

Book of Hebrews Part 52: 12:7-15; The Pain of Chastening; Pursue the Holiness of the Law (4/2/2020)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/cjqxqgj/book-of-hebrews-part-52>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

Currently we're looking at Hebrews chapter twelve. I want to open today with a little quote from a very well-known, illustrious, nay I say brilliant, author, C.S. Lewis. This is what he has to say—“God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His mega-phone to rouse a deaf world” (The problem of pain).

C.S. Lewis understands quite well the subject we've been covering over the last couple weeks as we look at the disciplining or the chastening of the Lord and the pain we are to incur in this chastening. C.S. Lewis recognizes the benefit and the payoff when God pulls out His megaphone. When we take in all of the things of the world, all the cares of the world, and as we start to seek the world the only voice we hear is that of the world. So we get to a place where we no longer hear the voice of the Lord until He cranks up the volume and starts inflicting pain. Then we start to hear the voice of the Lord again. All of the sudden we start to get clarity; all of the sudden we start to have perspective, and we start thinking about the reality of sin, judgment, eternal life, and the blessing and curses. All these things come back to mind. We start to remember the promises of God. All these beautiful things start to come back to our minds because of the pain. That is why the pain is so important, and it is so good to have.

Well, today we're going to continue in Hebrews chapter twelve. The writer has more to say in regard to the pain the chastening of the Lord. We are going to begin by circling back to Hebrews 12:7—**If you endure chastening...** What the writer is talking about is if you are being instructed by the pain, if you are going to endure this and change your ways so you are no longer walking in the ways of the world, and if you are going to get rid of those addictions and bad habits to which you have become accustomed. It also means this attitude of acquiring a taste for sin, you have gotten rid of it and destroyed the idols in your heart. That is what it means to “endure the chastening” as you are going through those pains of cleansing yourself of the sin.

Well, if you do that, then—**...God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?** So if, and this is the big if, we endure chastening, then we are a child of God. Whereas the writer goes on to give the opposite of that—**8But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers** (Nobody's excluded. We are all going to experience this at some point), **then you are illegitimate and not sons.** (Hebrews 12:8, emphasis added).

In other words, if you are not taught the chastening of the Lord, and if you don't humble yourself in the midst of the trial and tribulation, in the midst of the pain and the suffering, and you don't start going to the word and begin trusting God including confessing your sin and if you don't start changing your ways, then do not be deceived because you are not in a state of salvation. Therefore, you are not considered a child of God.

I am going to tell you right now: nobody wants to hear that. Nobody wants to hear those words. We certainly don't want to believe it.

Let me build on this by taking you to Jeremiah 5:3—**O LORD, are not Your eyes on the truth?** (Think about that. The eyes of the Lord are truth. Yeshua is the way, the truth, and the life.) **You have stricken them,** (He has come against His own people. This is disciplining. How did they respond?) **But they have not grieved; You have consumed them,** (Again, the chastening of the Lord. How do they respond?) **But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return.** (Emphasis added).

Think about this. This is the people in the group who do not endure chastening. They totally rebel against God. You need to understand how serious this is. I think the writer of Hebrews gets the point across quite well. If you reject the word of the Lord, if you reject His chastening, if you don't want to hear it, and you don't want to hear the commandments of God, then I am telling you right now, you are not in a state of grace. You are not in a state of salvation. You are lost; you are not a child of God. I hope that terrifies some who need to hear it, because that's a reality.

This is where Calvinism does so much destruction. Calvinism presents a heretical teaching which Satan was the first to purport in the Garden of Eden telling Eve, "You can eat the fruit. You will surely not die. Nothing bad is going to happen here. It is okay. Just do this." This is what Calvinism is essentially purporting: that it doesn't matter how you live today. Don't worry about it.

So, Calvinism comes in with this deception; it is just ridiculous lies, and it is slaughtering people because it is removing conviction, fear, and reality of what the writer of Hebrews is conveying, and what Jeremiah is crying out. He sees his own brother falling off a cliff right here. They are going in their wayward ways.

I am going to tell you if you continue reading in Jeremiah, you find in Jeremiah chapter seven the LORD instructing Jeremiah, "Don't you dare pray for these people. I will not hear." The LORD will never hear your prayers when you are in a state like this, when your heart is refusing to hear from the LORD. When you refuse the LORD, He is going to refuse you. It is an absolute biblical promise. It is a fact, and that is why we don't want to have these kinds of hard hearts or this kind of rebellion.

I think Proverbs 15:32 says it best when it says—**He who disdains instruction despises his own soul.** In other words, this is exactly what the Jewish people were doing in the days of Jeremiah. They wouldn't heed His sound instruction and wouldn't turn no matter the correction the LORD was trying to bring. They wouldn't have any of it. When you refuse that, you are giving yourself a death sentence. This is on you; this is not on the LORD.

Again, this is something the Calvinists can't even dream of believing because it has nothing to do with their world; it has nothing to do with them. They don't do anything. Any tiny, little effort on your own

part is going to be construed as legalism. You will be told you are trying to earn your way into the Kingdom of God. But here is the deal: if I don't respond to God in obedience and in His commandments, and I am refusing the Lord, then I am going to be the one to the blame.

So we have skin in the game. We have a responsibility to respond to the Lord properly. Short of that, we are sentencing ourselves to death. It is going to be our own fault when we stand before Yeshua and He says, "I never knew you." That will be on us; it is not on Him.

Then it goes on and says this in Proverbs 15:32—**but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.** The context here is much deeper if you're thinking, "Oh, I get a little bit of understanding of the Lord." This is talking about eternal life. You gain the understanding of the Living God: to walk in His path, to see clearly, to have a humble and contrite heart, and to pursue righteousness. This is about eternal life!

Continuing in our study in Hebrews 12:9—**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?**

I think the writer brings up a great point here. Those who are from the baby-boomer generation, even my generation, know what it means to respect your mother and father. You respected your mother and father; you didn't sass-mouth your dad or you may be looking for your teeth outside. You would get the belt. You didn't talk back to your mother. You did your chores. The houses were in order, and there was respect for mom and dad. And if dad came in and said, "You are going to do this, and this, and this, and I am going to come down on you if you did this wrong," you learned really quickly or there was pain inflicted.

It is so funny because I've heard so many stories from other people and how their parents disciplined them. They got the belt, were thrown across the room, and had soap shoved in their mouth. All sorts of things.

You don't forget this, and you certainly didn't want to do it ever again. Do you know what I am saying? The writer is saying, "If you learn that from an earthly father, how much more should you be in subjection to your heavenly Father?" We should be far more diligent to respond to Him immediately with obedience, humility, respect, and reverence; yet we live in such a vile, wicked generation which neither respects their earthly father nor their heavenly Father. It is awful, the generation we are living in right now.

Hebrews 12:10—**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.**

So again the writer of Hebrews isn't simply talking about a chastening that will result in making a more enjoyable life. He is talking about life and death. When he talks about being a partaker of His holiness, that is talking about entering the Kingdom of God for all eternity. So, this is a significant thing he is dealing with.

Hebrews 12:11—**Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful.** If there is one thing I believe we have covered quite well, it is the reality that when God gets involved in your world you are going to feel it. You are going to know pain, and you are going to know suffering. So the writer comes

back to this and recognizes and warns us, “Listen. When you are going through this, you are going to hate it. You are going to feel it, and it is going to hurt so bad.

It continues in Hebrews 12:11—**nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.** It has a payoff; you are going to come out on top if you are taught by the disciplining and the chastening of the Lord. But you have to believe you will come out on top.

Then the writer finishes his statement in Hebrews 12:11—**to those who have been trained by it.** It is only to those who are trained by it.

I love what Charles Spurgeon says when he says this—**“The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.”**

He is saying the most trained, well equipped, most powerful, influential, and the most effective soldiers of the Kingdom of God have come from the highlands of affliction all the way down to the valley of the shadow of death. This is where these men and women come from.

When I think about this, I think of King David. I think about the affliction he went through. And to this day, he is one of the greatest warriors of the Kingdom of God who has been mentioned anywhere in history.

Think about our elite military forces such as the Army Rangers or Navy Seals. Think about the training they go through. It is like the professional athletes we discussed last week. They will be bent in ways they've never been bent before. They will be bent psychologically and physically they will tear every muscle. They will go through things they've never been through in their life in order to do things they've never done before. They will go through this intense training in order to do what is impossible for other people to even think about doing. They train so an elite force of six can do the work of three thousand.

This is what Spurgeon is talking about. As recorded in the Bible, this is what the Lord is seeking to have happen when He comes to train you. David says in Psalm 144:1 that the Lord—**....trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle.**

Believe me, that training is hellacious. It is painful. But when you come out of there, you are so equipped for warfare. You are prepared to go up against demonic hosts of hell. You are prepared to fast and pray regularly because you are engaged in the warfare. You are ready! So I look at what is being said here, and it just speaks to this whole topic of pain and the chastening of the Lord.

Moving on to Hebrews 12:12—**Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.**

I am actually going to come at this verse from a couple different directions. The first thing I really want to cover is when you see somebody who is being chastened, when you recognize their suffering and that the Lord's hands are on them, and it is on them heavy because they haven't been walking with the Lord, how do we approach a person like? The writer in the verse clearly says—**strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.**

So where I am going with this is whether the writer is talking to us individually or talking about someone else whom we could go to and be a part of their life in order to strengthen them; either way it is what he

is not saying that is so critical. What he is not saying is we are to go strengthen that person in their sin, or strengthen yourself in your sin. What he is conveying here is— strengthen yourself in the Lord.

Obviously, there is a significant difference between the two. One is doing the work of a false prophet. The other is doing the work of the LORD. Let me give you an example of what I mean here. In Ezekiel 13:22 we read this—**Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life.** (Emphasis added)

So, we have the work of a false prophet coming into a situation where the LORD is chastening and trying to bring correction. But instead of going in there and building their faith, encouraging them to follow God's commandments, encouraging them to turn away from their sin, and reminding them of the blessing and the curses in the word, you put your arm around them, you are comforting them in their sin. That is the work of a false prophet; they are strengthening them in their sin so they don't turn from it.

So a modern-day version of this could look like this: "Don't worry my friend. You know what? You are under grace. Jesus loves you. It is okay. This is all going to work out. Just know that Jesus loves you. Everything is going to be fine." All this even though this person is living in sin. The reality is you are strengthening the hands of a sinner. That is not what the writer of Hebrews is asking us to do. That is certainly not what the Bible is asking us to do. What the Bible is asking us to do is strengthening them in the Lord again.

We are to remind them of the reality of judgment; remind them of the great sacrifice Christ paid so we would be forgiven from the very things they are practicing. Remind them of the promises that when we turn back to the Lord He will save us and forgive us. Remind them of the goodness of God and the blessings which come with walking in obedience. This is what we are called to do.

So when the writer of Hebrews 12:12 says— **strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees**—this is the kind of action the writer is talking about.

Why do they need to be strengthened? Why do our hands need to be strengthened? Why are the knees feeble? They are feeble because we're experiencing the chastening of the Lord. Discouragement is knocking at the door; it is ready to come in, and we need to be strengthened.

So the writer goes on and elaborates on how we get strengthened. Hebrews 12:13—**and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated.** Do you understand that? We are to make straight paths. That is a direct reference of us walking in the commandments of the Lord— **Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.** (Psalm 119:105). We are to walk in it. The Torah is a lamp, and the law is a light.

We need to make straight paths; we need to go back to the paths of obedience. Jeremiah 18:15 talks about stumbling from the ancient paths: from the paths of holiness and righteousness—**(Because My people have forgotten Me, They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in pathways and not on a highway.)**—**so that what is lame may not be dislocated.** (Hebrews 12:13).

Why do we have something lame? Because we've been afflicted by God. When God has come, we are feeling the full weight and measure of His discipline, of His chastening. But if we don't turn back, guess what happens? The lameness is going to turn into dislocation. In other words, what the writer is saying is you need to make straight paths for your feet right now because if you don't turn back right now, what is lame is going to get dislocated. Things are going to get worse just as we can read in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Things are going to get horrible; the Lord will come seven times more harshly against you for your sins.

Then he finishes—**but rather be healed**. So when he said—**that what is lame**— obviously, we don't want to move into dislocation because that'll be worse. But we actually want to be healed. This is what we're doing. This is the hope. The writer just laid out the beautiful hope we have by going through repentance, confession, turning from our wicked ways, and setting aside the lust of the flesh and the eyes of the pride of life.

I love what it says in Jeremiah 3:22—**Return, you backsliding children, And I will heal your backslidings**. (Emphasis added). Again, we have this beautiful promise that He will heal our backsliding. So it is worth it for us to give up all the things of the world because the Lord will restore us; He will accept us in full measure.

There are so many people I have prayed with who the devil keeps telling them that God won't forgive them because they are too bad of a sinner. They are feeling the weight of their sin, and they know how ugly the sin is, and so the enemy comes in and says, "God will never forgive you. There is no hope for you."

This is a lie from the pit of hell! I don't care where you've gone; there is hope for you when you turn back to the Lord. All you need to do is read the Bible; don't just read this passage. The entire Bible is filled with passages and proof which make it clear God can't deny Himself in repentance. Even after He has sworn to destruction, whether against His own people or against nations, when they turned back, He could not destroy them because His heart melts. It is a beautiful thing.

Moving on to Hebrews 12:14—**Pursue peace with all people**. Here we go again with the writer being obsessed with the Torah. He brings one Torah principle after another to the table. This verse comes right out of the Torah. This is the heartbeat of the Lord; to pursue peace not just with some, not just with our family members, not just with friends, but to seek peace with all people. There are going to be times that are a challenge for you especially when you are going to want to get in your flesh, and your flesh wants to absolutely not pursue peace but war. This is because you are angry, but this is what we're called to do.

As a backdrop to help you understand where the writer is coming from, we can go to the Torah. Deuteronomy 20:10—**When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it**. You can see what the LORD's heart is here. Was it for Israel to go in and just wipe people out? That is not His heart. The LORD wasn't seeking war; what the LORD sought was peace. This is why He instructed His children as they got into a situation of war not to just go into war. They were to offer peace to them because Shalom is so much better. This is where the writer is coming from: the heart of the LORD. And I can appreciate this!

I think of the words of Yeshua in Matthew 5:9—**Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.** Think about all these blessed Beatitudes. **Blessed are the peacemakers.... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness....** I could go on with all these beautiful Beatitudes. This is who we need to be. We need to be a peacemaker, so I appreciate the writer making these statements.

This epistle to the Hebrews is lethal to sin. It is one devastating blow after another to sin if we just adhere to what he is saying, because everything he is saying is founded in Torah. It is rooted in the revelation of the Messiah Yeshua. It is powerful! If we accept it, and we put these things to work, you are talking about radical life transformation!

Now I've stopped the writer mid-sentence here, so I want to finish up what he is saying. So I am going to put the whole thing up here. Hebrews 12:14—**Pursue peace with all people, and holiness....** (Emphasis added).

The first thing I want to do is draw your attention to this term, pursue. In the Greek, it is Διώκω / διώκετε (*diōkō*). It means to chase down aggressively; to run after. I think it has a little bit more intensity in the Greek regarding what it is conveying. This is hotly pursuing holiness. There is a manner by which we are to go after holiness. It is with intensity; it is with the utmost focus. It demands our utmost attention. This must be our world that we live in. We must go after holiness.

The only problem, at least today, with this modern-day, progressive Christianity we see, is that there are far too many Christians who have no idea what that really means. They have no idea what holiness means. It has been reduced to personal interpretation where people are interpreting, and I'll include pastors amongst those who personally interpret what they think and don't think is holy. That is because whatever it is they are pursuing, in effect they are saying that is what holiness is. So, if they've chosen not to pursue something, well then, that must not be holy. What we are pursuing matters and our definition of holiness matters very much.

I noticed something growing up, there were specific terms I consistently heard from the pulpit all the time. Those terms were judgment, sin, hell, righteousness, and holiness. There was a period of time where I heard several pastors whose emphasis was being holy unto the Lord. It was a radical faith and notion. It requires total abandonment of self. You have to crucify the flesh, pick up your cross, and follow Yeshua. But we don't hear this much anymore. We just don't hear the terms holiness and unrighteousness.

You can see many Christians not hesitating to proclaim that God is holy. However, have we heard what God has said to us? We say to Him, "You are holy." But what does He say to us? This is what He says to us—**...You shall be holy, kadosh, for I the LORD your God am holy.** (Leviticus 19:2).

Calling us to be holy still leaves us with the looming question: what in the world does that mean? We can come to the place where we admit, "Yes, maybe the Lord is calling us to holiness," but is that subject to what I feel it is? Is it subject to my emotions and what I think is holy? No! Actually, it is subject to the Torah. The Torah declares what is holy.

Do you know what is interesting about that passage in Leviticus? It starts out stating—**You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.** Then guess what? It does something unbelievable! It goes on to describe what it means to be holy. It goes through all these Commandments. It talks about revering your mother and father. It talks about keeping the Sabbath. It talks about not getting the land involved in harlotry. It talks about taking care of the poor. It talks about not stealing or bearing false witness. We could go on and on and on. It declares what is holy. This, the Torah, is holy.

Paul says in Romans 7:12—**Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.** (Emphasis added). Paul was zeroing in here on the *aseret dibrot*, the Ten Commandments. It is the essence; it is how we learn holiness. If you want to understand why the modern-day church doesn't know what holiness is, it is because the devil has gotten into the church and convinced them the law is no longer valid. He has convinced them the Torah is completely antiquated; that it has nothing to do with the New Covenant, and we should get rid of it.

If in fact the law is holy, and you cast the law off, how in the world could you possibly understand what holiness is? You can't! The devil has stripped your ability to understand something God gave to us, the Torah, which has been revealed, written, and preserved for the generations. This is what God has given us and it is rightfully ours. You know what it says in Deuteronomy 29:29—**The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.**

We cannot give this up to the adversary. And if our commission is to pursue holiness, we need to know what that means. And this is not according to our own definition **but according to the Lord's definition.**

I love what Paul says in Ephesians 5:10—**finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.** In other words, Paul is saying, “investigate”! This whole concept that we would come into the faith with a belief in our mind that would never translate into obedience, research, investigation or pursuit into holiness is outrageous! It is a blasphemous concept. It is completely unbiblical from beginning to end.

Let me take you to Hosea 4:6; we'll build on this. **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.** (Emphasis added).

Now, we haven't even come to my point yet, but what you need to walk away with is the fact that Hosea reveals that the terms Torah and knowledge are transposable; they are one in the same. So when he says—**you reject knowledge**—he is saying you reject the law. When he says—**you have forgotten the law**, you reject knowledge, they are one in the same term. The Torah equals knowledge.

With that now said, let's read Hosea 6:3—**Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning....** (Emphasis added). Does this sound familiar? This is what the writer of Hebrews said: we are to pursue holiness. This is what Paul says to the Ephesians. We're to find out what is acceptable to the Lord, which would also tell you we are to find out what is not acceptable to the Lord. And here Hosea is telling us this is what we're called to do. We are called to be in hot pursuit of this.

I love what Peter says because he shows that the faith was not to be stagnant. Once you come into the faith, then you said a prayer and got baptized, that is wonderful; you've come into the faith. Once that has happened, you don't stop; you don't allow the devil to come in to convince you that if you do any work what-so-ever, even the tiniest bit of obedience, then you are throwing away the grace of God. You are told, "Don't do that because then you are abandoning the New Covenant; you are coming under the law." What utter nonsense!

Actually, what you are doing is you are growing in the faith. You are doing exactly what Yeshua expects us to do. And the Apostle Peter picks up on this as recorded in 2 Peter 1:5—**But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith....** (Emphasis added).

He instructs us to add to it. He doesn't say, "If you feel like it; if it sounds like a good idea." No! He tells us to—**add to your faith.**

So what do we add to it? We get this answer as we continue in 2 Peter 1:5—**...virtue, to virtue knowledge,....** (Emphasis added). This knowledge is God's Torah. It is Yeshua's wisdom. This is what we need.

Continuing in 2 Peter 1:6—**to knowledge, self-control....** How novel of an idea is that? Once we come into the knowledge of God, then we start to put into practice that which God has given us. We become doers of the word and not hearers only.

Continuing in 2 Peter 1:6-9—**to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.** (Emphasis added).

Isn't that amazing? Do you understand the power of that statement Peter made? In other words, if you do not grow, if you do not add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, self-control perseverance and so on and so forth, if you do not do that, you've jumped off the narrow and difficult path. You are on the wide path, and you are lost and as good as dead.

That is exactly what the writer of Hebrews is conveying when he says in Hebrews 12:14—**Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.** (Emphasis added). If you are not in hot pursuit of Yeshua, in His holiness, in His word, in His Torah, he says you will never see the Lord; you'll never be saved.

Who talks like this today? Who talks like this? These guys in the first century, these radical anointed, Holy Spirit anointed apostles of the Lord, were not running around tickling the ears of people telling them what they want to hear so they can fill seats and make people feel good. They were giving people words of eternal life knowing there truly is a judgment coming. They weren't worried about the cares of this life.

Try to preach something like this today. There are many churches where you cannot preach the Bible as is written. They must rip out portions, passages, entire books, and the entire Old Testament or Torah.

They have to completely do away with it because the people are not willing to listen. The people have itching ears, and so they heap up for themselves false teachers and turn their ears away from the truth. We live in a Godless generation.

Moving on to Hebrews 12:15—**looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God....** (Emphasis added).

If you were wondering whether or not we are talking about life and death matters here, or salvation, wonder no more! He starts talking about falling short of the grace of God. If you do not pursue holiness, you are not going to make it; you will not see the Lord. You will fall short of His grace, which again flies in the face of Calvinism theology (and other Christian denominations) which states you can never lose your salvation. They claim if the grace of God has been bestowed upon you, nothing can happen to that grace.

In reality, something can happen to that grace, and it is your decision whether you decide to follow after the world, or you decide to pick up your cross and follow Yeshua, crucifying the flesh, and die daily. It is going to be on you.

But again, the adversary wants to proclaim, “Now you are trying to base your salvation on works.” No! That is not true at all. I am scared to death of the judgment. And you know what? Because of what Yeshua did for me, I want to love Him. I am thankful for what He did, and therefore I am pursuing holiness. I am pursuing Torah. I am pursuing the Bible and righteousness. And when the Holy Spirit convicts me and pricks my heart, I am going to take that and wrestle with it. But I know it is life, so I am not going to put it down.

2 Corinthians 6:1—**We then, as workers together with Him, also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.** (Emphasis added). So the Apostle Paul throws his hat in this very scary ring. There are people who were called into covenant with God. These people are now being chastened because they are in sin. They are in jeopardy of falling short of the grace of God.

So Paul throws his hat into this ring to the Corinthians. And if you know the backdrop of the Corinthians, the Corinthians were taking on water; they were taking on sin. They were becoming complacent, and they were developing an appetite for the sin. It was not a good situation. So Paul comes out and rebukes them.

If you have ever read Paul’s first and second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul does not mince words. He comes directly at them. He loves them, but he hits them hard on the sin, and here he is telling them, “I am pleading with you. Don’t receive the grace of God in vain.” He recognizes they had the grace of God. They were in covenant and had received Yeshua as their Lord and Savior. But guess what? Paul told them, “You are allowing sin into the camp, and if you continue to allow this, it is all going to be vanity.” All of Paul’s work will have been in vain, and them accepting Yeshua will have been in vain because they’ve embraced sin.

I am telling you, this is where we can go back and look at Hebrews 10:26— **For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.**

Paul talks about this in Galatians 2:17— **But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!** In other words, you take the name of Yeshua on your lips, but you go on sinning, you would become a blasphemer, and you would be saying Messiah, Yeshua, supports sin. Thus, you make Him wicked. That is blasphemy. That is not who He is. He is holy! And in turn, He called us to be holy.

I love Spurgeon's words, "If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows the Lord's will, but does not mean to attend to it, you are not to pamper his presumptions, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved."

Guess what? The Apostle Paul is ensuring the Corinthians they are not saved if they are going to continue in the sin. Guess what the writer of Hebrews is doing? He is concerned; he is giving them a warning: If you continue in sin, you are not saved. He is putting into practice this principle that Spurgeon is talking about, which obviously Spurgeon extrapolated out of the Scriptures.

Continuing in Hebrews 12:15— **...lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble....** If you look at this word, bitterness in the Hebrew, the word is רֹשׁ (rōš). We would say rosh as in Rosh Hashanah. It is the word for head, as in head of the year. It also means bitterness. It is spelled the same and is phonetically the same.

I am giving this information because as the writer uses the word bitterness in this verse, there is a much broader context than what you might think. And I think it would be safe to assume many people would look at this and say he is talking about unforgiveness which typically we could equate to bitterness. If we have unforgiveness against somebody, we are bitter toward them. And that is clearly a sin. And unless we forgive them, we will not be forgiven. Yeshua makes that very clear.

Well, you need to understand there is a lot more going on here. It is much broader. And to make a long story short, he is simply expressing sin as a whole. That would include the sin of unforgiveness, but it would include any sin that is taking you captive. Not just that, but doing so in a form of total deception where you think your relationship is just fine with Yeshua, despite you practicing whatever sin you are practicing.

I hope you are following this because it is so critical. What I am going to do is build on this and make sure you are following me regarding what the writer is conveying. I am going to take you to the Torah because the writer again is obsessed with the Torah. He is borrowing this very verbiage from the Torah. When you go to the Torah, and you read the context of what is happening, it illuminates what the writer is saying. So when you come back and read that verse, it has fullness to it. And remember that the writer's audience is Jewish. They grew up on the Torah, and as he is speaking these words and even as I was preparing this sermon and reading this, it spoke to me the very same way it would have spoken to the first-century Jewish people who grew up on the Torah. I think you'll appreciate this as we dig into it.

So let's go to Deuteronomy 29:18— **so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood.** (Emphasis added).

Isn't this interesting because this is what you need to see, and this is right where the writer of Hebrews is drawing from. In fact, this whole passage in the Torah completely encompasses everything we've

covered in Hebrews 12 today. It is kind of amazing, and it illuminates the whole backdrop of where the writer is coming from, what he is conveying, and why he is saying it in the way he says it. After we go through this passage, if you were to go back and reread everything we have read today, you will find it is mind blowing.

But getting to the point, here is what I want you to see. Notice the first thing I highlighted in that verse—**...whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God**. It doesn't matter what sin has taken you captive, and you are being led astray by it, your heart is turning away from the Lord. That is being likened to—a **root bearing bitterness or wormwood**. So for us to go away into sin equates to bitterness or wormwood.

Now, this gets even crazier because of the context of this and how this is important. As we continue, we read in Deuteronomy 29:19—**and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse**. Looking at Deuteronomy 28, what do we read there? We read about the blessing and the curses. And within that, you have all these curses. The curses are happening because the hearts of the Israelites had gone astray from God. So God pours out His discipline. He starts cursing the Israelites. They were in covenant with Him, so He starts putting these curses on them.

So guess what happens? They get worse. They only get more and more intense as they don't turn back and obey God. This is what the writer is talking about. So the context here is—**so it may not happen when he hears the words of this curse...** He is talking to the people telling them, “You know, all the curses you just heard? Be careful that you do not do this—**....that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart'--as though the drunkard could be included with the sober**. (Deuteronomy 29:19).

So here you have Moses going, “Whoa, whoa, whoa.” He warned them, “These curses you just heard, do not for one second think you are going to avoid the cursing of the Lord or the hand of the Lord coming harsh against you when your heart turns from the Lord, and you start to embrace the sin. You are not going to avoid it because the Lord will come for you. If you are not careful, you will become His enemy.”

In fact, it gets so bad the writer goes on and says this in Deuteronomy 29:20—**The LORD would not spare him**. So, when we talk about this whole notion of falling short of the grace of God, you are seeing it right here. The frame of mind the writer of Hebrews is in comes out right here.

Continuing in Deuteronomy 29:20—**The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven**. (Emphasis added).

Do you understand we're talking about a matter of salvation? If you go into sin, you are going to be blotted out of the book of life. You are not going to be in the book; you are not getting into the Kingdom of God.

So, Hebrews chapter 12 from verses 7-15 is all written from the mindset of what we just read in the Torah. It is all right here.

Going back to Hebrews 12:15—**looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God....** in other words, don't be deceived. This is the context: don't give into deception—**lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.** (Emphasis added).

Now to take this a step further, I want to take you to the Dead Sea Scrolls because it echoes the Torah and the context in which it uses the term bitterness. It echoes how the writer of Hebrews is using it, which is synonymous with that of Torah, and yet it continues to further add illumination. It is beautiful.

If you are not familiar with the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is one of the greatest archaeological finds in history where they found all these biblical manuscripts which represent every book of the Bible except Esther. These were all found in the caves of Qumran.

Regarding these scrolls, I saw this particular fragment I want to share with you. It is actually been called the Thanksgiving Psalms. Technically it is called DSS-1QHa. This is what we read—**fraud and seers of deceit** [False prophets], **they have plotted a devilish thing against me {...}** (this is a righteous man. He is speaking in the first person) **to change Your Law, which You engraved in my heart, for flattering teachings.**

So here you have this Psalm found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and it is speaking as living today as ever when you look at the condition of the church. This is because we have the church giving in to frauds and seers of deceit who are changing the law. This is something that was prophesied even by the Apostle Paul. The Book of Daniel contains prophesies stating the Antichrist would come to change times and the law. That time is now!

So this is an amazing passage, but he goes on and says—**for your people; they have denied the drink of knowledge to the thirsty....** This is amazing! Thirsting for righteousness, thirsting for the Word of God, and thirsting for Yeshua.

Continuing—**but for their thirst they have given them vinegar to drink.** (Emphasis added). Vinegar is completely bitter. You don't drink straight vinegar.

So false prophets are giving bitterness instead of giving the sweet, the honey, as Proverbs or Psalm 119 would talk about.

Continuing on—**to consider their mistake, so they may act like fools in their feasts so they will be caught in their nets. But you, O God, abhor every plan of Belial** (the proper noun for Satan) **and your counsel remains, and the plan of your heart persists endlessly. But they, (being) hypocrites, plot intrigues of --- Belial,** (In other words, they are plotting deceptions of the devil.) **they search you with a double heart and are not firmly based in (Y)our truth.** (And here we go; here's the payoff) **A root which produces poison and bitterness is in their thoughts.**

And so, as we look at this statement in Hebrews 12:15—**looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble**—you can see this warning in the Dead Sea Scrolls; you can see this in the Torah. This is terminology being used of those who are giving into sin explicitly in the context of deception. They believe they are fine when in fact they are not fine. This "bitterness" in the Dead Sea Scrolls is used in the context of false prophets going out telling the people who are sinning, giving them comfort, saying, "It is okay. You will have peace even though you

are doing these things. It is okay. God loves you. You are under grace; you are not under law. Don't worry about it. It is just fine.”

We will end there today.