

HEBREWS 12

JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH

HEBREWS 12:1 Therefore *...(Because of the Hall of Faith...)* we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,

- WITNESSES of WHAT? Witnesses of God's faithfulness during times of Testing... Trials... Tribulation and STRESS...
 - Times of God turning our burdens into blessings... Of turning disasters into miracles...
 - **Because He can and WILL do THAT...**

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

- We think that Paul was a sports fan because he enjoyed using sports analogies. Here again he uses the runner as an example of how we Christians should live and behave.
 - Picture in your mind the start of a marathon race... The runners are pacing, stretching, running in place... Straightening their fanny packs... Adjusting their backpacks... Checking their pockets to make sure they have their wallet, pocketknife, phone, chapstick, snacks, water bottle, comb, and breath mints, RIGHT? **NO!**
 - **They know that in order to win you must carry the minimum amount of stuff! THAT is SPIRITUALLY true of us too!**

WITH LITTLE OF THIS WORLD...

and let us run with endurance (**cheerfulness**) the race that is set before us,

- How often do we read of the Apostle's own cheerfulness as he suffered? He counted it a "Joy" to suffer for the Lord. He did by keeping his eyes on someone... **Listen...**

2 looking unto **Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the

joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising (**Disregarding**) the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- Our ultimate example of course is Jesus, who although having NEVER committed a single sin, TOOK ALL OF OURS ONTO Himself, paid for them, AND was satisfied with the Father's will...
- **COURSON** - For an example of One who ran the race with patience, look to Jesus. The course Jesus ran wasn't easy, but He knew on the other side of the finish line, joy awaited Him. I believe the Father gave His Son a sneak preview of this joy even as He hung on the Cross. You see, when one of the two thieves who hung on either side of Jesus said, "Remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (see [Luk 23:42](#)) it was as if the Father gave His Son a taste of the joy that would be His when an entire world would have the opportunity to follow the thief's example.

DO NOT GROW WEARY

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

- Think of it, After Jesus healed people, the religious leaders were SO angry about it that they wanted to kill Him.
 - His own brothers did not believe in Him until after He was crucified. None of them were even AT the crucifixion.

4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

- Paul is comparing the suffering of Christ to the complainers among the Hebrews.
 - We have it pretty easy in the USA. Keep voting so it will always be the case!

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "MY SON, DO NOT DESPISE THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD, NOR BE DISCOURAGED WHEN YOU ARE REBUKED BY HIM; 6 FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE CHASTENS, AND SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." **PROVERBS 3**

- From coaching an athlete to chastising a child out of love, Paul is making the case that we have a Good, Good, Father!
 - IF you love your children, you chastise them, coach them, warn them, teach them with painful lessons...
 - My generation got spanked, THIS generation gets their technology taken away BUT IT IS STILL FOR THE SAME reason – Love!
 - No LOVING parent says, “I don’t care WHAT the kids do...”
- God DOES care about what we do... He loves us!

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. **MAKE SURE YOUR KIDS KNOW WHY YOU ARE CHASTISING THEM! LOVE!**

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

- Can we agree together to let the Lord do His work in us? Can we stand to let Him use His way of bringing some pain into our lives in order to mold us into what HE wants?
 - I had a cousin who married a woman with her own kids. They blended their families into one... but... When he spanked the stepson once, the stepson reported it to the school... The school reported it to the Police... And after the Police left the house a coldness settled in between my cousin and his stepson that never thawed... The stepson had no respect for his stepdad – and it was mutual.
 - How are YOU and I doing with our Heavenly Father? Are we “Paying respect to God when He chastises us?”

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of

righteousness to those who have been trained by it. **CEV - It is never fun to be corrected. In fact, at the time it is always painful. But if we learn to obey by being corrected, we will do right and live at peace.**

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

- You know how sometimes after doing a task over and over, you shake your hands as if to say, "OK... I'm ready to get started again?"
 - Sometimes after a hard period of time, we need to do that spiritually, perhaps emotionally too.
- Say, "OK Lord... That was tough, but You brought me through it... Let's get started again!"

SOME GOOD ADVICE

14 Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: **WOW... That is some litmus test right there!**

HERE IS ANOTHER TEST

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

- Bitterness makes somebody make really bad decisions and can cause us to make oaths that we tend to keep...
 - Bitterness made Esau sell his birthright for a meal... It was a stupid decision. A decision he regretted for the rest of his life...
 - CCSV, let US be people who let go of bitterness, embrace forgiveness, and live regret-free lives, AMEN?
 - DO NOT justify sin with anger or bitterness. **LISTEN...**

17 For you know that afterward, when he (**Esau**) wanted to inherit the

blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, (**IE, he never repented**) though he sought it (**the Inheritance**) diligently with tears. **DO NOT turn down a chance to serve the Lord out of bitterness!**

A KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN

18 For you have not come to the mountain (**Mt. Sinai**) that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound (**continual sound**) of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.

- This was the mountain upon which the Lord gave the Law to Moses... It was so scary that the people stayed far away from it. They begged Moses to NOT make them go up...

20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "AND IF SO MUCH AS A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT SHALL BE STONED OR SHOT WITH AN ARROW." **EXODUS 19**

21 And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, "I AM EXCEEDINGLY AFRAID AND TREMBLING.") **EXODUS 3**

- All of this fear was under the old covenant of works... Some of the Hebrews wanted to stay under it but for some Paul says...

22 But you have come to Mount Zion (**IE, the cross**) and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.

- HOW is THAT for a cloud of witnesses? SO many angels that they are impossible to count. God the Father, God the Son, the fallen Saints... AND, when the Lord raptures His church the Holy Spirit will show up IN us...

WARNING!

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall* we *not escape* if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; **(Another reason why the COI feared Mt. Sinai)** but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO HEAVEN." **EXODUS 19**

- During the tribulation God will send quakes that include the universe...The Astrophysicists will not believe their eyes when they see planets being shaken...

27 Now this, "YET ONCE MORE," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. **NLT - This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain.**

THE GOAL: GRACE!

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

IE, The God of the OT is the same God of the New Testament.

He cannot tolerate sin, will not tolerate sin, And if you come before Him without first coming to Jesus, His Son... to be forgiven, it WILL NOT go well for you... BUT... If you DO come to Jesus, God will forgive and forget about your sin.

Who wants that deal?