

Jesus is Better – Hebrews

Hebrews 12:14-29

“A Kingdom that cannot be shaken” – July 22nd, 2018



Introduction

Jesus once told a parable to illustrate the infinite value of knowing and following Him. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Matthew 13:44). He sold *all* he had to get the field. But the loss of all his belongings was not a disappointment; he did it *with joy!* Value is essential to endurance in the Christian life. If we believe the reward at the end of the *great* value, we’ll (by God’s grace) strive to keep going. If we believe the reward is insignificant or of *little* value, we’ll give up running and drift off course. That is what we see in Hebrews 12: *worship is the key to perseverance in the Christian life.*

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. Strive for holiness *together* (12:14-17)
- II. Strive for holiness because of grace (12:18-24)
- III. Strive for holiness because of God’s judgment (12:25-29)

Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [Hebrews 12:14-17](#)

Esau serves as an example to *avoid*. He was the brother of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham to whom God had given great promises ([Gen. 12:1-3](#)). As the firstborn, he was in line to inherit the eternal treasure God had promised...but he valued the temporary pleasure of the world more. Instead of waiting, he traded in God’s blessing for a bowl of soup ([Gen. 25:29-34](#)). What are ways you’re tempted to value the temporary pleasures of this world *instead* of waiting for the greater reward of God’s promises? Why do you think it’s tempting in the first place?

To help us avoid Esau’s example and grow in Christ-likeness, to grow in holiness, we’re told to strive *together*. Though our growth as a Christian is God’s work and God’s gift from beginning to end, He still calls us to strive, to make effort. Our effort is empowered by the Spirit of God and informed by His promises, but we have a role to play (see [1 Cor. 15:10](#)). What are ways that we can help *each other* grow? Why is *peace* essential to our growth in *holiness*?

The ‘root of bitterness’ can be bitterness against God, leading to idolatry ([Deut. 29:16-19](#)) or it can be bitterness against others ([Eph. 4:31](#)). What can we do to root out the root of bitterness – either against God or against others?

Additional reading: Hebrews 11:25, Ephesians 4:26-27

2) Read [Hebrews 12:18-24](#)

Here, our author describes Mount Sinai and Mount Zion to illustrate two ways of relating to God. Mount Sinai represents the *old covenant*, where people approached a holy God without the mediator of Jesus (the background is [Exodus 19:16-25](#)). Mount Zion, a *spiritual* or *heavenly* mountain (not a physical one we can touch) represents the *new covenant*, where people approach a holy God through Jesus and His blood shed which atones for our sin. Note that the Christian has *not* come to Sinai, but to Zion – we come to God *through* Jesus. Also, note that v18 answers a “why” question. *Why should we avoid Esau’s example?* Answer? God’s grace in Christ! What difference does it make whether our motivation for holiness is God’s grace? When we live as if our efforts somehow *earn* God’s favor, what are we saying about God?

Additional reading: Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 2:11-14

3) Read [Hebrews 12:25-29](#)

Along with the encouragement of God’s grace, is the warning for those who refuse it. Hebrews warns us against trying to keep one foot in the world, and another foot following Jesus. When we try to do that, we’ll trip and fall because we cannot serve two masters ([Matthew 6:24](#)). God speaks to us through His word, and worship involves not only seeing and adoring God for who He is, but responding in obedience – action that expresses our trust. What act of obedience (clear in God’s word) have you hid from or been reluctant to do because of the potential cost?

Additional reading: James 4:4-5, Romans 12:1-2

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God’s Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God’s word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistchurchuppermarlboro-preview.cloversites.com/sermons>