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HEBREWS

Chapter 12:01-17
JESUS – OUR FOCUS

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Hebrews Chapter 11 – gave us a partial list of our Christian heroes that have lived and died in the faith.

1. The writer told us that this world is not even worthy of those men and women!
2. And I would like to start this teaching with a look back at the first **2 verses** in **Chapter 12**.

- a) **Hebr 12:1-2 (NKJV)** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares [us], and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- b) In other words, we are not to get sidetracked!
- c) We are to keep our eyes on Jesus and run the race without letting sin knock us off-track.

II. **HEBR 12:3-4 (NKJV)** FOR CONSIDER HIM WHO ENDURED SUCH HOSTILITY FROM SINNERS AGAINST HIMSELF, LEST YOU BECOME WEARY AND DISCOURAGED IN YOUR SOULS. **4** YOU HAVE NOT YET RESISTED TO BLOODSHED, STRIVING AGAINST SIN.

A. How many of us can say that we have shed blood in resisting sin and temptation?

1. **Luk 22:39-44 NKJV** Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. **(40)** When He came to the place, He said to them, **"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."** **(41)** And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, **(42)** saying, **"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."** **(43)** Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. **(44)** And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
 - a) What do you think the enemy was trying to do at this very moment in Jesus' life?
 - b) Do you think perhaps he was trying to give Him a "back door" and get Him to take the easy way out?
 - c) Do you think Jesus was **"striving against sin"** at this point?
 - (1) Satan tries to convince us that our pain would be all over if we would just give in and give up: quit resisting!
 - (2) Actually the opposite is true.

- (a) We would miss what the Lord is trying to accomplish in our life.

III. **HEBR 12:5-6 (NKJV) AND YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE EXHORTATION WHICH SPEAKS TO YOU AS TO SONS: "MY SON, DO NOT DESPISE THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD, NOR BE DISCOURAGED WHEN YOU ARE REBUKED BY HIM; 6 FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE CHASTENS, AND SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."**

- A. The writer quotes **Psalm 3:11-12** to validate how the Lord treats His sons and daughters.
1. There are 2 words we need to look at a little closer: they are **scourging** and **chastening**.
 - a) **First**, let's look at the word **chasten** = it is translated elsewhere as *learn*, *teach*, and *instruct* as well as *chasten*.
 - (1) So it carries with it the parental role of mentoring and instructing so children can grow up to be mature, productive adults.
 - b) The **second** word is **scourge** = it comes from a root word that means "*to handle or squeeze*".
 - (1) Another definition is "*a whip*", as well as "*a calamity*" or "*misfortune*".
 - (a) **John 19:1 (NKJV) So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged [Him]. 2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put [it] on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.**
 2. There is no mistake here that the writer of Hebrew is saying that Jesus uses extreme measures in our lives to teach us His ways!
 - a) Now at this point some are going to say, "*That is abuse and the Lord would never abuse his children!*"
 - (1) You are correct! But the conclusion depends upon our definition of abuse.
 - (2) Since we are Christians, the Bible is our "rulebook" not the state, or the current "temperature" of our society - so let's see what it has to say about discipline and correction.
 - (a) **Prov 10:13 (NKJV) Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, But a rod [is] for the back of him who is devoid of understanding.**
 - (b) **Prov 26:3 (NKJV) A whip for the horse, A bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the fool's back.**
 - (c) **Prov 29:15 (NKJV) The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left [to] [himself] brings shame to his mother.**
 - (d) **Prov 22:15 (NKJV) Foolishness [is] bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.**
 - (3) I think it is important to understand that the rod is only intended for the "fool". And the "fool" in scripture, is the one who will not listen to his Father's instruction and take the higher road.
 - (4) It is also important to understand that the Lord does not consider this "abuse". He considers it a necessary logical course of action to drive the stupidity from His children's lives.

- (a) But please keep this in mind – the Lord motivation is always love!

IV. **HEBR 12:7-8 (NKJV) IF YOU ENDURE CHASTENING, GOD DEALS WITH YOU AS WITH SONS; FOR WHAT SON IS THERE WHOM A FATHER DOES NOT CHASTEN? 8 BUT IF YOU ARE WITHOUT CHASTENING, OF WHICH ALL HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS, THEN YOU ARE ILLEGITIMATE AND NOT SONS.**

- A. An "illegitimate son" is one born to a woman out of wedlock that no man will claim to be his own!
1. The implication here is that **if** we **endure** = "*to bear bravely and calmly: ill treatments*", the Lord deals with us as sons and daughters.
 2. But if we reject the chastening we are as illegitimate children.

V. **HEBR 12:9-10 (NKJV) FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE HAD HUMAN FATHERS WHO CORRECTED [US], AND WE PAID [THEM] RESPECT. SHALL WE NOT MUCH MORE READILY BE IN SUBJECTION TO THE FATHER OF SPIRITS AND LIVE? 10 FOR THEY INDEED FOR A FEW DAYS CHASTENED [US] AS SEEMED [BEST] TO THEM, BUT HE FOR [OUR] PROFIT, THAT [WE] MAY BE PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS.**

- A. Earthy parents do their best to raise their children and give them the proper amount of love and discipline.
1. But they are just human. They make mistakes, and yet in the long run most of us end up loving and respecting our parents, in spite of their faults.
 2. How much more so, should we love and respect the Lord when we know He is perfect and so is His discipline?
 - a) **Verse 10** gives us even more assurance - that even though His ways and methods may seem harsh to us at times, they are always motivated out of perfect love.

VI. **HEBR 12:11-13 (NKJV) NOW NO CHASTENING SEEMS TO BE JOYFUL FOR THE PRESENT, BUT PAINFUL; NEVERTHELESS, AFTERWARD IT YIELDS THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT. 12 THEREFORE STRENGTHEN THE HANDS WHICH HANG DOWN, AND THE FEEBLE KNEES, 13 AND MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET, SO THAT WHAT IS LAME MAY NOT BE [DISLOCATED], BUT RATHER BE HEALED.**

- A. If we willingly submit to the chastening without giving into sin, it will produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness.
1. Of course, the opposite is true also: if we will give in and take the easy way out, there will be neither peace nor righteousness because we have not allowed the "training" to take place!
- B. The "**hands that hang down**", the "**feeble knees**", the "**crooked paths**", and the "**dislocated joints**" are all signs of discouragement and defeat.
1. We are exhorted by the writer of Hebrews to make the most out of our trials!

2. After all, they are allowed into our lives by a Father who loves us!
3. And they will ultimately produce a great work in us.
 - a) **Roma 8:28 (NKJV)** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to [His] purpose.
 - b) **Jame 1:2 (NKJV)** My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. **4** But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

VII. HEBR 12:14-17 (NKJV) PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL [PEOPLE], AND HOLINESS, WITHOUT WHICH NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD: 15 LOOKING CAREFULLY LEST ANYONE FALL SHORT OF THE GRACE OF GOD; LEST ANY ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRINGING UP CAUSE TROUBLE, AND BY THIS MANY BECOME DEFILED; 16 LEST THERE [BE] ANY FORNICATOR OR PROFANE PERSON LIKE ESAU, WHO FOR ONE MORSEL OF FOOD SOLD HIS BIRTHRIGHT. 17 FOR YOU KNOW THAT AFTERWARD, WHEN HE WANTED TO INHERIT THE BLESSING, HE WAS REJECTED, FOR HE FOUND NO PLACE FOR REPENTANCE, THOUGH HE SOUGHT IT DILIGENTLY WITH TEARS.

- A. The writer of Hebrews gives us a small list of guidelines for not getting sidetracked from serving the Lord.
 1. Pursue peace with all [people],
 - a) **Roma 12:18 (NKJV)** If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.
 - b) Unfortunately, peace is a two-way street and some may not want to live in peace with you!
 - (1) But notice that **Romans 12:18** says, **if it is possible, as much as depends on you.**
 2. We are also exhorted to live lives of **holiness** and of course that is impossible without Jesus.
 3. We see also see a caution about letting ourselves get **bitter**.
 - a) We are told that it defiles many, and we know from experience that some never recover!
 - (1) Bitterness is like a cancer – it spreads!
 - (2) Bitterness can be a sore that never heals. Maybe this is the time to give up any bitterness we may have.

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. Like Esau, there are some things in life from which people never recover because of bitterness.
 1. There are some loses that we cannot afford - some things too dear to lose – Like Jesus.
 2. Keeping our hearts right with Jesus can protect us from those kinds of losses.