

Sermon Notes – August 22, 2021

Review

- Hebrews is full of exhortations to endure, along with ample reasons to do so. The glory of Christ is the greatest reason. Christ is the better high priest, the better prophet, the better sacrifice, and we are called to keep our eyes on Him.
- Last week we looked at “God’s Training Program for Holiness,” noting in particular how the word “discipline” is used to address the many ways we train our children...we teach, correct, guide, cultivate, and encourage our kids to help them develop as they should. God does the same with us.

Text & context: READ Hebrews 12:12-17

Today’s text continues the analogy of the runner from verse 1, urging us to help each other run well in this race called life. Runner sometimes trip and fall – this text warns against several common dangers that can trip us up.

We Must Help Each Other Run The Race (12-13)

- ⇒ In Bible times, people did not run simply for recreation or _____. Many carried news from one place to another, sometimes news of war or national events.
- ⇒ When runners become weary after a long, arduous journey, their arms often droop, their knees wobble, and their feet become unsure. There’s a reason why a race is called an “Agon” in verse 1!
- ⇒ The encouragement here has a _____ context! Look back to Isaiah 35, a messianic and millennium-laden text. The writer quotes one verse to draw the rest to mind.
- ⇒ One writer notes: “*Hebrews is full of this idea of helping each other make it*” (3:13; 10:25). In a sense, the letter to the Hebrews is the writer’s attempt at exactly this.

We Must Pursue Peace and Holiness (14)

- ⇒ “Pursue” = chase as in a _____; it implies that the object is worth an _____ pursuit, and that it is elusive to some degree.
- ⇒ Relationships & holiness are two of our most difficult and daily battles. Churches, mission groups, and _____ all find these pursuits to be a challenge:
 - Romans 12:18; 14:19; Ephesians 4:3
 - I Peter 1:15-16
- ⇒ Notice what is at stake: If a watching world is going to see Christ in a church or family, these two qualities must be present. Further, if there is no evidence of practical holiness, a person has reason to wonder if they will, in fact, see Jesus on the final day (“Am I even saved?” is a good question).

We Must Guard Against Three Common Enemies (15-17)

“See to it...look carefully...look after each other” – related in concept to the word for “overseer.” Three things are mentioned (“See to it that...”):

- ⇒ _____: failing to truly trust Christ as Savior. It is easy to walk closely with God’s people, to enjoy the warmth of fellowship & church life, and never to trust Christ as Savior. How tragic!
- ⇒ Bitterness: holding a grudge instead of forgiving. Bitterness is not simply a _____ matter; it “defiles” many, either because of direct expressions or by the absence of blessing. A “bitter root” can also indicate unbelief (see Deut. 29:18-19 for a warning about hidden unbelief).
- ⇒ Sensuality: being ruled by a _____ of any sort. Esau is given as an example of valuing short-term pleasure over long-term blessing. God did not take away Esau’s blessing; he gave it away all by himself. Ultimately, he regretted his decision, but failed to truly repent.

Responding to God’s Word

- ⇒ Do you see weary people around you? How are you encouraging them?
- ⇒ Do you pursue peace – or are you an instigator of turmoil? Ask God to help you be an instrument of His peace in all your relationships!
- ⇒ Do you pursue practical holiness, beginning with the cultivation of a humble heart? In what area this week can you be a bit more like Jesus?

Worship Next Sunday: August 29, 2021

“Hold On To God’s Glorious Grace”

(Hebrews 12:18-29) Pastor Ben McCardell