

Hebrews 12

Jesus

I. Race of Faith

1 **Therefore** we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside** every **weight**, and the **sin** which so easily ensnares us, and **let us run** with endurance the **race that is set before us...**

Those before us ran to win. Therefore, let's do the same...

- **Drop:** Anything slowing you down
- **Cut:** Anything tripping you up

...all inordinate affection/concern for the body/present life/the world. Inordinate care for the present life or fondness for it is a *dead weight upon the soul* that pulls it down when it should ascend upwards, and pulls back when it should press forward; it makes duty/difficulties harder and heavier than they would be. [Henry]

Drop what slows you down/Cut off what trips you up
Run with endurance the race God set before you!

- **Race:** gr. *Agona*. Lit. Marathon and yet...

1 **Corinthians 9:24b** ... those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

Don't Peter out! Keep our eyes on the prize

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

- **NASB** *Fixing* our eyes on Jesus

Author/Finisher of our Faith
Originator/Perfector of our Faith

Philippians 1:6 [I am] confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun** a good work in you **will complete** it until the day of **Jesus Christ...**

2b **...who for the joy that was set before Him endured** the cross

Jesus endured the present pain by anticipating the future joy
His Treasure/Pearl of Great Price

2c **...despising** the shame

Jesus was humiliated
Naked/Nailed Cross/Exposed/Mocked

Psalms 22:6 But *I am a worm*, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people.
7 All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

Philippians 2:8 He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the **Name which is above every name**, 10 that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

From the Cross to the Crown
Humiliation to Exaltation

2d ...[Now seated] at the right hand of the throne of God.

II. Discipline of God

3 [So], **consider Him** who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, **lest you become weary** and **discouraged in your souls**. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

- Two Responses to Suffering
 1. **Get Better:** Trust God
 2. **Get Bitter:** Question God

Consider how Jesus suffered
Trusted God when it was excruciating: Not My will but Yours be done

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."

- **NT Chastening:** gr. *paideia*. Nurture/Instruct. The whole training/education of children which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals/employs for this purpose commands and admonitions, reproof and punishment. Also, training and care of the body also cultivating the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing passions. Instruction which aims at increasing virtue.
- **OT Chastening:** heb. *mûsār* Discipline. Disciple. Learner

To Chasten is to Discipline: Create a Disciple/Learner

Chasten: All suffering including that which we bring upon ourselves, what others inflict upon us, what the devil is permitted to do against us, all circumstances God allows, and all that God Himself brings upon us...is **for our good and His purpose**. [NJC]

Romans 8:28 ... know that **all things work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son...**

IOWs Trials with which God visits men for their becoming as Christ
Don't despise the pain. Learn/Grow from the instruction

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but **shouts in our pain**: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. [Lewis]

Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted, I went astray, But **now I keep Your word**. 68 **You are good, and do good**; Teach me Your statutes.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Whom the Lord loves He chastens

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. 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 [God] for our profit, that we may be **partakers of His holiness**.

Human fathers are imperfect at best
God is the perfect Father who corrects us for our good

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.

God's Chastening: Exactly the correct amount/intensity
Always in love...Never out of wrath

Isaiah 28:24 Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods? 25 When he has leveled its surface, Does he not **sow** the black cummin And **scatter** the cummin, **Plant** the wheat in rows, The barley in the appointed place, And the spelt in its place? 26 For **He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him**. 27 For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, And the cummin with a rod. 28 Bread flour must be ground; Therefore **he does not thresh it forever**, Break it with his cartwheel, Or crush it with his horsemen. 29 This also comes from the Lord of hosts, Who is **wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance**.

[Chastisement] ...there is not a drop of God's wrath in it; it is all sent in love. [Spurgeon]

Those who accept God's threshing will bear God's pleasant fruit of righteousness
Fruit of our obedience? Other will be made whole...

III. Better or Bitter?

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

- **Therefore...**

Stop Sulking in Suffering
Hurting people need to see our faith in God. Stand up straight

...13 make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

Context: People need to see God's power in you
Stop sulking. Stop complaining. Trust God. Stand up straight

Isaiah 35:3 [Context] **Strengthen** [your] **weak hands**, And make firm [your] **feeble knees**. [So you can...] 4 **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." 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

When we get bitter others get crippled
When we get better people get healed

Instead of asking why, *ask what...What is there to learn?*

A. How to have peace with men/Holiness toward God

God doesn't waste a hurt...but we can
Squeeze that Lemon: Covet every drop of Wisdom out of the pain

Also... Be very, very careful of your response to pain...

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 [lilt godless] person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 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.

Esau wanted the Blessing w/out the Birthright he sold to Jacob
God's Discipline: You cant have the blessing w/out the birthright
Response? Esau got bitter not better/Acted out in the flesh

Warning! Resisting God's discipline will make you bitter toward God. A bitter root bears bitter fruit. Giving in to bitterness will cause trouble/defilement to others rather than promoting the healing they desperately need. Bitterness *toward God* leads to rebellion *against God* as we see in godless Esau...His resentment of God digressing into active sin against God. [NJC]

Don't fall short of the Grace of God. We all suffer.
Don't give in to bitterness when we are so close to the prize

IV. Glorious Company

18 For **you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire**, and to **blackness and darkness** [lit. gloom] and tempest, 19 and the 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. 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." 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

The Law was given to Moses on Mt Sinai
The people waited in fear..

Exodus 20:18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, **they trembled and stood afar off.**

Deuteronomy 4:11 ...you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the **mountain burned with fire** to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.

Deuteronomy 18:16b ...[the people said] 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, **lest I die.**'

All this fear did not succeed in promoting holiness among the people of Israel. It did not succeed in changing the heart of Israel. 40 days later, they worshipped a gold calf and said it was the god that brought them out of Egypt. [Guzik]

Grace changes everything. A correct understanding of the Grace of God leads to a Godly fear of God then obedience to God proving our love for God. The law can't do that. [NJC]

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born **according to the flesh**, and he of the freewoman **through promise**, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which **gives birth to bondage**, which is Hagar— 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— 26 but **the Jerusalem above is free**, which is the mother of us all.

Mount Sinai symbolic of the first covenant gives birth to bondage. Since it is all about what we must do for God to be accepted by Him, it doesn't set us free. It puts us on a perpetual treadmill of having to prove ourselves and earn our way before God. The New Covenant is associated with Jerusalem, with Mount Zion — **but not the Mount Zion** of this earth. Instead, it is associated with the Jerusalem above — God's own *New Jerusalem* in heaven. [Guzik]

You have not come Mt Sinai burning with fire...

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...

You *did not come* to Mount Sinai: Law/Shadow/Temporal
You *have come* to the Mount Zion: Grace/Reality/Eternal

22b ...to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly [lit. festal gathering] 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.

You have not come to the Shadow of better things
You have come to the Reality of better things...

- Innumerable Angels
- Festal Gathering of Praise
- Church of Jesus and we who are registered in heaven
- God the Judge of All/Spirits of men now complete
- Jesus blood speaks better things than Abel?

Abel's blood cries out Judgment
Jesus blood speaks better things...Grace and Mercy

You have come to Mount Zion/To the city of the Living God
You have come to the Heavenly Jerusalem...

V. The Heavenly Voice

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks.

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days **spoken to us by His Son...**

Do not refuse Jesus' free invitation to His grace
It did not come cheap

25b ...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...

Jesus spoke to Moses on earth at the giving of the Law
Jesus now speaks to us from Heaven of His Grace/*We should listen...*

Hebrews 2:2b [...if by the Law every transgression/disobedience received a just reward] 3 **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...**

26 [Jesus] ...whose voice then shook the earth but now He has promised, saying, "**Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.**" [c.f. Hag 2:6] 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.**

Jesus shook the earth as the Law was given to men
Jesus will again shake both Earth/Heaven/All that is not of Him

Isaiah 34:4 All the **host of heaven shall be dissolved**, And the heavens shall be **rolled up like a scroll...**

IOWs God will remove things we trust in apart from him

Isaiah 6:1 In **the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord** sitting on a throne, high and lifted up

Only things unshakable will remain
Those in Christ/In His Kingdom will not be shaken

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.**

A correct understanding of the *Grace of God*
Leads to serving God with Reverence/Godly Fear

IOWs Grace says: I could have consumed you for your sin
Instead, I consumed My Son for your sin

- King Jehoram of Israel recruits Jehoshaphat King of Judah to attack Moab
- The King of Edom joins them against Moab. 3 Kings against 1
- God tells Israel to dig ditches in valley between them and Moab. Next morning...
- Water supernaturally fills the ditches/Sun rises/Ditches are shining red like blood

Moab believes the 3 kings/armies killed one another
Moab moves in realizing they are surrounded...

2 Kings 3:26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27 Then **he took his eldest son** who would have reigned in his place, and **offered him** as a **burnt offering upon the wall**; and there was **great indignation** against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to their own land.

God the Father expects a response to His sacrificing His own Son for you
Great indignation of our own sin/Greater understanding of His Grace

A correct understanding of the *Grace of God*
Should lead us to Serving God with Reverence and Godly fear

I could have consumed you for your sin. Instead...
I consumed My only Son for your sin...So you can trust Me in your suffering

29 For **our God is a consuming fire.**