

Lessons from the Letter to the Hebrews

The letter to the Hebrews has been called “*a rare gem among the King’s treasures.*” And that it is to be sure...for it is also the best “commentary” that we have on the Old Testament since so much of it is from the Old Testament. Many of us have had the misfortune of “trying” to read and understand the Old Testament even trying to find some application to our daily lives but to no avail. Is so, the letter to the Hebrews is for you/us because its author seeks to interpret much of OT history and explaining many of the OT prophesies. Thus, proving many things but these 2 stand out: That Scripture is in fact its own best interpreter; and that beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Old Testament is just as relevant and necessary to the Christian as the New.

The recipients of this letter are most probably believing Jews and Gentiles, but the main audience seems to be believing Jews who are still struggling with believing as the Gentiles have come to believe...the same crowd perhaps that Paul was writing to in Romans 9-11 and perhaps the same Jewish believers that we see in Galatians. They are obviously confused as to what the OT Scriptures taught and the author of this book, who is unnamed, seeks to clarify the truth of the Old Testament as it looked forward to the messiah that has come and done away with the civil and ceremonial requirements of the Law.

The main purpose for the writing of this book seems obvious to me...this book is about persevering in the faith. The Jewish Christians were struggling over their faith and their religion...their Gentile brothers were struggling as to how to integrate them into the church...plus understand the Old Testament truths that point to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. But for us today, another reality is that we all struggle with our faith and maybe for that reason alone the letter to the Hebrews is a good book to study...(of course, other than the fact that it is the inspired Word of God).

The letter reminds us of various challenges to the Christian faith and then it points us to the only foundation and source of power for our Christian life...Jesus our High Priest. The author of Hebrews continues to return to supremacy and sufficiency of Christ over and against anything that man could try or even want to do to gain favor with God. Over and over again he will turn his audience back to Jesus as we see all that they are struggling with. And this is how it will help us in our struggles as well. Tim Keller says, “*...one of the things that we learn as we grow in the faith is that the gospel is not just the ABC’s of the faith, it’s the A to Z of the faith.*” We never get “finished” with the gospel and move on to more profound stuff. We are to always be going back to the gospel (the Letter to the Hebrews is part of that gospel) for it is here that we “hear” God speak into our lives...into the midst of our struggles...into the midst of life’s celebrations to confirm His steadfast love for His own.

Also, this book clearly reveals how neurotic believers can be. We have favor with God by the work of Christ alone on our behalf, so to work at gaining favor that we already have, shows clearly how neurotic we are.

Lastly, the book of Hebrews unfolds the gospel in at least five ways:

First, Hebrews remarkably combines the person and work of Christ. The person of Christ as God and man constitutes the basis for his saving work. Jesus is set forth as the fulfillment of all the OT messianic prophecies.

Second, Hebrews shows Christ's superiority to Old Testament persons and institutions. He is the great and final Prophet and Priest, far surpassing Old Testament mediators of revelation—prophets and angels.

Third, Hebrews underscores humanity's need for redemption. In a word, we are needy sinners in need of a gracious and mighty Savior. And that is just what God has provided in his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.

Fourth, as strongly as any place in the Bible, Hebrews warns of the danger of apostasy in five passages: 2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; and 12:1–29. Plainly, the original readers of Hebrews were in danger of turning from the faith they had formerly professed. And one of the means that God employs to keep us is to warn of the folly of deserting him who saves us freely by his grace.

Fifth, Hebrews exhorts professed believers to persevere in the faith. It is true that God saves us once and for all. But that salvation is not static rather it is dynamic. The covenant is God's pledge to be God to us and to make us his own. Because he loves us, he not only assures us of his love with both promise and oath but also exhorts us to keep on living obediently in the faith, to keep on gathering with other believers for worship, and not to harden our hearts against him in rebellion.

So with this in mind my hope and desire is that as we study this book together, I hope each of us will see and hear God speaking to us in our struggles as God word does in fact speak to any and all things that will cause us struggle in this life.

Lessons from Hebrews
August 12, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Introduction

1. The recipients of this letter are most probably believing Jews and Gentiles,
 - a. **The main audience, however, seems to be believing Jews who are still struggling with believing as the Gentiles have come to believe...the same crowd perhaps that Paul was writing to in Romans 9-11 and perhaps the same Jewish believers that we see in Galatians.**
 - b. **They are obviously confused as to what the OT Scriptures taught and the author of this book, who is unnamed, seeks to clarify the truth of the Old Testament as it looked forward to the Messiah that has come and done away with the civil and ceremonial requirements of the Law.**
 - (1) **The Jewish Christians were struggling between their new found faith and their old religion...**
 - (2) **Their Gentile brothers were struggling as to how to integrate them into the church...plus understand the Old Testament truths that point to Jesus Christ as the Messiah.**
 - c. **There were many issues that these Jewish Christians were dealing with not just how to look at the Old ways and these “new” ways taught by Jesus and the Apostles. Like:**
 - (1) **There was a mixing of secular and religious views...just like today...they were obviously fascinated with teachings about angels...as we will see.**
 - (2) **They weren’t “feeling” like things were that different...because they had “converted” they were expecting a lasting “experience” and that was not what they were “feeling”...sound familiar? So many come to a new church expecting some new experience...seeking a personal satisfaction or fulfillment and they don’t find it because these are only truly found in our union with Christ and His corporate body. In fact, the writer of Hebrews could be summed up on this issue in this contemporary language, *“If you thought that you tried Jesus, and He wasn’t satisfying, then you never truly knew Jesus. You don’t need anything more than Jesus.”***
 - (3) **Ritualistic religion has you “doing” something...so your mind thinks you are experiencing something.**
 - (4) **There also seems to have been a possible connection with the Essenes (the Qumran community) especially among the Jewish Christians in the group. The Essenes had some interesting ideas...some of their ideas sounded Christian and other ideas were very Jewish. All of their ideas were contradictory to true Christianity...there are similar things out there today...cults, “New Testament” churches... that influence our thinking both directly and indirectly.**
 - (5) **As I said, they were having a hard time shaking loose what they had been taught since they were young...it is something that many in the church with have a hard time with.**

- (6) Plato's philosophies were affecting the Jewish believers interestingly enough for a Jewish teacher: Philo of Alexandria had taken Plat's stuff and translated into forms of religious writing that looked and sounded very Jewish. One way, that he did this was that in his writings which as I said were adaptation of Plato; he had this series of mediators between heaven and earth, like: angels, Moses, Aaron and a High priest...the system of the OT. This is just like today...we/the Church and our culture are influenced by the likes of:**
- Immanuel Kant, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and others...even Freud.**
 - When one studies philosophy it becomes pretty clear pretty fast how these men and others have affected our thinking and our actions...the way and the why of doing things.**
- d. Repeatedly the author encourages his readers not to turn back to the "old" ways but rather to "heed the word of God."**
- e. But for us today, another reality is that we all struggle with our faith and maybe for that reason alone the letter to the Hebrews is a good book to study...(of course, other than the fact that it is the inspired Word of God).**
- 2. The date of this book seems to be somewhere between A.D. 64 and A.D. 70.**
- a. Nero's reign. The fire had happened and even though Nero himself was suspected the emperor blamed the Christians.**
 - b. The writer's continual references to the Jewish sacrificial system would seem to indicate that the Temple had not yet been destroyed. These sacrifices had been re-instituted during the Intertestamental period after the Temple was cleansed at the Maccabean revolt. These sacrifices were only performed at the temple in that day.**
 - c. In A.D. 70 Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Titus and all animal sacrifices ceased. To this day the Jews have not reinstituted them.**
- 3. The author of the book is unnamed. Theories have abounded through the years:**
- a. The King James Bible ascribes this book to Paul....as well as others.**
 - b. Some say it was written in the style of Barnabas, the Levite. We have many of his letters from the early church fathers and some see some similarity.**
 - c. Other say possibly Silas...both Barnabas and Silas were mentored by Paul and theology in this letter is very Pauline but the writing style is not.**
 - d. Other have speculated that it was Apollos (Acts 18:24)**
 - e. Most Church Fathers have concluded as Origen- *"Probably who wrote the epistle in truth God only knows."* Or a more contemporary voice, F.F. Bruce, *"In spite of traditional ascriptions and brilliant guesses, its authorship is unknown."***

4. This book seems hard at first but we need to keep these simple themes in mind that resonate throughout-
 - a. **"Jesus is better than..."**
 - (1) **Moses**
 - (2) **Aaron**
 - (3) **The Levitical system of the priesthood**
 - b. **And that "He provides a better..."**
 - (1) **A better rest**
 - (2) **A better covenant...as in a fulfilled one**
 - (3) **A better assurance.**
 - c. **Heed the Word of God- Heb. 1:1, 2:1, 4:12-13...**

C. Hebrews 1:1-3

1. How is Jesus described here in this text?
 - a. **The revealer of God**
 - b. **Appointed to be Heir of all things= to do the things of God's heir...**
 - (1) **The things that were decided before the foundations of the world that would be done. God the Father appointing God the son as heir of all things is evidence of that agreement between the father and son.**
 - (2) **Since He is heir of all things there is no inheritance to be shared unless He determines to share it. So if we want a share in the great inheritance of God we must be related to Christ**
 - c. **Co-Creator/Architect of the universe. He is the One through whom God made the world/cosmos.**
 - (1) **John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16**
 - (2) **He is heir of all things and creator of all things at the same time.**
What is interesting about this thought? **Interesting, because heirs usually inherit what somewhat else builds.**
 - d. **The radiance of the glory (think Shekinah glory) of God ...the essential reflection of all that God is.**
 - e. **The exact imprint of His nature...He possesses the very nature of God. He not only reveals the divine, but He is divine. Phil. 2:5; Col. 1:15, 2:9-10, 16-17**
 - f. **Upholder of the universe by the word of His power. Col. 1:17**
 - g. **A High Priest...making purification for sin Himself, then He sat down...= the Only Redeemer of God's elect. When His work was completed it secured salvation for all God's elect from every nation, tongue and tribe and every time...past, present and future...never to be done again. "It is finished."**
 - h. **King...co-regent sitting with the Father on the throne over all.**
 - i. **So we see Jesus' 3 fold offices here- Prophet, Priest and King!**
2. Why was it important for the author to begin with the person of Christ?
 - a. **Even in their belief they were still trying to figure out where this Jesus "fit in" to what they had been taught about the Messiah.**
 - b. **They struggling to hold on to an out dated mode of religion that had been misunderstood and misapplied for centuries...1400 years to be exact of priestly sacrifices...most of the time having them done wrong if done at all...but still being taught this was the way to salvation.**

- c. **It needed to be established that He is God...above all others...superior to everyone else.**
 - (1) Moses and the prophets of old.**
 - (2) Angels**
 - (3) Spoken in many times in many ways...**
 - (4) Any other mediator- High Priest.**
 - d. **So that they and we, for that matter, would know that Christ is the final and best revealer of God.**
 - e. **It is to be established that He is the One who speaks, act and intercedes for God now with supreme authority...no one else speaks for God but Christ through His Word.**
3. **What do we learn and why is this image of Christ still foundational for us?**
- a. **God reveals Himself in and through His Son...it is His determined will to disclose or reveal to us what we can handle...Deut. 31:31.**
 - (1)He did it through the prophets...those who spoke God's Word...Adam, Noah...and so on**
 - (2)Now He speaks and reveals His Word through His Son.**
 - (3)Which ties the Old and New Testament together...as both being the inspired authoritative Word of God.**
 - b. **As Christians we must heed God's final Word...**
 - (1) In 2017 I saw this in a Gallop poll: 91% of the people said that God is very important to them...but...**
 - **66% of those same people said that they do not believe in moral absolutes.**
 - **67% of the same people said they do not believe in an absolute truth.**
 - **47% say the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but not everything should be taken literally.**
 - **26% say the Bible is a collection of secular stories and history.**
 - **25% of these people say that the Bible is the actual Word of God, to be interpreted accordingly...It was 28% in 2014**
 - (2) We must not try to add anything to Jesus.**
 - (3) His authority underlies all revelation, all prophecy, all of Scripture.**
 - (4) Sometimes would say we would like for God to speak to us directly...now setting aside the fear of death that we see when that happens...we must remember how limited God's speaking was....while we have His word all the time...we don't have to wait years we can simply open it up whenever and wherever we are.**

Lessons from Hebrews
August 19, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review- Hebrews 1:1-3

1. This may book seem hard at first but we need to keep these simple themes in mind that resonate throughout-
 - a. **"Jesus is better than..."**
 - (1) **Moses**
 - (2) **Aaron**
 - (3) **The Levitical system of the priesthood**
 - b. **And that "He provides a better..."**
 - (1) **A better rest**
 - (2) **A better covenant...as in a fulfilled one**
 - (3) **A better assurance.**
 - c. **We must heed the Word of God- Heb. 1:1, 2:1, 4:12-13...**
2. From last week's discussion...what were some of the ways we are meant to see Jesus according to this text??
 - a. **The revealer of God**
 - b. **Appointed to be Heir of all things= to do the things of God's heir...**
 - (1) **Since He is heir of all things there is no inheritance to be shared unless He determines to share it. So if we want a share in the great inheritance of God we must be related to Christ**
 - (2) **He is heir of all things and creator of all things at the same time. What is interesting about this thought? Interesting, because heirs usually inherit what somewhat else builds.**
 - c. **Co-Creator/Architect of the universe. He is the One through whom God made the world/cosmos. See John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16**
 - d. **The radiance of the glory (think Shekinah glory) of God ...the essential reflection of all that God is.**
 - e. **The exact imprint of His nature...He possesses the very nature of God. He not only reveals the divine, but He is divine. Phil. 2:5; Col. 1:15, 2:9-10,16-17**
 - f. **Upholder of the universe by the word of His power. Col. 1:17**
 - g. **A High Priest...making purification for sin Himself, then He sat down...= the Only Redeemer of God's elect. When His work was completed it secured salvation for all God's elect from every nation, tongue and tribe and every time...past, present and future...never to be done again. "It is finished."**
 - h. **King...co-regent sitting with the Father on the throne over all.**
 - i. **So we see Jesus' 3 fold offices here- Prophet, Priest and King!**
3. What do we learn and why is this image of Christ still foundational for us?
 - a. **God reveals Himself in and through His Son...it is His determined will to disclose or reveal to us what we can handle...Deut. 31:31.**
 - (1) **He did it through the prophets...those who spoke God's Word...Adam, Noah...and so on**
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 - (3) **Which ties the Old and New Testament together...as both being the inspired authoritative Word of God.**

b. As Christians we must heed God's final Word...

(1) In 2017 I saw this in a Gallop poll: 91% of the people said that God is very important to them...but...

- **66% of those same people said that they do not believe in moral absolutes.**
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- **26% say the Bible is a collection of secular stories and history.**
- **25% of these people say that the Bible is the actual Word of God, to be interpreted accordingly...It was 28% in 2014**

(2) We must not try to add anything to Jesus.

(3) His authority underlies all revelation, all prophecy, all of Scripture.

(4) One more thing: God has no need of visions/dreams/ or prophecies from anyone today...everything that has been revealed is all we need to be revealed. Jesus and His Word is all that the Christian needs...if anyone say anything else we need to question their faith.

C. Hebrews 1:4-14- "the proof"!

1. You can almost hear the converted Jewish believer that is still struggling between their "new" faith and the "old" asking, "But where can you go in the OT to confirm what you have just said?" or, today, where does it say that in the Bible?" And that is what the author begins to do here in these verses. There is nothing greater than the Son. And there is no one else is coming in the future.

2. Now let's look at vs. 3-4 together. What do we see that he is affirming in these 2 texts?

a. There is the Son.

b. There are angels.

c. And the Son...the superior One...the exact imprint of the Father...is more excellent than the angels. He is very God in His essence and He is NOT an angel.

(1) In the 4th Century Arius taught that Jesus was an exalted angelic created being from this text. Once again his presuppositions and unbelief ruled his conclusions...he saw a text ..took it out of context ...and formed a conclusion...like so many do today.

(2) "... as much superior to the angels..." or "having become as much better than the angels..." – Christ was exalted by the Father as a result of His perfect completion of the work of redemption that only he could accomplish. As the author will say later and it is amazing to consider but the Word of God says that Jesus earned the right to receive His inheritance because of His obedience- see quickly Hebrews 5:8ff.

d. And believers must then acknowledge these things.

(1) Jesus is higher...His name is higher than all created order...even the angels.

- (2) When we say we are Christians ...children of God...believers in Jesus the Christ...the 2nd person of the Godhead we automatically are saying we believe He is superior to all created things.**
3. Why is the author introducing the subject of angels here in verses 3-4?
- a. **He has been arguing that Jesus is far superior to the prophets, the final revelation of God...and that we can see God more clearly in Christ than in the law and the prophets.**
 - b. **Unlike the letter to the Colossians...to the Gentiles... there is nothing in this letter about these people worshiping angels...**
 - (1) Orthodox Jews didn't worship angels and these obviously came from Orthodox homes before conversion.**
 - (2) But these Jewish Christians seem to have been tempted by some contemporary view about angels...or a particular angel that would serve as a mediator...remember what we said about Philo of Alexandria last time talked about mediators between heaven and earth...like angels, Moses, Aaron and a High priest. But there was something else more influential among the working class...**
 - (3) This was an influential teaching of the Essenes.**
 - c. **Essenes- Last time I said they had some interesting ideas...some that sounded Christian and others that sound Jewish ...that is to the untrained ear...which is what they were dealing with at this time...JUST like today as well...untrained Christians are being influenced by so many false teaching...because they sound like they might be true.**
 - (1) They believed the OT did speak about the Messiah.**
 - (2) The Qumran community lived under a strong eschatological expectation. They believed they were living in the last days and they interpreted the prophets as referring to their time...or a time to come. They looked forward to the coming prophet and the messiahs of Aaron and of Israel, the priests and the kings, and as so terribly failed to see that all of this was resident in Jesus.**
 - (3) But...they broke the OT teaching of the Messiah down into 3 categories: Prophet, Priest and King...but!!!**
 - **There would be a prophet that fulfilled the messianic promises**
 - **There would also be a priestly messiah in the line of Aaron- in charge of the revitalization of Israel's religion.**
 - **There would be a kingly messiah from the line of David – in charge of revitalization of the government and the society at large.**
 - (4) But above these 3 figures, there was a preoccupation with the belief that Michael the Archangel would come after Jesus...perhaps at the end of time...to rule the whole restoration of Israel in fulfillment of the promises of the New Covenant talked about in Jeremiah and elsewhere in the OT.**

- (5) Like all heresies there can be found “a bit” of truth...rightly they believed that the Messiah was spoken of in the OT...AND that they were living in the LAST DAYS...but their conclusions of 3 separate people fulfilling the offices of prophet, priest and king was terribly off because in their unregenerate mind they could not conceive of these being fulfilled in one man even though that IS what the OT taught, affirmed and confirmed.**
- (6) Now think about how well this fits into the teaching in this text.**
- **Jesus is all 3 in One... The final Prophet, Priest, and King...and this is shown in the 1st 3 verses...then he brings us to this teaching about angels.**
 - **No one... especially not an angel...a created creature...not even Michael or any other Archangel... is higher than Jesus.**
 - **Jesus is infinitely higher than all created order!**
- d. The author appeals directly to the OT to prove Jesus’ superiority over all created things in heaven and on earth.**
4. How many OT passages do we see in this section between vs. 4-14?
- a. **7 or 8 depending upon how you are counting the allusions to Scripture as well...and they actually make up the greatest part of this chapter.**
 - b. **Seeking to prove his case about Jesus quickly!**
5. What is being communicated in these passages? Let’s look at the OT passages in verse 5 and 6.
- a. **Vs. 5- (Ps. 2:7)- This passage, of course, had David and his line in the immediate view and the work that they would do in obedience to God’s call on their lives for His glory and yet, the author of Hebrews by God’s direction says that this ultimately applies to Jesus and what He would accomplish for God’s glory.**
 - (1)The Son is absolutely uniquely the Son and He is uniquely related to God the Father.**
 - (2) “Today I have begotten you.”-What day? The day of His resurrection, ascension...the day when he began again to ultimately reign at the Father’s right hand. He was obedient to do all that God and He had determined to do before the foundations of the earth.**
 - (3)If we want Sonship, fellowship with the Father and the Spirit, then we must know we can only have this in Christ Jesus. The Son is unique and as we will see, if we want to participate in the blessings of Sonship we must be related to Him by faith.**
 - (4)No angel can wear His name or position...as was seen in verses 1-4.**

Lessons from Hebrews
August 26, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review- Hebrews 1:3-14

1. In a nutshell, why is the author introducing the subject of angels here in verses 3-4? **The Messiah was in “competition” with angels.**
2. How many OT passages do we see in this section between vs. 4-14?
 - a. **7 or 8 depending upon how you are counting the allusions to Scripture as well...and they actually make up the greatest part of this chapter.**
 - b. **Seeking to prove his case about Jesus quickly!**

C. Hebrews 1:4-14 continued:

6. What is being communicated in these passages? Let's look at the OT passages in verse 5 and 6.
 - b. **Vs. 5- (Ps. 2:7)- This passage, of course, had David and his line in the immediate view and the work that they would do in obedience to God's call on their lives for His glory and yet, the author of Hebrews by God's direction says that this ultimately applies to Jesus and what He would accomplish for God's glory.**
 - (5)The Son is absolutely uniquely the Son and He is uniquely related to God the Father.**
 - (6) “Today I have begotten you.”-What day? The day of His resurrection, ascension...the day when he began again to ultimately reign at the Father's right hand. He was obedient to do all that God and He had determined to do before the foundations of the earth.**
 - (7)If we want Sonship, fellowship with the Father and the Spirit, then we must know we can only have this in Christ Jesus. The Son is unique and as we will see, if we want to participate in the blessings of Sonship we must be related to Him by faith.**
 - (8)No angel can wear His name or position...as was seen in verses 1-4.**
 - c. **Vs. 5- (II Sam. 7:14)-**
 - (1)Considering the context (in both places) and then attributing this text to the Christ we know that in Him...in Jesus...all the ancient promises that God would set a king from the line of David on the throne are fulfilled.**
 - (2)This passages does not deny the eternity of the Son...it speaks of His function in time and space.**
 - (3)These promises are not just given to the Son, the 2nd Person of the Trinity but they are also given to the Son, the 2nd Adam, our representative before the Father...and because this is true of Him ...it is true of all believers as well.**
 - **Jesus said in John 10: 27-30, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”**

- **John 17:20-26, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”**
- d. Vs. 6- (Ps. 89:27, being alluded to)
- (1) **“firstborn” here speaks of His being first-born from the dead...His resurrection... Since He is the first born from the dead then by virtue of the grammar it tells us that there must be those coming after Him. Who are those coming after Him?...All of us who believe! So every time we celebrate His resurrection we must remember that this was a fulfilled promise for us as well.**
 - (2)**Ps. 89 while not directly referred to tells us as the note in your study Bible says... “the one of highest rank” not just biologically first-born in succession in a worldly sense. The highest ranking may not be the first in birth order...think Jacob over Esau...because it can also mean “chosen one” – Ex. 4:22 in the Hebrew language.**
 - (3)**The actual quote of this verse seems to come from Deut. 32:43 and Ps. 97:7 from the Greek which seems to use the term “angel” rather than “god” ... as the ESV does.**
 - **Everything must worship Jesus... (“must” = a divine directive). See the action of the angels in Luke 2:13-14....and Hebrews 2:2.**
 - **Those who would worship anyone or anything else- men and fallen angels- will fall before Him.**
 - **Another way to interpret this passage would be, “All you that are superior to men. Own yourselves to be inferior to Christ in nature and power.”**
- e. Vs. 7- Psalm 104:4-
- (1) **Servants/ministers of God...in that they are created to do His pleasure/will for His glory for a specific purpose...powerful but only for their purpose...to serve the Lord and His people. They are no more than God has created them to be. Servants of God ...Servants of the Son and servants of the Holy Spirit... servants of the Godhead.**
 - (2) **These...”winds” and “flames” do not compare with the God who created these things. God has endowed them with these characteristics in the same way He has endowed us with ours...all comes from God.**

Lessons from Hebrews
September 2, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Re-read Hebrews 1:1-7- What are some of the main themes in these verses?

2. What is the “point” of all the Old Testament passages?

C. Hebrews 1:4-14 continued:

1. What is being communicated in these passages?

f. Vs. 8-9- Psalm 45:6-7- What do we see here?

(1) God says that His Son is God. Jesus is God and is yet distinct from the Father.

- **The grammar here in the Hebrew reads like a Father who is proud of His Son's achievements...and position. It is obvious from the original that God the Father takes great pleasure in God the Son.**
- **God the Father declares Him to be God so it must be so.- There have been many through the centuries to question this...even today like cults like Jehovah witnesses...But God the Father declares it to be so.**
- **God the Father declares God the Sons eternity as God and King... *“Your throne , O God, is forever and ever.”* This distinguishes the Son's throne from all earthly thrones.**

(2) God says that the Son is KING of righteousness. The righteousness of His government comes from the righteousness of His person. God the Son has all rights of rule ...all authority and all power as God, as mediator...as King between God and the people... He is just, He is loving , He is merciful and gracious... *“You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness...”*

(3) God says that the Son is the PRIEST- anointed like the high Priest.

(4) He had already said the His Son was the last “prophet” to speak for Him physically and then through His Word.

- **“...the oil of gladness” was poured out upon Him by the Father so that He could rejoice even in His suffering... Heb. 12:2.**
- **This anointing was above all others...even though who seek to lead and walk in God's ways...the angels, prophets, kings, priests and all the saints=His brothers and sisters- the Elect of God...the Israel of God= See Ps. 132:9,16**

(5) Anyone who denies these truths do so to their own peril according to the context of Psalm 45.

g. Vs. 10-12- Psalm 102:25-27

(1) This passage declares the Sons omnipotence. How?

- **Steadfast**
- **Creator**
- **Omniscient- Finisher, Eternal, Victor**
- **Self-existent— He had to be before the world to be able to lay its foundation.**

- In creating the world- He made the world so He has an “original” right to rule the world as He sees fit. See Col 1:17
 - In changing the world through time. Everything created can perish but He will remain...all creation is mutable but He is immutable and immortal. God the Father attests to this and declares it to be so...so it is so.
 - Everything will age ...this world is becoming old and will be changed like an old garment...thrown away into the fire. Look around this world bears the symptoms of a dying world.
- (2) In creating the heavens and all things in them...including but not limited to the ANGELS...and by having created them they cannot be above Him.
- h. Vs. 13- Ps. 110:1
- (1) To which of the angels did He ever say, *“Receive your glory, your dominion and rest due to being my co-regent/co-ruler, and remain here in this place of ruling until all your enemies shall either be made friends and family by conversion or a footstool by judgement.”* Christ did nothing to make men His enemies...He chose His elect and passed over those who weren’t His elect.
- (2) God the Father gave to God the Son the elect...His sheep... as we are told in the Gospel ...and God the Father will has undertaken the task of making Jesus’ enemies His footstool in His predetermined judgment of them.
- (3) But in the meantime, Christ will rule and reign until this subjection is accomplished...He shall leave anything undone...He will continue to reign from on high until He returns...so as His people it is our duty that we must perform until He takes us home or returns as well...until we become more than conquerors...Rev. 2-3.
2. Vs. 14- So Jesus is better than angels...He is far superior as His name, Son of God illustrates, than their name/title- angel= equals messenger or as here- “ministering spirits”. So what does God say to the angels? **Serve me and my people!** What do we know about angels?
- a. “angels”- an interesting critter created by God as His special servants.
- (1) These are not men who have gone to heaven. (This is still a popular belief even in the Church.)
- I love “Clarence” in “It’s a Wonderful Life”...
 - But his death on earth and subsequent service is NOT how to become an angel.
- (2) Angels have special tasks to perform for God.
- They sing God’s praises,
 - They are messengers...not prophets...they come to declare for God what is!
 - They are ministers of divine Providence...see their activity in Genesis and their activity in Revelation at the end.
 - They are protectors of God’s people, encouragers, warriors- Ps. 91:11-12
 - They carry the believer home to God...Luke 16:22, 24:51

- **They are servants of God that minister only to God's people on God's behalf. (Heb. 1:14)**
 - **They are servants of Christ...and servants of God's elect...to serve *"for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation"* ...people are favored over angels for they are made in the image of God not the other way around. See I Cor. 6:3; Heb. 2:16**
- b. So...with this in mind, what should be their response to Jesus? Our response?

Lessons from Hebrews
September 23, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is the main take away in verses 1-3 concerning Jesus?
 - a. **Jesus is God above all created order...**
 - b. **Revealer of the God head.**
 - c. **Prophet, Priest and King over all!**
2. Re-read Hebrews 1:4-14- What are some of the main themes in these verses?
3. What is the “point” of all the Old Testament passages?
4. How does the author of Hebrews prove his point about who Jesus is with these Old Testament passages?

C. Hebrews 2:1-4

1. Now that we have discussed chapter 1 in review, what is this “therefore”; there for?
 - a. **R.C. Sproul says this about all “therefores” in the Bible. “The word ‘therefore’ links what has been said to what is about to be concluded.”**
 - b. **All of chapter 1 is not there just to give us some interesting doctrinal details for those who teach systematic theology...it is a MUST for all of us to now ... “So in light of what I just told you, you must...you ought to do...”**
2. So with this in mind what is the “therefore” pointing back to? What immediate conclusion is it referring to?
 - a. **The Jesus is superior to all**
 - b. **That Jesus is superior to the angel myths that are abounding at this time.**
 - c. **Then...that since so much bad teaching is out there “we must pay closer attention to what we have heard” from God through His various means and especially now through Christ. This statement is made in an emphatic statement in the Greek...**
 - (1) **Listen up...Pay attention for your life depends upon it!**
 - (2) **We need to study with a “vengeance” so that we are not easily led astray...**
 - (3) **Our time in the Scriptures needs to be meaningful and life changing in that we come to depend upon what we are learning from God’s Word.**
 - (4) **As people we spend way too much time on other stuff...nothing wrong with other interests, but...**
 - d. **This is the first of 5 or 6 specific warnings in the letter to the Hebrews.**

3. What are the warnings in this text alone?
- a. **He warns us about ourselves- Lest we drift away.** How does that work for those in the church?
- (1) Last week we were given a very good illustration of this “drifting away” This would be seen like looking at a boat at dock that’s moorings have come loose...the boat would stay in the dock for a while slowly banging up against the dock for a while but eventually with the tides the boat would begin to slowly drift out into the bay...all of this would be gradual until it hits the currents and then it would be pulled out quickly to be lost forever.**
- (2) So this tells us a truth about ourselves...that we have a tendency to drift from the truth! It usually happens slowly. Not to the loss of a believers salvation but to grave consequence and lack of maturity.**
- **When we have grown up in a gospel teaching church we often get desensitized to the gospel...like the Jews...thinking we are covered...we have heard it all before...there is nothing more to hear...so “we got this!”!**
 - **Amazing grace is not so amazing any more. It becomes boring and routine. Think about this: How hard was it to get up this morning and drag yourself to church...even if you want to be here? I bet there was a voice inside of you whether you want to admit it or not that was saying *“Really...wouldn’t it be better to stay home ..just this once?”***
 - **Christians often become apathetic and indifferent towards God’s Word...especially when it is not influencing their thinking and their actions.**
- (3) We have a tendency to believe falsehoods over the truth.**
- **Don’t want to go against the crowd...everyone likes it so who am I to dispute it?**
 - **It makes me feel good about myself...think health and wealth gospel, which is no gospel at all.**
 - **Most of us believe in a form of works-righteousness because it makes sense to us...you must have to work for your salvation at least a little because that is the way the world works.**
 - **We do this because of our misunderstanding concerning the person of Christ...Hebrews 1 and Rev. 1: 9-18**

Lessons from Hebrews
September 30, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review- Re-read Hebrews 2:1-4

4. Why the warnings in these verses?

- a. **This is foundational for the Christian...Christ warned us very similarly in the Gospels.**
- b. **The gospel must be taken seriously! It is weighty...not necessarily difficult to understand but convicting none the less...because it talks about eternal matters.**

(1) We must pay close attention to the truths of chapter 1.

(2) We must pay close attention to the gospel message... *"what we have heard"* goes beyond the chapter 1 context to all the gospel as given by the prophets and now through Jesus Christ.

(3) Paying close attention goes to the conclusion that we must be people of the Word so we can know false doctrines and false teachers.

5. What is the warning here in verse 1?

- b. **He warns us about ourselves- Lest we drift away.** How does that work for those in the church?

(4) Last week we were given a very good illustration of this "drifting away" This would be seen like looking at a boat at dock that's moorings have come loose...the boat would stay in the dock for a while slowly banging up against the dock for a while but eventually with the tides the boat would begin to slowly drift out into the bay...all of this would be gradual until it hits the currents and then it would be pulled out quickly to be lost forever.

(5) So this tells us a truth about ourselves...that we have a tendency to drift from the truth! It usually happens slowly. Not to the loss of a believers salvation but to grave consequence and lack of maturity.

- **When we have grown up in a gospel teaching church we often get desensitized to the gospel...like the Jews...thinking we are covered...we have heard it all before...there is nothing more to hear...so "we got this!"**
- **Amazing grace is not so amazing any more. It becomes boring and routine. Think about this: How hard was it to get up this morning and drag yourself to church...even if you want to be here? I bet there was a voice inside of you whether you want to admit it or not that was saying *"Really...wouldn't it be better to stay home ...just this once?"***
- **Christians often become apathetic and indifferent towards God's Word...especially when it is not influencing their thinking and their actions.**

(6) We have a tendency to believe falsehoods over the truth.

- **Don't want to go against the crowd...everyone likes it so who am I to dispute it?**
- **It makes me feel good about myself...think health and wealth gospel, which is no gospel at all.**

- **Most of us believe in a form of works-righteousness because it makes sense to us...you must have to work for your salvation at least a little because that is the way the world works.**
- **We do this because of our misunderstanding concerning the person of Christ...Hebrews 1 and Rev. 1: 9-18**
- c. **Given the tenor throughout the letter the author seems to be more concerned with complacent believers rather than those who will out an out reject the Word...though these are certainly in mind as well.**
 - (1) Just as an aside: We don't correct apathy and indifference with entertainment and celebrity.**
 - (2) Spurgeon said of his generation, "God does not call us to amuse the goats. He calls us to feed the sheep."**
 - (3) Seeking to simplify an already simple gospel only ends up trivializing the gospel in the end and turns people away because of the lack of sustainable food.**
- d. **That some in our midst are not really of us. This is a hard truth but it is one that the Bible constantly tells us is true. See Matt. 7**

C. Hebrews 2:2-4 continued:

1. What is the warning here in our text?
 - a. **Warns us about God, as well...God will hold people accountable for what He says....the warning is concerning rejecting His Son and His Word.**
 - (1) How might you summarize this statement found in verses 2-3 in your own words?
 - (2) **Thinking of the covenant blessings and curses: If you reject the gospel message given under the NT, you are liable to greater cursing than the people of God who lived during OT times...who didn't have a fulfilled gospel.**
2. What specifically is he telling us here vs. 2-4?
 - a. **God's Word is absolutely true. All the messages given from God are true...no matter which medium God used...angels, men...AND...all the messages are clear from God.**
 - b. **They we even attested to by the apostles...directly from Jesus' mouth...**
 - c. **God bore witness to the messages true through signs and wonders and various miracles...First, came the message...THEN came the signs and wonders and miracles... to confirm, substantiate, and give testimony to the message from God. All of it comes from God but there is/was an order to how it occurred. The miracle is worthless apart from its testimony to the word given.**
 - d. **And by the gifts of the Spirit that He has given that enables us to see and be assured that God's Word ...that Jesus... is in fact superior to any and all!**
 - e. **That all God's word is weighty ...serious**
 - f. **That God's word cannot be sidestepped...re-interpreted...re-imagined...re-voiced.**
 - g. **We cannot be neutral...we are either for it...as in believe and live it...or we are against it.**

- h. **All throughout this book the author of Hebrews will be contrasting the Law given at Sinai with the Law fulfilled at Calvary...and as such when God commanded the people “...do not touch this mountain, for if you touch this mountain you will die...” in Exodus 19. Pretty serious consequences for disobeying His command, but here the author of Hebrews is saying that if we reject the Word of Christ the judgment on those who reject God’s Word will even be more serious than that!**
 - i. **Just as an aside: This kind of does away with the myth that the God of the OT is all wrath and judgment and the God of the NT is all about forgiveness in Christ and love.**
3. C.S. Lewis warned us that there are many people that attempt to evangelize others by convincing them that Christianity is good for them. So he says, *“It doesn’t matter if Christianity is good, if it’s not true. We must not seek to get people to embrace Christianity simply because it is good if they do not believe it is true....No, no, no, a person must embrace Christianity because it is true, because if it is not true than it is ultimately NOT good.”* What do you make of this statement?
- a. **This is what the majority of people who come to Christ live like...they were hoping for a good life style because the one they were living wasn’t working for them...**
 - b. **But, the church is not gospel savvy so the only conclusion is that they thought they would get something out of it and then they moved on...I chose Christ...what’s in it for me? Got to be better than what I had.**
 - c. **But when God’s people are not “absolutely convinced it is true”...which means they/we are actually seeking to live as the Word says to live...then we are actually rejecting God’s Word for our own definition of that lifestyle. Christianity isn’t a lifestyle ...it is life from death!**

Lessons from Hebrews
October 7, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. In Chapter 2:1-4, the author of Hebrews gives the believing Jews 2 warnings. What are they and why are they still appropriate for us today?
 - a. **He warns us about ourselves- Lest we drift away. So this tells us a truth about ourselves...that we have a tendency to drift from the truth! It usually happens slowly. Not to the loss of a believers salvation but to grave consequence and lack of maturity.**
 - b. **Warns us about God, as well...God will hold people accountable for what He says....the warning is concerning rejecting His Son and His Word. As professing believers; considering the covenant blessings and curses: If we reject the gospel message given under the NT, we are liable to greater cursing than the people of God who lived during OT times...who didn't have a fulfilled gospel.**
 - c. **Given the tenor throughout the letter the author seems to be more concerned with complacent believers rather than those who will out an out reject the Word...though these are certainly in mind as well.**
 - (1) **Just as an aside: We don't correct apathy and indifference with entertainment and celebrity.**
 - (2) **Spurgeon said of his generation, "God does not call us to amuse the goats. He calls us to feed the sheep."**
 - (3) **Seeking to simplify an already simple gospel only ends up trivializing the gospel in the end and turns people away because of the lack of sustainable food.**
2. Why warnings...since there are going to more of them as we go through this book?
 - a. **We cannot be neutral...we are either for it...as in believe and live it...or we are against it.**
 - b. **All throughout this book the author of Hebrews will be contrasting the Law given at Sinai with the Law fulfilled at Calvary**
 - (1) **Think of the command that God gave His people at Sinai in Exodus 19- "...do not touch this mountain, for if you touch this mountain you will die..." Pretty serious consequences for disobeying His command and there are many other such commands given by God to His people...so that they would obey Him...but also that they and we would enjoy the life He has promised His own.**
 - (2) **Here the author of Hebrews is saying that if we reject the Word of Christ the judgment on those who reject God's Word will even be more serious than that!**
 - c. **Just as an aside: This kind of does away with the myth that the God of the OT is all wrath and judgment and the God of the NT is all about forgiveness in Christ and love.**

C. Hebrews 2:5-18

1. Here in vs. 5 we see he hasn't left the topic of contrasting Christ with the angels? Why?
2. He makes an interesting statement here at the beginning of verse 6, *"It has been testified somewhere..."* or... *"There is a place where someone has testified..."* Nothing is written by accident or without purpose. Why do you suppose he does this since he didn't use this kind of language in the first chapter when referring to Scripture?
 - a. **He reminds us of our relationship to Him.**
 - b. **It presupposes His audience of Jewish descent would know the reference. Like... *"you know, it's been said..."* presupposes that the next statement would be one that everyone knows and may even know who said it.**
 - c. **But more importantly, he may be making the point that he wishes to stress the divine authority of this text over that of even David's word.**
3. Now let's look at verses 6-9. By quoting Psalm 8:4-6 within these verses, what are some things he may hope to accomplish in this discussion contrasting Christ and the angels?
 - a. Christ's superiority.
 - (1)**Originally this psalm was penned by David to speak of the majesty of God and the Sonship of God's elect.**
 - (2)**The Angels never became man.**
 - (3)**But, of course, as this text makes clear, as well as others uses of this text, this is really talking about the Sonship of the Son, Himself...and we being adopted as sons.**
 - (4)**Nothing is outside of His control.**
 - (5)**He made the choice to become Man, to humble Himself unto death to become our substitute so that He could save God's children from their sins.**
 - (6)**And just so we are clear...who is and has the author been talking about up to and including now... *"...namely Jesus."* Why would this clarity have been important to his audience...and to 21st century man?**
 - **He was wanting to make sure that they captured this truth to dispel all the other influences that were seeking to drive them away from what they had been taught. I believe that is one reason why Chapter 2 opens with, *"Therefore we must pay much attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away..."*...which is what has been happening of late with the Jewish believers.**
 - **So many have questioned Jesus of Nazareth's deity then**
 - **So many have questioned it and do question His deity centuries later.**
 - **We are prone to drift because of how we view Jesus as well.**
 - (7)**He is superior to all... and yet for a little while He was made lower than the angels. How is that so for Christ?**
 - **The grammar lets us now that He existed before He became a man, for a little while.**

- **He died like man...and yet is immortal.**
 - **He rose...so we rise in Him.**
 - **The angels never die...never taste death.**
- b. Our limitedness.
- (1) Everything IS outside of OUR control.**
 - (2) We cannot see the whole picture...even that everything is even now under subjection to Him. For our vision is limited so it looks like and sometimes feels like everything is out of control.**
 - (3) We are created and born and made humble before God... God's angels already are humble before Him.**
 - (4) And yet we are made in God's Image...not them.**
 - (5) We die...and yet are immortal.**
4. What would you say is the main point(s) of verses 10-14?
- a. **Jesus is the main point.**
 - b. **The glorification of His children...Christ's future ministry... *"Bring many sons to glory."* That all things that are Christ's are ours as well...by virtue of having been adopted into His family.**
 - c. **For the sake of his Jewish audience he quotes Ps. 22:22 and Is. 8:17-18...but we also saw this when we were studying through Romans....look for a moment at Rom. 8:17-18. Everything that belongs to Jesus belongs to us.**
 - d. **It is for His brothers and sister alone that He died, rose again, ascended and will come to glorify.**
5. What specifically is he talking about in verses 14-18? The redemption of His children. This section describes in short form how Jesus solved the problem of sin and death.
- a. **He says that Jesus shared in our humanity by His death so He might DESTROY the one who has the power of death...that is, the devil.**
 - (1) Having tempted man to sin, the devil now stands as our accuser...demanding that God's punishment for sin be exacted upon all mankind.**
 - (2) This power only exists towards those whom Christ has not taken away the power of sin and death...those who aren't His children.**
 - (3) Even so as we have seen other places Satan doesn't get to decide who lives and dies...that comes under the authority of the Godhead.**
 - b. **But He does this to DELIVER us from the fear of death because of our lifelong slavery to sin. He has freed us from this fear by giving us eternal life in Himself.**
 - c. **And he did it to MAKE PROPITIATION for the sins of the people as the merciful and faithful high priest...His remnant...the elect. Propitiation=God's attitude towards us has changed. God's law is appeased and we are brought into fellowship with God again. By making propitiation for us He reconciled us to God once and forever.**

- (1) Just so we are clear the word expiation... which is sometimes used interchangeably with propitiation...is the act that results in the change of God's disposition toward us...Christ's Cross work and resurrection....and the result of Christ's work of expiation is propitiation...the result is that God's anger and wrath are turned away.**
- (2) Together expiation and propitiation constitute what is labeled placation...Christ did His Work on the Cross to placate the wrath of God...satisfied the wrath of God against sinners.**
- (3) Jesus died to deliver us from the wrath of God.**
- d. And we see yet a further blessing of so great a work of salvation...vs. 18.**

Lessons from Hebrews
October 14, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. At the beginning of the chapter he warns us, *"Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away."* Once again, what is he referring to and how bad are the consequences he refers to?
2. At the end of the chapter it is said of Jesus as our faithful and merciful high priest in service to God He came to make PROPITIATION for the sins of the people...God's elect. What does propitiation mean? (you will see this word throughout the new testament...it might be helpful to be able to articulate what it means.)
 - e. **Propitiation=God's attitude towards us has changed. God's law is appeased and we are brought into fellowship with God again. By making propitiation for us He reconciled us to God once and forever.**
 - (4)**Just so we are clear the word expiation... which is sometimes used interchangeably with propitiation...is the act that results in the change of God's disposition toward us...Christ's Cross work and resurrection....**
 - (5)**the result of Christ's work of expiation is propitiation...the result is that God's anger and wrath are turned away.**
 - f. **Together expiation and propitiation constitute what is labeled placation...Christ did His Work on the Cross to placate the wrath of God...satisfied the wrath of God against sinners.**
 - g. **Jesus died to deliver us from the wrath of God.**

C. Hebrews 3

1. We have seen thus far that the writer of Hebrews has made it clear, to anyone paying attention, that Jesus is "better than"...superior to the angels. And he has been making this case because of the possible influence of the Essene community who taught concerning several messianic figures to take the place of what they thought they saw in the OT. Now we come to another person who has been highly revered in Jewish thought Moses. Jesus is greater than Moses.
2. Hebrews 3:1-6
 - a. Why pick on Moses...the great and godly servant of God?
 - (1)**These people had already made profession of faith into Jesus as their savior/ Messiah...and they should not go back to Moses...to the Law.**
 - (2)**To show that Jesus is the builder and owner of the "house"...the kingdom.**
 - (3)**That Moses is a servant...though one of the best...but still a servant.**
 - (4)**Moses was faithful in all God's house...Jesus is faithful over God's house as His son.**
 - (5)**And we are Jesus' house...we are not Moses' children/house...he is the servant of the house.**

- b. He knows these believers are struggling in their faith...that they are being influenced to go back to the Law, even to disbelief through the influence of the Essene's who sounded rational. Remember they taught concerning a "graded" messiahship...where angels specifically Michael the archangel would oversee the 3 "earthly messiahs"...a last prophet to fulfill the messianic promises... a last priest in the line of Aaron to revitalize Israel's religion and a last king to revitalize the government and society of Israel at large. With these and other influences they are obviously struggling with specific foundational doctrines, doctrines that we must believe to even be considered believers.
- (1) Deity of Christ.
 - (2) The incarnation
 - (3) And His atonement.
 - (4) In what ways do we see the same struggles in today's church?
- c. So let's look closely at the first half of verse 1. *"Therefore, holy brothers(and sisters), you who share in a heavenly calling..."* Knowing what we know about their internal struggles of faith, why such wonderful descriptive words towards God's Children?
- (1) Words like these remind them who they are to whom they belong since their confession.**
 - (2) They/We forget how privileged they/we are in Christ...we are holy...we share in the heavenly calling.**
 - **Holy not just in profession and title...having been made holy...**
 - **But also, holy principle and practice...heavenly calling to live as God prescribes. As we share in God...we are to be a blessing to those around us.**
 - **Holy- set apart by God for Himself...saint's ...godly...by God's doing.**
 - **Do we actually believe this?**
 - **When we disbelieve this for whatever reason our pride has taken over and we set aside the truth of God.**
 - **We are to be humbled before our God..part of the fear factor, if you will...but we are to never doubt that we are His ...that we are holy...that we are forgiven or we make a mockery of God and God's Word.**
 - (3) They/We forget who we are so He calls them brothers and sisters- holy brothers and sisters...**
 - **we are not saved merely as individuals but for one another.**
 - **We are spiritually intertwined united in Christ and each other.**
 - **It is God who made them holy...and it is God who brought us together.**
 - (4) We/they are reminded of their heavenly calling...**
 - **This is what the KING has called us to do...**
 - **But this is also to be an attitude...a mindset that we have a heavenly calling.**
 - **They/we have been called into God's eternal shalom...His peace...His rest...which we will talk more about as we get further into this letter.**

- **They/we have been called to share in the blessings of the kingdom.**
 - **We/They are partakers of the heavenly vocation...to act and live as God prescribes.**
- (5) He does this to remind them and us of what we have been made in Christ and to remind them and us about our earlier confession.**
- d. Now what is He saying to us in the last half of verse 1?
- (1) We are being told...COMMANDED to “consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession...”...**
- **Since we are holy brothers and sisters we have the capacity to actually reflect upon who Christ is when we “pay much closer attention to what we have heard...”**
 - **And it is in “considering Jesus” that we can experience peace, hope, comfort...even in this dark world.**
 - **Considering Jesus enables us to actually “Submit our bodies, which are holy and acceptable, to God daily which is our spiritual worship to God.”**
 - **Matthew Henry put it this way; “We are called Christians; we must answer to that name and live like Christians.” The writer of Hebrews is saying that we can if we would consider anew Jesus...that is what he has said in the first 2 chapters.**
- (2) “...Consider Jesus...”...he simply states this as fact.**
- **He names Him so all parties are clear who he has been talking about.**
 - **By calling Him the apostle and high priest...the one sent by God with His authority for a specific ministry...and the One who ministers redemption as high priest ...he is also setting the stage for His argument that Jesus is “better than” Moses.**
 - **He is the One that they/we professed in our confession of faith...not Moses. He is also the One to whom Moses spoke in Deut. 18 one the prophet to come...greater than himself. See Deut. 18:15.**
- (3) What confession does he speak of? Rom. 10:8-9.**
- **This confession is essential...and the writer is saying they have all made this confession...or at least giving them the benefit of the doubt that they have said it and are Christians.**
 - **Since they/we have made such a confession...then he is commanding us to consider this before we change direction and follow teaching other than what they/we first believed from the teaching of the Bible and the apostles.**
- e. So what is the overall point he is making in verse 2 through the first half of verse 6? **Jesus is superior to Moses.**

Lessons from Hebrews
November 4, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is the message of chapter 2 and chapter 3?

a. **Jesus is better than the angels.- Chapter 2**

b. **Jesus is better than Moses.- Chapter 3**

c. Why is this particular message important to us today who are struggling with seeking out angels or Moses in our churches? Or put another way...

(1) Why are mystical versions of Christianity so popular in our day among academic types or popular writers and celebrities such as Rob Bell or Oprah Winfrey?

- **It has been said, "What I see happening in this form of mysticism is a shift from Christ to the self. There is a shift from that drama in which we must simply stretch out our hand of faith to receive the finished work of Christ to a drama that happens within ourselves. And as I turn on the television and see the guests on Oprah Winfrey, that's just what I hear. There it is within us... That is the basis of our own salvation. This is the original alternative and false religion to the true worship of God."**

- **As an example: The "Inner Light," also called "Inward Light," is often thought to be a distinctive theme of the Society of Friends (Quakers).**

- **This Inner Light is understood to be a direct awareness of God that allows a person to know God's will for him or her. This expression is often attributed to the teachings of George Fox in the 17th century, founder of the Society of Friends, who had failed to find spiritual truth in the English churches. He experienced an inner light and voice within, "that of God in every man."**

- **The Inner Light should not simply be a mystical experience, but should also result in a person's working for the good of others.**

- **The practice of Inner Light is believed to be the direct path of ascension towards the divine nature within man.**

- **The theme of Inner Light appears in various spiritual traditions as well as in the main religions of the world. Buddhism believes that the one experiences the highest nature of the mind, reaches enlightenment and liberation from the Wheel of Samsara (i.e. bodily existence).**

(2) What is the history of this speculative view of God, and what are the implications of this approach on the way we think about heaven, hell, and ultimate redemption?

2. How do the messages of chapters 2 and 3 compare?

a. **They both stress the person of Christ...a theme that has carried over from Chapter 1...because if we don't get Jesus right we won't get anything else right.**

- b. They both call us to **Heed God's Word** lest we slip away...lest we harden our hearts.
 - c. They both call on us to evaluate what it is we actually believe and make sure it measures up to Scripture...not what the world, the preacher or our hearts say...if those are in anyway are different from what the Scriptures teach.
 - d. We also, need to heed God's warnings...not so much in fear of losing our salvation since that can't happen if we are His...but so we do not live without the experience of God's presence in our life for large portions of our life.
 - e. We need to "exhort one another" about what the Bible teaches...and in so doing we strengthen, edify, and encourage God's church ...including ourselves...which keeps all parties from drifting away.
 - (1) This comes in the form of encouragement.
 - (2) This comes in the form of accountability...to keep others and ourselves from hardening our hearts against God.
 - (3) This could also come in the way of church discipline.
3. In Chapter 3 how is sin defined? **As unbelief.** Is this what you think of when you think of sin? **Remember: What is the greatest commandment listed by Jesus? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength.** So, since this is true what would be the greatest sin? **Not loving God in this way...unbelief!**
- a. An unbelieving heart is a sinful heart...we have a hard time thinking this way...
 - b. Unbelief is a great sin...that is unbelief that also is accompanied with an on-going lifestyle of sin...perhaps proving that we aren't God's after all.
 - c. When we live in unbelief we cannot reap anything of blessing only condemnation like those who would not follow Him in the wilderness.
 - d. *"Let those who think they stand take heed lest they fall."* (I Cor. 10:12)
 - e. Only those who believed and followed the LORD's ways made it into the Promised Land
 - (1) Everyone else died in the wilderness as a punishment for their unbelief.
 - (2) Moses died outside the Promised Land as a consequence for his sinfulness/unbelief as a leader...but he is still numbered among God's elect.

Lessons from Hebrews
November 11, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is the simple messages of Chapters 1-3?
 - a. **Jesus is God.**
 - b. **Jesus is better than the angels.**
 - c. **Jesus is better than Moses.**
2. In a nut shell...why is all of this important for us today?
 - a. **We need a non-wavering picture of who Jesus is if we are going to navigate this world to His glory.**
 - b. **There are so many other voices ...inside the church and outside the church....vying for our acceptance...mostly voices that point to our inner strength and we like that lie a lot.**

C. Hebrews 4:1-16- This concludes the sermon on Psalm 95 that we have been looking at.

1. Beginning in verse 1 we have yet another “warning”. What is it and what does it communicate to them and to us?
 - a. **See the warnings of Hebrews 2:1-2 and 3:1, 12**
 - b. **See also Jesus’s words in Matt. 7:24-27.**
 - c. **Since the promise of entering into His rest is before us we should live accordingly.**
 - d. **We should fear the LORD...we should walk in His ways...we should believe rather than not believe. This is important... *“lest any of us should “seem” to have failed to reach it...”***
 - (1)**When we blow our witness the world can never see the advantage of a life of faith...**
 - (2)**In fact they will conclude that we never were of the faith...which will cause many more to stumble.**
2. What is he making clear in verse 2?
 - a. **The same gospel was preached to all.**
 - b. **The elect heard and were united to Christ by faith alone.**
 - c. **And the non-elect were not united...they were not benefitted because they weren’t His children....these are the many of the ones who fell in the wilderness....and did not enter into the Promised Land.**
3. In verse 3-11 he speaks a lot about God’s rest...what is the point?
 - a. **We who believe entered God’s rest...have entered and will ultimately enter that rest at the consummation. This action concerning his elect was predestined/ predetermined before the foundation of the world...and...**
 - (1)**Because all His works were finished from the foundation of the world...that is everything that He was planning on created He created...elect and non-elect before the foundation of the world...**
 - (2)**Eph.1 speaks of this clearly along with everything else that He would use to bring Himself glory.**

- (3) Those of us who are His enter/entered His rest by His declaration and by our lifestyle.
- b. ***“For He has somewhere spoken”***- this is rabbinical language denoting the belief in the inspiration of the entire OT.
 - c. When God’s rest is talked about usually one of 4 things comes to the minds of his audience...maybe even our minds:
 - (1) Gen. 2:2- God’s resting on the 7th Day
 - (2) Num. 13-14- Joshua bringing the people into the Promised Land
 - (3) Ps. 95:7-11- speaking of David’s day when God’s rest had not fully come...even though there was a peace in the land for a while.
 - (4) Used to speak of being in God’s presence...so in some ways it probably means all 4 of these at the same time.
 - d. Heeding God’s voice equals entering into God’s rest. In fact vs. 7 which requotes the section we have already looked at many times says... ***“For those of you who can hear my voice...that is believers...do not harden your hearts.”***
 - e. There is yet a Day off that is promised for that purpose...vs. 4,7,8-10... A DAY when we will cease from our working diligently not to fall away. Our faithfulness will be completed on that DAY.
 - f. Faith is evidenced in obedience ...faith equals entering God’s rest... disobedience equals not entering God’s rest.
 - g. According to the rest of this passage, God’s complete rest did not come by Moses, Joshua or David, or even His presence in the temple...
 - h. Vs. 11 says-
 - (1) And yet while we are in this life we must still strive to be obedient...diligent in the faith. See again Hebrews 3:12-14.
 - (2) A promise and a warning again...Those who strive will not fall away because they are in fact God’s those who do not strive:
 - Will suffer the consequences of believers who will have all their works burned up and literally have nothing to show for their faith, or...
 - They will not be listed among the brethren....be non-believers who are hanging out in the church...those who Jesus talks about in Matt. 7: 21-23
4. What is the author seeking to communicate by defining the Word of God as He does here in vs. 12...and how does this understanding aid in our striving to enter God’s rests?
- a. **God’s word is living and active and sharper than any 2-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit. Of joints and marrow...**
 - (1) It is powerful and real...
 - (2) It is also life-shaping...God will use His sword to shape us as He sees fit into the image of His Son...Jesus.
 - (3) He sees us all the way through as a surgeon sees us in surgery. Precision as an instrument for healing and also as an instrument of war!
 - (4) ***“...discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”***
 - (5) He sees all things, everywhere at the same time.
 - b. God’s word discerns our heart and thoughts...mind...for someone has to do it ...we cannot be trusted to do this on our own to any long lasting benefit.

- c. **By keeping this in mind we understand the usefulness and the power of God's Word over everything else and we will strive ...at least our whole life will be defined in our a striving... not by our failures.**
5. Vs. 13 should be a very sobering statement for us...for any who think they might be able to hide their sin from God.
- (1) Literally, nothing is ever out of His sight...nothing gets by Him...nothing is ever really lost.**
 - (2) "...but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him..." literally, "...to expose the neck by lifting the chin..."= This is an OT metaphor used by judges referring to requiring the accused to look the judge in the eye as he receives his verdict.**
 - (3) "...to whom we must give an account." This is referring to the meeting with God face-to face on Judgment Day.**
 - (4) So this should be a sobering statement to be sure.**

Lessons from Hebrews
November 18, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. In chapter 3 and 4 what point(s) is God making concerning His children entering into His rest!
 - a. **Above all else He wants His children to enter His rest.**
 - b. **In His rest there will not be anyone who shouldn't be there.**
2. Since He is so concerned about His children entering into His rest; Is it because He thinks those of us who are His might not enter His rest? Support your answer with this chapter.

C. Chapter 4 re-visited and finished...

1. What is the author seeking to communicate by defining the Word of God as He does in 4:12... ***"God's word is living and active and sharper than any 2-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning/judging the thought and intentions of the heart."*** ...and how does this understanding aid in our striving to enter God's rests?

(6) *"For the Word of God is living and active..."*- like God...alive and, active and involved.

(7) *"...sharper than any 2-edged sword..."*

(1) Passages concerning 2 or double-edge sword:

- **Judges 3:16-** a real weapon with a real purpose...
- **Prov. 5:3-4-** as a tool of sin in our destruction.
- **Ps. 149:6-9-** as a weapon against the enemies of God...set against them toward their own destruction which might include the destruction of their old self as the Word of God bears fruit even among His enemies...taking them from enemies to family members.
- **Hebrew 4:12-**
- **Rev. 1:12-16, 2:12, 19:15-** Speaking of Jesus and His power wielded through His Word.

(8) *"...piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow..."*

(1) It is life-shaping...God will use His sword to shape us as He sees fit into the image of His Son...Jesus...cutting away the "fat" of sin.

(2) He sees us all the way through...all the way to the core/central issues of life... as a surgeon in surgery exposes and reveals and cuts away whatever is hindering health. Precision as an instrument for healing and also as an instrument of war.

(9) *"...discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."*

(1) The Greek word that is translated *"discerning"* or *"able to judge"* (depending upon the version you are using) is used only once in the entire Bible. It means= *"one whose business and special gift/calling is to judge"*...So Christ, the Word, the Second person of the Trinity has all authority and He is the One with the special calling/giftedness to wage this war on our thoughts and action/beliefs.

(2) The Greek word translated “thoughts” is the word “deliberations”= “the things we think a lot about or the things we meditate on...give great consideration to.” How has your thought life been of late? What kinds of things are continually on your mind? 2 things are in mind here:

- **God’s Word sees and knows what we have been spending the bulk of our time thinking about...worrying about.**
- **We can use God’s Word to...the true judge of all thoughts and intentions...to expose and convict ourselves and each other as we hold one another accountable.**
- **Note: it is to be God’s Word, not our opinion, that brings to light conflict and sin.**

(3) “...intentions.” The Greek word translated “intentions” refers to one’s moral understanding...

- **So if what we believe and live out is not consistent with God’s Word God’s Word will expose the inconsistency... showing us the truth so that we can change...immediately our “intention”.**
- **And when we do not...don’t be surprised by more and more struggle coming into our life...because God will not leave us alone until we are changed and our beliefs brought into conformity with our Father’s truth.**

(10) God’s word discerns our heart and thoughts...mind...for someone has to do it ...we cannot be trusted to do this on our own to any long lasting benefit.

2. Verses 14-16 are here to encourage us. The thought of our complete exposure before God from verse 13 might be a bit unsettling sooo... What is he communicating to these people here in these verses and to us 2000 years later?

a. When we are struggling we need to look back to our confession ...our profession...or have someone help us look back there.

(1) This is Jesus the Son of God...who came to save us...to rescue us from our sin and the falseness of this world.

(2) This is Jesus, the Son of God...He does not hurt us out of some sick psychotic desire to see us writhe when we sin.

(3) God reveals to us our sin and the law, not because He delights in it, rubs his hands together and laughs maniacally, but he does it with an aim toward introducing us to our Savior, letting us know our need.

(4) This is Jesus, the Son of God, who has our best interest in mind

- **As Paul tells us in Romans 8... *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those He foreknew/fore loves He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those He called He also justified (declared justified), and those whom He justified (declared justified) He also glorified.”***

- **All of this is in past tense because of what the author says in vs. 3... *“For we who have believed entered that rest, as He said, ‘As I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter my rest,’ although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.”***
 - b. That we have a High Priest who understands our deficiencies and sins. So when He intercedes for us before the Father He knows how to do it so that the Father sees Jesus instead of our sin.**
 - c. But this High Priest is greater than any other High Priest for He is sinless...and so His sacrifice could be perfect...which is what God required once for all time...no earthly priest could do that...making sacrifice for themselves even before they could make sacrifice for us.**
 - d. How does Hebrews 2:17-18 compare concerning our Great High Priest with the passage before us?**
 - (1) Suffered when tempted...we don’t always think of this...chapter 4 doesn’t highlight any suffering...**
 - **That adds a whole new dimension/understanding to what He went through for us...these were real temptations...these were real and hard trials that caused Him to suffer...**
 - **Especially when He didn’t sin...we let go and take the easy way out all too often...He did not adding to his suffering as a man.**
 - (2) This of course, makes Him more relatable to us.**
 - (3) And this makes Him an example as well...He did not give in to sin...He has given us the ability to “choose” not to sin as the Spirit is within us.**
 - e. Yet another question concerning this text: What does this text tell us, believers, about temptation?**
 - (1) Being tempted is one thing....falling into sin is another.**
 - (2) See I Cor. 10:13**
- 3. Think back to all the times the author speaks to us about God’s Word in these chapters, “God said...as the Holy Spirit says...as He has said...For He has somewhere spoken...saying through David so long afterward...” What is being communicated and why is this still important today?**
- a. He speaks to the authority of Scripture, to be sure.**
 - b. But, He also speaks about the Author of Scripture....God, the Son, through His Holy Spirit...**
 - c. The Word itself testifies to its source...its Author...here and in most other places in God’s own word. (See II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21)**
 - d. We may all agree that in the dialog sections that God is speaking...but here in chapter 4 we see that God is speaking even in the narrative sections...see vs. 4...and then it says, “And again in this passage He said...” tying both to one Author God.**
 - e. One of the biggest reasons for young adults leaving the Church today is their lack of belief in the Bible’s authority and accuracy...and when asked why they answered this way, their answers most often was one of these reasons,**
 - (1) “Because the Bible was written by men...not God, inspiring men to write...just simply men wrote it like men write every other book.”**
 - (2) “Also, it contains error”...presupposing that God couldn’t be its author since God can’t make errors.**

- (3) “Also, the Bible contradicts itself”...also indicating that it couldn’t be written by a God who is without error.**
- (4) Recent surveys then seem to indicate that at least 50% of young people leave the church for these reasons...which means they do not believe in the infallibility and inspiration of the Bible.**

Lessons from Hebrews
November 25, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Hebrews 4:13 is an interesting verse. It comes at the end of the thought about God's Word being a double-edged sword. Let's look at in context a minute. *"Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."* What is he communicating here? How should this statement motivate us to live as He prescribes?

2. How does Hebrews 2:17-18 compare concerning our Great High Priest with the passage before us?
 - a. **Suffered when tempted...we don't always think of this...chapter 4 doesn't highlight any suffering...**
 - (1) **That adds a whole new dimension/understanding to what He went through for us...these were real temptations...these were real and hard trials that caused Him to suffer...**
 - (2) **Especially when He didn't sin...we let go and take the easy way out all too often...He did not add to his suffering as a man.**
 - b. **This of course, makes Him more relatable to us.**
 - c. **And this makes Him an example as well...He did not give in to sin...He has given us the ability to "choose" not to sin as the Spirit is within us.**
 - d. **Being tempted is one thing.... falling into sin is another. See I Cor. 10:13**

C. Chapter 5- The author of Hebrews is still reminding them that Jesus is "better than" the priests.

1. In verses 1-4 what are some of the deficiencies of the human priests that the author contrasts with Christ from 4:14-16?
 - a. **The high priest of men is taken from among men.**
 - b. **We can only come to God through this priest...not on our own. This is God's grace to man and at the same time reminds us of the limited access that we have to our Father.**
 - c. **These High Priest sin just as the rest of us do and must make sacrifice for themselves before they can make sacrifice for others. While they may be able to sympathize and have compassion with their struggles, they do so as sinners themselves.**
 - d. **He is called from among men to serve men.... for no man takes this honor upon himself...it was granted to him by God himself. In fact, when a man chooses this type of leadership for himself he will only reap success and reward in his own eyes...not in God's.**
2. What are some similarities?
 - a. **Christ had to make a sacrifice...but not for His sins...rather as a true High Priest He sacrifices Himself for our sins.**
 - b. **He stood and stands before the Father interceding on our behalf.**

- c. **He was appointed by the Godhead but He Took this calling upon Himself.**
3. In verses 5-10, the author goes back to showing HOW Jesus is superior or "better than" the priests. In what ways does he show this?
- a. **He is God's Son! God never said this of Aaron or any of Aaron's sons.**
 - b. **"Begotten not made."- Coming directly from the Godhead to become the source of our eternal salvation.**
 - c. **Gen. 14; Ps. 110:4- "*You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*" ... See also, Hebrews 7:1-3**
 - (1) Obviously, a priest of higher order than Aaron's.
 - (2) Given this priesthood...where the priest is said in Scripture to have "*...no beginning and no end...*" ...Aaron's priesthood was meant to be temporary (as seen is the succession of generations...each person's priesthood coming to an end) until Christ the true Priest would come. So...to be clear the Aaronic Priesthood would be temporary while Christ's priesthood was forever...forever meaning= eternity past to eternity future.
 - d. **Christ took on flesh...humbled Himself...chose to come to us in this way...showing yet again how superior He is to the Aaronic priests.**
 - e. **Christ is to be preferred... because of His holiness- "His reverence" His prayers and supplications were given special warrant. He was always holy...no need to "get right" with God because He never sinned...and He was the Son of God...the 2nd person of the Trinity.**
 - f. **"As a Son He suffered..."- It is NOT normal in the mind of men that the son of the King would suffer...he would have others to do that...much like the priests had the Levites.**
 - (1) He suffered at the hands of men because God the Father had predestined it...preordained it to occur...See Is. 53; Acts 2. Not because He deserved it but because He was obedient to the will of the Godhead that had determined before the foundation of the earth that He would suffer and die as a man for His elect children. As a man, He learned= ("gained the experience") "obedience" ... by following through with the mission...and we have an example there as well.
 - (2) By His suffering ...by His own blood as the last and greatest sacrifice He was also consecrated and ordained as High Priest...and by His suffering He purchased a full deliverance from sin for His people...and is able to declare His people justified by grace alone through faith alone.
 - (3) So, none of us should figure that we will be exempt from suffering either...in fact, walking in His steps...guarantees us tribulation. Jesus said so!
 - (4) All those of us who obey Him, devote ourselves to Him daily, deny ourselves and the world, take up our cross and follow Him will receive from Him our great salvation and we will be owned by Him forever.

Lessons from Hebrews
December 2, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What was the point of at least the first 10 verses of chapter 5?
 - a. **The priest that they are now turning too our inferior and of no use...because...**
 - b. **Christ is better than the Aaronic priests.**
2. Look again with me at...5:11-14, the author gives a rebuke and yet another warning. What is it and what does this say to us today?
 - a. **Basically rebukes them for being lazy in their faith. Declaring to them what their laziness will net...weakness in their actions to the possibility of apostasy...showing that they never were in the faith at all.**
 - b. **It is hard for them to understand what he is saying because they have been dulled in their hearing (understanding and thinking) because of the influences outside and inside the Church that are seeking to lead them astray...and away from their earlier confession... and what is worse they are doing this to themselves... *"you have become dull of hearing."*= allowed the influences of the world...and the established ceremonialism of Judaism to re-shape their thinking rather than the Word of God which they professed that they believed.**
 - (1)**We need to be mindful of this as well in our day and age...we are too easily influenced by voices inside and outside the church who are either seeking to lead us astray...or are simply ignorant to the truths of Scripture. See II Peter 3: 15-18.**
 - ***"dull of hearing"*=spiritually lazy, at best...and that iis all that he seems to be accusing them of here right now...but the text allows us to take it further...**
 - **either is that we are so influenced by others that we can't hear the truth...**
 - **or we won't hear the truth.**
 - **What they had been doing was what we see people in the Church doing today. Thinking they must work their way into heaven by winning God's favor either by our own understanding or we must do what the established Church tells us to do to win God's favor...a combination of tradition and God's word may get us in...the old Galatian controversy that won't go away. Meaning that "in our own minds" we get to choose/determine our status of salvation...we will set the conditions...which in fact stymies true faith at best or is an indicator of no-faith at worst.**
 - **This makes the preaching of the truth word difficult and the blessing that comes from "hearing" the word of God almost impossible...**
 - (2)**We all too often set our hearts against the Word simply because we do not like what it tells us.**

- c. **They should have progressed to easily teaching this to others, but instead they still need someone to teach them. The author expects that by this time that they would not be so easily influenced and swayed by falsehood...that they would not be in need of the basics...the milk.**
 - (1) We need to be mindful of this as well. We NEED to be understanding of God's Word...discerning the world based on His standard... for it is a sign of our salvation in this life.**
 - (2) We need to be growing in our faith and beginning to teach it to others...in fact...it is in teaching it to others that we confirm that we actually know these truths....and a side benefit...which really isn't a side benefit at all- we learn more about God and ourselves when we teach it to others...**
 - (3) The author makes it clear that it is sin and should be considered a shameful thing for us to be happy with status quo and not seeking to learn more of our faith.**
 - (4) See Proverbs 2 for verification of what is received when we do as stated.**

C. Chapter 6

1. Chapter 6 opens with these words, *"Therefore (that is based on what I just said), let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity..."*
 - a. What would be his reason(s) for including himself in this... *"let us leave..."*?
 - (1) It is a common teaching tool.**
 - (2) He relates to his people and lets them know he is here to lead them.**
 - (3) He at the same time is communicating that he recognizes his own weaknesses. He may be more mature than they are at this moment, but he is still a sinner...susceptible to similar temptations and influences as they are...so "let us leave".**
 - b. What do you suppose he means by *"the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity..."*?
 - (1) We are not to be happy with the status quo...we are not to be happy with not dealing with the truths of Scripture.**
 - (2) We are to diligently work at knowing God and His Word.**
 - (3) We are to diligently work at teaching these truths to other for their edification and our growth in the Lord.**
2. Next he moves on to a list of items that are to be settled in the life of the Christian. What is he saying with these? (See verses 1b-2.)
 - a. ***"...not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God..."***-in other words they were being told that they don't have to start again the sacrifices to complete their faith.
 - (1) A modern equivalent would be coming forward every Sunday confessing and re-committing to NOT commit the same sin.**
 - (2) Seeking to have a "do-over" re-establishing our faith every week...**

- (3) We are not to forget that salvation in Christ is “one and done”- “once for all time”...that requires us to build on that faith...on the truth of Christ’s Cross work. By forgetting this we negate Christ’s actions on our behalf...not trusting that His work was sufficient to forgive.**
- **This doesn’t mean that there is no need to seek repentance on a regular basis...to keep our daily sins few and to keep ourselves as prepared and we can to worship God by working out our salvation.**
 - **In fact, it actually frees us up to be able to keep moving forward in our growth in the LORD.**
- b. “...and of instruction about washings...” – Christian baptism is a one time event...**
- (1) For these people it probably dealt with the teaching concerning constant ceremonial washings related to Temple worship.**
- (2) There is no need for future baptisms as many faith systems require to be members of their church because**
- **of their unwillingness to recognize Christian baptisms from other Churches**
 - **because of their misguided belief that salvation only comes by their individual church.**
- c. “...laying on of hands...”- there is no “magic in the hands of men, in that, it doesn’t guarantee a blessing. Today we look too often to the power of men...or to a particular fellowship as if it was the one true church...there is only One True Church...but its name is not Christ Presbyterian Church.**
- d. “..the resurrection of the dead...”- we need to be careful to understand WHAT IT IS that GOD HIMSELF says about this topic.**
- (1) Or once again we will be depending upon men to let us feel okay about ourselves...**
- (2) Or worse, we won’t know, hence we will always lack assurance at best and at worst will not care... revealing where our heart actually is concerning salvation.**
- e. “...eternal judgment.”- Once again these are not subjects best left up to what others may or may not tell us...we must have these things settled...as in the form of convictions! Preferences of one or another are not good enough...preferences would not stand up in a court of law...convictions, however, will...we must stand on our convictions based in God’s word not what we would “like” to be true.**

Lessons from Hebrews
January 6, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. When we began this study I said there were 3 basic themes to this book...a book that many put right up there with Romans as far as difficulty to understand. What did I say were the 3 basic themes?
 - d. **"Jesus is better than..."**
 - (4) **The angels**
 - (5) **Moses**
 - (6) **Aaron**
 - (7) **The Levitical system of the priesthood**
 - e. **And that "He provides a better..."**
 - (4) **A better rest**
 - (5) **A better covenant...as in a fulfilled one**
 - (6) **A better assurance.**
 - f. **We must...heed the Word of God- Heb. 1:1, 2:1, 4:12-13...**
2. What did we learn about the person of Christ from Hebrews 1:1-4 and why is this image of Christ still foundational for us?
3. The rest of the chapter and parts of chapter 2 deal with God proving from His Word the superiority of His Son over the angels so that they will not continue to be influenced by the lies of the times in which they live.
4. What is the author warning us of in chapter 2? Why?
 - d. **He warns us about ourselves- Lest we drift away. So this tells us a truth about ourselves...that we have a tendency to drift from the truth! It usually happens slowly. Not to the loss of a believers salvation but to grave consequence and lack of maturity.**
 - e. **Warns us about God, as well...God will hold people accountable for what He says....the warning is concerning rejecting His Son and His Word. As professing believers; considering the covenant blessings and curses: If we reject the gospel message given under the NT, we are liable to greater cursing than the people of God who lived during OT times...who didn't have a fulfilled gospel.**
 - f. **Given the tenor throughout the letter the author seems to be more concerned with complacent believers rather than those who will out an out reject the Word...though these are certainly in mind as well.**
 - (4) **Just as an aside: We don't correct apathy and indifference with entertainment and celebrity.**
 - (5) **Spurgeon said of his generation, "God does not call us to amuse the goats. He calls us to feed the sheep."**
 - (6) **Seeking to simplify an already simple gospel only ends up trivializing the gospel in the end and turns people away because of the lack of sustainable food.**
5. What are the themes of chapter 3?
 - a. **Christ is superior to Moses.**
 - b. **Heed the Word of God.**

- c. **Encourage one another in the Word.**
6. What is the warning of chapter 4 and why is it still important to us today?
 - e. **Since the promise of entering into His rest is before us we should live accordingly.**
 - f. **We should fear the LORD...we should walk in His ways...we should believe rather than not believe. This is important... *"lest any of us should **seem**" to have failed to reach it..."***
 - (3) **When we blow our witness the world can never see the advantage of a life of faith...**
 - (4) **In fact they will conclude that we never were of the faith...which will cause many more to stumble.**
 - g. Hebrews 4:12-13 are interesting for our faith. Let's look at them again for a minute. ***"Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."*** What is he communicating here? How should this statement motivate us to live as He prescribes?
 7. What was the point of at least the first 10 verses of chapter 5?
 - c. **The priest that they are now turning too our inferior and of no use...because...**
 - d. **Christ is better than the Aaronic priests.**
 8. The rest of chapter 5 is a rebuke and a warning. What is the point of all of these warnings to us His people?
 - a. **Because we need to be reminded by God Himself that we are weak and are in constant need of working out our salvation with fear and trembling...see Proverbs 4:26.**
 - b. **This reminds us as well that we need to be reminding each other...holding each other accountable to be paying attention to God's Word and living by God's Word...that is what family does...God our father does it...and then as His sons and daughters are to do it for one another.**
 9. Re-read Hebrews 6:1-20
 - a. What did we say were some of the problems of miss-interpreting the author's intent?
 - (1) **The author is God through this writer...so to question the authors intent is to question God's intent.**
 - (2) **When we are not willing to work to understand the harder things in scripture we are not wanting to grow beyond where we are.**
 - b. Now as we considered this chapter for these 3 weeks...how would you explain it to those who are struggling to understand it?
 - (1) **We must remember that there is much more to encourage us here in this text than there is to warn us.**
 - (2) **We must first and foremost realize that He is talking to His own...believers! And as His own we cannot lose our salvation...ever.**

- (3) For His children it is a warning against becoming “dull of mind” and falling under the influence of the world.**
- (4) Instead, let us keep our list of sins short as we repent and then live in the blessing He has not only promised, confirmed by an oath, but has also followed through by providing His Son as our propitiation for sin!**
- (5) For those who aren't His children let them hear Jesus and not us...Matt. 7:21-23.**

10. Read chapter 7.

- a. What is the point(s) of this chapter based on everything we have seen up to this point? **Christ is “better than” any and all of the OT priests.**
- b. What stands out to you?
 - (1) Melchizedek is a real Historical figure- Gen. 14:18-20; Psalm 110:4.
 - **Melchizedek like Christ was a king...King of Salem...king of Peace.**
 - **Melchizedek literally means king of righteousness which is what the author of Hebrews calls Christ in vs. 2. (Isaiah 9:6,11:5)**
 - **He like Christ was a priest**
 - **No OT Priest could be both priest and king.**
 - (2) **“For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest...” Jesus was the only “perfect” sacrifice...and this allowed Him to offer Himself in our place. (vs. 26-28)...so His priesthood is perfect as well...not needing to sacrifice for Himself.**
 - (3) A word from an “old guy”- Thomas Brooks-
 - ***“He ever lives to make intercession for us,’ (Heb. 7:25). The verb translated ‘intercession’, is a compound, and signifies ‘to call upon one’. It is a judicial word, and imports a calling upon a judge to be heard in this or that, against another or for another; so here Christ makes intercession for them, (Acts 25:24; Romans 11:2, and 8:34). The metaphor is taken from attorneys or advocates who appear for men in courts of justice; from counselors, who plead their client’s cause, answer the adversary, supplicate the judge, and procure sentence to pass on their client’s side. This act of making intercession may also be taken from kings’ favorites, who are much in the king’s presence, and ever ready to make request for their friends. But remember, though this be thus attributed to Christ, yet we may not think that in heaven Christ prostrates himself before the Father, or makes actual prayers; that was a part of his humiliation which He did in the days of his flesh. But it implies a presenting of Himself a sacrifice, a surety, and one who has made satisfaction for all our sins.”***

- **In other words...He stands before God the Father as an equal and as One who has accomplished His mission to glorify His Father and to forgive God's elect children our sins...He stands before the Father with authority and power to seek God's continual presence since God is eternally pleased with His Son...This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased...eternally!**
- (4) Tithing...7:4-10
- What does this communicate to us about tithing? **Not much in the broader context of things.**
 - Is this section about tithing? If not entirely, what is the main point of this discussion about tithing? **Not to offer anything up...your treasures to anyone but the LORD.**

Lessons from Hebrews
January 6, 2019

C. Prayer

D. Review

11. When we began this study I said there were 3 basic themes to this book...a book that many put right up there with Romans as far as difficulty to understand. What did I say were the 3 basic themes?
 - g. **"Jesus is better than..."**
 - (8) The angels
 - (9) Moses
 - (10) Aaron
 - (11) The Levitical system of the priesthood
 - h. **And that "He provides a better..."**
 - (7) A better rest
 - (8) A better covenant...as in a fulfilled one
 - (9) A better assurance.
 - i. **We must...heed the Word of God- Heb. 1:1, 2:1, 4:12-13...**
12. What did we learn about the person of Christ from Hebrews 1:1-4 and why is this image of Christ still foundational for us?
13. The rest of the chapter and parts of chapter 2 deal with God proving from His Word the superiority of His Son over the angels so that they will not continue to be influenced by the lies of the times in which they live.
14. What is the author warning us of in chapter 2? Why?
 - g. **He warns us about ourselves- Lest we drift away. So this tells us a truth about ourselves...that we have a tendency to drift from the truth! It usually happens slowly. Not to the loss of a believers salvation but to grave consequence and lack of maturity.**
 - h. **Warns us about God, as well...God will hold people accountable for what He says....the warning is concerning rejecting His Son and His Word. As professing believers; considering the covenant blessings and curses: If we reject the gospel message given under the NT, we are liable to greater cursing than the people of God who lived during OT times...who didn't have a fulfilled gospel.**
 - i. **Given the tenor throughout the letter the author seems to be more concerned with complacent believers rather than those who will out and out reject the Word...though these are certainly in mind as well.**
 - (7) Just as an aside: We don't correct apathy and indifference with entertainment and celebrity.
 - (8) Spurgeon said of his generation, "God does not call us to amuse the goats. He calls us to feed the sheep."
 - (9) Seeking to simplify an already simple gospel only ends up trivializing the gospel in the end and turns people away because of the lack of sustainable food.
15. What are the themes of chapter 3?
 - d. **Christ is superior to Moses.**
 - e. **Heed the Word of God.**

- f. Encourage one another in the Word.**
16. What is the warning of chapter 4 and why is it still important to us today?
- h. Since the promise of entering into His rest is before us we should live accordingly.**
 - i. We should fear the LORD...we should walk in His ways...we should believe rather than not believe. This is important... *"lest any of us should 'seem' to have failed to reach it..."***
(5) When we blow our witness the world can never see the advantage of a life of faith...
(6) In fact they will conclude that we never were of the faith...which will cause many more to stumble.
 - j. Hebrews 4:12-13 are interesting for our faith. Let's look at them again for a minute. *"Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."* What is he communicating here? How should this statement motivate us to live as He prescribes?**
17. What was the point of at least the first 10 verses of chapter 5?
- e. The priest that they are now turning too our inferior and of no use...because...**
 - f. Christ is better than the Aaronic priests.**
18. The rest of chapter 5 is a rebuke and a warning. What is the point of all of these warnings to us His people?
- c. Because we need to be reminded by God Himself that we are weak and are in constant need of working out our salvation with fear and trembling...see Proverbs 4:26.**
 - d. This reminds us as well that we need to be reminding each other...holding each other accountable to be paying attention to God's Word and living by God's Word...that is what family does...God our father does it...and then as His sons and daughters are to do it for one another.**
19. Re-read Hebrews 6:1-20
- c. What did we say were some of the problems of miss-interpreting the author's intent?**
(3) The author is God through this writer...so to question the authors intent is to question God's intent.
(4) When we are not willing to work to understand the harder things in scripture we are not wanting to grow beyond where we are.
 - d. Now as we considered this chapter for these 3 weeks...how would you explain it to those who are struggling to understand it?**
(6) We must remember that there is much more to encourage us here in this text than there is to warn us.
(7) We must first and foremost realize that He is talking to His own...believers! And as His own we cannot lose our salvation...ever.

- (8) For His children it is a warning against becoming “dull of mind” and falling under the influence of the world.**
- (9) Instead, let us keep our list of sins short as we repent and then live in the blessing He has not only promised, confirmed by an oath, but has also followed through by providing His Son as our propitiation for sin!**
- (10) For those who aren’t His children let them hear Jesus and not us...Matt. 7:21-23.**

20. Read chapter 7.

- c. What is the point(s) of this chapter based on everything we have seen up to this point? **Christ is “better than” any and all of the OT priests.**
- d. What stands out to you?
 - (5) Melchizedek is a real Historical figure- Gen. 14:18-20; Psalm 110:4.
 - **Melchizedek like Christ was a king...King of Salem...king of Peace.**
 - **Melchizedek literally means king of righteousness which is what the author of Hebrews calls Christ in vs. 2. (Isaiah 9:6,11:5)**
 - **He like Christ was a priest**
 - **No OT Priest could be both priest and king.**
 - (6) ***“For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest...” Jesus was the only “perfect” sacrifice...and this allowed Him to offer Himself in our place. (vs. 26-28)...so His priesthood is perfect as well...not needing to sacrifice for Himself.***
 - (7) A word from an “old guy”- Thomas Brooks-
 - ***“He ever lives to make intercession for us,’ (Heb. 7:25). The verb translated ‘intercession’, is a compound, and signifies ‘to call upon one’. It is a judicial word, and imports a calling upon a judge to be heard in this or that, against another or for another; so here Christ makes intercession for them, (Acts 25:24; Romans 11:2, and 8:34). The metaphor is taken from attorneys or advocates who appear for men in courts of justice; from counselors, who plead their client’s cause, answer the adversary, supplicate the judge, and procure sentence to pass on their client’s side. This act of making intercession may also be taken from kings’ favorites, who are much in the king’s presence, and ever ready to make request for their friends. But remember, though this be thus attributed to Christ, yet we may not think that in heaven Christ prostrates himself before the Father, or makes actual prayers; that was a part of his humiliation which He did in the days of his flesh. But it implies a presenting of Himself a sacrifice, a surety, and one who has made satisfaction for all our sins.”***

- **In other words...He stands before God the Father as an equal and as One who has accomplished His mission to glorify His Father and to forgive God's elect children our sins...He stands before the Father with authority and power to seek God's continual presence since God is eternally pleased with His Son...This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased...eternally!**

(8) Tithing...7:4-10

- What does this communicate to us about tithing? **Not much in the broader context of things.**
- Is this section about tithing? If not entirely, what is the main point of this discussion about tithing? **Not to offer anything up...your treasures to anyone but the LORD.**

Lessons from Hebrews
January 13, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review- Re-Read chapter 7.

1. What would you say is the point(s) of this chapter based on everything we have seen up to this point? **Christ is “better than” any and all of the OT priests.**
2. What stands out to you in this chapter? (Below are the things that stood out to me.)
 - a. Melchizedek is a real Historical figure- Gen. 14:18-20; Psalm 110:4.
(1) Melchizedek like Christ was a king...King of Salem...king of Peace.
(2) Melchizedek literally means king of righteousness which is what the author of Hebrews calls Christ in vs. 2. (Isaiah 9:6,11:5)
(3) He like Christ was a priest
(4) No OT Levitical Priest could be both priest and king.
 - b. Tithing...7:4-10
 - What does this communicate to us about tithing? **Not much really in the broadness of the text.**
 - Is this section about tithing? If not entirely, what is the main point of this discussion about tithing? **Not to offer anything up... “your treasures” to anyone... but the LORD.**
 - c. *“A better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.”*- Vs. 19 but also vs. 25.
 - (1) What does this mean for us?
 - (2) How does one draw near to God? See John 6:37, 44
 - d. How did Thomas Brooks help us to understand the phrase in verse 25, *“...since He always lives to make intercession for them.”*
(1) The verb translated ‘intercession’, is a compound, and signifies ‘to call upon one’. It is a judicial word, and imports a calling upon a judge to be heard in this or that, against another or for another; so here Christ makes intercession for them, (Acts 25:24; Romans 11:2, and 8:34). The metaphor is taken from attorneys or advocates who appear for men in courts of justice; from counselors, who plead their client’s cause, answer the adversary, supplicate the judge, and procure sentence to pass on their client’s side. This act of making intercession may also be taken from kings’ favorites, who are much in the king’s presence, and ever ready to make request for their friends. But remember, though this be thus attributed to Christ, yet we may not think that in heaven Christ prostrates himself before the Father, or makes actual prayers; that was a part of his humiliation which He did in the days of his flesh. But it implies a presenting of Himself a sacrifice, a surety, and one who has made satisfaction for all our sins.”

(2) In other words...Christ stands before God the Father as an equal and as One who has accomplished His mission to glorify His Father and to forgive God's elect children our sins...He stands before the Father with authority and power to seek God's continual presence since God is eternally pleased with His Son...This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased...eternally!

e. Next for me- *"For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest..."* - vs. 26 **Jesus was the only "perfect" sacrifice...and this allowed Him to offer Himself in our place. (vs. 26-28)...so His priesthood is perfect as well...not needing to sacrifice for Himself.**

f. What would you say are some of the differences highlighted between the Levitical priesthood and Christ's Priesthood?

(1) Levitical priesthood CAN NOT:

- **Bring anything to perfection...**
- **Justify the guilty...for they themselves were guilty...and must make daily sacrifices for their own sins.**
- **Sanctify men**
- **Cleanse men's consciences enabling people to worship truly**
- **All they could do was lead God's people to God...God had to do the work.**
- **Their work was never done so they had to stand continuously...**
- **They die before the work was completed...**

(2) Christ's priesthood:

- **Bring about the perfection that had been promised**
- **Be a better hope...for the "hope" that the people had in their regular sacrifices was fleeting as in the moment after they worshiped...and by this hope we are drawn to the Father.**
- **Bring certain and sure pardon and salvation...justification completely to all who are His.**
- **God the Father has sworn that the Priesthood is immutable, most excellent, efficacious and eternal...**
- **Guarantor of a better covenant...a fulfilled covenant...the Old Covenant pointed to this ...now in Christ all has been fulfilled.**
- **Made one Sacrifice for all time by offering Himself up as the last and best sacrifice.**
- **Jesus finished His work on earth and He sits at the right hand of His Majesty on High.**

g. In conclusion and for extra points: Why does Jesus being a priest eternally matter?

C. Hebrews 8

1. Hebrews 8:1-7

a. Chapter 8 begins with an interesting statement in verses 1-2. What is the point?

(1) Repetition aids learning.

(2) Summary enables his readers to put the whole point into a small memorable form. This brief pause knows that what he is saying has

been difficult...so like a good teacher he seeks to clarify in a summary so that they can understand.

(3) A reminder that Christ is “better than” the priests of old and the priests of their current day....look at where He is...

- ***“We have such a high priest...”*** This is real and He is present with His people through the Holy Spirit. We have a high priest like no other people or time!
- ***“...one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven...”*** With His high priestly work finished... “It is Finished”...He could sit down and rule accordingly...Interesting fun facts:
 - There were no chairs in the tabernacle.
 - The priests never sat down during their work day...and then they would pick it up tomorrow...for their work was never done...sacrifices were never enough...See Heb. 10:4
- ***“He is a minister in the holy places...”***
 - He may be sitting...but He is ruling
 - Like “a minister”/ priest he ministers before God...interceding on our behalf...representing us actively...
 - He is not “waiting” for the 1000 year reign propoorted by some to be about His business...he is reigning/ministering now!
- ***“...in the true tent that was set up by God.”***...His heaven...not set up by human hands...not defiled by human sin... His heavenly temple that we see at different times and different places like Isaiah 6; Rev. 1.

Lessons from Hebrews
January 20, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. According to Chapter 7, why does Jesus being a priest eternally matter to us today?
2. Chapter 8 begins with an interesting statement in verses 1-2. What is the point?
 - a. **Jesus, our Great High Priest, is reigning...now!**
 - b. **Repetition aids learning.**
 - c. **Summary enables his readers to put the whole point into a small memorable form. This brief pause knows that what he is saying has been difficult...so like a good teacher he seeks to clarify in a summary so that they can understand.**
 - d. **A reminder that Christ is "better than" the priests of old and the priests of their current day....look at where He is...**
 - e. ***"We have such a high priest..."*- This is real and He is present with His people through the Holy Spirit. We have a high priest like no other people or time!**
 - f. ***"...one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven..."*. With His earthly high priestly work finished... *"It is Finished"*...He could sit down and rule accordingly...Interesting fun facts:
(1) There were no chairs in the tabernacle.
(2) The priests never sat down during their work day...and then they would pick it up tomorrow...for their work was never done...sacrifices were never enough...See Heb. 10:4**
 - g. ***"He is a minister in the holy places..."*
(1) He may be sitting...but He is active
(2) Like "a minister"/ priest He ministers before God...interceding on our behalf...representing us actively...
(3) He is not "waiting" for the 1000 year reign purported by some to be about His business...He is reigning/ministering now!**
 - h. ***"...in the true tent that was set up by God..."*...His heaven...not set up by human hands...not defiled by human sin... His heavenly temple that we see at different times and different places like Isaiah 6; Rev. 1.**

C. Chapter 8

1. What is he telling them about Christ and His work in verses 3-5?
 - a. **Jesus did what no other priest could do and that was to offer Himself as the best and final sacrifice.**
 - (1)* The text says... *"Every High priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices , thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer."***
 - (2)* The prior chapter taught us that Jesus was the only "perfect" sacrifice...that allowed Him to sacrifice Himself in our place... Heb. 7:26-28**

- (3) Thus animal sacrifices are once again confirmed to only be a shadow...and Christ is the reality.**
- b. See Hebrew 9:24-Jesus did what no other priest could do: Enter heaven itself by His own volition.**
 - c. The earthly tent was merely “... a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things...”**
- 2. Understanding Covenants briefly:**
- a. A covenant is like a contract or treaty between 2 parties**
 - b. Covenants have terms and conditions, blessings and curses, and covenant signs.**
 - c. Ever since the beginning God has chosen to work through covenants beginning with the Covenant of Works... God says, “Do this and Live!” to the Covenant of Redemption/Grace... God says, “I will do this so that you may live.”**
 - d. Covenant of Grace...this is the covenant that has been in use by God since the Fall.**
 - (1)All God’s people are saved the same way: by faith in Jesus.**
 - (2)OT saints looked forward in faith to the Redeemer/ Messiah**
 - (3)Various stages of this covenant:**
 - **Abrahamic Covenant ... a land, a people, circumcision**
 - **Mosaic Administration... Old Covenant based on the Law not leading to salvation but to obedience towards God...defining God’s people from the other nations...these promises were only partially fulfilled at different times**
 - **New Covenant talked about from the beginning...Gen. 3:15, re-affirmed in Jeremiah...fulfilled in Christ Jesus.**
 - (4)God does not reveal His plans all at once, but in stages.**
 - (5)The Covenant of Works was completely fulfilled in Christ...it was His work alone that satisfied the demands of the Law.**
 - (6)Even the Covenant with Abraham...the Covenant of Grace/Redemption wasn’t complete until Christ came fulfilling His role**
 - **The older testament focused on the Law...which was imperfect...imperfect in that it cannot lead a person or secure for a person salvation.... It was “perfect” in that it is God’s Word...but it had a purpose in the OT as it does in the NT.**
 - **The newer testament focuses on Christ’s finished work which guarantees God grace upon all His elect...it is perfect in that it “secured” salvation for God’s elect children which the Law could not.**

Lessons from Hebrews
January 27, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

3. What would you say are the main points of Chapter 8 verses 1-5?

- a. **He is reigning now.**
- b. **Jesus did what no other priest could do:**
 - (1) **He offered Himself as the last and perfect sacrifice.**
 - (2) **He alone could enter heaven on His own volition**
- c. **All of the OT sacrificial system including the Temple was simply a copy, shadow...think type of what was to come.**

4. Why is a correct understanding of Covenants so crucial to our theology today?

C. Chapter 8 continued...

1. What is the author communicating in verse 6-7, that he began speaking to in chapter 7?

- a. **That Christ actually mediates a better covenant ...a fulfilled covenant.**
- b. **If the first one would have been faultless/ perfect there wouldn't have been a need for the 2nd. In other words... if salvation could have been achieved through the law then Christ would not have been necessary...**

2. Now look at verses 8-12. How does this long section from Jeremiah 31:31-34 support all that he has said so far.

- a. **To show that the Old Covenant was always looking forward to the New Covenant.**
- b. **Also, making it clear that the Old Covenant was not "good" enough to save...otherwise he wouldn't be looking forward to a New Covenant.**
- c. **Also, he stresses that the 2 covenants are different in that the people broke the Old Covenant...so it was incomplete and so must be finished or completed in Christ.**
- d. **There is an obvious contrast in vs. 9-10...They did not...I will...they broke the covenant...God is faithful to His covenant.**
- e. **One last thing, Jeremiah stresses that there will be unprecedented knowledge of the LORD by the people of God as well as actual complete and certain forgiveness in and through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.**

3. Look at verse 13 closely- What is he saying? And why is this statement so important, especially at this present time?

4. Mostly because of the mixed messages in the church today people lack assurance that they are saved or they wonder if Christ's work is sufficient to save them. How do these passages provide reassurance? Or are you even more confused than before?

5. How does the final, completed work of Christ enable us to obey Him and serve Him more freely?

Lessons from Hebrews
February 10, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Remind

1. When we began this study I said there were 3 basic themes to this book...a book that many put right up there with Romans as far as difficulty to understand. What did I say were the 3 basic themes?
 - a. **"Jesus is better than..."**
 - (1) **The angels**
 - (2) **Moses**
 - (3) **Aaron**
 - (4) **The Levitical system of the priesthood**
 - b. **And that "He provides a better..."**
 - (1) **A better rest**
 - (2) **A better covenant...as in a fulfilled one**
 - (3) **A better assurance.**
 - c. **We must...heed the Word of God- Heb. 1:1, 2:1, 4:12-13...**
2. What are some of the reasons that we have seen in the first 8 chapters that the author of Hebrews is so urgent in his approach? **Significant problems in the faith community:**
 - a. **Being influenced and convinced to look back to the old ceremonial system for a complete salvation...either all the way back to Judaism or some kind of syncretistic system like we see in the letter to the Galatians.**
 - b. **Falling into complete false doctrine like the doctrines of the Essene...weakening their confession and profession at best...revealing their true unsaved hearts at worst.**

C. Chapter 9:1-8

1. What are some of the high points that vss. 1-5 are emphasizing?
 - a. **Old Covenant Worship focused on an earthly place.**
 - (1) **"of this world"= temporary**
 - (2) **This Place was never meant to be permanent...just like the Temple was never meant to be permanent.**
 - b. **The tabernacle/tent that Moses built was mobile...only after the Israelites settled Jerusalem was a permanent Temple built.**
 - c. **The tabernacle/tent had 2 chambers:**
 - (1) **Outer Chamber= The Holy Place**
 - **7 Branched Golden Lampstands that the priests kept lit always.**
 - **12 loaves of the Bread of Presence, baked fresh weekly, eaten by the priests only along with wine.**
 - (2) **Inner Chamber= Most Holy Place- Holy of Holies**
 - **Attended only by the High Priest, once a year.**
 - **Blocked by a curtain, it represented the "place" where God was.**
 - **The altar of Incense represented the prayers of God's people before the throne...that are offered up by the High priest on behalf of the people. On the altar were bowls of incense similar to the ones the 24 elders carry before the throne in Revelation 4.**

- **When available the Ark of the Covenant was also there: containing manna, Aaron's budded rod and the 2 tablets of the Law.**
 - **Above the Ark...that is on the top cover of the Ark were the golden cherubim**
 - **These represented the true cherubim of glory... overshadowing/watching over the mercy seat.**
 - **The "mercy seat"...the Hebrew Word is the word "propitiary"= the place of propitiation ...propitiation= appeasement of God and His Law...that is; God's attitude toward us has changed...once we were children of wrath...now we are children of God through the propitiation of Christ. God's law has been appeased and we are brought into fellowship with God again through Christ's work alone. In the OT the sacrifice was to be continual since the people needed to be often propitiated for because of their ongoing sin... continual, that is, until Christ when he reconciled us to God.**
 - **Think about this a minute...Look at Heb. 4:16 *"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace (the mercy seat), that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* Does this passage change the way you think about the unprecedented access Christians have to God?**
 - d. **Under the Old Covenant access to God by the people was physically restricted.**
 - (1) **Worship of Yahweh was restricted in a formal sense to one place alone.**
 - (2) **Only the priest could serve God in the Outer chamber and only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies.**
 - (3) **The journey to the Temple was filled with restrictions. Cleansings...approvals...correct animals for sacrifice...to name a few.**
 - e. **How does what we see here stand in contrast to the believers access to God today?**
 - (1) **The New Covenant in Christ is superior.**
 - (2) **Being in Christ and His Spirit indwelling us reveals just how close God is to His people today so that we can actually experience His closeness daily.**
 - f. **What does confidence look like as we come into God's presence? Our sins have been forgiven once and for all time...our position in Christ has been assured.**
2. **What is being emphasized in verses 6-8?**
- a. **OC worship focused on the work of the earthly priest on behalf of the people and themselves.**
 - b. **Vs. 6- Priest entered regularly into the Out Chamber.**
 - (1) **God appointed the descendants of Levi...Exodus 32: 25-29...to serve the Lord in the tabernacle...and some Levites specifically those that include Aaron and his seed become the priests.**
 - (2) **They perform their duties regularly= "repeatedly" in Greek. Their work was never done and it was the same thing every day.**

- c. **Vs. 7- The High Priest enters the Holy of Holies once a year only.**
- (1) **Lev. 16:2- *"Tell your brother Aaron that he may not come whenever he wants into the holy place behind the veil in front of the mercy seat on the ark or else he will die."* Soo...under the Old Covenant even the Aaronic/earthly priests had limited access...to only one visit a year.**
 - (2) **Because the earthly High Priest was a sinner as well he must take blood with him which he offers for himself.**
 - (3) **And for the unintentional sins of the people...doing His duty before God first he must seek propitiation for himself...because he too is a sinner...then for the unintentional sins of the people as their advocate before the Father.**
 - (4) **Only the High priest could come into God's presence when He is allowed to come...beckoned to come...approved to come...and it would be this way as long as the Outer Chamber/ Court is still around.**
- d. **Vs. 8 deals further with this issue of symbolism:**
- (1) At the end of vs 8 we have these words: *"...which is symbolic for the present age."*
 - What is the point?
 - **All things that they see as forms of worship built by men will disappear.**
 - **They are simply symbolic for a time...that time...the time before the Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD.**
 - **See Zech. 3:8- *"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch."***
 - (2) What are some of the implications of this for our present time...these latter days?
 - **So many in the Church today believe along with the Jews that the Temple must be rebuilt...**
 - **For the Jew to usher in the Golden Age... for many Christians- to usher in the 1000 year reign of Christ.**
 - **The Word of God itself says there will be no Temple in the New Earth- Rev. 21:1-4**
 - **As he will go on to say in verse 9 and following that the old ways did nothing to save or remove actual guilt...so to reinstitute those old ways for any reason today would be a complete denial of the efficacy of Christ's saving work on the Cross.**

Lessons from Hebrews
February 17, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review- Hebrews 9:1-8

1. What would you say is being communicated in chapter 9:1-8? **It is all about telling the people that all of the OT worship forms were simply temporary and looking forward to their fulfillment in Christ...a fulfillment that was prophesied as well.**
2. Vs. 8 deals further with this issue of symbolism further:
 - a. At the end of vs 8 we have these words: *"...which is symbolic for the present age."* What is the point?
 - (1) **There is a transition time...and once the Temple is gone the transition is over...**
 - (2) **All things that they see as forms of worship built by men will disappear.**
 - (3) **They are simply symbolic for a time...that time...the time before the Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD.**
 - (4) **See Zech. 3:8- *"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch."***
 - **Clearly Joshua and the priest that sit before him are important for a time.**
 - **But...they are simply a sign...that is the whole office is a sign that will be fulfilled in the Branch- the Messiah...who is Christ the LORD...who is the last and best Prophet, Priest and King.**
3. What are some of the implications of this for our present time...these latter days?
 - (1) **So many in the Church today believe along with the Jews that the Temple must be rebuilt...**
 - (2) **For the Jew to usher in the Golden Age... for many Christians- to usher in the 1000 year reign of Christ.**
 - (3) **The Word of God itself says there will be no Temple in the New Earth- Rev. 21:1-4**
 - (4) **As he will go on to say in verse 9 and following that the old ways did nothing to save or remove actual guilt...so to reinstitute those old ways for any reason today would be a complete denial of the efficacy of Christ's saving work on the Cross.**
4. Why is it so important for him to continue to maintain this point of the temporariness of the OT ceremonies?
 - a. **Because it is so easy for us to get tired of being obedient.**
 - b. **Because we forget our calling.**
 - c. **Because we need to continually look to Jesus as the founder, perfecter, and sustainer of our faith...we need to rest in Him alone for all things at all times.**

C. Hebrews 9:9-28

3. What is he telling them and us in verses 9-10?

a. Old Covenant worship focused a lot on earthly sacrifices that were symbolic pointing forward as a type or symbol to a greater fulfilling reality.

(1) Sacrifices and gifts were offered that cannot assure the conscience of the worshipper...they never knew for sure ...they knew at that moment what they brought as their sacrifice and themselves were acceptable, but beyond that they needed to keep bringing sacrifices to be able to walk in the way of the LORD...to fear the Lord as they should...to be obedient to Him and His Word.

(2) We are told basically that these food, drink and various washings were regulations for the body...and as has been said many times by Christ and the Apostles those ceremonial laws have been abrogated because:

- They are imperfect/worldly.**
- Always were considered temporary.**
- They were imposed to train in obedience looking forward to the promise that would come on the Day of the Messiah's 1st coming, the time of reformation, after which they would no longer be necessary.**

Lessons from Hebrews
February 24, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

5. Why is it so important for the author of Hebrews to continue to maintain this point of the temporariness of the OT ceremonies for them?
 - d. They were walking back into “Egypt”...being pressured to revert back and incorporate temple worship with their profession.**
 - e. Adding anything to their confession...adding anything to the gospel only negates the Gospels impact in their lives and the lives of those around them.**
 - f. Reminding them what their forefathers knew...these things were looking forward to their completion...NOT their continuation!**
6. Why is this reminder still important for us today?
 - a. Reminding us what our forefathers knew...these things were looking forward to their completion...NOT their continuation!**
 - b. Because it is so easy for us to get tired of being obedient.**
 - c. Because we forget our calling.**
 - d. Because we need to continually look to Jesus as the founder, perfecter, and sustainer of our faith...we need to rest in Him alone for all things at all times.**
 - e. Adding anything to our confession...adding anything to the gospel only negates the Gospels impact in our lives and the lives of those around us.**

C. Hebrews 9:9-28

4. Let's consider this again for a moment- What is he telling them and us in verses 9-10?
 - b. Old Covenant worship focused a lot on earthly sacrifices that were symbolic pointing forward as a type or symbol to a greater fulfilling reality.**
 - (3) Sacrifices and gifts were offered that cannot assure the conscience of the worshipper...they never knew for sure ...they knew at that moment what they brought as their sacrifice and themselves were acceptable, but beyond that they needed to keep bringing sacrifices to be able to walk in the way of the LORD...to fear the Lord as they should...to be obedient to Him and His Word.**
 - (4) We are told basically that these food, drink and various washings were regulations for the body...and as has been said many times by Christ and the Apostles those ceremonial laws have been abrogated because:**
 - They are imperfect/worldly.**
 - Always were considered temporary.**
 - They were imposed to train in obedience looking forward to the promise that would come on the Day of the Messiah's 1st coming, the time of reformation, after which they would no longer be necessary.**

- (5) They rested in the fact that the priests accepted their offering, which meant God accepted their obedience but that was for then, at that moment really...they knew they would have to do it again...and again...and again.**
- (6) That is the beauty of the once for all time sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 7:27) ...it needs no repetition...my sins...past, present, and future...have been dealt with in Christ's perfect sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice is not capable of being repeated...which tells us that we are in fact, forgiven...we can be assured of that for the sacrifice is done.**
- c. **He is constantly reminding them that the past is the past...it wasn't sufficient then so why would you want to go back...and besides it is obsolete in Christ since everything pointed forward to His fulfillment.**
- d. **In the OC there was a lot of symbolism...but in the NC there is minimal symbolism by comparison.**
- (1) Symbolism in OT worship was central so that the OT believer would understand that there was something yet to come greater than he was experiencing.**
- (2) But in NT the reality has already come...NT worship is filled with the Spirit and with Truth not ritual and symbolism...Christ has come...everything that was pointing forward has been fulfilled in Christ.**
- e. **Thinking a moment out loud concerning worship in today's church. What might these verses, 9-10, be seeking to tell us today about our worship?**
- (1) Our worship practices can't perfect us either. So, why worship?**
- **Because we are commanded to.**
 - **Because the Spirit makes it a desire of our heart.**
 - **Because we know that we were meant to worship/ bring glory to God the Father.**
- (2) Everything must point to and support the glory of the Godhead so that all will know beyond a shadow of a doubt who it is we worship and why we worship.**
5. **Why is Jesus a better High Priest according to verses 11-12?**
- a. **Vs. 11- Christ entered through a greater place than the Holy of Holies....He went from heaven into the real tabernacle...to the very presence of God...**
- (1) He sat down with the Majesty on High...into the real Holy of Holies...the real throne of grace...not an earthly symbol.**
- (2) No earthly priest did that except when his priesthood was over and he died.**
- (3) And...because Christ has entered through this way...all of us have complete and immediate access through the same way...**
- b. **Verse 12 says that He entered the "presence" not because of the blood of imperfect earthly sacrifices but by His own shed blood...His own righteousness.**
- (1) No earthly sacrifice would do...everything created by God had been tainted by the Fall...Christ the God Man was perfect...His righteousness was perfect...so He is the superior High Priest.**

(2) Christ by His sacrifice alone secured our eternal redemption...something that all the sacrifices of the OT combined could not do.

(3) I don't know where I got this statement but given all that we have talked about so far what would you say the author means by this statement?
"We have a far greater advantage under the gospel than they had under the law."

Lessons from Hebrews
March 3, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Chapter 9:12 speaks of Jesus “*securing an eternal redemption*” by His own blood. What ALL does this statement communicate and why is it so important to us as believes today?
2. I don’t know where I got this statement but given all that we have talked about so far what would you say the author means by this statement? “*We have a far greater advantage under the gospel than they had under the law.*”

C. Chapter 9 continued:

1. Now we come to vss. 15-22...what point is he making here? **Explaining the need for Christ to die for His Own.**
 - a. **I love the first few words to verse 15, “*Therefore He IS the mediator of the new covenant...*” It is like he is saying...believe what you want about the OLD Covenant...the one you want to go back to...with angels or the earthly priests mediating it...but that was then...this is NOW...Jesus IS the mediator of the New Covenant...end of discussion... while at the same time he still isn’t finished proving his point with these folks...because he doesn’t really want them to believe the “garbage” that they are currently believing.**
 - b. **Verses 15-17 tell us that a person has to die for a “will” to go into effect.**
 - (1) **Interesting that the term “will” is the same term for “covenant”. The author is drawing an analogy between the 2.**
 - (2) **Just as the inheritance of an earthly will comes only when a person dies, so the benefits of the new covenant come into effect when Jesus died.**
 - (3) **“...so that those who are called...God’s elect... may receive the promised inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them...” The English says, “...so that those who are called may receive the promised inheritance...” ...Just so we are clear doctrinally...this Greek word for “called” is actually the word for “...all those effectually called” ...Now what does that add to the word “called”?**
 - (4) **As believers...His elect...adopted through Christ Jesus ... we are viewed as who we...His heirs in Christ and the recipients of a great inheritance from the God head through the completed work of Christ. Something we need to get today.**
 - c. **Verses 18-22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.**
 - (1) **By contrast, all guilty men forfeit their inheritance...beginning at the Fall. Vs. 18**
 - (2) **The entire OT sacrificial system focused on the requirement of blood vs. 18-21.**
 - (3) **The blood of the OT sacrifice was sprinkled everywhere to remind them of the pervasiveness and the cost of sin.**

(4) Blood is still the focus today...Christ's blood.

- **At the Last Supper Jesus said, *"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* (Matthew 26:28)**
- **Moses said similar words...see Lev. 17:11 and then Hebrews 9:19-20.**
- **Note, if necessary on vs. 19- there is no direct reference to sprinkling blood on a particular book in the OT, but :**
 - **The tablets of the Law – God's Book- were in the Ark of the Covenant that got sprinkled once a year...**
 - **When the Pentateuch was finally written...they may have been consecrated with blood before they were used in worship.**
 - **Obviously, this was said...going with what has already been said... to emphasize that the Law wasn't sufficient to save.**
 - **And the people could not save themselves so they had to be sprinkled as well.**

(5) Vs. 22- Two foundational biblical principles are seen.

- **Our sin is a bigger deal than we think: the punishment for it is death... Gen. 2:17.**
- **God is more holy than we think: Every single sin ever committed, all of them, will be punished by God...either a person pays for their sin...or Christ pays for their sins. But God must punish sin!**
- **The gospel is only glorious news when both of these are true.**

2. What aspects of your "Inheritance" in Christ are you most looking forward to?
How are some of those blessings present in your life already?

Lessons from Hebrews
March 10, 2019

D. Prayer

E. Review of chapter 9:15-22

1. What is the overall basic point of Hebrews 9:15-22?
 - a. **FORGIVENESS IS A BLOODY AFFAIR!**
 - b. **Blood still must be shed for our redemption. It is still all about the blood.**
 - c. **Only Christ's blood would do...once and for all.**
2. What aspects of your "Inheritance" in Christ are you most looking forward to? How are some of those blessings present in your life already?
3. In what ways do you down play the seriousness of your sin? Down played the seriousness of God's holiness? How does this passage help in bringing this to light?

F. Chapter 9 23-28

3. Now what about verses 23-28? **Tells us of Christ's superiority in securing our eternal life.**
 - a. **Vss. 23-24.**
 - (1) **First we see that in the OT blood was only applied to earthly places.**
 - (2) **The priests sprinkled the blood of earthly animals onto the "...copies of heavenly things..." the items of worship in the tabernacle, particularly the Ark of the Covenant...presenting the blood to God in the place of His choice...symbolizing His presence.**
 - (3) **These were simply earthly vessels representing and looking forward to the real thing...these were all made with hands of men.**
 - (4) **But Jesus ...He applied His blood to the real heavenly places.**
 - (5) ***"Christ has entered...heaven itself, now to appear in the actual presence of God."***
 - **Christ did what no human could do...enter into God's full presence.**
 - **Into the throne room of Rev. 4.**
 - (6) **Christ is representing all His elect before the throne of God.**
 - **He is there "on our behalf" according to verse 24.**
 - **He is the Only One who could have done this completely.**
 - (7) **God accepted Christ's sacrifice and because of that He will always accept us who are in Christ.**
 - (8) **Interesting note to go along with our earlier discussion on the earthly Temple...knowing it was temporary...he did not choose to sacrifice himself there...but He chose the time and means of His own death.**
 - (9) **All the sacrifices in the Temple were continuously repeated...His was a onetime thing.**
 - b. **Vss. 25-28**
 - (1) **The OT High priest offered sacrifices repeatedly...over and over again...since he came... *"... with blood not his own."***

(2) But Jesus offered Himself Once for all...for His own and for all time.

- **We have seen this phrase, “...once for all”...before.**
- **Once for all time...primary meaning in the Greek**
- **Once for all His people... never to be repeated...one and done...sufficient and effectual... “His people”- vs. 28- “the many” not the few but definitely not all mankind...only those He has effectually called (vs. 15) to be His.**

(3) Vs. 28 from the Greek- “And, in the same way, the Christ, once for all time, having been offered to bear the sins of the many will appear a second time not to deal with sin but ‘to deal with...to complete’ the salvation of those who look to Him, who wait expectantly for Him.” This is a crucial passage as it confirms all the doctrine that has been taught up to this point. Put it in your own words and tell why the total belief of this statement is crucial to the believer.

4. How does the work of Christ displayed before us in chapter 9 help us change the way we obey God?
5. How might it empower your “good” works differently?

Lessons from Hebrews

March 17, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is the easy way to understand the phrase “once for all” that we have encountered in the last chapter?
 - a. **Once for all time...primary meaning in the Greek**
 - b. **Once for all His people... never to be repeated...one and done...sufficient and effectual... “His people”- vs. 28- “the many” not the few but definitely not all mankind...only those He has effectually called (vs. 15) to be His.**
2. Vs 28 says, *from the Greek- “And, in the same way, the Christ, once for all time, having been offered to bear the sins of the many will appear a second time not to deal with sin but ‘to deal with...to complete’ the salvation of those who look to Him, who wait expectantly for Him.”* Why is the total belief of this statement is crucial for the believer?

C. Chapter 10

1. In verses 1-4, what is the author actually saying about the old sacrificial system that was needed to be said, but would have been “offensive and radical” to so many?
 - a. **God designed the ceremonial system under Moses to foreshadowed the real sacrifice to come...which means:**
 - (1)**The OT sacrifices did not really cleanse sinners.**
 - (2)**The OT sacrifices did not result in forgiveness of sins.**
 - (3)**The OT sacrifices did not even address the problems associated with a guilty conscience in the heart of believers.**
 - (4)**Because they all had to be repeated.**
 - (5)**Bottom line: the ceremonial law cannot bring you into communion with God...in fact, that was not the laws design in the first place.**
 - (6)**In fact, they would have been a perpetual reminder of the sins that the people commit throughout the year that they need to sacrifice for.**
 - **This may have left many in fear that if they died before the time of sacrifice...then they would be lost.**
 - **They fully knew that what they did through the sacrifices did not save them or they would have to continually make the sacrifices.**
 - **For some it would have led to desperation...to others it would cause them to look to the Messiah in faith...a faith given them by God.**
 - (7)**All of this points to a better sacrifice...one who makes us righteous by His sacrifice.**
 - b. After all that he has said, why does he need to make the statement, *“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*
 - (1) **The animals sacrifices are not “us”...they are not man. They are not the ones who have offended God.**
 - (2) **The animals could not give consent to place themselves in the sinner’s place. True atonement is made by one who gives consent and voluntarily substitutes themselves for the sinner.**

- (3) **They were not of sufficient “value” to make satisfaction. Only man had sinned ...only man would be sufficient as a substitution...but no man was even suitable for this type of substitution according to God’s law ...only a sacrifice without blemish and perfect would make the difference. So the One we offended had to become the sacrifice on our behalf.**
- (4) **The Temple would be gone soon enough (probably within the next 5-10 years at most, depending upon when we actually date the writing of this book) which stopped for all time the Temple sacrificial system so in His grace God is “weaning” them off of such harmful and non-biblical practices.**
- (5) **One last thing on the reason he/ God needed to say this is what He says in verses 5-7, God has said all along that they sacrifices of animals were not sufficient and that there would be a time when they would be completely done away with...now is that time ...to go back to the OT Levitical system means that they are resisting and rejecting God’s word from the beginning.**
- c. **Now it is not that they had not been told this...but after so many years of this ceremonial system being misrepresented they would have been “offended” by this “radical” idea.**
 - (1) **Jesus’ interpretations of the OT was an offense to the leadership of the time ...but He wasn’t bringing a new Word...but taking them back to its original meanings...Just like Paul did who was steeped in Jewish traditions.**
 - (2) **This was like the Reformation to the early Catholics of all stripes...the Reformation was an affront to the way things had been done for centuries.**
 - (3) **The movement within the Southern Baptist Church to re-claim its biblical/doctrinal roots...which go against many of the accepted practices of the last 100 plus or minus years.**
- 2. Look at verses 5-10. At the end of verses 1-4 you can almost hear these people asking the question, “If the OT ceremonial system couldn’t give us salvation/forgiveness/ communion with God, where do we find that?” Or as the disciples asked... *“What must we do to be doing the work of God? Jesus answered them; ‘This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’”* Now what is the answer the author gives them?
 - a. **This is God the Father talking, just like in chapter 1, and of course this is where the Words came from that were given to David. So God the father and the Word in general is verifying that these words were talking about Jesus.**
 - b. **The OT spoke of a real sacrifice to come...By David-Ps. 40:6-8 is interpreted here to mean that one greater was coming to replace the OT sacrificial system....and that One was Jesus, the Messiah...who was the One spoken of and is the One who fulfilled the law as the Law says.**
 - c. **This is the Scriptures interpreting the Scriptures correctly.**
 - d. When the messiah/ Jesus says, *“Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.”*- What specifically is He referring to concerning God’s will?
 - (1) **God’s will is His sacrificial death.**

- (2) **He would be the perfect, last, best and greatest sacrifice for the satisfaction and appeasement of God's Law and the plan that the Godhead had put forth before the foundation of the earth for the redemption of all God's elect.**
- (3) **He willingly would consent and voluntarily submit to be the substitutionary atonement once for all time and for all God's people.**
- e. **The author of Hebrews is telling these Hebrew Christians that this is how Jesus saw the ceremonial system...for these were His words on the matter.**
- f. Look at verse 8 just a moment...why is the parenthetical section in there? (*"...these are offered according to the law."*)
 - (1) **Clarifying statement.**
 - (2) **There had many sacrifices made and offerings given that had been given NOT in accord with the law...**
 - (3) **These were the true and righteous ones.**
- g. **Christ came into the world as the real sacrifice in obedience to the Father's will. He bears the penalty of God's law. He fulfills perfectly the requirements of the Law and the Covenant of Works for all His elect *"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once and for all (time)"...vs. 10 (See also 9:12, 15, 26)***
 - (1) **One of the great things of the Bible is that faith/obedience is better than sacrifice.**
 - (2) **The point is that God has always preferred that we love Him/ worship Him with all our heart, mind and soul...all of our life. Doing ceremony for the sake of ceremony only makes us a hypocrite.**
 - (3) **Moses told us this multiple times but no more so than in Deuteronomy when he spelled out what faith looked like... "do this and live...don't do this and die"...Only those who have faith can and will trust and obey. (See also Isaiah 1:10-16)**
 - (4) **In Matthew 23 (and other places) we see Jesus challenging the Pharisees and Sadducees for their outward doing of the law but they were not changed inwardly...they had no faith...they were simply consumed with their traditional understanding of the law.**
 - (5) **Just a note: *"...we have been sanctified..."*- this speaks of our immediate change of status before the Father because of Christ having imputed to us His righteousness...our propitiation. This word does not look forward to the reality of the on-going work of sanctification required as we live with our fallen nature in this life. That comes in verses 14.**
- h. **When Jesus came into the world the old order of things was abolished. It had run its course pointing to Jesus. Jesus was here and He had come to do His Father's will...**

Lessons from Hebrews
March 24, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. How would you sum up chapter 10:1-10 at this point?
2. We often talk about our progressive sanctification...the on-going work of God on our lives preparing to look more and more like Christ to the church and world around us...so what is going on in verse 10? *"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."* Why is this significant?
 - a. ***"...we have been sanctified..." Or... "...been made holy"... "...been purified"... "...have been consecrated..." in the OT sense of how we approach the LORD with our offerings...are we prepared to do so as God has said for us to be. In this case...Christ has cleansed us one and for all time so we do not have to continually do so.***
 - b. **This speaks of our immediate change of status before the Father because of Christ having imputed to us His righteousness...our propitiation. This word does not look forward to the reality of the on-going work of sanctification required as we live with our fallen nature in this life. That comes in verses 14.**

C. Hebrews 10:11-18

3. Now, let's look at vs. 11-18...now, they might be asking what you may be asking; What did Jesus' sacrifice do for us? What is the authors answer?
 - a. **To do His Father's will... that the Father's elect might be saved from their sins and His wrath forever...once for all who are His!**
 - b. **Christ's obedience effectively and perfectly reconciles all who are His by one single sacrifice to God the Father so that we have communion with Him forever...something the law could not and the priest daily work could not and would not do.**
 - (1) **The priest could not sit down while on duty...for they were never done.**
 - (2) **Jesus made His sacrifice and then sat down at the right hand of God.**
 - **We are forgiven forever because He sat down!**
 - **His work is finished and His reign has technically begun.**
 - **Better priest because He has actually finished His work.**
 - c. Fun scripture check: Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44 and here... what event is He talking about and when will this happen?
 - d. And the work He finished? **Vs 14- *"For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."***
 - (1) **Vs. 10 speaks of definitive sanctification...this passage speaks of progressive sanctification.**
 - (2) **What's the point to our maturity in the faith?**

- e. **And the Holy Spirit bears witness to us as well...vs. 15-17.**
- (1) **So we see the Trinity in play here**
 - **The Father, Son and Holy Spirit confirming all that the author of Hebrews is saying.**
 - **But also, this statement bears witness to the fact that it was the Holy Spirit that gave these words...who inspired the chosen writers to write...these Words came from Him.**
 - **Thus showing without a doubt that the Spirit existed among His people long before the Day of Pentecost in Acts.**
 - (2) **See Jeremiah 31:33-34**
 - (3) **These OT passages look forward to Christ's 1st coming as well as His Second coming when all things will be made brand new.**
 - (4) **All of this results in our justification/forgiveness and our sanctification and our on-going sanctification. We are holy and becoming holy.**
- f. **Vs. 18 tells us...where there has been justification/forgiveness accomplished there is no need for any more or any continual sacrifices at all. Jesus did it once and for all His people for all time.**
- (1) **No more remembrance of our sins...they are placed as far as the east is from the west from God's sight.**
 - (2) **There is no condemnation or shame for those of us who are in Christ Jesus.**
 - (3) **Think about vs. 4 as well.**
- g. **Our whole hope is in Jesus Christ...to experience communion with God the Father we must have forgiveness and sanctification granted to us By Christ Jesus alone.**
- h. **Hope = Jesus...No Jesus no ability to have hope! That is what the author of Hebrews is telling them...that is what God is telling us almost 2000 years later because everything but or maybe plus Jesus is what we think will bring us hope...but it is only Jesus only always!**
4. **Side note or interesting fun fact for vs. 18:**
- a. **Some Rabbi's used to teach; *"...in the time to come...the time of the Messiah...all offerings shall cease, but the sacrifice of praise/ thank offering. (Lev. 7:12- this was a voluntary offering and it is presumed that it would be at this time as well) The King Messiah, the son of David, shall reign and there will be no need of "an atonement" (or any atoning sacrifices) nor a need for deliverance, prosperity, for all things will be had..."***
 - b. **Rabbi Vajikra Rabba- 11th Cent. and Rabbi Abendana- 17th Cent.**

Lessons from Hebrews
March 31, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Re-considering vs. 11-18. The people are probably asking, *"If what you say is true about the sacrifices of the Temple, what did Jesus' sacrifice do for us?"*
What does the author say?
 - a. **Really...really people...how many times do I need to tell you this? ...that would be my response. But that is not his...just like God he patiently...once again says to them what they need to hear.**
 - b. **Christ's obedience effectively and perfectly reconciles all who are His by one single sacrifice to God the Father so that we have communion with Him forever...something the law could not and the priest daily work could not and would not do.**
 - c. **Vs. 10 speaks of definitive sanctification...this passage speaks of progressive sanctification...but verse 14 speaks of the on-going need of sanctification because the fallen nature is still in us to prepare us for our life in heaven.**
 - d. **And the Holy Spirit bears witness to us as well...vs. 15-17. Side note:**
 - (1) **The Holy Spirit speaks.**
 - (2) **The Holy Spirit is equated with the Lord.**
 - (3) **So if there is any question of the Spirit being a part of the Godhead here is yet another confirmation**
 - e. **Vs. 18 tells us...where there has been justification/forgiveness accomplished there is no need for any more or any continual sacrifices at all. Jesus did it once and for all His people for all time.**
 - **Our whole hope in in Jesus Christ...to experience communion with God the Father we must have forgiveness and sanctification granted to us By Christ Jesus alone.**
 - **Hope =Jesus...No Jesus no ability to have hope! That is what the author of Hebrews is telling them...that is what God is telling us almost 2000 years later because everything but or maybe plus Jesus is what we think will bring us hope...but it is only Jesus only always!**
 - f. **And He does this so that we can do His Father's will... that the Father's elect might be saved from their sins and His wrath forever...once for all who are His!**
2. Again what is the Jeremiah 31:33-34 passage there for?
 - a. **These OT passages look forward to Christ's 1st coming as well as His Second coming when all things will be made brand new.**
 - b. **All of this results in our justification/forgiveness and our sanctification and our on-going sanctification. We are holy and becoming holy.**

C. Hebrews 10: 19-39

5. Vs. 19-25

- a. What is verse 19 saying to them and to us?
 - (1) **"Therefore..."- based on everything that has been said up to this point with specific reference to that in this last 18 verses.**

- (2) ***“brothers” – brothers and sisters.***
 - **Fellow Hebrews**
 - **But more importantly fellow believers in God’s family.**
 - (3) ***“...since we have confidence/boldness...”-***
 - **We have boldness...no question ...because God has granted us continual access to His throne room...**
 - **No one on earth can deny us that access if we are His except in the case of blatant sin and Church discipline.**
 - (4) ***“...to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus..”***
 - **We have been given a “right” to approach God without fear...since we have thusly been cleansed; God’s Law grants us access.**
 - **He is communicating that we can personally come before Him at anytime.**
 - **But we have this confidence only because of Christ’s shed blood. When we have been cleansed by Christ’s blood we are clean indeed!**
- b. Vs. 20?
- (1) ***“...by the new and living way...” – think John 14:6***
 - (2) ***“...that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh...”-***
 - **He was our consecration by His flesh...His shed blood.**
 - **His blood was symbolically transferred to us...imputed to us was His righteousness making us consecrated...thus opening for us the Holy of Holies...**
 - **A first reference in these verses to us a priesthood of all believers.**
- c. Vs.21- ***“Great Priest over the house of God”***
- (1) ***“Great Priest” is a Jewish term used in the Jewish Targum (a paraphrase /transliteration of the Hebrew Bible written in the 1st century) ... a term to designate the Messiah – the better Priest than Aaron and his sons.***
 - (2) **This shows us that even the time of Jesus there was an understanding that the messiah would come and the old Levitical system would change dramatically.**

Lessons from Hebrews
March 31, 2019

D. Prayer

E. Review

3. Re-considering vs. 11-18. The people are probably asking, *"If what you say is true about the sacrifices of the Temple, what did Jesus' sacrifice do for us?"*
What does the author say?
 - g. **Really...really people...how many times do I need to tell you this?
...that would be my response. But that is not his...just like God he patiently...once again says to them what they need to hear.**
 - h. **Christ's obedience effectively and perfectly reconciles all who are His by one single sacrifice to God the Father so that we have communion with Him forever...something the law could not and the priest daily work could not and would not do.**
 - i. **Vs. 10 speaks of definitive sanctification...this passage speaks of progressive sanctification...but verse 14 speaks of the on-going need of sanctification because the fallen nature is still in us to prepare us for our life in heaven.**
 - j. **And the Holy Spirit bears witness to us as well...vs. 15-17. Side note:
(4) The Holy Spirit speaks.
(5) The Holy Spirit is equated with the Lord.
(6) So if there is any question of the Spirit being a part of the Godhead here is yet another confirmation**
 - k. **Vs. 18 tells us...where there has been justification/forgiveness accomplished there is no need for any more or any continual sacrifices at all. Jesus did it once and for all His people for all time.**
 - **Our whole hope in in Jesus Christ...to experience communion with God the Father we must have forgiveness and sanctification granted to us By Christ Jesus alone.**
 - **Hope =Jesus...No Jesus no ability to have hope! That is what the author of Hebrews is telling them...that is what God is telling us almost 2000 years later because everything but or maybe plus Jesus is what we think will bring us hope...but it is only Jesus only always!**
 - l. **And He does this so that we can do His Father's will... that the Father's elect might be saved from their sins and His wrath forever...once for all who are His!**
4. Again what is the Jeremiah 31:33-34 passage there for?
 - c. **These OT passages look forward to Christ's 1st coming as well as His Second coming when all things will be made brand new.**
 - d. **All of this results in our justification/forgiveness and our sanctification and our on-going sanctification. We are holy and becoming holy.**

F. Hebrews 10: 19-39

6. Vs. 19-25

- d. What is verse 19 saying to them and to us?
(5) "Therefore..."- based on everything that has been said up to this point with specific reference to that in this last 18 verses.

- (6) ***“brothers” – brothers and sisters.***
 - **Fellow Hebrews**
 - **But more importantly fellow believers in God’s family.**
 - (7) ***“...since we have confidence/boldness...”-***
 - **We have boldness...no question ...because God has granted us continual access to His throne room...**
 - **No one on earth can deny us that access if we are His except in the case of blatant sin and Church discipline.**
 - (8) ***“...to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...”***
 - **We have been given a “right” to approach God without fear...since we have thusly been cleansed; God’s Law grants us access.**
 - **He is communicating that we can personally come before Him at anytime.**
 - **But we have this confidence only because of Christ’s shed blood. When we have been cleansed by Christ’s blood we are clean indeed!**
- e. Vs. 20?
- (3) ***“...by the new and living way...” – think John 14:6***
 - (4) ***“...that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh...”-***
 - **He was our consecration by His flesh...His shed blood.**
 - **His blood was symbolically transferred to us...imputed to us was His righteousness making us consecrated...thus opening for us the Holy of Holies...**
 - **A first reference in these verses to us a priesthood of all believers.**
- f. Vs.21- *“Great Priest over the house of God”*
- (3) ***“Great Priest” is a Jewish term used in the Jewish Targum (a paraphrase /transliteration of the Hebrew Bible written in the 1st century) ... a term to designate the Messiah – the better Priest than Aaron and his sons.***
 - (4) **This shows us that even the time of Jesus there was an understanding that the messiah would come and the old Levitical system would change dramatically.**

Lessons from Hebrews
April 7, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What was the author of Hebrews reminding them of by using the phrase “*great High Priest over the House of God*” in verse 21?
 - a. **“Great High Priest” is a Jewish term used in the Jewish Targum (a paraphrase /transliteration of the Hebrew Bible written in the 1st century) ... a term to designate the Messiah – the better Priest than Aaron and his sons.**
 - b. **This reminds them and shows us that even at the time of Jesus there was an understanding that the Messiah would come and the old Levitical system would change dramatically, once again.**
 - c. **This goes along with what we saw concerning vs. 18.**
 - (1)**Some Rabbi’s used to teach; “...in the time to come...the time of the Messiah...all offerings shall cease, but the sacrifice of praise/ thank offering. (Lev. 7:12- this was a voluntary offering and it is presumed that it would be at this time as well) The King Messiah, the son of David, shall reign and there will be no need of “an atonement” (or any atoning sacrifices) nor a need for deliverance, prosperity, for all things will be had...”**
 - (2)**Rabbi Vajikra Rabba- 11th Cent. and Rabbi Abendana- 17th Cent.**
 - d. **So it seems clear that they knew about this truth...but were still willing to fall back on their default form of worship.**
2. Is there anything like this today where people who claim to be Christians know the truth about something but chose to follow tradition instead?

C. Hebrews 10:22-39 continued:

1. What is vs. 22 telling them and us?
 - a. **Since the Christ...the Messiah has come and is now at the throne ministering there over the house of God, having opened for us Access to the Godhead by cleansing us with His blood... *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...”* to the throne of grace...4:16.**
 - b. **Since He has drawn us to Himself...let us now draw near to Him...God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. Let us seek Him continuously.**
 - c. **We have been given a new heart... a *“true heart”* that guarantees a *“full assurance.”***
 - d. **Because, *“our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”***
 - (1) **This work guarantees a full assurance. Being baptized doesn’t save us...but it does publically affirm the work of God on our hearts and as such when we remember our baptism and participate in other baptisms since it is a sacrament of the Church then our assurance grows as well.**
 - (2) **It also speaks of us being prepared as the priesthood of all believers for God’s work.**
 - (3) **Baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

- e. Now, how should this truth affect them and us today?
 - (1) Since all of this is true...we cannot be kept away from God.**
 - (2) Since this is true and Christ has accomplished all of this work then to not live like this true is rejecting all that God has done on our behalf through His Son Jesus Christ.**
 - (3) Putting us on our knees before the Lord physically and metaphorically continually.**
2. What about Vs. 23?-
 - a. **Since all of this is true let us Hold fast= cleave to... cling to our confession.**
 - b. **Exhorting us not to be separated from what we say we believe...see vs. 26-31.**
 - c. **God is faithful and He always keeps His promises.**
3. Now, what about Vs. 24...an often quoted verse?
 - a. **This passage requires us...really requires us...not a suggestion...to know one another so well that we know how to stir/spur one another to love and good works.**
 - b. **It also emphasizes the importance of these 2 items as an outward sign of our faith.**
 - (1) Love equals a sign that shows what God has done for us we naturally do for others.**
 - (2) Good works are those works God prepared beforehand, to bring Him glory.**
4. Look again at this familiar verse- Vs. 25- this verse could read *"Let us not neglect meeting together..."*
 - a. **In fact, it seems it ought to be read that way so we maintain the force of the others as well.**
 - b. **It is clearly communicating the duty that we have as Christians to assemble together for worship every Lord's Day unless providentially hindered.**
 - c. **Let us not *"forsake the assembly of ourselves together"* is the Greek translation that perhaps works best.**
 - (1) Forsake is definitely a stronger term than simply neglecting though originally neglecting probably had more force attached to it than it might today. Forsaking is a choice to not do something or not be somewhere.**
 - (2) The Greek word for "assembly" here is "epi-synagogue"= "another synagogue".**
 - **This became the word used for the Christian assemblies as opposed to and in contrast to the Jewish assemblies.**
 - **This term was used to express the coalition of Jews and gentiles that met together for worship, to hear the Word and participate in the sacraments.**
 - (3) To forsake the assembling together is to forsake God Himself is the force of these words.**

- d. Why was it necessary to make this particular command?
- (1) **Because they had been doing this- “...as is the habit of some”= the manner of some= the prevailing custom of some...namely the Jews because of contempt against the Gentiles by the family and friends of the Jewish believers.**
 - (2) **They were beginning to fall back on old habits ...they were listening to the pressuring voices of people rather than listening to God...so the author must point them out as traitors to the faith.**
 - (3) **So that they would be able to do this- “...but encouraging one another...” How do we actually do this for one another?**
 - **Encouraging one another to Bible study and prayer, to regularly attend public worship, to stand firm in Christ, to participate in the sacraments.**
 - **But this word also means “comforting one another”-being with one another in times of need and grief, confessing our sins to one another, studying the Bible together when one needs to be disciple.**
 - **Being in the assembly of God’s people together with God’s people. The more they see others there the more they will want to be there.**
 - **We encourage one another when we share our testimonies of what God has done for us and we only have these conversations when we meet together in worship and in fellowship with other believers....choosing not to be together we begin to feel disconnected...and THAT IS ON US!**
 - (4) **Because this is what is coming- “...all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”**
 - **This passage expects us to see the “handwriting on the wall...to understand the signs of the times...to recognize we are in the Last Days and the Day is fast approaching.**
 - **This is the Day of the coming judgment. It is at hand. Are we and those around us ready and getting ready?**

Lessons from Hebrews

April 14, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Continuing on in Chapter 10

5. Looking specifically again at the beginning phrases of verses 22-25... *"Let us draw near...Let us hold fast...Let us consider...Let us not neglect..."* What do these communicate to us today? How do they affect what we are to be doing, now?
 - a. **John Calvin summed them up this way, *"We must remember that as long as Christ remains outside of us and we are separated from Him, all that He has suffered and done for the salvation of His people remains useless and of no value to us."***
 - b. **Philip Ryken says about this: *"Union with Christ is nothing less than a matter of spiritual life and death."***
 - c. **If we believe everything he said in verses 19-21...the whole book for that matter... then these 4 simply express what we will WANT to do more and more.**
6. How would you define what is being said in verses 26-31? How is it important to our faith today?
 - a. **When the temple is finally gone there will be no avenue for sacrifice if one was even being sought by the one continually choosing to sin. In the old days, if the sacrifice could not be made or if the sacrifice was deemed unacceptable by the priest the people lived in fear of judgement until they could find something acceptable to the priest...thus acceptable to God. This is the foundation and background for this statement...but**
 - b. **It is also clear, that after a person has seemingly embraced and professed the truths of the Gospel...particularly the great truths that we have just seen...and then they willfully and deliberately deny the truth and obstinately persist in deny the truth...then they show themselves to never have been saved in the first place. (See Matthew 7:21-23; Matt. 13:5-7-20-22, 18:15-18; I John 2:19)**
 - c. **When Christ returns there will be no hope for them...when the Day arrives (vs.25)...just like the 5 virgins who didn't have any oil for their lamps...they will be lost and miserable for eternity.**
 - d. **If you turn your back on Jesus...the One who has been shown continually to be Superior to all and savior of His own...this One who life and work is better than all the rest... then there WILL be dire consequences.**
 - (1) **Vs. 28 ...speaks of the one who denies the Law of God as given by Moses.**
 - (2) **Vs. 29...says it will be worse for those who know the Messiah has come and denies Him...**
 - ***"...trampled underfoot the Son of God..."*-The apostate treats Jesus as if He is just another man to be used and abused.**
 - **"Son" is the author of Hebrews title for the deity of Christ.**
 - **This one once sang God's praises but now has turned away.**

- ***“...profaned the blood of the Covenant...”***
 - **By saying that there is power in the blood of animals they deny and reject Christ sacrifice but also the Word of God OT and NT....saying that Jesus’ shed blood has no power.**
 - **Those who fall away must say this ...they must reject Jesus in all areas.**
- ***“...by which he was sanctified...”***- sanctified/ cleansed only in the sense that he was seen by men and treated by men as a Christian. They had receive the sacrament of baptism...and they often participated in the Lord’s Supper ...members in good standing in the church...receiving outward benefits only...just like the Israelites were cleansed/ consecrated with everyone else but only a remnant were actually believers...but along the way they received the benefits of being numbered with the covenant children until they broke covenant which is what they were destined to do.
- ***“...has outraged/(insulted) the Spirit of grace.”***- When the apostate profanes Christ he also insults/outrages the rest of the Godhead ...namely, in this case the Holy Spirit.
 - **Who wants to be on God’s bad side? Only a fool! As he says in verse 31- *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* Not maybe a fearful thing...but *“IT* is a fearful thing...” Eternity in Hell should be a fearful thing. Wailing and gnashing of teeth for eternity ought to be a fearful thing. Standing guilty before an all HOLY GOD ought to be a fearful thing!**
 - **The Father’s work, the Son’s work and the Spirit’s work are all rejected ...when we say things like “I have to choose my own salvation...the Spirit only can work if ii allow Him to work...for my free will is in play.”**
- e. **So, he is saying...almost pleading with these people, *“Keep on believing in Jesus. Keep on trusting Christ as He is offered in the Gospels. Don’t quit. Don’t look elsewhere. Don’t look to the right or to the left but straight on to Christ the author and perfecter of our faith. You began with Jesus , stay with Jesus, end with Jesus otherwise the consequences are dire!”***
- f. **To wrap this section up...this is a chilling warning to say the least.**
 - (1) **Interestingly, in trying to make sense of this passage the Roman Catholics developed a whole system of works from it called the “penitential system”. It was for those who had been baptized but at some point accidentally commit sin...then that one would go through the system of penance so that they could be forgiven again in order to regain their salvation...if they didn’t go through this system they would lose their salvation as defined by the RC Church.**
 - (2) **What is the problem or problems with this thinking according to these past 10 chapters?**
 - **It denies all that the author has said up to this point.**
 - **It denies Christ’s sacrifice... It denies what Christ has said about the sufficiency of His work the cross.**

- **It denies the prophecies... *"He comes to take away the sins of His people!"***

7. As we look at vs 32-39 what are somethings that jump out at you?

a. Looking at verses 32-34,

(1) Look at the deeds that you did at the point of your conversion:

- **You willingly endured a hard struggle/ a great conflict with suffering...even being publically exposed to reproach and affliction...and then being partnered with those so treated... As a Christian they endured with their brothers and sisters.**
- **You willingly had compassion on those in prison...they ministered to their brethren in prison.**
- **You willingly and joyfully endured having everything you owned taken from you because of your faith...because you knew that in Christ there were better possessions awaiting you.**
- **You endured all of this because you are a Christian...walking in the steps of Christ who suffered accordingly...I Peter 2:21.**
- **Why would you want to "go back."**

(2) This section is clearly to encourage these Christians to endure more.....this is not another blast against people who have already fallen away.

- **He is trying to shore up their weak faith at this point. He is saying look back to when you first became a Christian and look at what you were willing to endure by faith for the glory of the Godhead...and recognize in this that our only hope is in Jesus Christ alone.**
- **J.C. Ryle has said, *"The true cure for self-righteousness is self-knowledge."* If we really knew ourselves and what we deserved, we wouldn't try and go back to the old ways of trying to save ourselves.**

(3) A side observation: Think a moment about why the world may be so angry with Christians that seek to follow God's Way?

- **Could some of the anger be a reaction to a sense of gloom and doom that comes with those who are doing the "right" thing when the world is set on doing the "wrong" thing?**
- **When the world hears the Word of God...and they see the good works performed...they know instinctively...as image-bearers of God...that there is something there...a truth...a reality that they are drawn to something they ought to take seriously...but they cannot. Since they are not God's things are unclear...confusing...irritating...think Pharisees concerning Jesus' words and His work. And like the Pharisees are convinced they will "feel" better if these Christian are gone. The very presence of a true believer makes them so uncomfortable that they have to lash out at what they want to believe to be the problem of their discomfort...believers and God's Word.**

- b. Vs. 35- *"Therefore, do not throw away your confidence (in Christ), which has a great reward."*
- (1) **This is similar to verse 23, the author is saying *"Don't go back to the Levitical system...stay true to your word ...your confession in Christ... The temple will be gone soon Christ will always be. The only place where there is any reward is in Christ."***
- (2) **Verse 23 is put in a positive tone... *"Let us hold fast..."* rather than as here, *"...do not throw away your confidence in Christ."* What is His point?**
- c. Verse 36, *"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised."*
- (1) **What does he mean by the statement, *"For you have need of endurance..."***
- **Doing God's will requires endurance.**
 - **We don't lose weight or stay in good physical shape without a lot of sweat...work...diligence.**
 - **Endurance= doing the will of God...it will take endurance...hard work...diligence and vigilance to do God's will...to sacrifice as they had once did...and it is this endurance that leads to reward....that which has been promised.**
- (2) **What is meant by "the will of God" in this context?**
- **Same as the other places- "sacrifice".**
 - **Vs. 9 says, *"Behold, I have come to do your will..."* ... Vs. 10 says, *"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."***
 - **It meant "sacrifice" then and it means sacrifice now.**
- (3) **Look at Prov. 12:27- *"Whoever is slothful will not roast his game...(because the one who is slothful won't have any game to roast since that takes work as well...the slothful waits for others to take care of him)... but the diligent man will get precious wealth."* This is a possible translation...but more likely it should end this way *"...the substance of a diligent man is precious."***
- **The diligent are honest, trustworthy, hardworking and don't expect to be fed for doing nothing.**
 - **"working and keeping" God's "garden" whatever his hands find to do in God's will is enough reward but God promises other rewards for this man as well...for he is Blessed.**
- (4) **What sacrifices are we to make that will require endurance?**
- d. **What is being said in verses 37-39 of believers?**
- (1) **See Habakkuk 2:3-4; Haggai 2:6**
- (2) **We are not of cowardly stock any longer...II Tim. 1:7... *"not of fear/timidity"...*some translate this word as not a spirit of cowardice..." We are not of cowardly stock any longer because the Spirit is within us...and they may kill the body but they cannot kill the soul that goes immediately to heaven with the Godhead.**
- (3) **Because of the Spirit's presence we have faith and diligence and we are able to endure this life.**

8. Why is chapter 10 so important to our understanding of our faith today?

Lessons from Hebrews
April 21, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Look at verses 26-31 one more time. How would you define what is being said in verses 26-31?

- a. **Non-believers are in big trouble.**
- b. **Believers who turn from their confession will experience troubles beyond our “imagination” while they are “out of God’s Will”.**
- c. **In other words for any and all that choose to not follow God’s will their will be dire consequences. “If you thought the consequences of sinning were bad under Moses, think about denying the Messiah and the consequence for that.”**
- d. **Compare what is said here with what the prophet says in Zechariah 14:16-19.**
 - (1) **First it says, that the life of true Christians is to be one of constant feasting...which means...that we are to give thanks always in every circumstances for God’s provision of Himself, His protection of His own and the salvation that He so graciously grants to the Elect.**
 - (2) **Then it talks about those who have confessed to believe, those in the remnant perhaps, that have returned from exile who turn to their own ways...see Haggai 1.**
 - (3) **By using Egypt in this case He is talking about those who are acting foreign from their calling and profession...like Egyptians...being prideful and thinking only of themselves.**
 - **The use of Egypt here is interesting...God uses them a lot...mostly in negative ways to be sure.**
 - **Egypt is a land that is used to not having any rain to speak of...so what is the curse/plague that God is speaking of? Well God is the one who is in control of all the “common grace” hence “all the earth” ...and these people will be cut off from even them eventually if they do not return to the LORD.**
 - **In other words... those who think themselves less indebted or dependent upon the mercies of God cannot at the same time think that they are somehow guarded against His judgement for their lack of obedience. Even those who can live “without” rain, cannot live without God.**
 - (4) **Believers that come over time to believe they do not “need” the organized Church...with its Word, sacraments, discipline and fellowship are the ones who end up suffering from...they do not know what.**
 - (5) **The Word is clear for us who choose not to be fully engaged with God’s church...even here in the OT we see what the author of Hebrews is confirming.**

2. How is it important to our faith today?

C. Hebrews 10:32-39

1. What are some things that jump out at you in these?

e. Looking at verses 32-34,

(4) Look at the deeds that you did at the point of your conversion:

- **You willingly endured a hard struggle/ a great conflict with suffering...even being publically exposed to reproach and affliction...and then being partnered with those so treated... As a Christian they endured with their brothers and sisters.**
- **You willingly had compassion on those in prison...they ministered to their brethren in prison.**
- **You willingly and joyfully endured having everything you owned taken from you because of your faith...because you knew that in Christ there were better possessions awaiting you.**
- **You endured all of this because you are a Christian...walking in the steps of Christ who suffered accordingly...I Peter 2:21.**
- **Why would you want to “go back.”**

(5) This section is clearly to encourage these Christians to endure more.....this is not another blast against people who have already fallen away.

- **He is trying to shore up their weak faith at this point. He is saying look back to when you first became a Christian and look at what you were willing to endure by faith for the glory of the Godhead...and recognize in this that our only hope is in Jesus Christ alone.**
- **J.C. Ryle has said, “*The true cure for self-righteousness is self-knowledge.*” If we really knew ourselves and what we deserved, we wouldn’t try and go back to the old ways of trying to save ourselves.**

(6) A side observation: Think a moment about why the world may be so angry with Christians that seek to follow God’s Way?

- **Could some of the anger be a reaction to a sense of gloom and doom that comes with those who are doing the “right” thing when the world is set on doing the “wrong” thing?**
- **When the world hears the Word of God...and they see the good works performed...they know instinctively...as image-bearers of God...that there is something there...a truth...a reality that they are drawn to something they ought to take seriously...but they cannot. Since they are not God’s things are unclear...confusing...irritating...think Pharisees concerning Jesus’ words and His work. And like the Pharisees are convinced they will “feel” better if these Christians are gone. The very presence of a true believer makes them so uncomfortable that they have to lash out at what they want to believe to be the problem of their discomfort...believers and God’s Word.**

Lessons from Hebrews
April 28, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Chapter 10 continued:

2. What were some of the things we discussed that jumped out to us in verses 32-34?

f. Looking at verses 32-34,

(7) Look at the deeds that you did at the point of your conversion:

- **You willingly endured a hard struggle/ a great conflict with suffering...even being publically exposed to reproach and affliction...and then being partnered with those so treated... As a Christian they endured with their brothers and sisters.**
- **You willingly had compassion on those in prison...they ministered to their brethren in prison.**
- **You willingly and joyfully endured having everything you owned taken from you because of your faith...because you knew that in Christ there were better possessions awaiting you.**
- **You endured all of this because you are a Christian...walking in the steps of Christ who suffered accordingly...I Peter 2:21.**
- **Why would you want to “go back.”**

(8) This section is clearly to encourage these Christians to endure more.....this is not another blast against people who have already fallen away.

- **He is trying to shore up their weak faith at this point. He is saying look back to when you first became a Christian and look at what you were willing to endure by faith for the glory of the Godhead...and recognize in this that our only hope is in Jesus Christ alone.**
- **J.C. Ryle has said, “*The true cure for self-righteousness is self-knowledge.*” If we really knew ourselves and what we deserved, we wouldn’t try and go back to the old ways of trying to save ourselves.**

(9) A side observation: Think a moment about why the world may be so angry with Christians that seek to follow God’s Way?

- **Could some of the anger be a reaction to a sense of gloom and doom that comes with those who are doing the “right” thing when the world is set on doing the “wrong” thing?**
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- g. Vs. 35- *"Therefore, do not throw away your confidence (in Christ), which has a great reward."*
- (3) **This is similar to verse 23, the author is saying "Don't go back to the Levitical system...stay true to your word ...your confession in Christ... The temple will be gone soon Christ will always be. The only place where there is any reward is in Christ."**
- (4) **Verse 23 is put in a positive tone... "Let us hold fast..." rather than as here, "...do not throw away your confidence in Christ." What is His point?**
- h. Verse 36, *"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised."*
- (5) **What does he mean by the statement, *"For you have need of endurance..."***
- **Doing God's will requires endurance.**
 - **We don't lose weight or stay in good physical shape without a lot of sweat...work...diligence.**
 - **Endurance= doing the will of God...it will take endurance...hard work...diligence and vigilance to do God's will...to sacrifice as they had once did...and it is this endurance that leads to reward....that which has been promised.**
- (6) **What is meant by "the will of God" in this context?**
- **Same as the other places- "sacrifice".**
 - **Vs. 9 says, *"Behold, I have come to do your will..."* ... Vs. 10 says, *"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."***
 - **It meant "sacrifice" then and it means sacrifice now.**
- (7) **Look at Prov. 12:27- *"Whoever is slothful will not roast his game...(because the one who is slothful won't have any game to roast since that takes work as well...the slothful waits for others to take care of him)... but the diligent man will get precious wealth."* This is a possible translation...but more likely it should end this way *"...the substance of a diligent man is precious."***
- **The diligent are honest, trustworthy, hardworking and don't expect to be fed for doing nothing.**
 - **"working and keeping" God's "garden" whatever his hands find to do in God's will is enough reward but God promises other rewards for this man as well...for he is Blessed.**
- (8) **What sacrifices are we to make that will require endurance?**
- **Standing on God's word no matter the place we are.**
 - **Parenting...with so many voices today seeking to tell us we are good enough or we don't know what we are doing...or that we ought to let the professional do it for us...we need to stand up and parent.**
 - **Leisure is a struggle...leisure for what reason? Doing it even with an attitude to glorify God...not to rest to get away from all of that...we need to remember when we let our guard down that is when Satan attacks...the world attacks...and our fallen self attacks.**
 - **Self-esteem...standing rather for our Christ-esteem...our identity is in Christ alone.**

- i. What is being said in verses 37-39 of believers?
 - (4) **See Habakkuk 2:3-4- *“For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.”***
 - (5) **Haggai 2:6- For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.**
 - (6) **We are not of cowardly stock any longer...II Tim. 1:7... “not of fear/timidity”...some translate this word as not a spirit of cowardice...” We are not of cowardly stock any longer because the Spirit is within us...and they may kill the body but they cannot kill the soul that goes immediately to heaven with the Godhead.**
 - (7) **Because of the Spirit’s presence we have faith and diligence and we are able to endure this life.**
3. How important is endurance to the believer according to Chapter 10?
 - a. **Foundational...a key character trait of the Christian.**
 - b. **But this isn’t taught...rather we are taught that when you become a Christian we can hit the cruise control...we are taught the consequences of that.**
4. Why is chapter 10 so important to our understanding of our faith today?
5. How important is following God’s will for us in Chapter 10? Why?

Lessons from Hebrews
May 5, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. We have talked about “endurance” a lot over the past couple of weeks looking specifically at vs. 36... *“doing the will of God”* which is the Greek word for “sacrifice”, as used in vs. 11, speaking of Christ’s sacrifice. With this in mind; What were some of the sacrifices we talked about last week that we are to make that will require endurance?
 - a. **Standing on God’s word no matter the place we are.**
 - b. **Parenting...with so many voices today seeking to tell us we are good enough or we don’t know what we are doing...or that we ought to let the professional do it for us...we need to stand up and parent.**
 - c. **Leisure is a struggle...leisure for what reason? Doing it even with an attitude to glorify God...not to rest to get away from all of that...we need to remember when we let our guard down that is when Satan attacks...the world attacks...and our fallen self attacks.**
 - d. **Self-esteem...standing rather for our Christ-esteem...our identity is in Christ alone.**
2. Why did we say that chapter 10 is so important to our understanding of our faith today?
 - a. **There is absolutely nothing we can do to affect our salvation. Christ did it all and His work secures that salvation for all time.**
 - b. **Relying on any but Jesus in dangerous and a fool’s game.**
 - c. **Relying on anything plus Jesus is dangerous and folly that leads to eternal death.**

C. Chapter 10:39-11:1-3

1. Introduction
 - a. How many people in the world are considered Christian? **2.5 billion**
 - b. How many people fall into a “born again” Christian definition? **Maybe 1 billion...but that may be stretching even the most liberal of definitions.**
 - c. How many people are there in the world today? **Roughly 7 billion.**
 - d. What does that alone communicate to the true church? **There is a lot of work to be done and it won’t be easy.**
 - e. Of course, all of this begs the question, what is a believer? How has the author of Hebrews answered that question up to this point... chapter 1-10?
2. Read 10:39-11:1. What would you say is the connection between 10:39 and 11:1?
 - a. **11:1 describes the “those” in verse 39.**
 - b. **We are numbered among the faithful...the believers.**
 - c. **It confirms that we all have these abilities as we are in Christ. We are NOT of cowardly stock because we are of Christ, the Son of God with the Spirit living within us just as He did those believers who went on before us. See II Timothy 1:6-7...specifically “spirit of timidity/cowardice”**

3. Faith is an important and often repeated subject in the Bible. God speaks to us over 240 times in the New Testament alone about faith. Good teachers repeats themselves...God is a great teacher so He repeats Himself constantly out of love.
4. What are some of the various names the NT has for us?
 - a. **Beloved**
 - b. **Brother and Sisters**
 - c. **Christians**
 - d. **Followers of the way**
 - e. **Bride of Christ**
 - f. **Royal Priesthood**
 - g. **Saints**
 - h. **Elect**
 - i. **Living sacrifices**
 - j. **God's offspring...OT and NT**
 - k. **Believers- Acts 2:44 ...What does that mean to you?**
 - (1)**People who believe in Christ**
 - (2)**People who congregate with others who believe the same thing as we do about Christ**
 - (3)**People who exercise their faith...live it out day by day.**
 - (4)**People who have joy in Christ.**
 - l. **The NT contains over 175 names, descriptive titles, and figures of speech referring to Christians.**
 - m. **With so many names...one of the comments from the class in jest was "Now we know why we have such a problem with our identity."**

Lessons from Hebrews
May 12, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Remember 10:39- *"But we are NOT of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls."* Who is he talking about?
 - a. **Them and Us= The elect! We are not "of those" who don't believe and persevere in the faith...but we are "of those" who did!**
 - b. **We are of the heritage and the pedigree of the ones who follow in chapter 11.**
 - c. **The author is seeking to encourage his readers/hearers by giving them and us a "gigantic illustration of the phrase, "...of those who have faith and persevere their souls."**
 - d. **What does that communicate to you? Do you really believe it?**
2. Faith is an important and often repeated subject in the Bible. God speaks to us over 240 times in the New Testament alone about faith. Good teachers repeats themselves...God is a great teacher so He repeats Himself constantly out of love.

C. Read 10:39-11:1-3.

1. Generally speaking, from what we see here, what would you say is the main connection between 10:39 and 11:1-3?
 - a. **11:1-3 begins describes the "those" in verse 39.**
 - b. **We are numbered among the faithful...the believers.**
 - c. **It confirms that we all have these abilities as we are in Christ. We are NOT of cowardly stock because we are of Christ, the Son of God with the Spirit living within us just as He did those believers who went on before us. See II Timothy 1:6-7...specifically "spirit of timidity/cowardice"**
2. How do verses 1-3 describe a true believer?
 - a. **They have faith in God...something that the Bible has clearly defined as a gift given/ granted to us...not something we earn or an even ask for on our own.**
 - (1) Luke 17:5- as something that came to them...was granted to them...they are asking for an increase of strength...an increase in ability to glorify God..**
 - (2) Romans 10:17, 12:3**
 - (3) Eph. 2:7-8**
 - (4) II Tim. 4:7- Paul says he has "kept the faith"...**
 - **That is he has kept what was given to Him by God just like everything else has been given to him by God...kept it in a way that glorifies God....**
 - **"Kept" just like Adam was commanded to "work and keep" the garden"...we are to cultivate what we have been given so that we produce fruit.**
 - **He kept the faith= he endured, persevered, remained faithful in the face of struggle and temptation.**

- b. **They have the assurance of things hoped for... they are certain of what is promised through God's Covenant and affirmed by Christ on the Cross. This assurance is absolutely crucial for a believer to live out their faith. Without it there can be no peace.**
- (1) **The word assurance, interestingly enough, was also the word used at the time when talking about a title or deed to your home.**
- **So he is saying that Faith is the title deed to all the things you hoped for that God has promised you.**
 - **Faith is the instrument whereby we are assured of receiving what God promises.**
- (2) **What things are you assured of in Christ?**
- **Salvation**
 - **Christ Second Coming**
 - **I am loved in this life.**
 - **I have been given strength, grace and the ability to endure in this life.**
- c. **They have the conviction of things not seen? This goes with assurance...it has to.**
- (1) **Faith is what God uses to convict us of what He says is absolutely true...faith enables us to trust and believe.**
- (2) **Promises that have yet to be revealed but the faithful absolutely believe they will receive them no matter what their day to day is like.**
- (3) **II Cor. 5:7- *"...for we walk by faith, not by sight."***
- (4) **What things haven't you seen that you are still convicted of?**
- (5) **Extra points: What were these people of old commended for by God? Why did they get an "at a boy" for?... **"By it..." The faithful of old received their commendation...****
- **They were commended by God for the faith they had. "By it..." going forward will always mean "By faith..."...and as we move forward in this text he will give us a list of the people of old who were commended by God for the faith they had been given.**
 - **They experienced His blessings because they exercised the faith that was given them by God...by faith they did what they did to glorify God.**
 - **They walked in His way and they received the promises of God and their just home when their time on this earth was up.**
- d. **"By Faith" they were enabled to believe and understand that the universe was created by the power of God's word.**
- e. **"By Faith" they believed and understood that what was made was made from "no thing" ...for before God created there was only the Godhead. These believers had no problem believing God at all...no evolution only God's Word...God said it and it was so...and that was good enough for them.**
- (1) **True Christians of the day understood and believed this truth: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth out of no thing and all very good, in the span of 6 regular days!**
- (2) **Most Greeks did not believe that the world had been created by God's word.**

- (3) Aristotle taught that the world had always been, because nothing from nothing equals nothing. So since there is “something” now there must have always been something.
 - (4) So the Greeks taught the eternality of matter. They denied a Supreme Being brought this world into existence even while “worshiping” their gods.
 - (5) Carl Sagan and Stephen Hawking’s in the 20th Century along with others held this same view. Carl Sagan used to open up his TV show “Cosmos” with this statement, *“The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be.”*
 - (6) An Oxford Chemist Peter Atkins has said, *“...science is ‘omnipotent’—that’s a Divine attribute!”* According to him, there’s nothing science cannot explain. However, this was answered by the noted apologist William Lane Craig, when he said; that he disagreed and then listed five things science can’t explain:
 - logical and mathematical truths,
 - metaphysical truths like the existence of other minds and the external world,
 - ethical values,
 - aesthetic judgments,
 - and most importantly, the scientific method itself!
 - (7) The author of Hebrews says that it is only with faith that we know and understand that God did in fact create all there is out of nothing by the power of His Word. This and the rest of Scripture makes it impossible for a true Christian to actually believe in macro evolution.
- f. Why is a correct understanding of creation so crucial to the description of a true believer?
- (1) **It shapes the way we look at the world...at God.**
 - (2) **Faith enables us to accept the truth of God’s creating the way He says He created.**
- g. So to re-cap, how are believers described here in verses 1-3? (We will see more descriptions as we navigate through the rest of this chapter.)
- (1) **One who believes in God is one that knows they have been granted faith by God alone through Christ alone as the Scriptures alone have said.**
 - (2) **They know and believe ...they are assured and convicted about the promises of God. They take God at His Word and live accordingly.**
 - (3) **They fully believe that god made all there is out of nothing by the power of His Word for His own glory.**
 - (4) **Obviously, the Faith/belief talked about here is not a blind faith...it has a foundation built on God’s work, God’s infallible revelation of Himself and His promises for His people from the beginning.**

Lessons from Hebrews
May 26, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review- Hebrews 11:1-5

1. I keep coming back to verses 1-3 as the beginning point for the authors description of faith and the faithful. Considering what we have said so far, why is a correct understanding of creation so crucial to the description of a true believer as found in verse 3?
 - a. **Faith enables us to accept the truth of God's creating the way He says He created.**
 - b. **It shapes our view of God.**
 - c. **It shapes our view of Scripture.**
 - d. **It shapes our view of the world.**
 - e. **It shapes our view of us... *"...from dust we come...to dust we will return."*-Is that how we see ourselves? We should. As was said, *"Everyone should understand their place."*Is there any of us that like that statement?**
 - f. **Cultural note of the day: Towards the end of the first Century and into the second, Hellenistic philosophy crafted the lenses through which everything was viewed. In that sense, it was this influence that invisibly shaped how people thought.**
 - (1) **Of particular note, it regarded spirit as pure and good and matter as inherently evil.**
 - **When the gospel was seen through those lenses, it was not long before it was distorted in some fundamental ways.**
 - **Even today it is how we feel...or our spirituality that matters most..."I'm a spiritual person...not necessarily a person of faith." ...some would say today. The statement itself reveals so much about a person.**
 - (2) **If mind/spirit alone is good and matter is by definition evil, then as this thinking went...it is impossible that a good God could have created a material world.**
 - (3) **How then did the world come into being?**
 - **It either had always existed as Aristotle said or another theory was that...**
 - **It must have been created by a lower kind of deity—a god emanating somehow from the Perfect One. This "creator god" was known as the "demi-urge"...or as we know them today "demi-god" =a less-than-perfect god.**
 - (4) **This, in turn, became the lens through which the revelation of God in the Old Testament was viewed by some influencing the thoughts of the 1st century church."**
2. What do we learn about faith and being faithful from Abel and Enoch?
 - a. **The author of the letter to the Hebrews answers the question that some are left with when they read Genesis 4, Tell me, why is Abel's offering accepted and Cain's was rejected? "By faith, Abel offered..."**

- b. **Abel teaches us by his own example that faithful worship gains God's approval and an enduring witness.**
 - (1) **Interesting fact: How we worship God is absolutely important to God.**
 - (2) **The Psalter and much of the rest of Scripture talks about how His people have decided how they will worship God even making idols so that they have something to "hold on" to...even though God expressly forbids adding anything to the worship He prescribes. But Israel would not submit and consequently things went "south" for them.**
 - (3) **With so much written about how we are to worship the One true God in Scripture it would seem that one of the main touchstones for God that measures the faithfulness of God's people is whether we worship Him as He has commanded us to worship Him.**
 - (4) **The Scriptures also seem to be indicating as one commentator has put it that if we want to know how faithful we are to God all we have to do is to look at how we worship...Is it truly as God has commanded...or as we want? As this commentator goes on saying, *"If we won't worship God the way He commands, then we won't be obedient in anything else that He says to do. In other words, if we won't be obedient in His very presence in worship, we won't be obedient anywhere."***
- c. **As a prophet, Enoch did what He had been commanded to do by God.**
 - (1) **See Gen. 5:18-24; Jude 3-4, 14-18 (also I Chr. 1:3, Luke 3:37...chronicles of the godly).**
 - (2) **By faith Enoch lived in such a way that it totally pleased God.**
 - (3) **Enoch's faith pleased God so completely that God took him to heaven without seeing death.**
- d. **Faith is the quality in the fellowship which God enjoys...so we are being commended to fellowship with God by faith...just as John will tell us in I John 1... *"..that which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ."***

C. Continuing on Hebrews 4-7

- 1. What is the point of verse 6 being stuck in the middle of these examples?
 - a. **The author has just told us about two people that God was very pleased with...so since God is pleased... then it is because of their faith in Him...which God gave to them...by the way!**
 - b. **The fact of the matter is, both authors make it abundantly clear that we cannot have communion with other believers or with the Godhead unless we enter in to this fellowship by faith...that faith granted through Christ alone.**
 - c. **The necessary and essential "ingredient" is faith...for without faith in God...as He defines faith and grants faith...it is impossible to please God...impossible to have a relationship with Him...no relationship= no communion with Him...no communion with Him= no life, no hope, no comfort, and no peace.**
 - d. **This is NOT faith in faith or faith for faith's sake.**
 - (1) **He is not calling us to take a leap of faith ...as some might say.**

(2) He is not saying, "Well, you just have to believe. Believe what. Well, you just have to believe, that's all!"

(3) He is not saying... "You are down 35 to nothing, with 34 seconds left on the clock. You just have to believe that you can come back and win the game."

e. Then he says, "...for whoever would draw near to God must..." He says this to get their and our full attention. "Must"...divine directive ..."must" what? 2 things:

(1) Must believe that He exists...the object of true faith...the Godhead.

(2) Must believe that He rewards those who seek Him...keep His promise.

- **This faith is both a belief in a person ...the Godhead ...and His promise...the promise that the Godhead made to us in His Word.**
- **This faith is based on an object...the Godhead, the object of our faith, as displayed to us in Jesus Christ ...**
- **This faith is based in the absolute truth of God's Word.**
- **Christian faith believes in the One, True, Personal and Living God and in His promise made to all who are His.**

2. Vs. 7 speaks of Noah... what do we learn from Noah?

a. He took God at His Word...despite evidence to the contrary.

b. What do we know about Noah?

(1) Gen. 5:28-32, 6:5- 7:1-3, 9:28-29; Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27; II Peter 2:5

(2) He was Righteous which means: He was one who had been made righteous by an act outside of himself- God's grace! In other words He believed God and he held to the standard of the covenant...those who follow the Lord are called righteous. He had saving faith: How?

- **Methuselah would have passed on what he knew of God's grace and faithfulness...**
- **He would have grown up always knowing the love of God and how important it is to be devoted to the Lord because God had gifted him with faith. His family taught him ...so not ALL men were beyond saving...but the vast majority.**
- **Methuselah was the last "good man" beside Noah had just passed away...so Noah and His family was all that God needed to save.**

(3) He was a preacher/herald of righteousness and the 8th person God would save...that is the righteousness of God...for God...II Peter 2:5...apparently before he started building.

- **By his Words given to him by God...**
- **By his actions as he believed God and acted on what God had said to do.**
- **Jewish tradition even has the "words" he spoke- As a prophet and preacher of God, they says that he said to the people then... *"Repent and turn from your evil ways and works, lest the waters of the flood come upon you, and cut off all the seed of the children of men."* This is based in oral tradition.**

- (4) **He was Blameless- he was utterly devoted to God and His commandments...wait... what commandments? A whole man in a broken world. The ones from the garden and after that they had come to have fleshed out even before the 10 Commandments.**
- (5) **Walk with God- intimate fellowship with God...it was said that Adam walked with God...Enoch walked with God and now Noah. Can this be done today? HOW?**
- (6) **He acted “in reverent fear”= “In the fear of the Lord.” God said it and that settle it for Noah! He believed God and acted accordingly! Noah acted on it out of honor and glory to God.**
 - **This is how it is supposed to work in the Christian life...God says it and we act on it.**
 - **This is NOT: “God says it, I believe it, that settles it!”**
 - **It is even simpler than that, “God says it, that settles it!”**
 - **Believers are to believe God and His Word more than we believe anything else and the Word is to change the way we look at the world...and it is to change the way we live.**
- c. **God warned Noah and gave him a plan that would save His family and lead to the destruction of the rest of mankind.**
 - (1) **I don’t think God’s decree for the destruction of sinful man would have phased him much. Being righteous he would recognize God’s judgment and the “rightness” of this plan. As blameless he wouldn’t have questioned God. As one who walked with God he would completely trust God’s word on this matter...**
 - (2) **BUT... Build an ark? He was in the desert...approximately 500 miles from the nearest big body of water... build a boat...REALLY!! ... it hardly ever rained... certainly not enough to float your boat! God gives Noah the dimensions and specifications before God tells Noah why he is building this BIG boat.**
 - (3) **What would his friends say? If he had any friends. II Peter seems to tell us that the people would have saw him as God saw and used him but it made little to know difference what he said to them.**
 - (4) **Waiting and gathering the animals...do we suppose that this was a simple task? It is possible that God made this so...like a pre-fall relationship...but certainly this would have stretched his faith from a Fallen perspective.**
 - (5) **Then carrying the burden of what he knew that others did not...that all the rest of the human race would be wiped out.**
 - **Look at Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27. It seems that God did not have Noah say anything to these people about the coming doom while he was constructing the ark.**
 - **Why is God within His “rights” not to have Noah say anything more about His plan? Remember the II Peter 2 passage told us that Noah had been a herald for God’s word among the people prior to God’s call to build the ark. So it is not as if they had not heard... There were none who were innocent in that day...there will be those today that are not believers as well and will not repent but will know their destruction at a later time.**
 - (6) **And it took approx. 100 years to complete.**

(7) Then after everything was completed and they were in the Ark God made him wait 7 more days before the rain started. The whole venture was an act of faith. This doesn't mean that he didn't struggle with unresolved conflict concerning what God had not told him...just like us today...BUT, the act of faith is... he kept working.

3. Summarize in a few words what these first 3 saints of old are teaching us?

Lessons from Hebrews
June 2, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review- Hebrews 11:1-7

1. I am still moved by verse 3 here in its description of a true Christian being one who absolutely believes that God is the One who created all things and that He did it out of nothing...essentially speaking things into existence as they are. Why is this an important distinction for this 1st Century audience? Why do you suppose that none of us include this statement in our testimony when we give it?
2. What do we learn about faith and being faithful from Abel, Enoch and Noah (vs. 4-7)?

C. Hebrews 11:8-19

1. We know this first part of the story of Abraham...it spans Genesis 11-21 until Isaac is born and grows...the son of the promise.
2. For a moment let's look at Romans 9:6-9; Galatians 3:5-9
 - a. What do we learn about Abraham from these texts?
 - b. What do we learn about how God views Abraham from these texts?
3. What signs of saving faith are being highlighted in verses 8-22?
 - a. Vs. 8- *"By faith Abraham obeyed..."*
 - (1) **Saving faith is always accompanied by obedience= trust and action... in God's commands. (I John 2:4-6)**
 - (2) **Saving faith then, doesn't just believe...it acts on God's commands...on God's will to God's own glory.**
 - **Abram believed God and...**
 - **He set out not knowing where he was going. But God said Go...so, He went believing in God's promise to him.**
 - (3) **God acted on his calling by God in the faith God had given him. One theologian put it this way, "God's effectual calling of Abraham resulted not only in Abraham trusting God...believing in God; it led to his obedience." In other words, those who have been called by God, trust/believe in God, and those who trust...obey God. It all begins with our calling...this is where we are changed from enemies of God to children of God.**
 - (4) **Remember the message of Hebrews 1:1- *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."***
 - **Abram had not seen this land God had promised...he didn't even know where it was.**
 - **The author of Hebrews makes this point to these struggling Jewish Christians who are being told of things that have not yet been fully manifest in their midst...to do as Abram who and believe and go even though we don't see the outcome yet. God has promised so we are to believe and do!**

- **This is also true for us...Jesus promised to prepare a place for us...He even told us that He is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Him. We know the way, just like He told Thomas...Because we know Him...but we don't know and can't see the country into which we are destined...but as long as we are following the way...we are "good".**
 - **Heaven or the New Earth is an undiscovered country to us...the world to come but we are to believe that it is there and that is where we are headed.**
- b. Vs. 9-10- *"By faith he (Abraham) went to live in the land of promise..."*
- (1) Saving faith trust God.**
- (2) Saving faith means we live where and how God says, knowing that this world cannot give us satisfaction ...only God can in Christ Jesus.**
- (3) Saving faith is accompanied by a willingness to be a pilgrim/sojourner in this life.**
- **Abraham lives as a pilgrim...and alien...a sojourner in the land of promise....in tents...looking to God and His "city"...the city of God that He will one day give.**
 - **He was not looking to build a city but to live by God's provision and His protection.**
 - **Think of Lot, not by contrast to Abraham for both men had faith, but consider their strength and weakness of faith: Gen. 19:4-16, II Peter 2:6-9.**
 - **The passage says, that when the angels came to him and told him and his family to leave, "*Lot lingered...*".**
 - **According to Peter Lot was a righteous man... a believer and he was drawn to the things of God.**
 - **But he was also drawn to the city...for provision and protection.**
 - **He knew things in the city were bad, but in his mind the "good" probably outweighed the bad.**
 - **He had married a woman of the city and they were to leave that family to their death....so he was also, drawn to the city.**
 - **Because Lot lingered...the angel seized/grabbed them...God would not allow one of his own to make such a bad decision...God's grace and mercy sometime snatches out of situations that we are unclear about...that we would not leave willingly.**
 - **Unless God is merciful to us then we will perish with the rest of the city of man.**
- (4) Saving faith for Abraham had a definite earthy and geographic dimension to it.**
- **Land was clearly promised to Abraham and his descendants...**
 - **But as we see in verse 10 this earthly Promised Land was not all...it was simply a means to an end if you will.**
 - **The physical land was only meant to point Abraham and his descendants forward to the permanent land and inheritance built and designed by God for them to enjoy into eternity.**

Lessons from Hebrews
June 9, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What do we learn about faith and being faithful from Abraham from (vs. 8-10)?
2. How does understanding God as creator as the Bible spells out rather clearly, affect the depth of these men's faith?
 - a. **I understand this is subjective to a certain degree, but...**
 - b. **Thinking of God based on how the Bible described God should affect the way we live and the way we obey.**
3. With all the distractions of the day:
 - a. How do you suppose they were able to keep this Creator God in the forefront of their lives even in spite of their many sins along the way?
 - b. What are some of the reasons we are so distracted and wander from what we say we believe?

C. Hebrews 11 continued...

1. Vs. 11-12- *"By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive..."*
 - a. **Saving faith enables us to do God's work. Sarah had faith in God and thus received the power of God to conceive for the posterity of Abraham...the line of promise that would lead all the way to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**
 - b. **Sarah's faith was not based in Abraham's faith...she exhibited faith as well in believing the LORD. Sarah depended on the LORD she couldn't depend on Abraham to always do the right thing...after all he did give her away ...twice.**
 - c. **Sarah's saving faith was the instrument that God used to continue the line of the promise as Isaac was the son of the promise.**
 - (1) **She believed even though physically speaking it would have been impossible at her age.**
 - (2) **But God said it and even in her doubting she believed God and He used her as the mother of the promise.**
 - (3) **Think Mary...the angel comes and says she will conceive and bear a child...and she says...that's not possible for she was a virgin...humanly speaking it was impossible...but nothing is impossible with God.**
 - d. **Sarah believed requiring her to trust in something she did not live to see...that is that through Isaac, Abraham's descendant would virtually be innumerable...the promise God had made to Abram.**
2. Vs. 13-16- *"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised..."*
 - a. **Saving faith alters our self-identity...to a Christ identity.**
 - (1) **A life of faith changes the way we see ourselves.**
 - (2) **Our whole identity is shaped by our faith in God through Christ Jesus. Gal. 2:20- "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live BY FAITH in the Son of God."**

- b. Saving faith gives us understanding and strength to accept that we will be different from the world.**
- c. By faith we are to live a distinguishable life....as sojourner and strangers to this life.**
- d. We are obviously not called to be separate from the world...in that we should live in a commune or only among our own peoples. We are “in” the world but we are to be distinguishable from the world.**
- e. They had been promised a great people and a Promised Land...and all of them did not see it...but they had faith that it would happen.**
 - (1) It was not the land that they had left and it ultimately would not be the land to which God would take them.**
 - (2) They looked forward to the city of Rev. 21.**
 - (3) They looked forward to an actual homeland with God and they knew that the Messiah would have to come to fulfil the promises of God made in Gen. 3:15 which was made to Abraham as well...**
 - (4) The covenant from Gen. 15-17 defined us a different people than the peoples of the world.**
 - (5) This is what is meant when Jesus said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” See John 8:55-58.**
- f. We have dual citizenship in the city of man and the city of God...but we are to live like citizens of the city of God...by God’s standard looking forward to the fruition of the kingdom...a better country...a heavenly one.**

Lessons from Hebrews
June 16, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What do we learn from the faithfulness of Sarah?
 - e. **Saving faith enables us to do God's work. Sarah had faith in God and thus received the power of God to conceive for the posterity of Abraham...the line of promise that would lead all the way to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**
 - f. **Sarah's faith was not based in Abraham's faith...she exhibited faith as well in believing the LORD. Sarah depended on the LORD she couldn't depend on Abraham to always do the right thing...after all he did give her away ...twice.**
 - g. **Sarah believed requiring her to trust in something she did not live to see...that is that through Isaac, Abraham's descendant would virtually be innumerable...the promise God had made to Abram.**
2. In Verses 13-16, what stood out to you as pertaining to your faith walk today?
 - g. **Saving faith alters our self-identity...to a Christ identity.**
 - (3) **A life of faith changes the way we see ourselves.**
 - (4) **Our whole identity is shaped by our faith in God through Christ Jesus. Gal. 2:20- *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live BY FAITH in the Son of God."***
 - h. **Saving faith gives us understanding and strength to accept that we will be different from the world.**
 - i. **By faith we are to live a distinguishable life....as sojourner and strangers to this life.**
 - (1) **We are obviously not called to be separate from the world...in that we should live in a commune or only among our own peoples.**
 - (2) **We are "in" the world but we are to be distinguishable from the world.**

C. Finishing up verses 13-22

1. A couple more things about verses 13-16.
 - a. **God will eventually take us out of the city of man and we will be placed in the city of God.**
 - **John 14:1-7**
 - **Psalm 87:1-6**
 - b. **The point of verses 15-16 is that Abraham and Sarah were not ultimately looking ahead to an earthly "better country" but to a heavenly one. The earthly Promised Land was only intended to point them to the heavenly Promised Land that was to come... and they knew that!**
2. Vs. 17-19- *"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac..."*
 - a. **Saving faith submits to God's will no matter what He asks.**

- b. Saving faith holds nothing...nothing not even that which is most precious to us... back from God...since all of what we have is God's anyway. We must trust God with all that we have and all that we are...for what He does with them is always right.**
- c. Saving faith trust that God always knows what is best...for us and His own glory.**
- d. Saving faith KNOWS that God does what He does for our good and His own glory always!**
- e. How many times up to this point had God called upon Abraham to trust in what humanly speaking seemed unlikely or impossible?**
 - (1) He would have a son of the promise.**
 - (2) He would become a great and numerous nation.**
 - (3) His name would be respected and honored.**
- f. Again, with Isaac God was calling on him to believe and act, even though it appeared to contradict what God had promised.**
- g. It is not abnormal for God to test the faith of His people...like exercise to strengthen us...and this test/trial (whatever you want to call it) requires continual trust in His Word, but the test that God put Abraham through was far greater because the command to sacrifice Isaac was in direct contradiction to His promise and to His Law. Abraham was the father of promise so more would have been expected of him.**
- h. I remember reading that story the first time...before I even knew this Hebrew passage was even here...thinking that Abraham must have known that God would have supplied the substitute on Moriah when he went up. But Hebrews 11 tells us exactly what he thought. By Faith Abraham believed God's Word so much that meant as the passage says, *"He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back."* Figuratively and physically as well.**
- i. Faith is not even affected by the possibility of death.**
- j. This is the kind of faith that we should manifest as believers in response to God's covenantal promise. It is not faith in faith. It is not faith in ourselves. It is faith in God and His Word.**
- k. What is required of us in the on-going life that God gives to us?**
 - (1) Believe and act on what we know of God from His Word.**
 - (2) Which requires us to be a people of prayer and people of the Word and people of the sacraments.**
 - R.A. Torrey said on prayer- *"The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came. Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory."***
 - I came across this illustration this past week: If you had been with the men who were going ashore at Normandy, on D Day, 75 years ago, I don't think you would have found many of them turning to their chaplains, as the ramp fell down into the water or onto the beach, "Why is this happening to me?" It was what they had been training for. That was their moment, they had prepared for this moment in time...it was the job that they had**

come to do. Well, so also in the Christian life when we face trials our response is, “This is what the means of grace have been preparing me for. This is what prayer prepares me for. This is what studying the Bible has prepared me for. This is what sitting under the faithful teaching of God’s word has prepared me for...that I might be proven in this trial...and so the Christian response to trials ought to be very different than how the world responds...for we have been prepared for this.

3. Vs. 20-22- *“By faith Isaac invoked future blessing...By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of his sons...By faith Joseph...”*
 - a. **Interesting that the author only focuses on this one act of faith by both Isaac and Jacob...with so much else to choose from.**
 - b. **Even at the end of life and dying these are still looking to the future...**
 - (1) **Future blessing for their children.**
 - (2) **Future blessings for God’s children.**
 - (3) **Joseph looking forward to being buried in the Promised Land...because he believed God’s promised to take His people to the Promised Land...a promised that had been passed down to him since given to Abraham in Gen. 15.**
 - (4) **This immediate life is not all there is.**
 - c. **Speaks hardily to the expectation that we have to pass on...to bless our children with the knowledge of our faith in the Lord and what is expected of them as they grow...even if they don’t grow up to be believers.**
 - (1) **This is an action based in faith...according to this text...in other words it is expected of us who are faithful to do such things.**
 - (2) **We are to set them a direction to go.**
 - (3) **We are to pray and expect that God will bless them by their witnessing and experiencing our faith as we seek to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.**
 - (4) **We are to do these things as these 2 men do even for those who aren’t believers so they always know who they are and who they belong to....earthly family as well as a heavenly one if they are in Christ.**
 - d. **Isaac preferred Esau but by faith he did as God required of him to do for it had been prophesied that the older would serve the younger...in other words Jacob would receive the Lord’s blessing for His children in covenant.**
 - e. **It is revealed that Jacob did the same for the sons of Joseph , but the author tells us one more thing that Jacob did... *“bowing in worship over the head of his staff.”* In other words Jacob was characterized as one who trusted and worshipped God to the end of his days. See Genesis 48:13. Birth order and/or age does not in any way constrain God’s choice.**

Lessons from Hebrews

June 23, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What did we see about the faith and faithfulness of Isaac and Jacob?
 - a. **Even at the end of life and dying these are still looking to the future...**
 - (1) **Future blessing for their children.**
 - (2) **Future blessings for God's children.**
 - (3) **This immediate life is not all there is. They had learned a very important lessons...that all of life is pointing to the consummation of the redemption.**
 - b. **It is revealed that Jacob did the same for the sons of Joseph , but the author tells us one more thing that Jacob did... "bowing in worship over the head of his staff." In other words Jacob was characterized as one who trusted and worshipped God to the end of his days. See Genesis 48:13. Birth order and/or age does not in any way constrain God's choice.**
2. What is the significance of the blessing that Jacob gives to these 2 not so significant sons in the grand scheme of Redemptive history? Why is this one referenced here?
 - a. **I say not so significant because Ephraim while having a "great run" crashes and burns to point of not even being listed in Revelation 7 (actually Reuben is back in his place) and not much a note worthiness comes from Manasseh. (After all ½ of them chose not to enter into the Promised Land.)**
 - b. **Look at Gen. 48:1-22...**
 - (1) **Jacob indicates his preference even before he pronounces the blessing...Gen 48: 5.**
 - **In verse 1 the order was reversed just as Joseph planned on presenting them...**
 - **And to preserve the birth order.**
 - (2) **Ephraim and Manasseh essentially take the place of Reuben and Simeon and Joseph is given a double portion. (See Gen. 41:50-52)**
 - (3) **It had been 20 plus years after Joseph's "disappearance" ...but God gave Jacob 17 plus or minus years with Joseph and his family afterwards.- Gen. 48:11**
 - c. **Ephraim...interestingly enough would become the "heart of the northern kingdom" and Manasseh would also become a "great people".**
 - d. **The 2 principle pillars of God's promise to His people at this time have been the seed (offspring) and the land.**
 - (1) **These blessings assure that Joseph becoming 2 great tribes.**
 - (2) **These blessings go from one family unit to the next as God intends.**
 - e. **God often chooses the least in order to do the greatest...even at the end of life those with true faith will continue to worship God.**
 - f. **This choosing reflects how God chooses His own for adoption.**
 - g. **The significance then is more to show us about how faith (By Faith...) had changed Jacob ...from a deceiver to one who followed the LORD's will and worshiped Him even unto death.**

3. Then there is the faith of Joseph- vs. 22- What can we take away from his exhibition of faith?
 - a. **By faith Joseph knew that God was going to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.**
 - (1) To his dying days, by faith, he knew that God would take His own people out of Egypt ...**
 - (2) That God had taken them to Egypt to be saved and to grow into a mighty people as He had promised Abraham.**
 - (3) But he also knew God had promised Abraham that He would bring them out into the Promised Land in Gen. 15.**
 - (4) And by faith he knew that he was not to be buried in Egypt among pagans...so he gave directions as to his bones.**
 - (5) And he expected God to do this so much that he gave instructions as to what to do with his bones because he knew that God's people were not destined to stay.**
 - (6) And Joseph was taken back at the head of the procession, back into the Promised Land.**
 - b. **By faith each of these patriarchs looked forward to God fulfilling a promise that was not fulfilled in their own lifetime...and yet to the very end of their lives they believed that God would be faithful to His promise.**
 - c. **Faith always bows the knee to God's will and His word.**

C. Hebrews 11:23-29- Moses

1. Let's see...what can you tell me about the actual historical events ... not the events as told by the movie The 10 Commandments? (☺)
 - a. **Moses' birth- 1525BC-**
 - (1) Father- Amram...mother- Jochebed-**
 - (2) Youngest of 3- brother Aaron was 3 and Miriam was 7 plus or minus.**
 - (3) His parents hid him for 3 months against the edict of the Pharaoh.**
 - (4) Moses name seems to have come from the Hebrew name Moshen= "deliverer/ to draw"(in its simplest form)... What was it that his parents saw when he was born? Hebrews 11:23**
 - (5) Moses name seems to have corresponded with the Egyptian name "Mes" meaning "son" and that would have been his name (his family name) until his "coming out" and then he was probably given the name Thutmose II for a time. Josephus, Philo and others make this to be an Egyptian name "Monios" to indicate one saved from water.**
 - (6) His time in Pharaoh's court would have prepared him to be an Egyptian leader. (see Acts 7:22.)**
 - b. **Thutmose I was Pharaoh at Moses birth according to this time frame...and he did, according to Egyptian annals, decree that all slave infants were to be thrown into the Nile...just like the Bible says. But God had other plans about one infant in particular.**

- c. **Nefure (Pharaoh's unmarried or at least infertile daughter) "found" Moses and adopted him to raise as her son. This was not uncommon and being an only daughter—she would have been granted whatever she wished.**
 - (1) **Moses sister, Miriam, made sure that Pharaoh's daughter found Moses.**
 - (2) **Nefure paid Jochebed to nurse Moses...that could have been up to 3 years old.**
 - (3) **Thutmose I dies and Moses adoptive mother Nefure= Hatsheput takes over the throne.**
 - (4) **Hatsheput is listed in the annals of Egyptian and world history as one of the great female rulers of all time.**
 - (5) **Moses probably had been groomed to become Pharaoh. But because he was not native born he probably couldn't ascend the throne at this time so a marriage was arranged so that Hatsheput could reign after her father's style. Moses probably carried the title Thutmose II until his mother married. But Moses is a great builder and general according to the chronicle of Josephus. He was the victor over the Nubian/Ethiopian revolt. See also Acts 7:20-22.**
- d. **Fast forward to (plus or minus) Moses at 40- Moses kills the Egyptian and leaves for Midian...even though the Bible says that Pharaoh sought to kill (or wish him dead as not to bring shame on the family) him and he probably did have a price on his head...the royal family would have let him go so that no more shame would come to them. Then as was customary his accomplishments would have been given to someone else or history would have been re-written to exclude his existence. By this time his mother was too weak or dead so this could have been accomplished without her reprisal.**
- e. **From 40 to around 80 Moses is a shepherd in Midian.**
 - (1) **He marries Zipporah (Jethro's daughter) and has 2 son's.**
 - (2) **The burning bush incident occurs in Ex. 3-4 but even here he tries to make excuses as to why he shouldn't be the one to lead his people.**
- f. **From 80-120-**
 - (1) **Moses comes back to Egypt after Thutmose III dies at God's command.**
 - (2) **Moses convinces the people that He is from God- YAHWEH- with the 10 plagues and knowing God's personal name.**
 - (3) **Leads the people out of Egypt and they hold their first worship in years.**
 - (4) **Exodus seems to occur around 1445BC 1445 BC- Ex. 7:7; Acts 7:30**
 - (5) **The next 40 years Moses was in the desert watching God's children complain and die off because of their sin against God about not going into the Promised Land...**
 - (6) **He was given the 10 Commandments- twice. We always see the 10 Commandments on 2 tablets...and there would have been 2 tablets but each tablet would have had all the Commandments on them...one for the Ark and one for the people. But, of course, because of the peoples sin, Moses breaks the first set...so God graciously makes another. (Exodus 34:1-4)**

(7) Moses dies and is buried on the mountain overlooking the Promised Land not being allowed to go in because of his own sinfulness during the trip ...at 120 years old...Deut. 34:7

2. What do we learn about faith and faithfulness from Moses' parents?
 - a. **They believe in the LORD and they trusted God, convinced that God would affect a deliverance for Moses...maybe through Moses, as well. By faith for them has a few nuances in that :**
 - (1) They believed the general promise of God to eventually deliver His people.**
 - (2) They believed that time of deliverance to be soon.**
 - (3) The word "beautiful" in this text (and in acts 7:20) seems to indicate more than simply he was an extremely handsome child...**
 - **Since this section begins with describing their faith there seems to be some perception on their part because of their faith that this baby was going to be remarkable in that he would accomplish something extraordinary for the LORD...**
 - **In Acts the word "beautiful" can also be translated as "exceedingly fair" or "exceeding fair to God"= divinely purposed as the Hebrew idiom indicates. Josephus writes that Pharaoh's daughter used to say of Moses that he was "in form divine". So even his Egyptian mother saw something special in him.**
 - **Which may have meant that they also believed/ thought he might be the deliverer God had promised.**
 - b. **Practically speaking we can say that Moses was literally saved because of the faith of his parents.**
 - c. **They were not afraid of men but hid Moses for the first 3 months of his life. The Pharaoh's command was contrary to nature and more importantly contrary to God's law.**
3. What do we learn about faith and being faithful from Moses in these texts from (vs. 24-29)?
 - a. **Because of his faith in God, Moses defies the "world." (Read Egypt the most powerful nation in the world at the time.)**
 - b. **Moses didn't want to be numbered among the Egyptians... He declined to be numbered among the world.**
 - c. **He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.**
 - d. **Choosing solidarity with his people no matter the cost to him. He chose to suffer...he sacrificed his life in Pharaoh's household...a life of "ease" rather than be counted among the Egyptians and all the material pleasures that came with their lifestyle and religion.**
 - e. **After Moses killed the Egyptian for beating a Hebrew close to death he encounters 2 Hebrews fighting among themselves and seeks to call them on their lack of care for one another as brothers and they turn it around on him as if to say this isn't your business; Exodus 2:14 says, *"Who made you a prince and a judge over us (read judge and jury)? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid, and thought 'Surely the thing is known.'***
 - (1) He feared that the murder would be made public.**

- (2) He was aware of God's law on taking another's life and he may have feared reprisal from God's law.
 - (3) It was obvious from the way that it is talked about that in the moment he made a plan to kill the Egyptian... *"He looked this way and then that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."*
 - (4) It was only later that Pharaoh found out
 - f. He left Egypt not necessarily fearful of the Pharaoh's wrath...because of his "new- found" faith he had a healthy fear of God...more than man.
 - g. He returned to set God's people free...and by faith he kept the Passover.
 - (1) He believed God in what God had said.
 - (2) He trusted God to protect His people this way by smearing the blood on the doorframes....and not destroy the firstborn of even the Israelites.
 - (3) He responded to what God says by faith...doing what God directs.
 - (4) He was not fearful that his "mission" would be thwarted by Pharaoh.
 - h. By faith he led the people across the Red Sea on dry ground and Pharaoh's army was destroyed.
4. Look again at verse 26. It sounds so New Testament doesn't it? Well, it is!
- a. Paul made a similar statement when he said, Indeed, *"I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."* (ESV), or *"I consider these things less than nothing in comparison to knowing Christ."* (NIV)
 - b. Moses considered all the treasures of Egypt...which were his as he lived in the palace...not to be compared with the privileged of bearing the reproach of Christ.
 - (1) You see the sufferings of Moses and the people are in some way linked to the sufferings of the Christ.
 - (2) All that Moses suffered were for the cause of God's plan of salvation...and he knew that his suffering was part of that plan and so he was proud to receive it as part of God's plan.
 - (3) Because he was looking forward to his reward...God's.. *"Well done!"* Being hated for Christ was better than being loved by men...for the reward was eternal with God and only temporary with men.
 - (4) Think of Christ on the cross.. Hebrews 12, *"...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."* Christ reward for all His suffering which was the climax of the Godheads plan of salvation was to be seated back with the Father.
 - c. One of the problems with the Church today:
 - (1) It wants the world to like us...to think well of us...not to call us names...we do not wish to bear the reproach of Christ...the hatred of the world.
 - (2) Moses is an example of how faith stands up to the offerings of the world and its reproach when it can't win us over. Moses would rather have God's praise than the world.

- d. **So the author of Hebrews is saying to his congregation and to us, *“Seek the reward of Christ...His ‘well done’. For it is better than anything the world may attempt to give and it is eternal.”***
 - e. ***“Moses’ choice exemplifies certainty of what he hoped for, since he was looking ahead to his reward.”* (Notes from the Reformation Study Bible)**
 - f. **Faith values the rewards...the promises of God and denies the world. (See also I John 2:15-17)**
5. What do we learn about faith from all these people so far?
- a. **Over and over again faith is directly related to God’s word. Each of these named respond to God’s Word.**
 - b. **Faith is NOT in faith...faith is NOT in believing as hard as we can something that we thought up in our own minds.**
 - c. **Faith listens to God’s commands over the worlds instructions.**
 - d. **Faith is responding to God’s word, and of course, in this case faith also involved looking for God’s promised reward and fearing God above men.**
 - e. **Even the people of God who were later reluctant were listening to God’s Word through Moses when By faith they walked through the Red Sea basin.**
 - (1) **Can you imagine the dilemma that would have stirred in you iif you were confronted with walking out into a dry river bed where a river had just been flowing fully with your family in tow?**
 - (2) **The whole Egyptian army to your rear and a wide river bed to your front...maybe they could even actually see the waters piled up...maybe not...God presented them with a major test...trust Him or perish to the Egyptians.**
 - (3) **They believed and they walked by faith responding to God’s word and they made it across to dry land with no problems. Their reward?**
 - **A drowned Egyptian army when the waters returned when they sought to cross the same sea bed.**
 - **A land of provision and safety between them and Egypt ...deliverance just as God had said.**
 - f. **So faith trusts God’s promises...faith values God’s blessings over anything the world can offer which is only temporary... and faith trust in God even in trials.**
 - g. **They were not perfect...they didn’t always exhibit this faith, but along the way even feebly they trusted and they beleived and they honored the Lord because it is not the “quality” of faith that saves us...it is the Object of our faith that saves us...Jesus Christ!**

D. Hebrews 11:30-40- the rest

- 1. In these verses there are at least 5 different things that he teaches us about faith. Can you spot them and put them into words?
 - a. **VS. 30- Believing God when the odds look impossible...**
 - b. **Vs. 31- believing God when you cannot imagine that He loves you.**
 - c. **Vss. 32-34- Believing God is the key ingredient to every spiritual achievement in this life.**

- d. **Vss. 35-38- Believing God is key to enduring trials and tribulations in this life.**
 - e. **Vss. 39-40- Believing God is not something that you do at the beginning of the Christian life and then you are done with it. Believing God is going to be necessary throughout our life up to our dying breath.**
2. What do these other people mentioned here teach us about faith and being faithful?
- a. **The children of Israel responded by faith to the word of Joshua and marched and the walls of Jericho fell. The impossible happened. They believed God could do the impossible. Their only knowledge that this would defeat the city was provided by God in His promise, *"I have given Jericho into your hand."* (Josh. 6:2)**
 - (1) Remember a whole generation had been judged for unbelief...except for Caleb and Joshua and their households.
 - (2) But now a new generation is being brought into the Promised Land and they must respond to God in faith...He says walk for 7 days...they walked...He says shout and they shout...He says blow trumpets and they blow trumpets and the great walls of Jericho came crumbling down. They believed without seeing...
 - b. ***"Rahab, the prostitute..."* who loves such a one? God can and does...she gave up all that she knew and the city she had lived in all of her life to serve the Lord and His people.... She identified with those who believed not with the disobedient who would be destroyed...and her reward...she was justified (James 2:25) and became the grandmother of King David...in the family line of the Messiah. Rahab found love in the LORD and then love in one of the Lord's men.**
 - c. **Vs. 32-34 make it clear how important faith is to every situation and circumstance...these verses highlight what God accomplished through faithful...not perfect...men. Faith is the key ingredient...not military skill or physical strength or even courage...just faith. We are to live and serve God by faith!**
 - d. **Vss. 35-38 speaks clearly that the only way for us to get through the dark nights of the soul...to overcome the temptations of this life...to endure the disappointments and griefs that come in this life is with a life of faith.**
 - (1) See I Kings 17:22-23; II Kings 4:36-37
 - (2) Tradition has it that Isaiah died by being sawed in 2.
 - (3) John Newton in his hymn says that this life is filled with "many dangers, toils, and snares..." (Amazing Grace)
 - (4) The Puritans used to say, this life is filled with "losses and crosses".
 - (5) Every Christian suffers trials and tests of all kinds with afflictions and struggles in this life....every one of us. How do we survive...this section says...By Faith!
 - (6) One of the problems in life today is that we are surprised by suffering... we are surprised by evil...and we are surprised by struggle because we think we are basically good...we believe we are entitled to better...we are certain that we have at least earned a better life...all things that are lies we tell ourselves to help us endure this life of disappointments and struggle. But it is faith and faith alone in Christ that can see us through.

- (7) They suffered as God had destined them to suffer the reproach of Christ and these were God's saints...whom the world was not worthy of!**
- e. **Vss. 39-40 tells us that this faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things unseen...in a different way.**
- (1) “..commended through their faith...” Justified through faith alone...declared justified by God just as He does us today...not because of their/our works...but so we can do “good works” that God has appointed for us ahead of time to do.**
- (2) Faith is a marathon something that we must push through to the end of our very lives...**
- (3) There can be no laziness...we must always be on alert.**
- (4) They received commendation for their faithfulness for what God was doing in and through them...but they didn't receive what had been promised...**
- While many promises were fulfilled**
 - The hope for the Messiah was yet to come...**
 - But BY FAITH they were assured of the things hoped for and convicted about the things not seen... because their faith enables them to believe God's promises and live accordingly.**
- (5) They didn't see Him...but they believed in Him...just as we have not seen Him and yet we still believe in Him...by faith.**
- (6) Together as One Church we will all be made perfect on THAT DAY...the Day of Christ's return. God's perfect bride = glorification ...not in this life but in the next.**
- (7) The author of Hebrews challenges us 21 centuries later with this chapter. How do we live the Christian life? By Faith!**
- Faith that believes that God created by the power of His Word out of nothing.**
 - Faith that believes that God's plan of redemption also included the Fall.**
 - Faith that believes God always keeps His promises even when we can't see the promised completely or even partially fulfilled.**
 - Faith that believes God can and does do the impossible.**
 - Faith that believes Christ sacrifice was sufficient to save all His Elect from the past into the future until He returns.**
 - Faith that God can and will reach all who are His no matter where they are or when they are.**
 - Faith that depends upon God for whatever we are going to have and achieve.**
 - Faith that our lives are meaningful and pleasing to Him even if we don't do the “great things of the world”.**
 - Faith that gets you through trials.**
 - Faith that stays with us to the end.**
3. By way of wrapping up this chapter; remember 11:6... *“Without faith it is impossible to please God”* How does this chapter exposit that verse?
- a. **If that statement is true and it is...Then it follows that without faith it is impossible to live the Christian life.**

- b. Look at I Thessalonians 2:4- How does this passage help us in understanding this idea of pleasing God?
 - (1) Our purpose is to Glorify God in all that we do...one of the main things we are called to do is proclaim and to live God's Word out before our family and the world... a living testimony to God.**
 - (2) Jesus lived to please His Father (John 8:29) leaving us an example to do the same.**
 - (3) This living also includes how we endure hardship and temptations and tests from God.**
 - (4) We please God when we do as He wills...and as He prescribes.**
 - c. **We are to trust God to fulfill His spiritual blessings/promises, no matter what our situation in life.**
 - d. **If they had judged God's faithfulness simply on what had been fulfilled in their own lifetime, or if they would had said we will trust God to the point that you fulfill your promises in their lifetime, they would have fallen short in faith...and many did years later...but these did not.**
 - e. **Because they had faith, given to them by God, they were able to trust God to the end for His promises even promises that they were not able to see with complete clarity. In God's word they saw that God would send a Messiah...and by faith they believed and that affected how they lived the rest of their lives.**
 - f. **Even though they didn't see they still believed...by faith. But all things will not be fulfilled until He returns...and these people are good examples/models of the faith to keep us physically reminded of how we are expected to live before the Lord...by faith.**
 - g. **By faith believers gain access to realities that cannot be seen...access, assurance and identity in things and the One who has not been seen. *"Jesus said, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet believed.'"* (John 20:29)**
 - h. **Faith moves people to take appropriate action in response to God's Word and will and they/ we are rewarded with the assurance of eternal life... *"whoever does the will of God abides forever."*- I John 2:17b**
4. How would you summarize the lessons we are expected to learn from such an ancient truth as taught in these verses?
- a. **We are to trust God to fulfill His spiritual blessings/promises, no matter what our situation in life.**
 - b. **If they had judged God's faithfulness simply on what had been fulfilled in their own lifetime, or if they would had said we will trust God to the point that you fulfill your promises in their lifetime, they would have fallen short in faith...and many did years later...but these did not.**
 - c. **Because they had faith, given to them by God, they were able to trust God to the end for His promises even promises that they were not able to see with complete clarity. In God's word they saw that God would send a Messiah...and by faith they believed and that affected how they lived the rest of their lives.**

- d. Even though they didn't see they still believed...by faith. But all things will not be fulfilled until He returns...and these people are good examples/models of the faith to keep us physically reminded of how we are expected to live before the Lord...by faith.**
- e. By faith believers gain access to realities that cannot be seen...access, assurance and identity in things and the One who has not been seen. *"Jesus said, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet believed.'"* (John 20:29)**
- f. Faith moves people to take appropriate action in response to God's Word and will and they/ we are rewarded with the assurance of eternal life... *"whoever does the will of God abides forever."* I John 2:17b**

Lessons from Hebrews
July 7, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Two weeks ago now, we looked at Moses...the real Moses ...in short form. He was groomed by his adopted mother as if he would become a Pharaoh. We learned a lot of facts even about his adoptive mother...so I suppose the question is what do you remember about the brief overview of Moses life that you may or may not have known before?
2. How do we see God's providence in the life of Moses concerning what we looked at a couple of weeks ago?

C. Hebrew 11:23-29 continued...

1. What do we learn about the faith and the faithfulness of Moses true parents in vs. 24?

d. They believed in the LORD and they trusted God, convinced that God would affect a deliverance for Moses...maybe through Moses, as well.

By faith, for them, has a few nuances in that :

(4) They believed the general promise of God to eventually deliver His people.

(5) They believed that time of deliverance to be soon.

(6) The word "beautiful" in this text (and in Acts 7:20) seems to indicate more than simply he was an extremely handsome child...after all doesn't most everyone already believe they have a beautiful baby?

- **Since this section begins with describing their faith there seems to be some perception on their part because of their faith that this baby was going to be remarkable in that he would accomplish something extraordinary for the LORD...**

- **In Acts 7:20-21- *"At this time Moses was born; he was beautiful in God's sight ... and when he was exposed (Probably...exposed to the elements, hence placed in the basket in the bulrushes...but also , sent out from his house or maybe when someone found him), Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and he was mighty in his words and deeds."***

■ **The word "beautiful" can also be translated as "exceedingly fair" or "exceeding fair to God"= divinely purposed as the Hebrew idiom indicates.**

■ **Josephus writes that Pharaoh's daughter used to say of Moses that he was "in form divine". So even his Egyptian mother saw something special in him.**

- **Which may have meant that they also believed/ thought he might be the deliverer God had promised.**

e. Practically speaking we can say that Moses was literally saved because of the faith of his parents.

- f. **They were not afraid of men but hid Moses for the first 3 months of his life.**
 - **They were civilly disobedient because they knew that Pharaoh's command was contrary to nature and more importantly contrary to God's law.**
 - **Even the taking in of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter was a sign of God's divine intervention because Moses was destined by God for something more than the average Hebrew.**
2. **What do we learn about faith and being faithful from Moses in these texts from (vs. 24-29)?**
 - i. **Moses' parents influence on him was amazing to be sure after all at least his mother had access to him until he was 3 years old instilling in him, it would appear, the truths of his forefathers...the all the content of Genesis in oral form.**
 - (1) **This tells us today how important it is to begin educating our children in the language and truths of the Bible as soon as possible...**
 - (2) **This alone does not save them...but when God calls they are ready.**
 - j. **But God's mercy and grace is even more powerful in that after all the years of his growing up...the next 37 or so...**
 - (1) **God through His Spirit brought his identity forward by changing the heart of Moses. When Moses least expected it...(think Paul, as well, maybe even yourself)...**
 - (2) **Moses responded to God's internal call and regeneration as one counted among God's elect from before the foundations of the world.**
 - k. **Because of his faith in God, Moses defies the "world." (Read Egypt the most powerful nation in the world at the time.)**
 - l. **Moses didn't want to be numbered among the Egyptians... He declined to be numbered among the world.**
 - m. **He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.**
 - n. **Choosing solidarity with his people no matter the cost to him.**
 - **He chose to suffer...he sacrificed his life in Pharaoh's household...a life of "ease" rather than be counted among the Egyptians and all the material pleasures that came with their lifestyle and religion.**
 - **His identity was to be "only" found in the God of his forefathers...the God of creation...the one true God.**
 - o. **Now after Moses kills the Egyptian for beating a Hebrew, the next day, he encounters 2 Hebrews fighting among themselves and seeks to call them on their lack of care for one another as brothers and they turn it around on him as if to say this isn't your business; Exodus 2:14 says, *"Who made you a prince and a judge over us (read judge and jury)? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid, and thought 'Surely the thing is known.'***
 - (5) **He feared that the murder would be made public.**

- (6) It was obvious from the way that it is talked about that in the moment he made a plan to kill the Egyptian... *"He looked this way and then that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."* In other words, this was a pre-meditated act on his part...which could have even brought the death penalty from his new people let alone the Egyptians.**
- (7) He was aware of God's law on taking another's life and he may have feared reprisal from God's people in how they would incorrectly judge him by how they misused the and misunderstood law.**
- (8) It was only later that Pharaoh found out.**
- p. He left Egypt not necessarily fearful of the Pharaoh's wrath...because of his "new- found" faith he had a healthy fear of God and maybe a fear that the other Hebrews may not uphold the Word of God in judging him as protecting a brother in the LORD. After all they had not shown that they understood God's Word in the way they were treating one another.**
- q. Then Moses returned to set God's people free after listening to God at the burning bush...and by faith he kept the Passover.**
- (5) He believed God in what God had said.**
- (6) He trusted God to protect His people this way by smearing the blood on the doorframes....and not destroy the firstborn of even the Israelites.**
- (7) He responded to what God says by faith...doing what God directs.**
- (8) He was not fearful that his "mission" would be thwarted by Pharaoh.**
- r. By faith he led the people across the Red Sea on dry ground and Pharaoh's army was destroyed.**

Lessons from Hebrews
July 14, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

3. What do we learn about faith and being faithful from Moses in these texts from (vs. 24-29)?

s. Moses' parents influence on him was amazing to be sure after all at least his mother had access to him until he was 3 years old instilling in him, it would appear, the truths of his forefathers...the all the content of Genesis in oral form.

(3) This tells us today how important it is to begin educating our children in the language and truths of the Bible as soon as possible...

(4) This alone does not save them...but when God calls they are ready.

t. But God's mercy and grace is even more powerful in that after all the years of his growing up...the next 37 or so...

(3) God through His Spirit brought his identity forward by changing the heart of Moses. When Moses least expected it...(think Paul, as well, maybe even yourself)...

(4) Moses responded to God's internal call and regeneration as one counted among God's elect from before the foundations of the world.

u. Because of his faith in God, Moses defies the "world." (Read Egypt the most powerful nation in the world at the time.)

v. Moses didn't want to be numbered among the Egyptians... He declined to be numbered among the world.

w. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

x. Choosing solidarity with his people no matter the cost to him.

- **He chose to suffer...he sacrificed his life in Pharaoh's household...a life of "ease" rather than be counted among the Egyptians and all the material pleasures that came with their lifestyle and religion.**
- **His identity was to be "only" found in the God of his forefathers...the God of creation...the one true God.**

y. Now after Moses kills the Egyptian for beating a Hebrew, the next day, he encounters 2 Hebrews fighting among themselves and seeks to call them on their lack of care for one another as brothers and they turn it around on him as if to say this isn't your business; Exodus 2:14 says, *"Who made you a prince and a judge over us (read judge and jury)? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid, and thought 'Surely the thing is known.'*

(9) He feared that the murder would be made public.

(10) It was obvious from the way that it is talked about that in the moment he made a plan to kill the Egyptian... *"He looked this way and then that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."* In other words, this was a pre-meditated act on his part...which could have even brought the death penalty from his new people let alone the Egyptians.

(11) He was aware of God's law on taking another's life and he may have feared reprisal from God's people in how they would incorrectly judge him by how they misused the and misunderstood law.

(12) It was only later that Pharaoh found out.

z. He left Egypt not necessarily fearful of the Pharaoh's wrath...because of his "new-found" faith he had a healthy fear of God and maybe a fear that the other Hebrews may not uphold the Word of God in judging him as protecting a brother in the LORD. After all they had not shown that they understood God's Word in the way they were treating one another.

aa. Then Moses returned to set God's people free after listening to God at the burning bush...and by faith he kept the Passover.

(9)He believed God in what God had said.

(10) He trusted God to protect His people this way by smearing the blood on the doorframes....and not destroy the firstborn of even the Israelites.

(11) He responded to what God says by faith...doing what God directs.

(12) He was not fearful that his "mission" would be thwarted by Pharaoh.

bb.By faith he led the people across the Red Sea on dry ground and Pharaoh's army was destroyed.

4. How do we see God's providence in the life of Moses?

C. Hebrews 11:26

1. Look again at verse 26. It sounds so New Testament doesn't it? Well, it is!

g. Paul made a similar statement when he said, "*Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.*" (ESV)

h. Moses considered all the treasures of Egypt...which were his as he lived in the palace...not to be compared with the privileged of bearing the reproach of Christ.

(5)You see the sufferings of Moses and the people are in some way linked to the sufferings of the Christ.

(6)All that Moses suffered were for the cause of God's plan of salvation/redemption...and he knew that his suffering was part of that plan and so he was proud to receive it as part of God's plan. Wow...we hardly ever, look at our suffering that way, do we? *I Peter 2:20-21- "For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps."*

(7)Because he was looking forward to his reward...to God's "Well done!" Being hated for Christ was better than being loved by men...for the reward was eternal with God and only temporary with men.

(8) Think of Christ on the cross.. Hebrews 12, “...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Christ reward for all His suffering which was the climax of the Godheads plan of salvation/redemption... was to be seated back with the Father.

i. One of the problems with the Church today:

(3) It wants the world to like us...to think well of us...not to call us names...we do not wish to bear the reproach of Christ...the hatred of the world.

(4) Moses is an example of how faith stands up to the offerings of the world and its reproach when it can't win us over. Moses would rather have God's praise than the world.

j. So the author of Hebrews is saying to his congregation and to us, ***“Seek the reward of Christ...His ‘well done’. For it is better than anything the world may attempt to give and it is eternal.”***

k. ***“Moses’ choice exemplifies certainty of what he hoped for, since he was looking ahead to his reward.”*** Notes from the Reformation Study Bible-) This was a reward, by the way, that he could not see which takes us back to our original definition for faith in vs. 1.

l. **Faith values the rewards...the promises of God and denies the world. See also I John 2:15-17- *“Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions; is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”***

D. Hebrews 11:30-40- the rest

5. In these verses there are at least 5 different things that he teaches us about faith. Can you spot them and put them into words?

f. **VS. 30- Believing God when the odds look impossible...**

g. **Vs. 31- believing God when you cannot imagine that He loves you.**

h. **Vss. 32-34- Believing God is the key ingredient to every spiritual achievement in this life.**

i. **Vss. 35-38- Believing God is key to enduring trials and tribulations in this life.**

j. **Vss. 39-40- Believing God is not something that you do at the beginning of the Christian life and then you are done with it. Believing God is going to be necessary throughout our life up to our dying breath.**

6. What do these other people mentioned here teach us about faith and being faithful?

f. **The children of Israel responded by faith to the word of Joshua and marched and the walls of Jericho fell. The impossible happened. They believed God could do the impossible. Their only knowledge that this would defeat the city was provided by God in His promise, *“I have given Jericho into your hand.”* (Josh. 6:2)**

(3) Remember a whole generation had been judged for unbelief...except for Caleb and Joshua and their households.

(4) But now a new generation is being brought into the Promised Land and they must respond to God in faith...He says walk for 7

days...they walked...He says shout and they shout...He says blow trumpets and they blow trumpets and the great walls of Jericho came crumbling down. They believed without seeing...

g. *"Rahab, the prostitute..."*

(1) "The Prostitute..."- in that culture her lifestyle defined her...even though there is no evidence that she was still engaging in the lifestyle at the time of the spies coming into the city. But it seems that most people do not know of her conversion...

- Maybe she was a recent convert and she was trying to get her life in order...the fear of the one true God seems to have gotten a hold of her...she even knows His personal name. (Joshua 2:9-14) So the people and the authorities assumed...she still was.**
- Josephus mentions that Rahab kept an inn which goes along with the rabbinic texts concerning the word we translate prostitute. It was not uncommon for an inn to have a duel purpose in the pagan world...however the answer to her assumed profession is cleared up in James where he calls her a prostitute using the Greek word most often used for that line of work. And James only refers to her that way in recounting the original story...because James also knows what happens after the LORD changes her life...**

(2) *"The Prostitute..."* who can love such a one?

- God can and does...she gave up all that she knew and the city she had lived in all of her life to serve the Lord and His people....**
- She identified with those who believed... not with the disobedient who would be destroyed...and her reward...she was justified (James 2:25) and became the grandmother of King David...in the family line of the Messiah. Rahab found love in the LORD and then love in one of the Lord's men...and she is listed in the genealogy of our Lord in Mathew 1.**
- So in the end she loses the sinful label and acquires a most noble one... "Child of God"...her identity is in Christ...in the God head.**

(3) Rahab is such a great example of how God changes us from being children of wrath to being adopted children of God... *"...and so we are!"*

(4) But she lied and was civilly disobedient! How then can she be called a godly woman?

- First, we must understand that Joshua was doing what he needed to do by sending the spies into the land to get reconnaissance of the city of Jericho...special teams op, if you will. Even though God had decreed the victory Joshua was responsible to be diligent in preparing his people for battle...just like I am called to prepare y'all for battle even though Jesus secured your salvation 2000 years ago.**
- Unlike the SEAL teams these spies were found out right away...after all the army of Israel was only a little ways away...**
- At first blush it might appear that Rahab was simply trying to save her own skin and the skin of her family by making a covenant with the spies for their safety...and that might be true if you stopped reading at Joshua 2:10.**

- **But by verse 11 it is very evident that she has a true faith in the one true God.**
 - **In the ancient near East every one knew that there were more Gods than their own...if fact, they all understood that each people have their own gods...and they were tolerant of those gods up to the point that their gods competed with their own household and national gods.**
 - **Rahab makes a grand confession of faith here in Joshua 2:11 for she “KNOWS” that Israel’s God is the God of heaven and earth...in other words, the One True God. So she is saying I am one of you!**
 - **She even seems to understand the covenant concept of the faith by seeking to enter in to a covenant with these spies...using what they would clearly understand since these men were faithful ...handpicked by Joshua himself.**
- **But all of this brings us back to the original question- Is her lie justified?**
 - **One train of thought by past theologians is that it was not...but in spite of her lie she is still a saint by God’s grace, just like the rest of us who were chosen before the foundations of the world to be part of God’s family. They say if she truly believed in God’s sovereignty and providence she would have turned in the spies and let God intervene in their lives. But what would have been remarkable enough about that to get into the Hall of the Heroes of the Faith?**
 - **The 2nd train of thought posed by such men as Augustine, Bonhoeffer and R.C. Sproul is that what she did was actually biblically and morally acceptable before God as she acted in faith assured of what she could not see. How do they make this claim?- Well, the heart of biblical justice is that people are given what is due them...that is what justice is all about. Righteousness requires that we tell the truth but we are never required to tell the truth to someone who has no right to the truth. Rahab’s duty as a believer was to protect these representatives of God from this wicked king and his officials...so with that being the case... her lying and civil disobedience are seen as justified because she was obeying the mandate by God not to participate in the destruction of God’s people...just like the mid-wives were commended by God for lying to Pharaoh.**
 - **Hence she was courageous and righteous making the Heroes list for the reason of her faith by believing something that she hoped for but as yet had not seen.**

Lessons from Hebrews
July 21, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. How did we see God's providence in the life of Moses?
2. What do we learn about faith and being faithful from God's people during the Exodus and Rahab in verses 29-31?
 - h. The children of Israel, BY FAITH, responded to the word of the LORD from Moses and crossed the Red Sea...and there immediate reward was to see their pursuers perish and they were safe from Egypt.**
 - i. The children of Israel responded by faith to the word of Joshua and marched and the walls of Jericho fell. The impossible happened. They believed God could do the impossible. Their only knowledge that this would defeat the city was provided by God in His promise, *"I have given Jericho into your hand."* (Josh. 6:2)**
 - j. Rahab makes the Heroes list for the reason of by faith she believed God and she sided herself with His people which entailed doing something that she hoped for but as yet had not seen. She is an example of Loving God and Loving God's people sacrificially.**

C. Hebrews 11:32-40- What do the rest of the people mentioned here teach us about faith and faithfulness?

- 1. Vs. 32-34 makes it clear how important faith is to every situation and circumstance...**
 - a. These verses highlight what God accomplished through faithful...not perfect...men.**
 - b. Faith is the key ingredient...not military skill or physical strength or even courage...just faith. We are to live and serve God by faith!**
- 2. Vss. 35-38 speaks clearly that the only way for us to get through the dark nights of the soul...to overcome the temptations of this life...to endure the disappointments and griefs that come in this life is with a life of faith.**
 - a. See I Kings 17:22-23; II Kings 4:36-37**
 - b. Tradition has it that Isaiah died by being sawed in 2.**
 - c. John Newton in his hymn says that this life is filled with "many dangers, toils, and snares..." (Amazing Grace)**
 - d. The Puritans used to say, this life is filled with "losses and crosses".**
 - e. Every Christian suffers trials and tests of all kinds with afflictions and struggles in this life....every one of us. How do we survive...this section says...By Faith!**
 - f. We too often take issue with these things in this life today is that**
 - (1) We are surprised by suffering...**
 - (2) We are surprised by evil...and**
 - (3) We are surprised by struggle because we think we are basically good...we believe we are entitled to better...we are certain that we have at least earned a better life...**
 - (4) These are lies we tell ourselves to help us endure this life of disappointments and struggle. But it is faith and faith alone in Christ that can see us through.**

g. We find an interesting statement in vs. 38- *"...of whom the world was not worthy..."*

(1) For context we read the whole thing, speaking of saints and martyrs for God he says, *"They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated...of whom the world was not worthy...wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."*

(2) They suffered as God had destined them to suffer the reproach of Christ and these were God's saints...whom the world was not worthy of! Think about that statement a minute!

(3) Though this is all true about them...this in no way means that their mission was ineffective or that they should have run away into a hole at the first encounter with trouble....

- **They had a calling...that calling required hardship as given by God.**
- **That calling required commitment to God no matter the outcome.**
- **God's honor required that they suffer the reproach of the world.**

(4) With all of our warts and sins and imperfections...how can this statement be absolutely true...that the world was not worthy of these?

- **God and His word says so.**
- **See Look at II Corinthians 4:17-18**

Lessons from Hebrews
July 28, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What do we know about these specific people mentioned in vs. 32-34?

a. **Gideon**

(1) Putting God to the test with the fleece...

(2) The lapping drinkers—300 strong against a force of over 120,000.

b. **Barak- cowering before an army calling on Deborah's help**

c. **Samson- sexual sins...comes back in the nick of time.**

d. **Jephthah- ?**

e. **David- warrior-King-adulterer-murderer**

f. **Samuel- Man of God- prophet-judge a type of king**

2. Just by hearing their names what things would have come to their minds? (I want to highlight 2.)

a. **Gideon-**

(1) Best known along with Samson and Samuel.

(2) Midian- Moses' Midian? (Jethro was from the South part of the land of Midian the son of Abraham and Keturah)...

- **Keturah was Abraham's last wife/concubine when Abraham was between 142-150.**

- **Sarah was 89 and Abraham was 99 when Isaac was born.**

- **Sarah was 127 when she died...which makes Abraham approx.... 137 and Isaac 36 or 37.**

- **It would have taken awhile for them to get Rebekah from the far country where Abraham's servant went to fetch her so by the time she gets back Isaac is probably 41 or 42 and Abraham is approx.... 142.**

- **Sometime soon after that Abraham married Keturah and they have 6 boys and then Abraham dies at 175.**

- **These are probably tribes from the east who were aligned with Moab and Amalek, they were known as an undisciplined mob with no king or general by this time...much like a terrorist group today...each faction had a leader but there was not necessarily one person running the whole show and these people were oppressing Israel...during the times of the Judges- Judges 6.**

(3) Gideon and his family are beating out wheat that they have hidden away from the Midian tax guys just so they can have some food for their family.

(4) The angel of the LORD commissions Him a judge.

(5) Unconvinced, he seeks a sign from God...the angel of the LORD with a sacrifice...that was accepted By the Angel of The LORD...a pre-incarnated Messiah...2nd Person of the Trinity...for only God can accept sacrifices...and Gideon also expects to die for he had seen face to face, the Angel of the Lord...not something you say to a mere angel.

- (6) **The Lord tells him next to take a bull to use as a sacrifice...tearing down the altar to Baal the Asherah poles and use them for the fire for the offering to the LORD.**
 - (7) **Because of how close they are as a family...his father sees that nothing happens when Baal's alter is torn down and he turns and protects his son with a grand speech that basically says, If Baal is so powerful let him contend with my son...and oh by the way...anyone who takes Ball side will die by the morning...**
 - (8) **So like good upset evil people ...Let's get our army together and take Gideon...**
 - (9) **Gideon the reluctant judge, seeks another sign... of God...the wet and then dry fleece...**
 - (10) **The 300 mighty men who lapped the water out of their hands...with the help of the other tribes once the enemy army was on the run defeated the Midian's, the Amalekites 120,000 plus men were put to the sword...**
 - (11) **Gideon disciplined two cities of Dan for not helping them**
 - (12) **Then in the later days of his life he set up an ephod...which was probably only supposed to be a memorial to the work of the LORD...but it was wrong in what it represented...so this "good" man even had flaws...yet he is in the list of the Heroes of the Faith. And because of this Gideon had to forsake his family.**
- b. Jephthah- (actually pronounced Jif tey h) a not so well known Judge of God's people.
- (1) **Judges 11-12:1-7**
 - (2) **When he was grown he was cast out of his family because his mother was "a strange woman"**
 - **The ESV translates this "prostitute" ...and that is a possible translation**
 - **But more than likely given what the excuse that was given when they sent him out... "*...for you are the son of another woman*"...the above reference is probably for the fact that she was either a Gentile or an Ishmaelite...neither of which could be included in temple worship.**
 - (3) **God forged a mighty warrior in the land of Tob fit for a time such as the one God placed him to fight against the Ammonites.**
 - **Jewish Tradition has it that he was well known for his forays into enemy territory to disrupt and to deal decisively with them,**
 - **It is said that he was more than an able hunter and fighter...**
 - **He was not a common crook...more of a "freedom fighter" like David was as an outcast from Saul's court...**
 - **So successful was he that even the people of Gilead who had formally cast him out came searching for him to wage war against the Ammonites.**
 - (4) **In Chapter 11:11 we see him committing himself and his judgeship to the LORD which tells us that god's hand was in all of this from the beginning. (Think Joseph!)**

- (5) But in his boasting he made a vow (a vow he didn't need to make) that would cost him dearly... He said he would sacrifice to God whatever/whoever came out of his door on his arrival from the defeat of the Ammonites...and his daughter came out first.**
- (6) Now comes a difficult question. Look at Judges 11:29-31. The men listed here are said to all men who "executed justice"...that is God's justice. Sooo...How could God include Jephthah in this list of Heroes of the Faith if his last act was to illegally according to God's law and horrifically slay his own daughter flailing her out like he would any other sacrifice before the LORD?**
- **Is this his sin ...like David's adultery and murder...like Gideon's ephod?**
 - **Was he just that boastful? Think Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12-
"But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no, no' so that you may not fall under condemnation."
 But then what about vs. 29- *"The Spirit of the LORD was upon Jephthah..."*?**
 - **But what would have Jephthah assumed when he came back from battle?**
 - **Women consistently came running, dancing, and playing musical instruments after a great victory...so he would have known they would be coming out to meet him and the army when he made the vow...**
 - **The words in the Hebrew in vs. 31, *"...whoever comes out to meet me"* actually stands for encountering a person not an animal...so he wasn't anticipating an animal to come to meet him that he would sacrifice...because what if it had been unclean...it would definitely not be an acceptable sacrifice...just like children were not an acceptable sacrifice.**
 - **Further Hebrew clarification by Rabbis through the ages is this. The Hebrew word we translate "and" is the Hebrew word "vav" which can mean "and", in that the text reads as it does...shall be Yahweh's and I will offer it up as a whole burnt offering." But this word can also be translated "or" as in, "...shall be Yahweh's or shall be offered up as a burnt offering." The "vav connection here translated "or" would mean in Hebrew that whoever came out would be dedicated to Yahweh...and only if necessary would be actually sacrificed.**
 - **Also, being under the influence of the Spirit (vs. 29) that he was using the language of "whole burnt offering" symbolically as the LORD does of Aaron and his sons (the Levites) were symbolically offered to the LORD as a wave offering...something completely consumed by fire...which was a gesture of complete and total dedication to the LORD. These dedicated Levites also stood in symbolically for all the first-born of the Israelites as God's sacrifice....a substitution. So it is possible he was talking of a complete devotion of all who came out to the LORD.**

- (7) The willing submission by Jephthah's daughter seems more to lean to her being kept from marriage ...his only child...would not produce any heirs...a sacrifice to be sure....rather than child sacrifice which was abhorrent to God. She wept over the not being able to produce offspring... *"wept for her virginity"*...not her death...for she would remain celibate. *"She had never known a man"*...or ... *"she did not know a man."* If she is really dead at this point...what is the point of this information?
- (8) The vow that he made become known and her submission...her willingness to submit to her father to remain celibate when the world of that time and the command of God was to marry and reproduce...and this was then lamented for ages to come as *"... it became a custom in Israel..."*. A statute....as they went up year after year to lament with her. This is the language that is used of Hannah as she went up to the temple year after year.
- (9) So the "tragedy" of this vow was that he would have no prodigy for his family line since she was his only child.
- So Japheth may have thought he would be offering up someone up to full time service of the LORD...think Samuel!...But he was thinking it would perhaps be someone else besides his daughter...and of course women in the service of the tabernacle were not uncommon (See Ex. 38:8).
 - So Jephthah's daughter here seems in some cases to be the Hero here in that when her father became ambivalent to carry out his vow before the LORD she insists with a simple caveat for time of preparation for her service that would exclude her from ever becoming a mother. So perhaps she is not a woman to be pitied after all but one among many to be admired for her faith as well even though she remains nameless in our text.
- (10) But also think of the Nazarite vow of Numbers 6:1-21 where a man or a woman takes a vow of abstinence for life or for a time ...and while she is in that vow she was to be visited once a year by her friends who would call out to her...see and hear how she is doing in her celibacy.
- c. Oh why not...let's talk about Samson a bit...
- (1) What do we most know about Samson?
- (2) With all his sinfulness why would he be included in this list?
- **He was chosen by God to do all that is listed of him.**
 - God had his hand on him from birth
 - His birth was heralded by an angel- Judges 13— Interesting.
 - He was a judge for 20 years and the only immorality that we hear about is his...the people seemed to be relatively faithful when they had a judge.
 - The Spirit of God work through Samson a number of times. So instead of concentrating on all of his sins we need to focus on what God does through him a sinner/saint. Like us?
 - Samson stopped a lion with his bare hands under the power of the Spirit.... Just like in our Hebrews passage.

- **He sacrificed himself at the end...he knew he must die in order for God's people to experience deliverance**

(3) Why would God keep giving him strength if he was so involved in his sexual sin?

- **God is always faithful to His promises no matter if we are.**
- **Samson seems to have thoroughly believed the angels prophecy...he seems to have believed God would use the strength God gave Him so every mighty deed was done by and through faith...faith being the instrument which God uses in His children to do His will.**
- **He, like all Christians, can exercise true faith, while being unfaithful! Think sinner/saint...think of your daily life...but also at the same time think of what was secured on the cross by Christ that had nothing to do with anything we had, could or would do.**
- **Samson believe God would be faithful to His Word, but Samson seemingly didn't believe that he needed to be faithful to God's Word...or... while he may have trusted God to empower his gifting for God's purposes, he didn't trust God to satisfy him in this life. He doesn't show trust that God will actually take care of him...**
- **Much like us today...God does for everyone else, but I am not sure He can or will take care of me. It is a defeatist attitude on our part even while we may be doing ministry.**

Lessons from Hebrews
August 4, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

3. Why would you say that the writer of to the Hebrews would have mentioned these obviously flawed people in this account of those who did marvelous things in vs. 32-34 given that we often remember, first, their sins?
4. We spent a lot of time talking about Jephthah last week, as a Hero of the Faith, who else in his story would have been remembered as a hero and why?
 - a. **So Jephthah's daughter here seems in some ways to be the hero here in that when her father became ambivalent to carry out his vow before the LORD she insists with a simple caveat for time of preparation for her service that would exclude her from ever becoming a mother.**
 - b. **So perhaps she is not a woman to be pitied after all but one among many to be admired for her faith as well even though she remains nameless in our text.**
 - c. **Her willingness to submit to her father to remain celibate when the world of that time and the command of God was to marry and reproduce...and this was then lamented for ages to come as *"... it became a custom in Israel..."*... a statute....as they went up year after year to lament with her. This is the same language that is used of Hannah as she went up to the temple year after year.**

C. Hebrews 11:38-40

1. In verse 38 an interesting statement is made, after delineating the troubles and deaths of unnamed people, the author states, *"...of whom the world was not worthy..."* What are we to make of such a statement as this?
 - a. **For context we read the whole thing, speaking of saints and martyrs for God he says, *"They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated...of whom the world was not worthy...wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."***
 - b. **They suffered as God had destined them to suffer the reproach of Christ and these were God's saints...whom the world was not worthy of! Think about that statement a minute!**
 - c. **Though this is all true about them...this in no way means that their mission was ineffective or that they should have run away into a hole at the first encounter with trouble....**
 - (1)**They had a calling...that calling required hardship as given by God.**
 - (2)**That calling required commitment to God no matter the outcome.**
 - (3)**God's honor required that they suffer the reproach of the world.**
 - d. **But still, with all of their sins and imperfections...how can this statement be absolutely true...that the world was not worthy of these?**
 - (1)**The world is not worthy of anything "good" that God does for it!**
 - (2)**God and His word says it is true...so it is true**

(3) See Look at II Corinthians 4:16-18- *“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”*

2. Vss. 39-40 tells us that this faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things unseen...in a different way. ***“...though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”***
 - a. They were justified through faith alone...declared justified by God just as He does us today...not because of their/our works...but so we can do “good works” that God has appointed for us ahead of time to do.
 - b. Faith is a marathon something that we must push through to the end of our very lives...
 - c. There can be no laziness...we must always be on alert.
 - d. They received commendation for their faithfulness for what God was doing in and through them...but they didn’t receive what had been promised...
 - (1) While many promises were fulfilled
 - (2) The hope for the Messiah was yet to come...
 - (3) But BY FAITH they were assured of the things hoped for and convicted about the things not seen... because the faith God gave them enabled them to believe God’s promises and live accordingly.
 - e. They didn’t see Him...but they believed in Him...just as we have not seen Him and yet we still believe in Him...by faith.
 - f. Together as One Church we will all be made perfect on THAT DAY...the Day of Christ’s return. God’s perfect bride = glorification ...not in this life but in the next.
3. How would you summarize the lessons we have learned from these faithful people verses?
 - a. Over and over again faith is directly related to God’s word. Each of these named responded to God’s Word.
 - b. Faith is NOT in faith...faith is NOT in believing as hard as we can something that we thought up in our own minds.
 - c. Faith listens to God’s commands over the worlds instructions.
 - d. Faith is responding to God’s word, and of course, in this case faith also involved looking for God’s promised reward and fearing God above men.
 - e. They were all “commended” for their faith.
 - (1) Interesting in that “commendation” points to something given to them...not something that they gave to themselves.
 - (2) Commendation here =declared righteous then granted faith to glorify God in how they lived...over the course of the entire lifetime.

- f. **Offering/sacrifice/giving of worship is useless without faith. This was true with Cain and Able but it is a universal truth constantly dealt with with God's people.**
 - g. **We are to trust God to fulfill His spiritual blessings/promises, no matter what our situation in life.**
 - h. **If they had judged God's faithfulness simply on what had been fulfilled in their own lifetime, or if they would had said we will trust God to the point that you fulfill your promises in their lifetime, they would have fallen short in faith...and many did years later...but these did not.**
 - i. **Because they had faith, given to them by God, they were able to trust God to the end for His promises even promises that they were not able to see with complete clarity. In God's word they saw that God would send a Messiah...and by faith they believed and that affected how they lived the rest of their lives.**
 - j. **Even though they didn't see they still believed...by faith. But all things will not be fulfilled until He returns...and these people are good examples/models of the faith to keep us physically reminded of how we are expected to live before the Lord...by faith.**
 - k. **So faith trusts God's promises...faith values God's blessings over anything the world can offer which is only temporary... and faith trust in God even in trials.**
 - l. **They were not perfect...they didn't always exhibit this faith, but along the way even feebly they trusted and they believed and they honored the Lord because it is not the "quality" of faith that saves us...it is the Object of our faith that saves us...Jesus Christ!**
 - m. **By faith believers gain access to realities that cannot be seen...access, assurance and identity in things and the One who has not been seen. *"Jesus said, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet believed.'"* (John 20:29)**
 - n. **Faith moves people to take appropriate action in response to God's Word and will and they/ we are rewarded with the assurance of eternal life... *"whoever does the will of God abides forever."*-I John 2:17b**
 - o. **If this chapter is true and it is...then it follows that without faith it is impossible to live the Christian life.**
 - p. **Without faith it is impossible to please God!**
 - q. **(16 things...more?)**
4. **Why would you say that this chapter is important to the audience then and the audience today? The author of Hebrews challenges us 21 centuries later with this chapter. How do we live the Christian life? **By Faith!****
- a. **Faith that believes that God created by the power of His Word out of nothing.**
 - b. **Faith that believes that God's plan of redemption also included the Fall.**
 - c. **Faith that believes God always keeps His promises even when we can't see the promised completely or even partially fulfilled.**
 - d. **Faith that believes God can and does do the impossible.**
 - e. **Faith that believes Christ sacrifice was sufficient to save all His Elect from the past into the future until He returns.**

- f. Faith that God can and will reach all who are His no matter where they are or when they are.**
 - g. Faith that depends upon God for whatever we are going to have and achieve.**
 - h. Faith that our lives are meaningful and pleasing to Him even if we don't do the "great things of the world".**
 - i. Faith that gets you through trials.**
 - j. Faith that stays with us to the end.**
5. We've spent a lot of time talking through chapter 11. Now, why do you suppose the author chose these people from all the faithful ones of the Old Testament?

Lessons from Hebrews
August 11, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Considering chapter 11 again for a moment, how would you summarize some of the lessons we have learned from these faithful people verses?
 - a. **Over and over again faith is directly related to God's word. Each of these named responded to God's Word.**
 - b. **Faith is NOT in faith...faith is NOT in believing as hard as we can something that we thought up in our own minds.**
 - c. **Faith listens to God's commands over the worlds instructions.**
 - d. **Faith is responding to God's word, and of course, in this case faith also involved looking for God's promised reward and fearing God above men.**
 - e. **They were all "commended" for their faith.**
 - (1) **Interesting in that "commendation" points to something given to them...not something that they gave to themselves.**
 - (2) **Commendation here =declared righteous then granted faith to glorify God in how they lived...over the course of the entire lifetime.**
 - f. **Offering/sacrifice/giving of worship is useless without faith. This was true with Cain and Able but it is a universal truth constantly dealt with with God's people.**
 - g. **We are to trust God to fulfill His spiritual blessings/promises, no matter what our situation in life.**
 - h. **If they had judged God's faithfulness simply on what had been fulfilled in their own lifetime, or if they would had said we will trust God to the point that you fulfill your promises in their lifetime, they would have fallen short in faith...and many did years later...but these did not.**
 - i. **Because they had faith, given to them by God, they were able to trust God to the end for His promises even promises that they were not able to see with complete clarity. In God's word they saw that God would send a Messiah...and by faith they believed and that affected how they lived the rest of their lives.**
 - j. **Even though they didn't see they still believed...by faith. But all things will not be fulfilled until He returns...and these people are good examples/models of the faith to keep us physically reminded of how we are expected to live before the Lord...by faith.**
 - k. **So faith trusts God's promises...faith values God's blessings over anything the world can offer which is only temporary... and faith trust in God even in trials.**
 - l. **They were not perfect...they didn't always exhibit this faith, but along the way even feebly they trusted and they believed and they honored the Lord because it is not the "quality" of faith that saves us...it is the Object of our faith that saves us...Jesus Christ!**

- m. **By faith believers gain access to realities that cannot be seen...access, assurance and identity in things and the One who has not been seen. *"Jesus said, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet believed.'"* (John 20:29)**
 - n. **Faith moves people to take appropriate action in response to God's Word and will and they/ we are rewarded with the assurance of eternal life... *"whoever does the will of God abides forever."*-1 John 2:17b**
 - o. **If this chapter is true and it is...then it follows that without faith it is impossible to live the Christian life.**
 - p. **Without faith it is impossible to please God!**
 - q. **(16 things...more?)**
2. Why would you say that this chapter is important to the audience then and the audience today? The author of Hebrews challenges us 21 centuries later with this chapter. How do we live the Christian life? **By Faith!**
- a. **Faith that believes that God created by the power of His Word out of nothing.**
 - b. **Faith that believes that God's plan of redemption also included the Fall.**
 - c. **Faith that believes God always keeps His promises even when we can't see the promised completely or even partially fulfilled.**
 - d. **Faith that believes God can and does do the impossible.**
 - e. **Faith that believes Christ sacrifice was sufficient to save all His Elect from the past into the future until He returns.**
 - f. **Faith that God can and will reach all who are His no matter where they are or when they are.**
 - g. **Faith that depends upon God for whatever we are going to have and achieve.**
 - h. **Faith that our lives are meaningful and pleasing to Him even if we don't do the "great things of the world".**
 - i. **Faith that gets you through trials.**
 - j. **Faith that stays with us to the end.**
- C. Hebrews 12:1-11
1. Read 11:39-12:2 to get a fuller idea of the immediate context before we jump in.
 2. As we consider vss. 1-2, what would you say is the overall message that the writer of Hebrews wants to communicate...generally speaking?
 - a. **The great duty that the author is seeking to talk these believers into is to endure all things by faith just as those from chapter 11.**
 - (1) **For them to lay aside the things that distract...**
 - (2) **For them to lay aside the sins...**
 - (3) **For them to run the race...endurance through life by God's grace.**
 - b. **To do all things with Christ as the author and finisher of our faith, as our example both in victory and in struggle.**
 3. Looking at verse 1-2a what images would immediately come to the mind of his mostly Hebrew audience?
 - a. **"Therefore"- what's the "therefore" therefore in this instance?**
 - (1) **Immediate reference to the "therefore" would be chapter 11.**

- (2) But...it also refers all the way back to the last therefore...10:35**
- From 10:35 forward he is talking about how the Heroes of the Faith endured ...
 - Now was that ...by faith... which brings us to faith in whom.
- (3) He challenges them to take to heart the good lessons learned there so they can push forward in their own walk with the Lord which will be difficult just like the ones we have just talked about. Jesus said in John 16: 32-17:2-*"Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, *"Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him."***
- b. *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud..."***
- (1) These good former Jews would be thinking about another "cloud"...pillar of clouds in the wilderness...by night it became the pillar of fire.**
 - (2) These good Jewish believers would also know the event of Jesus' ascension and the promise of His return on the clouds...Acts 1:9, 11**
 - (3) The ancient Hebrews always understood this word as a symbol of the Divine presence... or clouds of glory...Shekinah glory clouds. Clouds filled the court around the tabernacle and of the Temple...**
 - (4) Clouds were also a sign of blessing as usually this meant the rains were coming into the land from God's hand.**
 - (5) We are ...they are reminded that they are surrounded as in a race where you want to be in the center of the pack as you run so that you are right where you need to be. These are pacing you...now the illustration somewhat breaks down because this seems to be a picture of a stadium and yet they are still surrounding us and cheering us on in our race.**
- c. *"...so great a cloud of witnesses..."* – or better translation would be *"martyrs"*.**
- (1) We often talk about these as friends and family...I have even used that line at funerals...but that is not even clearly a primary reference for this text.**
 - (2) These who died...or were killed for their faith. They leave behind their legacy of faith and God's grace for us to see and know personally when things get hard for us...**
 - (3) Since this word is most often rendered "martyr" they may or may not be witnessing all that is going on "down here".**
 - But the text seems to indicate that this cloud surrounds us, and it is a big cloud ...in the OT sense of covering us...encouraging us to endure as we run our race in this life...or "witnessing" in the sense of encouraging...
 - They give us an example to help get us through the struggles of life.

- **The main point here seems to be that these who have gone on before us to point to the reality we have in Christ...we can and will endure to the end when we are His. Their example should spur us on...not cause us to fear...they each completed their mission for God. Their lives clearly demonstrate that it is not impossible to face trials and adversity and still be more than conquerors by faith.**
 - **And he is telling these people that we all have this great cloud with us as individuals and as the Church...we are connected. We are not alone in our faith walk...ever.**
 - **We may be the only practicing Christian where God has placed us...but we are never alone. Remember Elijah's great dilemma when he thought he was all alone? What did the LORD tell him?- *"...there are 7000 who have not yet bowed the knee to Baal."***
- d. *"...let us also lay aside every weight/obstacle/ encumbrance/burden..."***
- (1) To run a race...especially a marathon they would have stripped down to a lion cloth...the Romans and the Greeks would have stripped completely down...the Olympics were virtually run naked by all contenders.**
 - (2) But look the text say, *"...let us also lay aside..."* Those who have gone on before us had to do this as well...they had to lay aside:

 - **Their national identities...even the promise for the time...**
 - **The fact that they never saw or would see the fulfillment of the promise of God...**
 - **Their very life in the case of Abel...**
 - **Most of those listed had to lay things aside that in and of themselves were not sinful. By virtue of being called to be a judge or a King or a priest sacrifice of things common to regular people meant not coveting those things...giving those things up or laying them down for a better cause.**
 - **The point is that they too laid things aside for the LORD's mission to be successful.****
 - (3) But what are some of the weights/obstacles/encumbrances/ burdens that we must lay aside today?**
 - **Anything that weighs us down... that distracts us from the mission ...even those things that may not be sin in and of themselves like:

 - **What is it that you spend most of your free time doing? That can be an encumbrance if it keeps you from the mission of the kingdom...to keep you from going to church, going to fellowship times with the church, Bible studies, Sunday School...**
 - **Reaching out to your church family when in need or your neighbors having them into your home so you can present the gospel in word and in deed.****
 - **Anything that is more important than the mission for God...making money in and of itself is not sinful but working so much that you don't have time for God, for your family, for the**

church, for your neighbors...is. Pride in life...prejudice...self-righteousness.

- **Interesting the Arabic translation from a few centuries ago (earliest fragment in the Arabic/Syriac Language is 8th Century BC) translated this word... *“every weight of luxury”...think about this:*
 - **The luxuries of yesterday have become the necessities of today.**
 - **The more we possess the more we want.**
 - **What used to be in control of our possessions now often our possessions possess us.**
 - **No one intends for this to happen but because we are not paying attention and laying these things aside they take the place of Christ...we become dependent upon them rather than Him. The Gospel makes it abundantly clear that we should be dependent upon God not what we have or can get. Think Matthew 6:11!**
 - **Again, things are not sinful in and of themselves; the trick is to not be dependent on things. See Hebrews 10:34- *“...you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.”*****

Lessons from Hebrews
August 18, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Read 11:39-12:3 to get a fuller idea of the immediate context as we jump in again.
2. What's the "therefore" there for in this instance?
 - a. **He challenges them to take to heart the good lessons learned there so they can push forward in their own walk with the Lord which will be difficult just like the ones we have just talked about.**
 - b. **Jesus said in John 16: 32-17:2—"Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him."**
3. We talked about the obstacles that we are to lay aside so we can run our race...but look at the text again a minute,
 - a. ***"...let us also lay aside..."***
 - b. **Those who have gone on before us had to do this as well...they had to lay aside:**
 - (1) **Their national identities...even the promise for the time...**
 - (2) **The fact that they never saw or would see the fulfillment of the promise of God...**
 - (3) **Abel laid aside his brother to do God's will in his offering...so he laid aside family to follow the LORD.**
 - (4) **The point is that they too laid things aside for the LORD's mission to be successful.**

C. Continue what he is saying in chapter 12:1-3- *"...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted"*

1. ***"...and sin which clings/ entangles so closely..."*** What would be being communicated to them by each of these phrases?
 - a. **Clings/ cleave/entangle— sin can be so sneaky...**
 - **It is so easy to tolerate especially the subtle sins and then before you know it we are accepting it as normal and we have set up a wall between us and God.**
 - **Or, it is so close we can't see it...and this is where we need the aid and assistance of others who can "see" what we can't see.**

- We are to be quick to recognize sin and be just as quick to repent of it. How can we do this?
 - By being in God's Word and prayer.
 - By being a part of a Bible-believing Church.
 - By receiving the sacraments as part of that family.
 - The means of grace are crucial in our on-going defense of sin.
 - b. The New King James-says- *"...and the sin which so easily ensnares..."*
 - c. The NASB translates this, *"...and the sin which so easily entangle us..."*
 - d. The Arabic/Syriac translations translate it this way- *"...and the sin that is so easy to be committed..."* I think this really gets at the broader meaning of the type of sin ...the one that is so easy for us to slip into...Satan knows our weaknesses and he uses them against us... which is a reminder for us to be all the more diligent with regards to this sin.
 - e. The Greek does not have the definite article there for "the sin" but that seems to be is the idea...in distinction from the encumbrances/ weight/ distractions/ obstacles...which can become sin...while most do not start out that way....this one is sin ...no doubt!
 - (1) So with these being the best translations it seems to be talking about our fallen nature, for sure...the general fallen nature that is always there affecting everything we think do and say in one way or another...
 - (2) The author could have a particular sin in mind...as in whatever particular sin seems to affect us that would keep us from being effective for the LORD.
- 2. *"...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..."***
- a. As we have said before they would have thought of an arena...and a track meet but not just any track meet but a marathon of which they are called to run with the expectations that they will finish.
 - (1) Each of the saints in Chapter 11 faced many challenges, trials and temptations over the course of many years for some of them.
 - (2) Every race has a starting point and an ending...
 - (3) Oh, there is no mention of a reward here in this verse or those who finish...but they know there will be one whether they can see it or not...
 - (4) This is a great exhortation to persevere...to endure.
 - b. *"...endurance"* ~
 - (1) Is a crucial aspect of a believer's response in faithfulness to the gracious, loving God who in giving Christ provides acceptance and salvation.
 - (2) Endurance/perseverance, then, is an inherent part of authentic "believing" that is expected of every Christian. Inadequate believing withdraws in times of confusion (John 6:66- *"After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him."*), but true commitment endures by looking to Christ for the resources of life (John 6:68-69, *"So Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you want to go away as well?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.'"*)).

(3) God has made it plain that His people will at times meet suffering, hardship, persecution and other trials. Through their endurance, however, they will prove God's faithfulness and develop true Christian character. Endurance enables us to resist to the point of death so that we may grow.

(4) R.C. Sproul said once- *This is the will of God, even our sanctification!*

(5) Endurance comes from a compound Greek word: hupo (under) + meno (to remain). Literally, it means endurance under pressure, under testing, under trials. By God's grace alone we can learn to stick with it when troubles, trials, discouragement and difficulties come into our lives.

(6) Many Christians retreat from trials and they become spiritual creampuffs. They never really grow and mature. James tells us there is no easy way to mature. We can only become mature and full-grown when we learn to endure trials when they come.

(7) What is in the mind of the writers that use this word, endurance? In other words, what are they expecting the people and themselves to have to endure?

- **Imprisonment**
- **Impoundment of property**
- **Persecution**
- **Oppression**
- **Martyrdom**

(8) How does this, then, apply to us, today?

c. Next- *"...the race set before us..."*

(1) Jesus is the WAY... there is only one way to run the race. A marathon cannot be run in reverse.

(2) This is the race that is or has been *"set before us"*...someone else has design and implemented the course...say... destiny of our lives.

- **Jesus says in Matthew 7:13-14- *"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."***
- **And here again- John 6:44- *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."***
- **One more- John 10:27-30- *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."***

(3) The way this race is to be run has been marked out by Him in His Word...the road map, if you will.

3. Vs. 2a- "...looking to Jesus..."

- a. Since we have "finally" dropped everything...there is now nothing else to look at...nothing else to draw our attention away...so we can look fully at Jesus.**
 - (1) Looking to...longing...turning an eye toward Jesus ...with the sight of faith... ..expectantly, not anxiously, but in the sense that hope is in sight.**
 - (2) The Greek word "aphorontes" = fix your eyes on Jesus...never taking our eyes off of Him.**
 - **The emphasis is looking upon Jesus only to help win the race set before us.**
 - **We are not to look even to those who are cheering us on...as if we could see them...but we are not to linger "with them"...the fact that THEY are cheering us on...**
 - **The only voice that matters...is Jesus'...fixing our eyes on Jesus is like setting your eye on a target you don't take your eyes off the target or you will lose it.**
- b. He is already at the finished line.**
- c. Jesus also said in John 6:37- *"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."***
- d. We can finish**
 - (1) Because He is also looking at us along with the great cloud of witnesses...and**
 - (2) We can see Him with the eyes of faith...which are assured of things hoped for and convicted about the things of God that are not seen.**
- e. The race is not about winning...**
 - **Jesus did that...**
 - **It is about finishing...**
 - **Some of the greatest finishes at the Olympics have not been by the one who wins...but how one finish...**
 - **I have seen people literally crawling across the finish line of the marathon hours after everyone else is gone to their rooms and are out partying...simply because it was their goal in representing their country ...to finish...**
 - **Our goal in representing our Father is too finish...which will bring Him glory...**
 - **But not only is Jesus at the end of the race cheering us on but He also enables us to endure...**

Lessons from Hebrews
August 25, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Hebrews 12:1-3- ***"Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted."***
2. We said last week that the race is not about winning...then what is the race about?
 - a. **Our sanctification which bring us to glory.**
 - b. **Obedience which brings God glory.**
 - c. **The fact there is a prize at the end...not a participation trophy...but eternal life.**
3. And yet winning is involved in this race...how so?
 - a. **We get the Holy Spirit.**
 - b. **It confirms our adoption into God's family. So the race confirms God's covenantal promises being fulfilled in His people.**
 - c. **So we get to run the race. Not everyone is chosen...just like in the Olympics...only some are chosen to represent. But we are chosen solely because of the Father's covenantal/electing love predestining us to adoption through Jesus Christ...we cannot or could not do anything on our own to win His favor/choice and we couldn't choose it for ourselves.**
 - d. **Through the hardship and through the joy we get the satisfaction that we are fulfilling our purpose...to run so that God is glorified.**
 - e. **Eternal life ...the ultimate reward...**

C. Hebrews 2a- revisited-

4. ***"...the founder and perfecter of our faith,"***-they would have noticed these 2 words!
 - a. **The Greek word for founder "arkagon"- here communicates more of an originator, pioneer or trailblazer...the one who goes before...cuts the path...sets down the way...this goes well with :**
 - (1) **For He is the one who has set the path before us...He is the One who commands us to *"Enter through the narrow gate..."***
 - (2) **The path is before us:**
 - **There may be times because of our sin or discouragement we can't see it.**
 - **Which will require us to get down on our hands and knees with our not so bright light of Christ burning within us...and it will be down on the ground that we will find the path...it's there...we just can't always see it.**

- (3) So we look to our High Priest...who has gone before us and blazed the trail...and is at the end of the trail.
- b. He is also the “perfecter/ finisher”- “teliototes”... of our faith.
- (1) “Finisher” was a trade...an occupation...when the job was almost finished the finisher would come in and perfect everything.
- (2) When I was in the road construction business with had what the industry then called “rough graders” and “finish grader” operators...the rough grader operators would come in and do most of the work and to the untrained eye it might appear to be “finished” but then I would send in my “finish grader operators...to get the road cut precisely to grade so that when it was inspected it would pass the test.
- (3) Jesus is the perfecter/finisher...nothing is left undone...nothing will be overlooked...in this case He roughs it in and He finishes it ...Paul said of Jesus in Philippians 1: 6- *“And I am sure of this, that he who began ha good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”*
5. What does the rest of verse 2 tell us of Jesus’ motivation for doing what he did? - *“...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
- a. *“For the joy set before Him...”*
- (1) For the His love of the Father He went about doing His will.
- (2) Looking forward to His job, that which had been covenanted to be done before the foundation of the world, being complete...
- (3) Looking forward to getting back into heaven...
- (4) Looking forward to His people...the people that the Father had given Him being secured in the path to salvation...the joy set before Him so we can run the race set before us...
- (5) For this joy...
- b. *“..He endured the cross, despising the shame,”*
- (1) Because of what He was looking forward to He endured the cross...this was an act that He must endure for the reward.
- (2) He despised the shame ...
- in other words the shame was not worth comparing to the glory that was before Him at the time.
 - He was mocking the cross...mocking the shame... by going through with this... rather than what natural men would do and run away.
- (3) Jonathan Edwards spent 20 minutes a day just thinking about heaven...because this life tricks us into momentarily believing that this is all there is...we need to reflect that there is something greater ahead of us that we might endure...we must physically, spiritually and emotionally work at realizing that what we perceive as hardships and blessing cannot and should not be compared to the glory that awaits us.
- c. *“...and He is (now) seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
- (1) Since He is there...this then is the finish line...where He is is what we have to look forward to.
- (2) He is on His throne crowned with majesty and honor...and we will one day participate in that glory.

(3) He is ruling over all things now just as the rest of the NT makes clear...we do not have to wait on this...He is ruling now...which kind of puts a dent in the whole pre-millennial position (Historical or Dispensational) that says He will one day reign...He is reigning now.

6. Once again as we look at verse 3 what was being communicated first to them and then to us? And how does all of this in these 3 verses go together to encourage us?

a. Facing persecution is part of running the race...Jesus did it before us so we are not alone...that is we are not the only one to ever suffer such things...

b. Just like Edwards thought on heaven for 20 minutes we need to think about Christ- *"Consider Him..."* ...

(1) The greatness of His person...both God and man.

(2) The Son of God...heir of all things.

(3) Prophet, Priest and King.

(4) Savior of His children. Author and perfecter of our faith.

(5) Sovereign...

(6) Who bore the scourge, rejection and mocking of men and went to the Cross shedding His blood on behalf of all His people.

(7) How well are we doing with this? When do you do this? On Sunday only....maybe at Bible study...do you consider Him like this when you read/study and pray through your Bibles? I have recommended "journibling" for years now...for me it is hard not to think of these things as you are writing out the Scriptures the words and then praying through those words they become more powerful.

c. So that, in considering Him...

(1) We won't lose heart...or lose our identity.

(2) When we know that He endured such hardship and is now seated at the right hand of the Father...it tells us that we can get through this life to our complete salvation as well...Jesus will complete what He started...

- He has been through this...since He has been through it and rose victorious we can know we will as well...for as He says we are in Him...**

- He lives in us through the Holy Spirit...we will overcome!...we have overcome and have the promise and the reality of eternal life. Though we die in this world it is truly a transition to the next with God!**

(3) We do not have to be weary or fainthearted.

(4) Consider this as a support for this text: *"Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God?' Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings*

like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:27-31)

- **The point of this text is that they, like us who are in Christ, do know these things.**
 - **But we, like them, must remind ourselves of these truths so that we will not stay faint and weary...it is focusing on the TRUTH that we can endure through this life with the assurance that is promised in both of these texts.**
- d. There is obviously a battle against sin that will rage until we are taken up or Christ returns...to know that this is before us...and to know that there is a reward at the end... enables us to endure and expend every bit of energy we have by grace to get to the “finish line”.**
- (1) People give up when they are told that things will be easy and then find out that they aren’t....and people give up when they are told that things are hard...because we are wimps...we can blame the “snowflakes” but they had to learn it from an adult.**
- (2) If we make life easy for our children the harsh reality of life will eventually set in and they will act like they have been jipped...and lied to and they will rebel...oh wait that happened in the 60’s and certainly is happening on a larger scale today.**
- (3) However, if we are too harsh and only focus on the harshness of the world they may despair as well...there has to be the kind of balance that we see in Scripture ...a balance on justice that focuses on redemption for His people.**
- 7. Many in the church say “Let go and Let God!” How do these 3 verses disprove that clarion call of today’s Church?**
- a. Look at all the action we are to take- let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted”**
 - b. There is nothing passive about these activities on our part...we are commanded to do them especially the last one Consider Him...**
 - c. Paul told us in Romans 12: 1-2- “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”**
 - d. We may be passive in our initial salvation but that is where it ends... “...we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.”**

Lessons from Hebrews
September 1, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

8. Once again as we look at verse 3, *“Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted”*... what was being communicated first to us today?
- e. **Facing persecution is part of running the race...Jesus did it before us so we are not alone...that is we are not the only one to ever suffer such things...**
 - f. **Just like Edwards thought on heaven for 20 minutes we need to think about Christ- “Consider Him...” ...**
 - (8) The greatness of His person...both God and man.**
 - (9) The Son of God...heir of all things.**
 - (10) Prophet, Priest and King.**
 - (11) Savior of His children. Author and perfecter of our faith.**
 - (12) Sovereign...**
 - (13) Who bore the scourge, rejection and mocking of men and went to the Cross shedding His blood on behalf of all His people.**
 - g. Why do we need to consider Him...what is the benefit?
 - (1) We are commanded to do so...so there must be benefit to doing so>**
 - (2) We won't lose heart...or lose our identity.**
 - (3) When we know that He endured such hardship and is now seated at the right hand of the Father...it tells us that we can get through this life to our complete salvation as well...Jesus will complete what He started...**
 - **He has been through this...since He has been through it and rose victorious we can know we will as well...for as He says we are in Him...**
 - **He lives in us through the Holy Spirit...we will overcome!...we have overcome and have the promise and the reality of eternal life. Though we die in this world it is truly a transition to the next with God!**
 - (4) We do not have to be weary or fainthearted. Not consider Him and we will be weary and fainthearted...all the Scriptures profess to this.**
9. How well are we doing with considering Him? When do you do this? On Sunday only....maybe at Bible study...do you consider Him like this when you read/study and pray through your Bibles? I have recommended “journibling” for years now...for me it is hard not to think of these things as you are writing out the Scriptures the words and then praying through those words they become more powerful.

C. Read Hebrews 12:4-17

1. Generally speaking, why do we need God's discipline according to the text?
- a. **God disciplines because He loves us He knows what we need.**
 - (1) God disciplines us in order to correct our sin...(coaches make us run laps for bad behavior)**

- (2) God disciplines us in order to train/shape us for endurance...think about what a coach does to get us ready for a marathon...or the rigorous training you put yourself through.
- b. These are both in mind in this passage.

2. How does He do it according to our text?

- a. Vs. 4- Our *"struggle against sin"*- various earthly trials like persecution, slander, maybe even imprisonment, obviously the sin that other are perpetrating upon us in this case...but *"...not to the point of shedding your blood."*- as many of the OT saints had to do...as well as some of the NT apostles and saints.
- (1) To realize that compared to others...who have been and are persecuted that are struggles are probably light in comparison.
- (2) We must expect to suffer as long as we are in the world...
- (3) And if our blood be called for give it for the sake of Christ.
- (4) We are not dead yet...we must keep fighting...never give in.
- b. Vs. 5a- *"And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?"* It is possible that this is NOT a question at all. It could be translated as an exhortation... *"And you have forgotten..."* Do you hear his exhortation...this is not just a simple reminder...he is disciplining us here by reminding us what we have *"forgotten"*. What does he mean here when he asks if or says we have forgotten?
- (1) We have *"forgotten"* we are His and the benefits that come from that association.
- (2) We *"forget"* because we don't like the discipline.
- (3) We *"forget"* because we sometimes don't trust the LORD to be just, because we don't know Him.
- (4) We *"forget"* hoping that no one will remember or notice.
- (5) In other words our conduct reveals our heart.
- c. Vs. 11- Discipline involves *"pain"*...if it doesn't hurt, it isn't discipline. And this is always for our good whether it is because of sin...or to train and shape us...both can be and often do have pain involved to make a difference.
- d. C.S. Lewis once said- *"God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."*
- e. Pain that comes without sin- *"As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.'"* (John 9:1-3)
- f. Pain because of sin- *"Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.'"* (John 5:14)

Lessons from Hebrews
September 22, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review- Read Hebrews 12:1-3

1. What is He communicating in verses 1-3 that we spent so much time on a few weeks back?
 - a. **The importance of endurance.**
 - b. **Our place as believers and how we are to submit to Christ Jesus in all things.**
2. Specifically verse 3, *"Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted"*... what was being communicated first to us today?
 - h. **Facing persecution is part of running the race...Jesus did it before us so we are not alone...that is we are not the only one to ever suffer such things...**
 - i. **Just like Edwards thought on heaven for 20 minutes we need to think about Christ- "*Consider Him...*" ...**
 - (14) **The greatness of His person...both God and man.**
 - (15) **The Son of God...heir of all things.**
 - (16) **Prophet, Priest and King.**
 - (17) **Savior of His children. Author and perfecter of our faith.**
 - (18) **Sovereign...**
 - (19) **Who bore the scourge, rejection and mocking of men and went to the Cross shedding His blood on behalf of all His people.**
 - j. Why do we need to consider Him...what is the benefit?
 - (5) **We are commanded to do so...so there must be benefit to doing so**
 - (6) **We won't lose heart...or lose our identity.**
 - (7) **When we know that He endured such hardship and is now seated at the right hand of the Father...it tells us that we can get through this life to our complete salvation as well...Jesus will complete what He started...**
 - **He has been through this...since He has been through it and rose victorious we can know we will as well...for as He says we are in Him...**
 - **He lives in us through the Holy Spirit...we will overcome!...we have overcome and have the promise and the reality of eternal life. Though we die in this world it is truly a transition to the next with God!**
 - (8) **We do not have to be weary or fainthearted. Not consider Him and we will be weary and fainthearted...all the Scriptures profess to this.**

C. Read Hebrews 12:4-17

3. Generally speaking, why do we need God's discipline according to the text?
 - c. **This is how we "know" that we are His sons and daughters by how He loves us which includes His discipline for us.**
 - d. **God disciplines because He loves us He knows what we need.**

- (3) God disciplines us in order to correct our sin...(coaches make us run laps for bad behavior)
 - (4) God disciplines us in order to train/shape us for endurance...think about what a coach does to get us ready for a marathon...or the rigorous training you put yourself through.
 - e. These are both in mind in this passage.
4. How does He do it according to our text?
- g. Vs. 4- Our ***“struggle against sin”***-various earthly trials like persecution, slander, maybe even imprisonment, obviously the sin that other are perpetrating upon us in this case...but ***“...not to the point of shedding your blood.”***-as many of the OT saints had to do...as well as some of the NT apostles and saints.
 - (1) To realize that compared to others...who have been and are persecuted that are struggles are probably light in comparison.
 - (2) We must expect to suffer as long as we are in the world...
 - (3) And if our blood be called for give it for the sake of Christ.
 - (4) We are not dead yet...we must keep fighting...never give in.
 - h. Vs. 5a- ***“And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?”*** It is possible that this is NOT a question at all. It could be translated as an exhortation... ***“And you have forgotten...”*** Do you hear his exhortation...this is not just a simple reminder...he is disciplining us here by reminding us what we have ***“forgotten”***. What does he mean here when he asks if or says we have forgotten?
 - (6) We have ***“forgotten”*** we are His and the benefits that come from that association.
 - (7) We ***“forget”*** because we don't like the discipline.
 - (8) We ***“forget”*** because we sometimes don't trust the LORD to be just, because we don't know Him.
 - (9) We ***“forget”*** hoping that no one will remember or notice.
 - (10) In other words our conduct reveals our heart.
5. What is He seeking to accomplish in us with this discipline?
- a. Vs. 6-9- ***Discipline is to comfort us...it proves that we are His children.***
 - (1) All men are not the objects of God's love...only those He has given the right to be called children of God...who get to run the race.
 - (2) Discipline of His children is NOT a sign that God is against us, but a sign that He is for us and desires our full conformity to His Word that we might fulfill what we were created to do...glorify Him.
 - (3) ***“For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.”*** Vs. 6...or Prov. 3:11-12- ***“My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom He loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”***
 - The Lord disciplines/chastens those He loves because He cares that we change and become more and more like His Son.
 - This is God's nature towards His own.
 - The Lord chastens/scourges every son whom He receives...and only to His children does He do this...because He really doesn't look at the rest of mankind the same way He looks at His own...we don't look at the neighborhood children as equal to

our children...we certainly wouldn't discipline a neighborhood child...but we must discipline ours.

- **God sometimes suffers us to be scourged by men...think the cloud of witness.**
- **God sometimes suffers us to be tempted right up to the edge by Satan...think Job.**
- **God sometimes scourges us Himself with the rod by men because of our own sin because He loves us.**
- **Those left without the Lord's loving discipline are not His sons...they are as illegitimate children.**

(4) Think about how hard true discipline is...consistency takes diligence on the part of the parent...and time...that we could devote to something else.

(5) But...we do this hard work if we truly love our child...

- **To not discipline goes against biblical mandates.**
- **It also tells the child as they grow that you don't really love them.**
- **When we discipline...the Word says that they will grow up respecting us for our loving them so well.**

(6) So we must endure the discipline...for the reward is great...for we know we are sons.

(7) Better to be known this way than to be known the other...to be sure. For the Father has our best in His mind always because of His steadfast love.

b. Vs. 10-11- Discipline changes us- it makes us holy!

(1) *"...But He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness."*

- **Since we have no holiness except for that which we are given.**
- **He delights to discipline us that we might experience and share in His holiness...beginning at our regeneration and here it is designed to increase as we are disciplined.**
 - **Afflictions are designed as means to bring us closer to God as we share in His glory...His holiness as Jesus described in John 17.**
 - **Afflictions bring us to a sense of our sin so that we will acknowledge it and see it for what it really is, and once recognizing our sin enables us to fully appreciate the pardon we have been granted by God.**

(2) *"For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*

- **These words seem to be offered up just in case someone was to object to this line of thinking since there is pain always associated with discipline...for good or bad...but most people jump to the pain of some form of corporal punishment rather than the fuller meaning.**
- **The writer grants that no discipline "seems" pleasant at the time...because it hurts...he knows...he remembers his own youth...plus some of the persecutions he may have experienced as an adult Christian.**

- But nevertheless, it changes us and we will experience the peaceful fruit of righteousness...that assurance of faith that allows us to endure this life because a better country awaits us.
 - Interesting word... *"later"* or *"afterwards"* – the writer may have in mind a peace that will be experienced in this life...or...he may have a fuller peace that won't come until we have transitioned to heaven.
 - Paul has told us in Romans 5 that we have peace with God now because we have been declared justified...so that is the fact...we are no longer enemies of God rather we are now and forever His children...and then he says in Rom. 8:1- *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
 - But many of God's people suffer all of their lives while they may recognize that their peace is real by faith...that is peace with God...the experience of that peace may not be until heaven...where their real rest will occur.
 - In Jesus famous statement, *"Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone...I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* He speaks to the oppressive persecution that is coming upon His church...that will seem as all peace is gone.
 - We hardly teach a doctrine of suffering in the Church any more...we do everything we can NOT to suffer...or when we do... we wonder why God has put us through the suffering. But one of the characteristics of the Church is Suffering...in Peter we read, *"But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."* (I Peter 2:20-21)
- (3) Vs. 11- Discipline involves "pain"...if it doesn't hurt, it isn't discipline. And this is always for our good whether it is because of sin...or to train and shape us...both can be and often do have pain involved to make a difference.
- (4) C.S. Lewis once said- "God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."
- (5) Pain that comes without sin- "As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.'" (John 9:1-3)
- (6) Pain because of sin- "Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.'" (John 5:14)

(7) Human discipline is limited and imperfect...but we can always trust God's discipline is for our good and His glory.

(8) Interesting statements...put them into your own words.

(9) Key principle: God wants us to finish the race! And we will, as he disciplines us to make us better/healthier/stronger runners.

Lessons from Hebrews
September 29, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. When looking at verses 4-11 from last week, why, generally speaking, do we need God's discipline according to the text?
2. What did we talk about as far as what God is seeking to accomplish in us through the discipline he talks about in verses 4-11?
 - c. **Vs. 6-9- Discipline is to comfort us...it proves that we are His children.**
 - (8) **All men are not the objects of God's love...only those He has given the right to be called children of God...who get to run the race.**
 - (9) **Discipline of His children is NOT a sign that God is against us, but a sign that He is for us and desires our full conformity to His Word that we might fulfill what we were created to do...glorify Him.**
 - (10) ***"For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives."* Vs. 6...or Prov. 3:11-12- *"My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom He loves, as a father the son in whom he delights."***
 - d. **Vs. 10-11- Discipline changes us- it makes us holy!**
 - (10) ***"...But He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness."***
 - **Since we have no holiness except for that which we are given.**
 - **He delights to discipline us that we might experience and share in His holiness...beginning at our regeneration and here it is designed to increase as we are disciplined.**
 - **Afflictions are designed as means to bring us closer to God as we share in His glory...His holiness as Jesus described in John 17.**
 - **Afflictions bring us to a sense of our sin so that we will acknowledge it and see it for what it really is, and once recognizing our sin enables us to fully appreciate the pardon we have been granted by God.**
 - (11) ***"For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."***
 - **These words seem to be offered up just in case someone was to object to this line of thinking since there is pain always associated with discipline...for good or bad...but most people jump to the pain of some form of corporal punishment rather than the fuller meaning.**
 - **The writer grants that no discipline "seems" pleasant at the time...because it hurts...he knows...he remembers his own youth...plus some of the persecutions he may have experienced as an adult Christian.**

C. Now let's look at verses 12-17. How are we to respond to this discipline?

1. Don't ignore it!

- a. **Some seek to dismiss it- *"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord..."* (vs. 5b)**
- b. **Affliction and pain alone do not produce good results for long...we must respond to them by faith.**
 - (1) **Behavioral modification—spanking and such works to change behavior...and this is temporary.**
 - (2) **Heart modification...which includes discipline...which is painful and is then taught the why of discipline...is eternal when done by God through His spirit...but even this is often a lifelong process.**

2. Don't Quit- No matter what don't quit...keep running.

- a. **Training is wearisome and it can make us consider quitting...but we can't.**
- b. **The race can be draining...causing you to wonder if you can make it or if it is worth it...but we can...because the Spirit is within us and Christ is cheering us forward.**
- c. **Vs. 12- *"Therefore..."*- what is this here for this time?**
- d. **Vs. 12- *"...lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees..."*.**
 - (1) **Obviously a picture of me after about 1/3rd of a mile (or less, when I am trying to run on the beach...I do it before the sun comes up so I don't embarrass myself)...but this is the picture of a weary runner that actually keeps going...**
 - (2) **Problems related to... *"droopy hands and weak knees..."***
 - **Reveals no power...**
 - **Spiritual weakness effects emotional and physical issues as well.**
 - **Can't carry "our cross" effectively...or take up the burdens of others.**
 - (3) **But you may be tired...you may have "hit the wall"...but by God's grace, His strength...the knowledge of His peace now and awaiting us...**
 - **We are to keep doing our duty no matter how hard...**
 - **We are to bear every burden that God has placed on us in a way that honors Him...**
 - **We are to along the way help others...Isaiah 35:3-4.seems to be alluded to hear... *"Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."* We will see more of this in a bit when we get down to verse 14.**
- e. **Vs. 13- *"...and make straight paths for your feet..."***
 - (1) **"Feet"= speak of our walking in God's ways (*straight paths*) as well as our conversations that are salted with God's Word... Isaiah 52:7- *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."***

(2) So this is referring to staying on the path of righteousness and not diverting away from it...

f. Vs. 13- *"...so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather healed."*-This means at least this much:

(1)

(2) If we stay on the right path our weak and weary joints while very tired won't be put out of joint because we took our eyes off the prized and sprained our ankle or knee...making us truly lame...and useless.

(3) Walking the path that God has placed us on will not keep us from pain...but it will always lead us to Christ.

(4) Staying on the path will lead to healing at the end of the race.

(5) Us staying on the path may also keep weaker brothers following the path as they watch our lives as well.

- **The word "lame" has also been translated in the Syriac version as *"lame member or weak believer"*...one who looks to the stronger brother as an example and strength when their faith walk is weaker than it should be...**
- **So this is also talking about how we care for one another...our walk will be seen and judged worthy or not by those watching.**
- **Our walk then becomes an instrument used by God to bring the weaker along to maturity.**

3. Pursue holiness-

a. He began by telling us that discipline enables us to share in His holiness in verse 10.

b. Now he says in verse 14b, that God disciplines us because holiness is essential to seeing God- *"...for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."*

c. Taking the first word of this verse... *"Striving..."* then we are to be striving for this holiness with all that we are...we are to be pursuing holiness...righteousness...just like Jesus said, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..."*

d. Does this mean that we are saved by our obedience?

(1) No.

(2) Holiness is not the condition of salvation; it is the consequence of salvation.

(3) Key threat to our holiness is the pursuit of pleasure. Vs. 16-17

(4) When suffering under trials of all kinds it is tempting to seek physical pleasures.

(5) Esau is the example given:

- **He was a sexually immoral man...his lifestyle and pagan wives that he flaunted in the face of his parents.**
- **He sold his birthright for a single meal...he gave up long term blessing for short term pleasure.**
- **Such pursuits can lead one to apostasy— *"...he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears."***
- **Why use Esau as an example for His children? What does this have to do with us who are in the race?**

4. Interestingly, help others along the way...
- a. **We have already seen this “sneaking in” if you will in verses 12 and 13 so it only makes sense that this would continue as our faith walk...our looking to Jesus...is not just about us but how we live in the Body of Christ.**
 - b. **Vs. 14- “*Strive for peace with everyone...*” What does this mean?**
 - (1) **It is talking about fellow runners of the race...not anybody and everybody...but fellow runners...brothers and sisters in Christ.**
 - (2) **Striving for peace...making it the focus of our fellowship with true believers... As Paul says in Rom. 12:18- “*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*” This all is first and foremost with all of God’s other children.**
 - (3) **But we are as we can strive for peace even with non-believers...the command is clear... “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*”**
 - (4) **Being justified we have peace with God...we are in Christ...each of us as brothers and sisters are in Christ...one family... so we are to strive for peace...our priority with each other as we meet each other along the race... “*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, bweI have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Rom. 5:1).**
 - c. **Vs. 15- “*See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God...*”**
 - (1) **The words “*See to it...*” could easily be translated as, “*Looking diligently to...*”... so...**
 - **This may be directed first to the elders of the church as we are held accountable to God for each of His flock under our charge.**
 - **As elders we need to be diligently looking to...tending to the needs of those who are weaker....or simply troubling a the time...something that he will talk more about in chapter 13.**
 - (2) **But it is also our (each believers) responsibility to make sure that we encourage our brothers and sisters along the way...for it is about His Church getting to the finish line...not just us as individuals...**
 - (3) **Runners stopping when another runner falls... to pick him up and carry him to the finish line if need be.**
 - (4) **It is of utmost import by all of us that we seek not to lose anyone along the way.**
 - **No one will be lost that is the LORD’s ...true... but the writer here throughout this is certainly speaking of the importance of our walk and our ability to look after one another.**
 - **Our walk is to be an example to the younger/weaker ones...**
 - **So our being diligent watching over one another and their faith walk then we are teaching as well... how we take care of one another...it is what family is supposed to do...have each other’s back...**
 - **When one is weak then the others step up and carry us.**
 - **When one is in sin the family steps up not just to point out that sin but to seek to reconcile them back to God and the church through love.**

d. In doing this kind of thing for one another we ensure that no “root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble...”

- (1) This seems to be a reference to Deut. 29:18-19- *“Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.”* This is where God’s people turned to idols causing all kinds of sins...from which vs. 16-17 refer.**
- (2) Bitterness among brothers and sisters can weaken the unity that we have in Christ to where we are no longer acting as His witnesses. “If those Christians are going to fight among themselves why would I listen to them?”**
- (3) If we can’t be expected to work out our differences in a way that glorifies the Lord then everything else we have to say will be suspect.**
- (4) Bitterness among brothers and sister causes division to the point that we see each other as Adam and Eve saw each other...and then even God Himself... *“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”***
- (5) But one more thought on this...**
 - This ... *“root of bitterness”* often signifies, in Jewish writing, the beginning of a heresy or an error that stands in opposition to the truth or a foundational doctrine.**
 - Which could also make sense with the last part of that verses that says, *“...and by it many become defiled...”***
 - This can also talk about the bitterness that is unseemly between believers but it could be talking about how false doctrines can invade and divide and cause many to be led astray...like in the last days prophecies of Jesus and the Prophets.**

Lessons from Hebrews
October 6, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What specifically are we being commanded to do in verses 14-17 in the 21st Century?

- e. **We are to be thinking of others. We have already seen this “sneaking in” if you will in verses 12 and 13 so it only makes sense that this would continue as our faith walk...our looking to Jesus...is not just about us but how we live in the Body of Christ.**
- f. **Vs. 14- *“Strive for peace with everyone...”* As Paul says in Rom. 12:18- *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”* This “all” is first and foremost with all of God’s children.**
- g. **Vs. 14- *“...(Strive) for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”***
 - (1) **See Heb. 10:10- we have been made holy because of Christ’s sacrifice.**
 - (2) **“Holiness” in this context speaks of pursuing holiness...pursuing a holy lifestyle as laid out by God...Micah 6:8.**
 - (3) **“see the Lord”- speaks of experiencing His blessing now and later...for if we are not pursuing holiness we are probably not His in the first place.**
- h. **Vs. 15a- *“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God...(because of our sinful behavior- overt behavior or simply getting in the way of another’s growth)”*.**
 - (5) **No one will be lost that is the LORD’s ...true... but the writer here throughout this is certainly speaking of the importance of our walk and our ability to look after one another.**
 - (6) **Our walk is to be an example to the younger/weaker ones...**
 - (7) **So our being diligent watching over one another and their faith walk then we are teaching as well... how we take care of one another...it is what family is supposed to do...have each other’s back...**
 - **When one is weak then the others step up and carry us.**
 - **When one is in sin the family steps up not just to point out that sin but to seek to reconcile them back to God and the church through love.**
- i. **Vs. 15b -*“(...see to it) that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble...”***
 - (6) **This seems to be a reference to Deut. 29:18-19-**
 - (7) **Bitterness among brothers and sisters always weakens the unity that we have in Christ to where we are no longer acting as His witnesses.**
 - (8) **But one more thought on this...**
 - **This ... *“root of bitterness”* often signifies, in Jewish writing, the beginning of a heresy or an error that stands in opposition to the truth or a foundational doctrine. Which could also make sense with the last part of that verse that says, *“...and by it many become defiled...”***

- **So it could also be talking about how false doctrines can invade and divide and cause many to be led astray...like in the last days prophecies of Jesus and the Prophets and the days of the writer..**
- j. **Vs. 16- “(...See to it) that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau...” – wow, this is a big ask! Huge! But look at how involved we are to be with our brothers and sisters for we want them to experience the mercy and grace of God.**
2. When looking at **verses 16-17- “...that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.”** What did we say about the author’s use of Esau as an example for God’s children? What does this have to do with us who are in the race?
- C. Now let’s look at Hebrews 12:18-24
1. In verses 18-24, the author is making a contrast and a comparison for these folks.
- a. Let’s read the Exodus 19:1-21 and Ex. 20:18-21 account...This is what the people...the Hebrew believers...would know. (It would seem according to Hebrews 12:19 that 20:18-21 is a narrative that should probably go right after Ex. 19: 20a and 20b.)
- (1) What is God seeking to teach His people about Himself in this passage?
- **He is Holy.**
 - **His covenant directs all of God’s activities.**
 - **That He is to “feared”!**
 - **Literally**
 - **Honoring**
- (2) What is God seeking to teach His people about themselves in this passage?
- **That they are His...He saved them from bondage and made them His people.**
 - **That they must keep His covenant in order to receive the promised blessings.**
 - **This is “Good News” for them...they fear the wrong things.**
 - **God had just delivered them why would they fear His motives.**
 - **God had come down to be with them from the mountain.**
 - **They feared because of His commands dealing with His holiness?! Really...when He had just delivered them from these most powerful army/kingdom of the day???**
 - **They NEEDED Him>**
 - **“Better” News is coming...for all of this is merely a mirror of what is to come which will be “better.”**
- b. Back to the text before us; which is Hebrews 12:18-21, at this moment...
- (1) What is the author seeking to remind these people of by bringing this event on Mt. Sinai back up?
- **God is Holy.**
 - **God’s covenant is still in play.**

- **That it is terrifying to be in God's presence, especially if you aren't keeping His covenant.**
 - **Since God is Holy...in the OT that meant He was also distant from His people...you can't draw near or you die...God's people were always reminded of barriers between them and God. Because God is HOLY and we are not there must always be a mediator between God and Man.**
 - **Moses**
 - **The priests**
 - **The mountain.**
 - **Consecration**
 - **The curtain in the Holy of Holies...tabernacle and the Temple.**
 - **Oh, and by the way, this is the way is USED to be and is NOT any more.**
- (2) Does this mean that OT people were saved by law-keeping as some are probably saying to the author of Hebrews and as many had said to both Jesus and Paul?
- **No, because according to Jesus and Paul and soon this author as well as the rest of the writers all people both Old and New are saved by grace through faith alone.**
 - **But the focus of this event and the subsequent giving of the law was on the need for these people to trust in the LORD and walk in His Laws not for salvation but to live in a way that they would experience the blessings of the covenant.**
 - **Remember God delivered these people...chose these people from all the people of the world ...BEFORE giving the Law.**
 - **So the Law was given that His elect/the remnant might live in a way that Honored their God and would continue to sanctify them**
 - **Just like us today...we are saved...we are holy, already...and not yet fully...as we await the fulfillment of that holiness.**
 - **Remember the 3 purposes of the Law...**
 - **The reveal our sin.**
 - **To restrain our sin....because of the Law things aren't as bad as they could be.**
 - **To encourage and inform believers, Old and New, of who God is and what He expects of His beloved children...so we are not left to make it up and run the race without hope.**
- c. Now let's look at verses 22-24. Interesting imagery here...
- (1) Vs. 22a- The Mount and City of God and His people
- ***"But you have come to Mt. Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem..."***
 - ***"But you have come..."*- we have become part of this family/this elect city...for this will be our city along with everyone else of God's choosing.**
 - **This mount does not issue threats, but grace, identity, hope, comfort and a place to be...with the triune God for God's children alone.**

- **The city is NOT an earthly location...so we do not need to look to a place...but to the person of Christ.**
 - **This city is NOT visible to us but it awaits us.**
- (2) Vs. 22b-24- This city is filled with heavenly inhabitants.
- ***“(Come to)...and to innumerable angels in festal gathering...”- all praising God...think the songs of the Revelation.***
 - ***“and (come) to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven...”- interesting image to be sure...one that we haven’t encountered since the Pentateuch...since Leviticus study.***
 - **Israel was required to give their firstborn among all the things born to them up to God as a sacrifice.**
 - **But, God, not being like the pagans, provided for the firstborn children spiritually through the Levites...they took the place of the firstborn children in their service to the LORD...so these are those “firstborn” that were Priests and Levites to represent the firstborn of Israel.**
 - ***“and (come) to God, the judge of all...”- of course God Himself is there...this is where His throne is...this is where He judges on high...this is where He directs all of redemptive history.***
 - ***“and (come) to the spirits of the righteous made perfect...” - those who have gone on before...now being “perfected” in His sight.***
 - ***“and (come) to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant...”***
 - **No fear for Jesus is there... Remember Jesus said, *“In my house are many rooms...and I go to prepare a place for you.”* The writer of Hebrews said, *“...Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”***
 - **Jesus is the mediator...there had to be a mediator between God and man...and the last, great, best mediator is Jesus in His incarnation and then in giving His precious Holy spirit to be with us while they mediate for us before the Father.**
 - ***“...and (come to) the (His) sprinkled blood (image of His sacrifice as a sin offering) that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.”...***
 - **Abel’s blood had no power to save...though it look forward to the One who blood would save.**
 - **While it was “good” that Abel’s blood was shed on behalf of righteousness and God’s honor...as in the case of the Christian martyrs ...Christ’s death and His blood is “better” ...is Best!**
 - **It is by His blood that His covenant of redemption was fulfilled... a definition of covenant- *“a covenant is a bond in blood (blood being the life-force) sovereignly administered.”* O Palmer Robertson in THE CHRIST OF THE COVENANT.**
 - **His Blood speaks to the truth, righteousness and goodness of God’s covenant promises.**

- D. The authors applications found in verses 25-29.
1. First application is negative: Don't refuse Him.- Why?
 - a. **Because God judges those who reject Him- vs. 25**
 - (1) **God's judgment can be even greater in the NT because now there has been more revealed about Himself in Christ...we have no excuse.**
 - (2) **If people were judged in the OT for not listening...how much more in the NT?**
 - (3) **For those who will refuse Him...those "predestined to stumble" the wrath of God will be worse now and going forward...for so much more has been revealed...and while knowledge alone does not save...Christ alone does that...we are responsible before God for what He has graciously revealed...as Paul says... *"So they are without excuse"*- (Rom. 1:20)**
 - b. **Because His voice will shake the heavens and the earth...the end is coming.- vs. 26-27.**
 - (1) **He cites Haggai 2:6 as he looks back to look forward to the 2nd Coming...and all the shaking and moving and destruction that will occur just before Christ Returns.**
 - (2) **There have been many shakings throughout Scripture by God...**
 - **Whether it be from earthquakes or the thunder of the hoofs of those who would take His people into Exile or the thunder He produces in the storm ...**
 - **These all look forward to the Final Day when He will unleash the greatest catastrophe of all time before He remakes the heavens and the earth.**
 - (3) **It is at the 2nd Coming that Christ will remove all earthly things making all things new...things that will never be shaken again!**
 2. 2nd application is positive, in that he points to us gratefully worshiping Him- verses 28-29.
 - a. **For we are safe in Christ and we cannot be shaken...condemned.**
 - b. **Our response to this grace is to always be grateful worship.**
 - c. **God is still holy- *"...a consuming fire."***
 - d. **But now we draw near to Him in Christ Jesus.**
- E. So what about us? How do these passages help us to answer the questions:
1. What happens to believers after death?
 2. What happens to unbelievers after death?
 3. What is all of this truth based on?

Lessons from Hebrews
October 13, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Remembering the contrast that the author to these Hebrews was making between Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion what is God seeking to teach His people about themselves in this passage?
 - a. **That they are His...He saved them from bondage and made them His people.**
 - b. **That they must keep His covenant in order to receive the promised blessings.**
 - c. **This is "Good News" for them...they fear the wrong things.**
 - d. **God had just delivered them why would they fear His motives.**
 - e. **God had come down to be with them from the mountain.**
 - f. **They feared because of His commands dealing with His holiness?! Really...when He had just delivered them from these most powerful army/kingdom of the day!?!?**
 - g. **They NEEDED Him!**
 - h. **"Better" News is coming...for all of this is merely a mirror of what is to come which will be "better."**
 - (1)**First by the commandments that would be receiving that revealed even more of God's nature to them because of God's great love for them.**
 - (2)**All of this pointed forward to what "more" would be revealed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ the 2nd Person of the Trinity.**
2. So with this in mind, let's look for one minute more of review at verses 25-29. What is the point or points of application he is making for these folks and for us today?
 - a. **If people were judged in the OT for not listening...how much more in the NT?**
 - b. **For those who will refuse Him...those "*predestined to stumble*" the wrath of God will be worse now and going forward...for so much more has been revealed...and while knowledge alone does not save...Christ alone does that...we are responsible before God for what He has graciously revealed...as Paul says... "*So they are without excuse*". (Rom. 1:20)**
 - c. **Because His voice will shake the heavens and the earth...the end is coming.- vs. 26-27.**
 - (1)**He cites Haggai 2:6 as he looks back to look forward to the 2nd Coming...and all the shaking and moving and destruction that will occur just before Christ Returns.**
 - (2)**There have been many shakings throughout Scripture by God...**
 - (3)**Whether it be from earthquakes or the thunder of the hoofs of those who would take His people into Exile or the thunder He produces in the storm ...**
 - (4)**These all look forward to the Final Day when He will unleash the greatest catastrophe of all time before He remakes the heavens and the earth.**

(5) It is at the 2nd Coming that Christ will remove all earthly things making all things new...things that will never be shaken again!

d. He points them and us to the fact that we should be gratefully worshiping Him.

C. Now let's move on. Hebrews 13:1-9. What we will be looking at as we conclude this letter...this sermon, as many have said that it was, given its literary style... is what the Christian life is to practically look like. The author seeks to give us practical exhortations... declarations... commands that will enable us to live the Christian life as God describes and prescribes. These are not ALL the things that Christians are to do but just a few; the most important to him at this moment for these people...and most all of these are placed in the imperative mode. We will now look at the first batch of these ***"exhortations"***... the author's word- God's word...Hebrews 13:22.

1. Let's look at chapter 12: 28-29 first where we find the first exhortations. But first, what is the ***"Therefore"*** therefore?

a. *"Therefore, that is, because God has done all of this for you in Christ Jesus..."*

b. It actually is the first of his exhortations... We are to stop a moment and *"consider Him"*, by considering all that the Lord has done for us as motivation for living the Christian life.

c. So... *"therefore"*...Look beyond the circumstances of life to the God who controls the circumstances of life and rest in Him.

2. He has told us what our motivation is for living the Christian life in Hebrews chapter 1-12:27, now he begins a list of exhortation for living the Christian life.

a. What are the "first" things that we are to be doing in this Christian life that he highlighted in 12:28-29?

(1) *"...let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken..."*

- **Thankfulness to God is to be a major character trait of all Christians. I Thessalonians 5:18- *"...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."***
- **Psalm 50:23- *"The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!"***
- **The sentence structure is a bit difficult here from the Greek but it could also be rendered with a few more words that were implied and understood by his audience this way, *"Therefore, since we by grace are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful..."***
- **What do all these extra words do for your understanding of what we are to be grateful for?**
 - **That it is by grace that we are being received into this kingdom...it is not by what we do...just like our salvation is by grace alone so that no one can boast.**
 - **This kingdom that we have been graciously received into will not be shaken as our current world is all too often.**

(2) “...let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe...,”

- **Worship is our next priority ...worship based in the fact that we have been received into God’s kingdom.**
 - **Just like Pauls’ doxology in I Timothy...the understanding of all that God has done for us in Christ ought to lead us to praise and worship Him in reverence and awe.**
 - **“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!”**
- **Worship based in the fact that “our God is a consuming fire.” He is HOLY, ALMIGHTY, GOD OVER ALL!**

(3) By being thankful to God and worshiping God in reverence and awe...we show Him and others that we are seeking to love Him with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind...with our all...fulfilling the first tablet of the Law.

- b. Now we turn to more exhortations concerning the Christian life. After basically telling us what the first priorities are to be in our lives, what is he commanding us to do in 13:1-9? **To keep the 2nd tablet of the LAW as Jesus summarized all the Law.** In what ways...what are some of the things he tell us that we need to focus on in these verses?

(1) “Let brotherly love continue”...Keep in mind this is a commandment. Jesus told His disciples and through them all believers, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to have love for one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples.” (John 13:34-35) We have seen this command emphasized in each of our sermon series as well as all our teaching times. (See Rom. 13:8; I Cor. 13; I Thess. 4:9; I, II, II John) Ok, that is all well in good but what are some ways that he supposes that we do that?

(2) “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware.”

- **The author takes these folks back to the event that occurred with Father Abraham and the angels in Gen. 18 and 19. Not only was Abraham the supreme example of faith in the OT but he was also the supreme example of hospitality. Look what it benefitted him to be so hospitable!**
- **So the author says as Abraham did so you/we are to do the same.**
- **Hospitality is another character trait of all Christians. The Apostle John made sure Gaius showed hospitality to visiting preachers that were unknown personally to Gaius... Hospitality in the Christian life is crucial to show love to one another and to our neighbor. Rom. 12:13; I Tim. 3:2; I Peter 4:9**
- **We were “strangers” when Christ took us in.**
- **This is a command that reveals the desire to put others needs before ourselves for the good of love. We ought to be quick to jump in to lend a hand to our brothers and sisters in Christ...meals, moving help, prayer, taking care of each other’s children so parents can have a date night...listening to their grief and their sins.**

- (3) “Remember those in prison, as though in prison with them, (remember) those who are mistreated...”**
- **The call to “remember” shows that we easily forget those who suffer.**
 - **Not just those who have been tried and convicted of crimes.**
 - **But maybe even more so those who have been imprisoned and are being mistreated for the faith in Christ. Just like when Paul was in prison many of the brothers and sisters came and took care of him.**
 - **And we are to do this, “...since you are also in the body.”**
 - **As part of the body of Christ and as image bearers of God it is expected that we will minister to those brothers and sisters who suffer this way. One of those ways is to pray for them.**
 - **I Cor. 12:24b-26- “But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”**
 - **Jesus came in the body so He could suffer with and for us (Heb. 2:14-18).**

Lessons from Hebrews
November 10, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. We began moved on last week to consider Hebrews 13:4-9- more exhortations for us to do...not simply to consider, as if they are suggestions...but to remember that these are all for the most part written in the imperative form...a command... and those that aren't...well, we must still consider that this is the Word of God and that God doesn't give suggestions about how we are to live to glorify Him and enjoy Him and edify His people.
2. As we saw last week he begins this section talking about marriage. Why?
 - a. **People always seem to be confused about such a well-documented subject in Scripture.**
 - b. **People want to do things their own way...marriage, worship work...we want to do it our way!**
 - c. **This was a problem within the culture and it may have been affecting the church adversely...especially among the Gentiles of the time...so he wanted to Church to know, believe and practice the truth before a "needy" culture.**
3. So he exhorts us- ***"Let marriage be held in honor among all..."*** He clearly is saying at least a few of things:
 - a. **Marriage as God defines is it to be honored by all...but especially those in the Church.**
 - b. **God views marriage as a high and holy estate...it is a creation mandate and ordinance...and thus is incumbent upon ALL people- believer and non-believer to uphold God's standard for marriage or ALL will be judged accordingly.**
 - c. **There is to be no compromise on this by anyone who claims the name of Christ.**
 - d. **People are not allowed by God's definition to marry anyone they wish...**
 - e. **See also Jesus speaking on this in Matthew 19:5-6.**

C. Hebrews 13:4-9 continued...

1. Next he commands, ***"...let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."***
 - a. **As Jesus points out in the Sermon on the Mount sexual immorality happens physically and mentally.**
 - b. **The people of the time were consumed with sexuality...Even the Jews...just remember all the rules governing sex in the Pentateuch...for this is a problem with all people in the world. Just like today so this was a constant source of problems as we see throughout the Bible.**
 - c. **So this stresses sexual purity...one woman man...one man woman for life...both physically and mentally. And by connection it also stresses sexual purity outside of marriage.**
 - d. **See Malachi 2:13-16**

- e. **God will judge this behavior severely.** Why does God care so much about our sexual practices?
 - (1) He knows the allure of sins related to this subject...He talks to us all through the Bible concerning this subject.**
 - (2) His Word is our standard for living and it is to be honored for when we choose to go against His Word we go against Him.**
 - (3) He loves us and wants the best for us.**
 - f. Paul even talks about those who struggle mentally with sexually immoral thoughts outside of marriage that they ought to marry in I Cor. 7 and I Tim.5 when talking about young widows (and I would suppose young widowers, as well).
 - (1) In our day and age ...some in the church want to call themselves “Gay Christians” but celebrate their non-practicing of their temptation (a good thing) and at the same time choosing not to marry because that would go against “who they are” (a wrong thing) for marriage is to be the norm from God people.**
 - **They find themselves affirming “who they are” and their lifestyle even though they are not acting out their “desires”.**
 - **God says that even the on-going desire is sinful so rather than complaining that they are so lonely in their “God- honoring choice” they should marry ...and marriage is only between one man and one woman.**
 - (2) God’s word is so specific about such things from the OT through the NT...God’s standard of purity cannot really be questioned as if no one knows what He expects...here again everyone is without an excuse.**
 - (3) Christians are to be the clearest witness to what God commands and expects.**
 - (4) We are to think counter-culturally on this issue and many other issues the culture says are important that dishonor God and His word.**
 - (5) Paul makes it clear how important marriage is with his injunction to the young widow- See I Tim. 5:14-15- *“So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan.”***
 - g. What are some ways that we can guard our marriages and relationships (if you are not married)?
- 2. “Keep your life free of the love of money, and be content with what you have ...”**
- a. **So that we don’t cause others to stumble ...so we ourselves don’t get caught up in the world.**
 - (1) This is an overzealous eagerness for more and a destructive discontentment when you don’t get it...**
 - (2) The sin of covetousness is dealt with from both testaments as well.**
 - (3) Jesus tells us that we can’t serve 2 masters...God and mammon...**
 - **See also I Timothy 6:10. Not money in and of itself but the love of money which takes away the love of God and our neighbor!**
 - **Sex and money have led to the downfall of many throughout time...which is discontentment with what God has given to us.**

b. This discontentment with what God gives us is what he talks about now, “...for He has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you.’ So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?’”

(1) Materialism gets in the way of relationships...God and others.

(2) Materialism takes our eyes off God’s presence and providence.

(3) Materialism puts all of our “happiness” on our own doing so that we can take credit for what we have.

(4) So materialism leads us away from the way that God has set before us.

(5) The reality is this – “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

- **The Lord provides for His own...if He takes care of the sparrow how much more will He take care of His children whom He has called to Himself after shedding the blood of His own Son to fulfill the covenant of redemption.**
- **So if the Sovereign God is my helper...what CAN man do to me that matters?**
- **Martin Luther said, “There are 3 conversions necessary in the life of every man: the conversion of the heart, the conversion of the mind, and the conversion of the purse.”**

3. In verse 7 he is going beyond the normal relationship and now speaks to our relationships in the church.

a. He says, “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God...” How would you put what he is saying in your own words?

(1) The call to remember reminds us that we have a tendency not to think about these things.

(2) Because God is with us in all things and we do not need to fear man we can submit to proven spiritual leadership (read elders because of, “...those who spoke to you the word of God.” and because of what he will say in verse 17)

- **These God has given to us for our own good.**
- **So sitting under good teaching is critical to staying on track in our faith.**
- **God expects all of us to be under authority...that is... authority that He has supplied for us specifically in the church.**

b. Christian leaders must reflect their faith in their conduct...In the next part of this verse the author drives home the connection again between faith and practice... “Considering the results of their conduct, imitate their faith.”

(1) He is telling the people to go back and look closely at the lives of these people...(Consider the results...contemplate the fruit)

- **Look at how they live...**
- **How they raise their children...**
- **How they teach...**
- **Look at their fruit...**
- **Perhaps how they died...**

- Judging these things not from personal opinion but by the standard of the Word...
 - Then imitate them if what you find measures up to God's Word.
- (2) He is saying that faith and practice go together and it is to be evident to all...especially those in the church.
- (3) Godly leaders will never be perfect, but they can and will be encouraging examples.
4. Next he exclaims in verse 8, ***"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!"*** Now why do you think he "slips" that in here given the context of this passage so far?
- a. An exclamation point for what has been said so far.
 - b. It also sets us up for the next statement well... ***"Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings..."*** – apparently a constant problem in the church. Why?
 - (1) Men are fallible... Jesus and His Word are not.
 - (2) False teachings change with the wind...Jesus and His Word do not!
 - c. First thing this means is that while all men fail us...even the best of men...Jesus remains the same...unchanged...immutable...just as His promises remain unchanged and immutable. Matthew 24:35- ***"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."***
 - d. But then this also means, that unlike the false teachers and doctrines he will talk about next...Jesus never changes.
 - e. So follow Christ and submit to Christ's authority no matter what.
 - f. His Word is faithful and it never changes since He never changes...so when men faithfully teach it, preach it and live it out before us...follow them as those provided by Christ for us.

Lessons from Hebrews
November 17, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What exhortations/commands are we given so far from chapter 12:28 through to vs. 9a?

- a. **Vs. 28- *"Therefore..."*- we are to stop and consider Him...consider all that the writer of Hebrews has highlighted that makes Christ better than.**
- b. **Vs. 28- *"...let us be grateful..."*- that we have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken... What does this mean for us today?**
- c. **Vs. 28- *"...let us offer to God acceptable worship..."*- What is acceptable worship today?**
- d. **13:1a- *"Let brotherly love continue..."*- defined by Jesus in John 13:34-35.**
- e. **13:2- *"Do not neglect to show hospitality..."***
- f. **13:3- *"Remember those in prison...mistreated"*- Again what is being communicated when he says "remember"?**
- g. **Vs. 4- *"Let marriage be held in honor among all..."* What does this require of us today?**
 - (1) **Stand up and proclaim the biblical definition of marriage for God's honor.**
 - (2) **To pray for marriages...especially Christian marriages to be an example of how to glorify God.**
 - (3) **Train pre-marrieds...and disciples newly married in the word of God concerning marriage.**
 - (4) **Support older marriages so they can endure for the long haul to God's glory.**
- h. ***"...let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."* Strive for purity in our marriages and in life in general.**
- i. **Vs. 5- *"Keep your life free of the love of money, and be content with what you have..."*.**
 - (1) **Contentment in this life because of God's provision...no contentment if we believe it is all up to us.**
 - (2) **See end of vs. 5 and vs. 6 for support.**
- j. **Vs. 7- *"Remember your leaders/elders..."* What is he telling us to do here?**
- k. **So far 9 things...every speaking or communication class tells us that speakers should give more than 7 things...that the human mind can't hold any more...well here are 9 so far....and he is not done.**

2. We ended last time at **verse 8- *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."*** Why did we say that this absolute statement is placed here in the midst of these exhortations/commandments?

- a. **It is an exclamation point to all that has come before.**
- b. **It sets us up for the next statement well... *"Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings..."* - apparently a constant problem in the church. Why?**
 - (3) **Men are fallible... Jesus and His Word are not.**

- (4) False teachings change with the wind...Jesus and His Word do not!
- (5) Anchoring to Jesus and His Word will enable us not to be tossed around by the new and improved teachings of our day.

c. There are, at least, 2 things that are missing in this life that keep us from true happiness :

- (1) **Sufficiency**- nothing can make us happy except that which is completely satisfactory I itself for if anything is doubted in the least then our happiness will be affected...and we will be at the least bored. Christ alone is completely satisfactory- Ps. 73:25- *"Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you."* Then there is Col. 3:11- *"...but Christ is all, and in all."*
 - (2) **Certainty**- if anything is subject to change then men cannot be happy...that is satisfied completely...and everything in this life changes... everything except Christ, Hebrews 13:8- *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."* All who dwell in Christ need not fear change.
- d. This 3/trilogy speak... is common... *"...who is and who was and who is to come..."*- Rev. 1:8

C. Hebrews 13:9-16

5. In the context of Jesus and His Word's unchangeableness he hits us with verse 9 which calls us to a commitment to the Word of God, he says, ***"Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods which have not benefited those devoted to them."*** What is he generally communicating to us today who don't have the restrictions of the civil and ceremonial laws which include the food laws?

- a. He commands the church... just like God the Father in the OT, Jesus the Son in the NT like the Spirit who enables us to understand the truth...like Paul, like John, like Peter...virtually every biblical writer...tells us not to stray after false teaching.
- b. False teachers and their teaching is dangerous to the church.
 - (1) When people are unfamiliar with the Bible and its meaning then when a persuasive speaker comes along many are persuaded by their passion not so much their content.
 - (2) Jesus speaks not only that we should know the content of false teacher's but also we are to know their fruit... Jesus weighed in on this in the Sermon on the Mount- Matthew 7:15-16- ***"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits."***
- c. But let's break this down a bit:
 - (1) ***"Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings..."*** This is a command that should always be heeded no matter what.
 - ***"...strange and diverse..."***= new and improved, new and different...or even old errors that seems to come back into vogue...they may seem more exciting and they will always be found within the visible church. Why are people so enamored with "new teaching"?

- Paul reminded the elders in Ephesus that these people will come from within...even from within the elders/leaders of the church.
 - See Acts 20:28-30- *"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them."* The Bible has made this clear from the beginning.
 - These 2 terms speak to ANYTHING that is out of accord with the Bible, especially referring to new and improved teachings.
 - If Jesus doesn't change then it stands to reason that His Word doesn't change...which means the faith doesn't change...no new teaching...we have it all!
- (2) *"...for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods which have not benefited those devoted to them."*
- In the "old days" the things you ate or did not eat were part of your sanctification.
 - Part of the way the LORD kept His people holy was to fix the things they ate so they couldn't just eat with anyone of their choosing. So when you were traveling around the Ancient Near East and you pulled up to your Baal worshiper friend/colleague you couldn't eat with them if they just pulled out a plate of BBQ pork.
 - As we saw in Leviticus it is one of the things God used to distinguish His people from other peoples plus as I said it kept them holy as they kept obeying His Word.
 - In Christ...Sanctification is by grace alone through faith not by keeping the ceremonial laws that have been fulfilled.
 - The Jewish Christians of the day...just like regular Jews today...kept the dietary laws of the ceremonial law...religiously.
 - So "food" becomes the expression to denote anything ceremonial added to the Gospel as a thing of primary importance....Food then could actually be read as "ceremonial observance" taking the place of our freedoms in Christ.
 - So, it then follows that these "ceremonial observances" are of no use to someone's faith...of no benefit spiritually... now he is not saying that they are necessarily bad in and of themselves... just wrong when it becomes a definer of someone's true faith.
 - The doctrines of grace...hence the Gospel...are the only definer of someone's faith and the fruit that comes as evidence of that faith *"strengthened by grace"*.
 - Paul speaks to this same issue multiple times concerning the fact that so many were seeking to make these a requirement of one's faith expressions.
 - Rom. 14:17-20- *"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy*

in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God."

■ **Also I Cor. 8:8-9- *"Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak."*** In other words, we are no worse off spiritually if we do not eat, and no better off spiritually if we do.

- **Since his audience is being tempted to return to the ways of the old covenant he is making the point that rituals and special restrictions are NOT the way to God!**
- **Paul and the author to the Hebrews are seeking to have Christians focus on the things that are important to edification rather than to idle speculation concerning what is proper to eat.**

6. Verses 10-16- Let's look at each of these questions and ask the obvious questions...what he the writer communicating to these who are so steeped in Temple worship?

a. **Vs. 10- *"We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat."***

(1) **Those who served at the temple...the priest and Levites were the only ones entitled to eat from the sacrifices (some of the best meats that were being offered) as designated.**

(2) **The author is designating us priests in this statement... We are a kingdom of priests and just as they got to eat at the designated altar...so don't we.**

b. **Vs. 11- *"For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside of camp."***

(1) **The people would have been thinking of this section of Scripture- Lev. 16:15-22- *"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel. And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat.***

And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness."

- (2)** The picture is one of atonement...there will be no "food" for the priest with this one...all of this flesh will be consumed in fire.
 - (3)** Then the priest places the sins of the people upon the remaining goat and he is sent out in the wilderness. So that he bears the sins of God's people as far away as possible.
 - (4)** This is a picture of the way God dealt with the sins of His people back then that is He offered up a substitute of blood and one that would bear our sins away...so an act of expiration and propitiation.
 - (5)** The author of Hebrews now brings us to Jesus just like he has from the beginning of the book.
- c. Vs. 12- *"So Jesus suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His Blood."***
- (1)** Jesus is the scapegoat who suffered outside the camp taking upon Himself our sin and taking away as far as the east is from the west.
 - (2)** Jesus is also the atoning sacrifice...our substitute with His own blood shed on our behalf for our forgiveness and acceptance with God the Father.
 - (3)** It is by this that He supplies the grace we need to be nourished
 - (4)** ***"Outside the camp"***-is a term that is used closed to 2 dozen times in Leviticus and Numbers and when it is used it is used for 1 of 3 things.
 - Someone who is unclean or defiled is to be sent outside the camp.
 - Someone who has sinned against the LORD is to be sent outside the camp, often to be judged...sometimes stoned to death.
 - The carcasses of these atonement offerings are to be taken outside the camp.
 - This is a picture of separation between sinners and God. As Jesus hung on the cross he experienced what being outside the camp was like having all of our sin placed on Him by His own doing and all of God's wrath as well.
 - The authors of Hebrews is once again saying Jesus is better...and when he says Consider what Jesus has done he really means for us to consider it all.
- d. Now we get to next exhortation- Vs. 13-14- *"Therefore let us go to Him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come."***
- (1)** Our author is imploring these people to understand the challenge before us. In the Christian life we are persuaded that there is something better than Jesus...there has to be more.
 - (2)** He is outside the camp...all His ways are outside the camp...conventional wisdom...worldliness is inside the camp of

sin...Jesus is outside where the people said you take the refuse...where in Jesus' day they took the criminals.

- (3) Don't we want to be where he is rather than the "security" of the world?**
- (4) Jesus is better than anything that this world has to offer...better than what's inside the camp.**
- e. Yet another exhortation a sacrifice of praise- vs. 15-16- *"Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."***
 - (1) Think Romans 12:1-2-*"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."***
 - (2) Oh, they are only to be offered up.. *"through Him...in Him"*...this is the only way our offerings will be acceptable to God.**
 - a. In the OT sacrificial system God enabled the priest to determine if something was acceptable.**
 - b. Now only Christ does that...all those things which are offered through Him are acceptable...those things that are "good",**
 - (3) What does the authors mean by sacrifice of praise or a living sacrifice?**
 - a. Since Christ has been offered up once for all time...which means no more real sacrifices are necessary.**
 - b. We are to offer up thanksgiving – the fruit of our lips that acknowledge His name....Through worship corporately and privately we offer this up continuously Paul tells us in all circumstances.**
 - c. We are also to offer up our "good works"...works that He prepared beforehand for us to walk in. We are not to neglect doing good...that which brings God glory.**
 - d. We are also then to share all that God has given us...time, talent and treasure.**
 - (1) Christian service is in mind here...a primary definer of the Christian...servant.**
 - (2) We are to seek everyone's else's good above own.**
 - e. While we do not offer continually sacrifices for our sins or as thanks with the hope to have God's acceptance. These 3 that He has highlighted the fruit of our lips, our good works and sharing are only done as a result of the work Christ did on our behalf...as an outworking /product of the faith we have been given since we have been redeemed. So they are to be offered "continually"...the Christian life that we are to live here never ends until our death or Christ comes again....and this is pleasing to God.**

Lessons from Hebrews

November 24, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Hebrews 13:17-25

1. Throughout our study of this book, we have stressed that the author's grand exhortation is that we persevere in the faith, that we not turn our backs on Christ, that we not seek some other mediator, that we do not try and find some other way into fellowship with God. And here at the end of the book he is continuing that exhortation. As William Hendriksen has said, his consistent exhortation and argument has been *"Jesus is worthy of your faith. Have faith in Him and do not fall away."* And so throughout the book, he has been calling for faith and for perseverance. He wants us to trust in Christ alone and he wants us to continue to trust in Christ alone and he wants us to live our lives in that light.
2. Looking at vs. 15-19, what would you say are the final exhortations here?
 - f. **Yet another exhortation a sacrifice of praise- vs. 15 *"Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name."***
 - (4) **Oh, they are only to be offered up.. *"through Him... Or...in Him"...*this is the only way our offerings will be acceptable to God.**
 - **In the OT sacrificial system God enabled the priest to determine if something was acceptable.**
 - **Now only Christ does that...all those things which are offered through Him are acceptable...those things that are "good", Honorable, Noble...bring God glory.**
 - (5) **Next he says, *"...let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God..."* So in the New Covenant we are to continually offer up the sacrifice as opposed to the occasional sacrifices of the Old Testament.**
 - **It might have been only once a year that you would have gone down to offer up a sacrifice under the Levitical Code.**
 - **But he says this kind of sacrifice, I want you to offer all the time.**
 - **While we do not offer these continual sacrifices for our sins or as thanks with the hope to gain God's acceptance. Since we have God's acceptance we must continually offer up sacrifices of praise.**
 - **Think Romans 12:1-2-*"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the***

renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

- (6) What does the authors mean by sacrifice of praise or a living sacrifice?
- **Since Christ has been offered up once for all time...which means no more real sacrifices are necessary.**
 - **We are to offer up thanksgiving – the fruit of our lips that acknowledge His name....Through worship corporately and privately we offer this up continuously Paul tells us in all circumstances. He even hints at what he is getting at with the language that he uses.**
 - **Look, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. In the old Levitical system, how did you offer up a thank offering? With an animal, with a bullock. You went and made a thank offering or you make some other sort of a sacrifice according to the ritual code.**
 - **He says, that is not what I am after. I am not after your making an animal sacrifice, because the whole argument of the book is those sacrifices are obsolete. Christ has been offered up once and for all. He is the only sacrifice that there is and so you offer up a sacrifice which is the fruit of your lips. In other words, it is through worship, praise of God, which comes from a heart which has been changed by the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ.**

g. Vs. 16- *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

- (1) He goes on to say that he wants us to offer up another kind of sacrifice too.**
- **I want you to offer up the sacrifice of good works. Do not neglect doing good works... works that He prepared beforehand for us to walk in. We are not to neglect doing good...that which brings God glory.**
 - **We are also to share what we have (been given).**
 - **This sharing is to be offered “continually”...because the Christian life never ends until our death or Christ comes again....and this is pleasing to God.**
- (2) In the OT the people brought their sacrifices on the high holy days...and then daily there were sacrifices offered up as well...**
- **Because of the authority given to the priest to stand in between God and the people God empowered the priest to accept their sacrifices for the day or the moments knowing that continual sacrifices would have to be offered up in obedience to the Lord and they were pleasing to Him.**
 - **Since Christ, He offered Himself up as the last great substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of His people and now daily we are to offer up our selves as a living sacrifice “...*holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*” Our continual daily sacrifices are made acceptable by the One and His one sacrifice on the cross for His chosen people.**
- (3) So we are to offer up:**
- **The praise of sacrifice in worship.**

- **We are to offer up the sacrifice of obedience and good works.**
- **We are to offer up the sacrifice of sharing or of alms giving as Christian.**
 - **Giving of the substance that the Lord has given to us for the sake of those in need...time, talent and treasure.**
 - **And all of these are only done as a result of the work Christ did on our behalf...as an outworking /product of the faith we have been given since we have been redeemed. This takes us back to the *"Through Him..."***

(4) Does this sacrifice make us right with God? NO! Then why are we to do it?

- **So whatever kind of a sacrifice He is calling us to make now, this is not a sacrifice that makes us right with God, because there is only one kind of sacrifice that makes us right with God; that is the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- **Therefore, he says, whatever He is calling on us to do now, we must do through Christ. It is accepted in Christ alone and is it, *"...such sacrifices that are pleasing to God."***
- **We make these sacrifices that God calls us to out of love...thankfulness...obedience.**

(5) Basically he saying, "I want you to give yourselves as a sacrifice, since Christ has given Himself as a sacrifice that has brought you into fellowship with Him, with the Lord, with God. I want you to give yourselves back to the Lord as a living sacrifice." And so he is calling us to a sacrifice of praise and a sacrifice of kind and loving actions towards one another.

(6) F. F. Bruce puts this beautifully. He says, *"Christianity is sacrificial, through and through. It is founded on the one self-offering of Christ. And the offering of His people's praise and property, their service and their lives, is caught up into the perfection of His acceptable sacrifice and is accepted by Him."* That language is even reflected in our own Confession in Chapter 16 which teaches about good works.

h. Vs. 17-*"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."*

(1) Ouch... *"Obey and submit..."* all in the same exhortation.

- **Obey...obedience is a required thing...we do not have the right to disobey those who God has told us to "Obey".**
- **Submit...submission is a voluntary act out of our desire to honor the Lord.**
- **No way to get out of this one unless we simply choose to be rebellious.**

(2) *"...leaders..."*-elders, deacons specifically.

- **Paul told us in Ephesians 4 that one of the gifts that Jesus gave to the church from the right hand of God was officers.**
 - **He gave the church pastors and teachers, those who would lead in the congregation.**
 - **He has given the church elders to lead the congregation.**

- And so this exhortation is an indication of structure in the Lord's church. Not all of us are equal in authority. The Lord has given us elders who have the spiritual responsibility to answer to God on behalf of the congregation.
- (3) *“...for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”*
- And so the reason for the obedience we are to give here is that these leaders will one day have to give an account to the Lord.
 - That is an awesome thought, that one day those officers that the Lord gave to our congregation will stand before Him and give an account for the souls that they gave spiritual oversight to.
 - So the author is saying, I want you, Christian brothers and sisters, to live in light of the fact that one day those men are going to have to give an account for you.
 - So the motivation in this instance is that we remember what our elders are going to have to do one day.
 - And these leaders are given charge, we are told in this verse, to *watch over our souls*. So their authority is not arbitrary. It is not self-serving; it is for our benefit.
 - Their purpose is to do their best to encourage us to walk with the Lord. So the author says we ought to obey so that that task of giving an account for us will be a joy for them and not a grief.
- (4) Story is told of 2 men in ministry having lunch together and they are friends but they come from a different understanding of what the Church is for. The first guy asks his friend to join him in on a trip for his ministry. The second guy said that he would have to speak with his leaders first. The first guy couldn't believe that a grown man would have to ask anyone's permission...the idea to him was simply unthinkable. So the 2nd man asked the first:
- “Who watches over your soul as one who must give an account? Who loves you and has your best interest at heart? Who prays for you and counsels you objectively, seeking God's best for you?”
 - The 1st guy said... “No one.”
 - “Then don't pity me for being under the authority of another”, the 2nd guy said. “You are the one to be pitied. The men who watch over my soul are among the greatest heritage and gift I have been given in this world.”

Lessons from Hebrews
December 1, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review and continuation in Hebrews 13:17-25

1. Vs. 17-“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

a. Ouch... “Obey and submit...” all in the same exhortation.

(1) Obey...obedience is a required thing...we do not have the right to disobey those who God has told us to “Obey”.

(2) Submit...submission is a voluntary act out of our desire to honor the Lord.

(3) No way to get out of this one unless we simply choose to be rebellious.

b. “...leaders...”- elders, deacons specifically.

(1) Paul told us in Ephesians 4 that one of the gifts that Jesus gave to the church from the right hand of God was officers.

- He gave the church pastors and teachers, those who would lead in the congregation.

- He has given the church elders to lead the congregation.

(2) And so this exhortation is an indication of structure in the Lord’s church. Not all of us are equal in authority. The Lord has given us elders who have the spiritual responsibility to answer to God on behalf of the congregation.

c. This is a discussion about us being good followers. When we decide to join a church we must take those vows seriously.

(1) The Scriptures talk about how marriage is equated with the Church in Eph. 5:32.

(2) When we take vows we are saying that we will submit to the authority God has placed over us.

(3) This should not be an easy thing to walk away from.

d. Let’s consider vs. 7 just one more time in this vein: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.” ...to answer the question why we should obey and submit beyond the obvious... “God said so!” The text gives of 3 to follow...to obey and submit...beyond what this verse gives:

(1) Do this if they are teaching the Word of God faithfully.

(2) Do this if they are as far as we can tell, living a godly life...

- Knowing no one does this completely.

- This requires us to take the initiative and get to know our leaders the best we can.

- Do this...obey and submit...if they trust in the promises of God.

(3) These are men then that are worth following and imitating their faith.

- e. ***“...for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”***

(1) And so the reason for the obedience we are to give here is that these leaders will one day have to give an account to the Lord.

- So the motivation in this instance is that we remember what our elders are going to have to do one day.
- What they do is of great value to us as we grow and mature in the faith within the structure that God has placed us in.

(3) And these leaders are given charge, we are told in this verse, to ***watch over our souls***. So their authority is not arbitrary. It is not self-serving; it is for our benefit.

(4) Their purpose is to do their best to encourage us to walk with the Lord. So the author says we ought to obey so that that task of giving an account for us will be a joy for them and not a grief.

2. In verse 18-19, he gives us yet another exhortation, ***“Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.”***

a. Pray for our spiritual leaders. ***“Pray for us...”*** The writer of Hebrews is exhorting them to pray for him and for the elders of the church.

b. And so even though the author of Hebrews had been very plain spoken, he had said some hard things to this congregation, he shows them that he loves them and asks for their prayers.

c. And we should give them our prayers praying for them that they can maintain ***“...a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.”***

d. And we should pray for ourselves so that we would be able to obey and submit and ***“Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”*** Even and especially when they have hard things to say to us.

e. Then he makes a specific request for them to pray, ***“I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.”***

(1) He is obviously away from them and desires earnestly to be back in their presence.

(2) OR—he senses isolation in his absence...isolation that all pastors and ministers feel from time to time...he can't wait to be back with them.

- There is no indication that he is the pastor of this congregation...he could be and has been called away for some reason...but there is nothing definitive.
- I have had many people through the years who have come here to preach for me that have said I can't wait to come back to your church...because they love being with the brothers and sisters here.

f. So what is the application of all this?

(1) In these exhortations, he asks us to live our lives as a sacrifice of praise in word and deed.

(2) He asks us to respect and submit to our elders and he asks us to pray for our ministers.

Lessons from Hebrews
December 8, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review and continuation of chapter...

- 3.** In verse 18-19, he gives us yet another exhortation, ***“Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.”***
- g.** Pray for our spiritual leaders. ***“Pray for us...”*** The writer of Hebrews is exhorting them to pray for him and for the elders of the church.
- h.** Then he makes a specific request for them to pray, ***“I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.”***
- (3)** He is obviously away from them and desires earnestly to be back in their presence.
- (4)** OR—the sense isolation in his absence...isolation that all pastors and ministers feel from time to time...he can't wait to be back with them.
- There is no indication that he is the pastor of this congregation...he could be and has been called away for some reason...but there is nothing definitive.
 - I have had many people through the years who have come here to preach for me that have said I can't wait to come back to your church...because they love being with the brothers and sisters here.
- i.** So what is the application of all these exhortations so far?
- (3)** In these exhortations, he asks us to live our lives as a sacrifice of praise in word and deed.
- (4)** He asks us to respect and submit to our elders and he asks us to pray for our ministers.
- 4.** In verses 20 and 21 he is pronouncing a blessing upon them a benediction. Let's look more closely at this:
- a.** It is a seven-part benediction.
- (1)** ***“Now may the God of peace...”*** ...that is the invocation...he is invoking the God of peace to do this blessing.
- When a minister pronounces a blessing on a congregation, he doesn't have any power in and of himself to bless you. But he is invoking God's blessing upon you.
 - He is invoking the Lord to display His grace and mercy and peace. He is invoking the Lord to give His grace to you all.
- (2)** The phrase, ***“who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant...”*** that phrase is a phrase of adoration.
- In this he shows us the power of the God of peace.
 - In this He shows us the reason we should adore Him as well.
 - This is the God of peace that I am calling on to bless you. He raised our King/Savior...that we might be raised with Him fulfilling His eternal covenant.

- (3) Next he prays that the God of peace would equip you to do His will.**
“...equip you with everything good that you may do His will...”
- **That phrase is the main petition. So he is praying that God would equip you to be obedient to Him.**
 - **Because God wants us to do His will...so he prays for us to be able to do so...to want to do so...and just to do it even when we don't want to do His will.**
- (4) Then he says, “...working in us that which is pleasing in His sight...”**
- **This is a supplemental petition to the main petition. In other words, He is further specifying what he is praying here.**
 - **But he is highlighting that even those things which we do in accordance with God's will, God's Spirit is working within us. So our sanctification is not a matter of ourselves pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. It is a process of being sanctified by the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit and committing ourselves to striving after Christ-likeness.**
- (5) Then he puts an exclamation point on this statement... “...through Jesus Christ...”**
- **That is the basis of the whole prayer. It is the basis of the petition.**
 - **The God of peace equip you through Jesus Christ...for His glory.**
- (6) Then he gives a doxology in the midst of this benediction- “...to whom be glory forever and ever.”**
- **He is praising the Godhead...even by emphasizing Jesus Christ...who he has been talking about throughout.**
 - **The truest expression of faith is obedience and praise to the Godhead.**
- (7) Lastly, “...Amen” –**
- **The so-be-it Word!**
 - **The “Lord do as I have prayed according to Your will.” The great expectation that God will fulfill what He has promised to do.**
- b. This great benediction suggests that He who has saved us is continually working in us, making us sensitive to His will so that all we do is pleasing in His sight.**
- c. There is a great phrase from B.F. Westcott (Anglican Bishop 1825-1901) that I recently came across recently in a book. He says, “The work of God makes man's work possible.”**
- (1) It is God at work in us that makes it possible to do good works.**
- (2) It is God's work that He prepared for us to do ahead of time for us to walk in them...Eph. 2:10.**
- (3) So not only is our justification based on what Christ has done for us, but our sanctification is based on what Christ is continuing to do for us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is by grace from first to last.**

5. After this benediction, maybe as an afterthought...except this is God's word first...so not an afterthought... he gives us yet one more exhortation in verses 22-25. So what are some of the things he is communicating to them and to us with this final exhortation?
 - a. **I have been told that this sermon would have taken about an hour to read out loud to a congregation. But I am not thinking that it is not the length of reading this message to them that makes the author a little nervous but how the content may be received...so he says, *"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation..."***
 - (1) Having said several hard things and corrected them in their thinking and their profession the people might have gotten distinctly nervous at hearing this message read.
 - (2) So the author basically says to bear with my exhortation, even though it may be painful. Bear with God's word...it is not always easy to listen to. *"Suffer the Word..."* When God speaks as He has done in this book we must listen...just like in Micah when the prophets calls out to Israel, *"Hear, what the LORD says..."*
 - (3) A word of exhortation= something that is written to stir/spur us to action- see Hebrews 10:24- *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works..."*
 - b. **The author knows that listening to faithful preaching is not necessarily comfortable, but it is worth bearing.**
 - (1) Sometimes when we hear good preaching and teaching we get uncomfortable...every good preacher can see it...but in this case he knows these people so he knows these will be uncomfortable.
 - (2) Sometimes it feels like the preacher has stopped preaching and gone to meddling, because it was applying to me, of course.
 - (3) So although good preaching isn't always easy to bear, it is always good for us. It is worth bearing, and the author says bear with this word of exhortation.
 - c. **Then he pronounces another blessing on them: *"Grace be with all of you."* That word grace sums up all of the blessings of the New Covenant, the better covenant of which Jesus Christ is the only mediator.**

Lessons from Hebrews
December 15, 2019

- A. Prayer
- B. Read the Letter to the Hebrews. (Listen carefully and write down or remember portions that stand out to you.)
 - 1. What stood out to you as I read...?
 - 2. So...I know this may be a stretch but, how are these Hebrews like us today and what are some of the lessons we have actually learned from this?
 - a. **These Hebrew Christians are very tied to their Jewish identity...rather than their Christ identity...**
 - (1) **We as well are tied to our identity...Presbyterian, lawyer, mother, carpenter...**
 - (2) **We are more tied to what we do than who we are in Christ.**
 - b. **They are so tied to their traditions and their Jewishness that they don't know about the Bible as they ought...**
 - (1) **Just like us they had sayings that they held up as Scriptural (Christ points some of them out to the Pharisees), but for us we assume things like "God helps those who help themselves" is actually a Bible verse, no matter how many times it is taught not to be so because it fits our lifestyle.**
 - (2) **We are so illiterate concerning the Bible that we lean into our church traditions with the "belief" that they are biblical.**
 - (3) **Some traditions are good as long as they measure up to biblical standards...those that aren't need to be evaluated on a regular basis for their effectiveness in bringing God glory.**
 - (4) **Traditions are safe...but we forget...God is NOT safe...but He is always GOOD!**
 - (5) **He tells them to look to Christ and the Word. That manmade tradition is a dead end...and they will know that in less than 30 years when all vestiges of their temple religion is gone.**
 - c. **As Jews they knew some stories of their past...but they don't seem to know their significance or how the whole story fits together.**
 - (1) **Christians today don't understand the covenant and how it ties the whole Bible together.**
 - (2) **Because our basic illiteracy concerning the Bible we don't even comprehend the meaning of the sacraments and why God gave them to us.**
 - (3) **Like the Jews of old we either don't think they are important enough to warrant continual participation or we are so tied to doing them just in case that by doing them they will guarantee our salvation and favor from the LORD.**
 - d. **The writer to the Hebrews knew very well that these Hebrew Christians, to whom he was writing, were still fondly drawn to the Levitical System of the O T that they and their families had been a part of for centuries. I mean after all the Temple was still there...drawing them in...**
 - (1) **Again Christians today are drawn to what is comfortable rather than what will spur them onto growth and maturity.**

(2) We gravitate to what is “normal” for us...what doesn’t stretch us beyond what we grew up with and our parents grew up with if we grew up in the church. So we look for churches that think the way we do...

- Downside of this is we aren’t really seeking growth...something we are commanded to do in Christ.**
- Upside is that we fellowship with likeminded people and that is good as far as it goes but it means that we are satisfy with the status quo...and that does not do much for us when we are in trouble and suffering.**
- He tells them to measure everything by this Word not our comfort level.**

(3) We should seek to grow and not be happy to sit idly by and complain about how bad things are.

e. There are some who are listening to the Essene teachings that wanted something “new and improved”.

(1) Many Christians look for that as well, today.

(2) We are convinced that there is more than what the Scriptures are telling us so when some ones comes up with “new” interpretation that confirms it and we run to him or her.

(3) We find “new things” and we follow that ...like the Pied Piper leading rats we flock after the new teaching or teacher.

(4) We want to question God’s word ...asking the same questions over and over again until we actually get the answer we want to hear.

f. Like them, we like to believe what we want to believe and we do not like to be told what to do or to believe...even by God but most assuredly not by officers in the church.

(1) We don’t want to be challenged at home or at church...because we are always challenged at work and in the world...

(2) We are autonomous by nature...fallen nature, that is.

(3) We seek out congregational government so we can have control...the problem; of course, with congregational government is the fallen nature that we all possess.

(4) We don’t trust or respect our leaders because so many have fallen ...so how do we know that these won’t. We don’t... but we follow them...until we can’t...because we took a vow to do so...and even more than that... the Bible says it is a benefit and a blessing for us to do so.

3. Recommendations concerning this book/letter:

a. If you want a study in Christology...this is the best book on the person of Christ outside of taking the Gospels and putting them together.

b. R.C. Sproul- *“This is one of the most magnificent portraits of Christ. His exaltation of Christ and preeminence of His labor and position to the cosmic scope of things is breathed into every page.”*