

Introduction: Running the Race (Hebrews 12:1-2)

- Believers encouraged to run with endurance, looking to Jesus
- Review of previous week: discouragement in the race, the marathon illustration
- Spiritual blisters and hitting a brick wall
- Hebrew believers pressured to return to their heritage

Warning Against Giving Up: Strengthening the Weary (Hebrews 12:12-13)

- Strengthen hanging hands and feeble knees
- Make straight paths for your feet
- The difficulty of letting go of familiar traditions
- Pursuing peace and avoiding bitterness (verses 14-15)

The Warning of Esau (Hebrews 12:16-17)

- Esau as an illustration of valuing immediate satisfaction over eternal blessing
- The danger of exchanging Christ for temporary relief
- Esau's rejection when he sought to reclaim the blessing
- The distinction between godly sorrow and sorrow over consequences (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- The college scholarship illustration
- God can redeem a broken story — finish strong

The Earthly Mountain: Mt. Sinai and the Old Covenant (Hebrews 12:18-21)

- The contrast introduced: "you have not come" vs. "you have come"
- The two mountains represent the two covenants

Observable characteristics at Sinai

- Fire, blackness, darkness, and tempest
- The sound of the trumpet and the voice of God
- The people begged God to stop speaking

The emotional response of the people

- Terror and trembling among the Israelites
- Moses himself declared he was exceedingly afraid

The purpose of the law

- Not intended to save, but to reveal God's holiness and expose sin
- Romans 3:20 — the law gives knowledge of sin
- Galatians 3:24 — the law as a tutor leading to Christ
- The law as a mirror: it shows the problem but cannot fix it

The symbolism of fire in Scripture
God's holy presence, purity, and judgment
Refinement and purification

The danger of returning to legalism
Works-based thinking as a personal Sinai
The first-class seat illustration
Do not return to what is familiar when Christ offers something far better

The Heavenly Mountain: Mt. Zion and the New Covenant (Hebrews 12:22-24)

"You have come" – the contrast with verse 18

Mount Zion as a reference to the heavenly Jerusalem
Revelation 14:1 – the Lamb standing on Mount Zion
A place of security and strength
Philippians – our citizenship is in heaven

Galatians 4 – two sons, two covenants, bondage vs. freedom
The inhabitants of the heavenly city
An innumerable company of angels
Ministering spirits from Hebrews 1
From celestial terror at Sinai to festal worship on Zion

The general assembly and church of the firstborn registered in heaven
Romans 8:17 – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ
All believers are firstborn – no second or third born
John Newton quote on lasting treasure

God the Judge of all
Grace through Christ's blood allows believers to stand forgiven
The illustration of arriving and not being on the list
The Army installation in Frankfurt illustration
For believers, the reservation has already been made

Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant
The blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than Abel's

The Unshakable Kingdom (Hebrews 12:25-29)

Do not refuse Him who speaks
"Refuse" means to make excuse – Luke 14 parable of the Great Supper

Everything known will be shaken and renovated
Old neighborhoods, old cars – things change over time

What cannot be shaken will remain — build on the eternal
The body fades; only the spiritual is eternal

Receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken (verse 28)
Respond with grace and thankfulness
Serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear

Our God is a consuming fire (verse 29)

Closing Challenge

Identify the shakable and unshakable things in your life
Surrender anxious things to the Lord in prayer
When coming to worship, remember you are approaching a consuming fire who
loved you enough to give His Son