** straight paths for your feet, **†so that** what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

**† strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees...v.12**

- **Strengthen** - anorthao, ἀνορθόω, to raise up, establish, make great
- This is a reference to Isaiah 35:3

## Isaiah 35:3-8

<sup>3</sup> **Strengthen** the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup> Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened...

<sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the **Highway of Holiness**. The **unclean** shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others.

Isaiah is making reference to a Way in which only the holy can pass- a **Highway of Holiness**

- Remember the purpose of the paideia, παιδεία, the correction and instruction of God in v.10
  - That we may be partakers of His holiness, Heb 12:10
    - The paideia, παιδεία, sanctifies us and makes us clean, Jn 15:1-3
    - Loosing us from the sin of the world, Is 28:26-27

Another example of the paideia, παιδεία, working with the word **strengthen**, anorthao, ἀνορθόω, is Psalm 18:35 LXX

## Psalm 18:35 LXX English

<sup>35</sup> And your **correction and instruction**, paideia, παιδεία, has **lifted me up**, anorthao, ἀνορθόω, unto completion.

## Psalm 18:35 LXX Greek

<sup>35</sup> ...καὶ ἡ **παιδεία** σου **ἀνώρθωσέν με** εἰς τέλος,

**† and make straight paths for your feet...v.13**

- This is quoted from Proverbs 4:26 from the Septuagint
- **make** - poieo, ποιέω, to commit yourself to
  - commit your feet to straight paths
  - this goes back to our reference in Isaiah 35:8- The straight path of the **Highway of Holiness**

**† so that what is lame may not be dislocated...v.13**

- That which is lame- those hands that are hanging down and the feeble knees
- **dislocated** - ektrepo, ἐκτρέπω, turned aside, turned away

<sup>2</sup> Timothy 4:3-5 <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will **turn their ears away from the truth**, and be **turned aside**, *ektrepo*, ἐκτρέπω, to fables. <sup>5</sup> But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

- The warning of being turned away, “dislocated” could have eternal consequences
    - If they do not strengthen or raise up their hands and knees, they will be turned aside from God
    - They are on the edge of being drug back under the Law in which they would reject Jesus.
      - This has serious, eternal consequences as we have seen in Hebrews 10:26-29, 6:4-6
      - To be turned aside and to reject Jesus, means they “*trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the spirit of grace*”, by which, “*there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*”, Heb 10:26, 29
      - and the warning in Hebrews 6:4-6- “*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*”
        - These previous two warnings mean if they reject Jesus and put Him to an open shame, they will forfeit their salvation
          - They won’t lose it, but rather give it up and throw it away
      - This isn’t something easily done.
        - Salvation is eternally secure as long as you are in Jesus Christ
        - The Hebrew Christians were still in Christ, however, Paul is warning them that they are standing on a slippery slope
          - At this point they haven’t apostatized and rejected Jesus.
          - Paul tells them in Hebrews 6:9- “*But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.*”
            - and through the correction and instruction of God’s Word, they have the opportunity to repent and look to Jesus
      - This is why the Hebrew Christians are undergoing a correction and instruction from God
        - Remember, Paul’s exhortation in 12:1- “Therefore”
          - urging them to, lay aside every weight of Legalism and the sin of unbelief and run with endurance the race of Christianity, looking only to Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith.
        - Now we see something similar in v.12, another “therefore” and exhortation,
          - *strengthen the hands and feet, make straight paths for your feet so that you don’t get turned aside,*
- + *...but rather be healed, v.13*
  - This statement is a statement of hope
    - They haven’t been turned aside yet, and if they follow God’s correction and instruction, and straighten themselves out through the power of the Holy Spirit by the loving hand of God, *they will be healed.*
      - Not a physical healing, but a healing of the soul
        - A healing of righteousness, holiness, and peace with God

## Hebrews 12:14

<sup>14</sup> **†Pursue** peace with all *people*, and holiness, **†**without which no one will see the Lord:

**† Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, v.14**

- **Pursue**- dioko, διώκω, pursue in haste, press on, Philippians 3:14- *I press toward*, dioko, διώκω, *the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*
- This is the final imperative summarizing the exhortation
- Notice *people* is in italicize. It doesn't exist in the original language
  - Pursue peace with all, meta panton, μετὰ πάντων,
    - Pursue wholeness and reconciliation with all (that I am telling you)
- And pursue holiness, hagiasmos, ἁγιασμός, sanctification
  - Remember the reason for the paideia, παιδεία,
    - That we may be partakers of His holiness, Heb 12:10
    - To be sanctified and made clean, Jn 15:1-3, by the loving, corrective hand of the Father
  - So pursue peace and holiness...
    - This is a matter of the heart
      - To have a yearning, expectant heart toward God. Toward His peace and holiness
    - Paul said in Philippians 3:12- *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on*, dioko, διώκω, *that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*
      - The new birth is holiness begun in our spirit, but this is just the beginning of our walk with Christ
        - This walk is called sanctification, pursuing Jesus and separating ourselves from the world
      - We must have a yearning in our heart to know God
        - To attain to that which He has qualified us for, Col 1:12
      - A yearning in our heart to separate ourselves from the evil of this world, aligning ourselves with God because we love Him
  - Paul has been urging the Hebrew Christians in this entire letter to “*pursue*” God
    - Here are some examples:

Hebrews 3:6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are **if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.**

Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ **if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,**

Hebrews 4:11 Let us therefore **be diligent to enter that rest...**

Hebrews 6:1 ... **let us go on to perfection...**

Hebrews 6:11-12:11 ... **show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish...**

Hebrews 12:1 ... **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,**

Hebrews 12:12-14: <sup>12</sup>... **strengthen the hands** which hang down, ... <sup>13</sup> **make straight paths for your feet...** <sup>14</sup> **Pursue peace with all, and holiness...**

Hebrews 13:15 ... **let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Hebrews 13:22 And I appeal to you, brethren, **bear with the word of exhortation...**

- This reminds me of Mary, the sister of Martha
  - Mary sought Jesus over everything else, and put Him first
    - Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to His words while Martha was *distracted by much serving* and complained to Jesus
      - Jesus answered, "*Mary has chosen the good portion*", Lk 10:38-42
    - This is the pursuit of peace and holiness
      - the *Highway of Holiness*, Is 35:8,
        - so that *the eyes of the blind shall be opened*, Is 35:5.

† *Without which (the pursuit of holiness) no one will see the Lord, v.14*

- Does this mean if you don't pursue holiness you won't go to heaven?
  - The short answer is no,
    - but those who do not pursue Jesus will not participate in everything God has for them.
  - There is a special place and privilege in eternal life for those who seek Jesus
    - There are rewards and inheritances waiting for the faithful believer, to those who make Jesus their treasure, Heb 10:34; Matt 6:19-21, 5:11-12, 25:20-21; 1 Pet 1:4; Col 1:12; 1 Tim 6:19
- Notice the importance Paul places on pursuing sanctification. He says, "*without it, no one will see the Lord*"
  - This "seeing" is more than seeing with your physical eyes
    - It is the word *orao, ὁράω*, having the sense of becoming visible, appear, perceive
      - It is a result of perceiving Jesus after He has revealed Himself to you
      - Only those who are seeking Him will find Him, Prov 8:17, Matt 7:7
  - Jesus tells us He will only reveal Himself to those who love Him, Jn 14:21
    - John 14:21- "*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*"
  - Only those who pursue Jesus and separate themselves from the world will "see" Him and know Him
    - 1 John 3:2- *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*
    - We see an example of this after Jesus' resurrection

Luke 24:27-31 (on the road to Emmaus) <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself... <sup>31</sup> **Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him**; and He vanished from their sight.

Acts 10:40-41 <sup>40</sup> Him God raised up on the third day, and **showed Him openly**, <sup>41</sup> **not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God**, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

- There was a special revealing those 40 days after the resurrection to those who loved Jesus
- And we too are expecting another "revealing" to come soon
  - This is the rapture, the catching away of the saints, 1 Thess 4:15-17

- Only those who are pursuing Jesus and expecting Him are those whom He will “reveal” Himself to and be caught up with Him, Rev 2:3-5, 3:2-3; Luke 21:34-36, 12:35-48; Matt 25:1-13; Mark 13:31-37; Luke 17:28-36
  - It is only those who are earnestly seeking Jesus that will “see” Jesus and be caught away with Him at the rapture.
    - These are those who become the Bride of Christ.
    - Don’t be like the five virgins who let their oil run out and missed the bridegroom, Matt 25:1-13

Paul continues with the consequences and warnings in these next three verses, 15-17

- We have three “lests” relating to three warnings
  - These three “lests” build with intensity

Hebrews 12:15-17

<sup>15</sup> †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; <sup>16</sup> †lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. <sup>17</sup> 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.

† *looking carefully, v.15*

- This word means to take the oversight to adhere to these exhortations

† *Lest anyone fall short of the grace of God, v.15*

- This isn’t falling short of justification
  - It is falling short of all that God is trying to impart on your life through correction and instruction

1 Corinthians 1:7 *so that you come short in no gift*, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

† *Lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, v.15*

- Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy 29- <sup>14</sup> “*I make this covenant and this oath... <sup>18</sup>so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;*
  - The root of bitterness is in those who turn aside from God
    - This is the same warning as being “dislocated or turned aside” in Heb 12:13

† *and by this many become defiled, v.15*

- Becoming defiled is the sense of being unclean and unable to bear fruit
  - Remember last week, Jn 15:1-3, we are cleansed by the Word so that we can bear fruit
  - God is trying to impart His holiness to us, but if we allow a root of bitterness in our life, our hearts are hardened to His word and we become unclean

† *Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, v.16*

- ...sexually immoral or godless person like Esau, Gen 28:6-9
  - We spoke on Esau a few lessons back and learned that Esau despised his birthright, Gen 25:34
    - Esau’s birthright was an honor to carry on the Messianic line.
      - It was promised to Abraham that in his seed, all nations would be blessed.
        - This was the promise that the Messiah would come through his loins



- This blessing passed onto Isaac which then would pass onto Esau
  - But Esau despised his birthright and sold it for a cup of soup, Gen 25:30-34
    - His actions despised the Messianic line, *trampling the Son of God underfoot, counting the blood of the covenant a common thing, and insulting the Spirit of Grace*, Heb 10:29

Hebrews 12:17

<sup>17</sup> 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.

† *He was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, v.17*

- This word rejected is apo-dokimazo, ἀποδοκιμάζω, - away from being proven genuine
  - This word is used 9 times in the NT and only in association with rejecting Jesus
    - This is what the Hebrew Christians were in jeopardy of doing
  - This is a profane and godless person of which *there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*, Heb 10:26, *and it is impossible to renew them again to repentance*, Heb 6:6

† *...though he sought it diligently with tears, v.17*

- Even though Esau begged Isaac with tears, Gen 27:34, 38, his heart was defiled and unclean
  - He didn't want the birthright to honor God and the Messiah
    - He had a heart of jealousy and a hard heart toward his brother Jacob, Gen 27:41
    - This hard heart is what makes it impossible to be renewed to repentance, Heb 6:6
- However, I believe in the power of the grace of God
  - If someone were to hear the Word of God and allow the Word into his heart, even after rejecting Jesus
  - And if they opened up their heart to the Truth,
    - I believe this person could find repentance and have everlasting life in Jesus

God is always trying to get the best to us. He loves us and this is why He corrects and instructs us.

- This is why we see Paul's earnest exhortations to warning the Hebrew Christians
- If we listen to His word of instruction and are trained by it, we can partake in His holiness and have an everlasting, intimate relationship with Him.
  - But to do this we must:
    - Strengthen ourselves,
    - lift ourselves up,
    - commit ourselves to righteous paths by the Word of God
    - and pursue peace and holiness

If we do this, when that Great Day comes, when we hear the trumpet of God calling us up.

We will not be turned aside. But rather, we will see Him as He is,  
and be caught up in the clouds unto  
everlasting life with Jesus