

21: Peace & Holiness (Heb 12:12-29)

Those who claim Christ should be pursuing peace with people and living in the holiness that Jesus has given us, all the while looking forward to the eternal hope that awaits us. Today we discover how our eternal hope should impact our everyday living.



teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES

* Bible Translation: **CSB** (Christian Standard Bible)

CATCH THE CONTEXT

Last week we talked about becoming **Disciplined Children**. Like good earthly fathers, we recognized that if God is our Father, then He WILL discipline us.

- He will *confront* and *correct* our sin. He won't allow us to wallow in it without His conviction.
- God will allow and use *tough times* to shape us, refine us, and use us to offer hope to those who are hopeless.

Discipline for Our Benefit

Hebrews 12:9-11 (CSB) Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? For they **disciplined us** for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but **He does it for our benefit**, so that we can share His holiness. No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, **it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it.

If you're a child of the King, God will discipline your disobedience and walk with you THROUGH the tough times, so that you will grow in *purity, character, endurance, eternal focus, love for God and love for people*.

Keep Your Eyes on the PRIZE, Keep Running, & Never Quit!

Hebrews 12:12-13 (CSB) Therefore, strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees [Is 35:3], and make straight paths for your feet [Prov 4:26], so that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed instead.

The author of Hebrews calls on 2 Old Testament passages encouraging these weary runners to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

- **Isaiah 35:3** "Strengthen the weak hands, steady the shaking knees!"
- **Proverbs 4:26** "Carefully consider the path for your feet, and all your ways will be established."

We are to **make paths straight** - to live in purity & consistency, rather than run a bumpy & crooked path of inconsistency & sin. This pure and consistent path which leads to **healing instead** of further damage like **dislocation** of a foot.

2 Challenges to PURSUE

Hebrews 12:14 (CSB) **Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness**—without it no one will see the Lord.

- We are to **pursue peace with everyone**. Other translations: "*strive*" (ESV) or "*make every effort*" (NIV) to be at peace with all. This isn't a *PASSIVE* kind of attitude. This is an aggressive pursuit of peace, that *starts with those who are in our faith family, but extends to everyone else we come into contact with*.

Romans 12:18 (CSB) If possible, as far as it depends on you, **live at peace with everyone**.

You aren't responsible for the other person's response. You are responsible for your **OBEDIENCE** to do your best to live at peace with everyone. You and I are to "*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*" (Rm 12:14)

- We are to **pursue holiness. Without it - holiness - no one will see the Lord**. Christians are **COMMANDED** to walk in holiness. It's **NOT** optional! **Holiness** is the great *GIFT* of God given to all who turn from their sin and follow Jesus. We have no holiness in ourselves. Here's how we are made holy.

Colossians 1:22 (CSB) But now He has **reconciled you** by His physical body **through his death**, to present you **holy**, faultless, and blameless before Him

Titus 3:5 (CSB) **He saved us**—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but **according to His mercy**—through the **washing** of regeneration and **renewal** by the Holy Spirit.

We can't continue to live for the stuff Jesus died for!

Simon Peter Remembers the Bloody Payment

1 Peter 2:24 (CSB) **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree**; so that, having died to sins, **we might live for righteousness**. *By his wounds you have been healed.*

1 Peter 1:15-16 (CSB) But as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, *Be holy, because I am holy.*

- We are to WALK in the holiness that Jesus has given us.

☀ **William Lane** "Christians...are to make the pursuit of holiness their great quest in life."¹

BIG TRUTH: PURSUE PEACE with PEOPLE, and LIVE in the HOLINESS Jesus has given us.

The author is *doing more than calling individuals to pursue peace and holiness* - he is calling the Christian community to pursue peace and holiness....TOGETHER!

Show the Grace of God!

Hebrews 12:15 (CSB) **Make sure** that no one falls short of the grace of God and that **no root of bitterness springs up**, causing trouble and defiling many.

Those who are experiencing **the grace of God**, should be the first to extend the grace of God to each other. If the enemy is going to destroy a church he more often does this through internal **bitterness IN THE CHURCH** rather than external persecution from **OUTSIDE THE CHURCH**.

- Rather than being quick to forgive or humbly confronting, we talk about it to other people who aren't a part of the *problem or solution*.
- *Factions develop*. Smirks replace smiles, and the body of Christ starts acting like immature teenagers.

We are called to:

- **"Love one another deeply** as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in **honoring one another**." (Rm 12:10)
- **"Live in harmony with one another..."** (Rm 12:16)
- "So then, let us **pursue what promotes peace** and what **builds up one another**." (Rm 14:19)
- "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (2 Cor 13:12)

👉 If you're at odds with another believer, it's time to make it right.

How the Body of Christ Should Walk in Holiness

Hebrews 12:16-17 (CSB) And make sure that there isn't any **immoral or irreverent** [NET & NIV = *godless*, ESV = *unholy*] **person like Esau**, who sold his birthright in exchange for a single meal. For you know that later, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, even though he sought it with tears, because he didn't find any opportunity for repentance.

Read about this: **Genesis 25:27-33**. Esau came in from an unsuccessful hunt for dinner and smelled what Jacob was cooking. Jacob offered an exchange - *ONE great meal for Esau* for the older brother's birthright. The birthright was a double-portion of inheritance. So Esau exchanged his 2/3rds for Jacob's 1/3 portion...for ONE MEAL!²

How many times have WE done the same thing!!!?? We disobey God to fulfill our sinful desires...**in exchange for a single meal** - one moment of satisfaction that ends in frustration, fear, tears, and wishing we could have a do-over...but we can't. The damage is done.

✘ The lifelong blessing that could have been Esau's was exchanged to fill his stomach for ONE MEAL.

¹ William L. Lane, Hebrews 9-13, vol. 47B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 450.

² John H. Walton, Genesis, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 550

☀ **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** "It makes no difference whether it is sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money, or, finally, that strange desire for the beauty of the world, of nature. Joy in God is in the course of being extinguished in us and we seek all our joy in the creature. At this moment God is quite unreal to us, he loses all reality, and only desire for the creature is real; the only reality is the devil. Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.³

➡ When we lean toward ungodly actions, the Presence of God is less and less on the front burner of our minds.

❓ How much happier when we weigh our immediate decisions in light of the future impact of those decisions?

Oh that we will be known as MORAL and REVERENT, GODLY people!

PURSUE PEACE with PEOPLE, and LIVE in the HOLINESS Jesus has given us.

The author then reminds his Hebrew audience of WHO they are obeying or disobeying by retelling the history of what happened when God met with the Hebrew people on Mount Sinai and spoke His 10 Commandments to them. Read it here: **Exodus 19-20**, and **Deut 9:7-10:5**.

TAKE SOME NOTES HERE!

The Meeting at Mount Sinai

Hebrews 12:18-21 (CSB) For you have not come to what could be touched, to a blazing fire, to darkness, gloom, and storm, to the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of words. Those who heard it begged that not another word be spoken to them, for they could not bear what was commanded: If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned. The appearance was so terrifying that Moses said, *I am trembling with fear.*

☀ **Kent Hughes** "The people were visibly, physically assaulted with the holiness and majesty of God. This palpable divine display on Sinai communicated far more than any speech or written word ever could—and all Israel, young and old, could understand."⁴

All of this pointed to God's holiness and the separation between Him and sinful people. But NOW...through Jesus, there is **NO MORE SEPARATION!** We don't come to Mount Sinai in FEAR, but we come to Mount Zion in FAITH!

Hebrews 12:22-24 (CSB) Instead, you have come to **Mount Zion**, to the city of the living God (the **heavenly Jerusalem**), to myriads of angels, a festive gathering, to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been written in heaven, to a **Judge**, who is **God of all**, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, and to **Jesus**, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which says better things than the blood of Abel.

- **myriads of angels.** These are messengers of God often sent to protect God's people and punish God's enemies. **Myriads** is from a Greek word meaning a number so large it is 'countless, innumerable'.⁵
 - We see people **whose names have been written in heaven!** God KNOWS those who are His! Jesus told His disciples: "...don't rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but **rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**" (Luke 10:20)
 - The **God of all**, the **Judge** of mankind is present.
 - We also see the spirits **of righteous people made perfect** are believers who find their righteousness in...
 - **Jesus**, the **mediator of the new covenant**, by His **sprinkled blood**.
- ✗ We don't approach God careful to keep our distance (in contrast to Mt. Sinai) *in FEAR that He might strike us down.*
- ✓ We can approach in FAITH - as His children - **whose names have been written in heaven, righteous people made perfect**, because of what **Jesus** has done for us - bringing us into a **new covenant** - a better covenant - because His **sprinkled blood** has been applied to our sins to make us holy!
- The **blood of Abel** "cried out" Cain was GUILTY (Gen 4:10), *the blood of Jesus shouts that we are FORGIVEN and FREE!*

³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Temptation* (London: SCM Press, 1961), p. 33

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, vol. 2, *Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 189.

⁵ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 602.

Listen Up!

Hebrews 12:25 (CSB)

See to it that you do not reject the One who speaks. For if they did not escape when they rejected Him who warned them on earth, even less will we if we turn away from **Him who warns us from heaven**.

Who is this **One who speaks**? Earlier the author wrote:

Hebrews 1:1-2a (CSB) Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, **He has spoken to us by his Son**.

God didn't just speak from clouds & thunder at a mountain, God spoke through the GOD-MAN - Jesus!

Judgement IS Coming

Hebrews 12:26-27 (CSB)

His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, *Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens* [[Hag 2:6](#)]. This expression, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what is not shaken might remain.

God had shaken the ground at Mt. Sinai, but God will do more than cause the earth to quake, He will destroy & renovate the earth as we know it!

2 Peter 3:10-13 (CSB) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day **the heavens will pass away with a loud noise**, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed [**NET=laid bare; ESV=exposed**].

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, **it is clear what sort of people you should be** in holy conduct and godliness as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming. Because of that day, **the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat**. But based on his promise, **we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells**.

Followers of Jesus Belong to a Kingdom that Cannot Be Shaken!

Hebrews 12:28-29 (CSB)

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, **let us be thankful**. By it, we may **serve God acceptably**, with reverence and awe, for **our God is a consuming fire**.

This is our great hope! ***This life is NOT all there is!*** God will return and JUDGE ALL! Those who think they are getting away with what they've done, won't! God knows those who obey Him when no one else knows. Until that day, may we...

PURSUE PEACE with PEOPLE, and LIVE in the HOLINESS Jesus has given us.

FEET2FAITH

① **Are you a FOLLOWER of Jesus?** Trust Jesus with your life!

② **Are you AT PEACE with all as much as it depends on you?**

✓ **Meet & make things right with your faith family!** Don't wait. Don't put it off and hope it will resolve itself. Be gracious & kind, with the desire to make things right.

③ **Are you LIVING in the HOLINESS Jesus has given you?** If He returned today, would you be EXCITED or ASHAMED?

✓ **Turn from sin and walk with others who want to live holy!** Get involved in a small group on Sundays, Wednesdays or in a Home setting. Walk with others who walk with Jesus!

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (850-673-7952),

Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717),

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