

(Through the Bible) Hebrews 12-13

by Chuck Smith

In Hebrews 12-13, Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of faith, endurance in trials, and understanding God's loving correction as we run our spiritual race with our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Duration: 1:11:01

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-2, Hebrews 12:18-19, Hebrews 12:25, Hebrews 13:3, Hebrews 13:7-9

Topics: "Eternal Judgment", "Brotherly Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the impending cataclysm that Peter talks about in the Bible. He describes how the material universe will be dissolved and only spiritual things will remain. The preacher emphasizes the importance of living a life dedicated to Christ, as only the things done for Him will last. He also highlights the loving nature of God, who watches over us like a caring father, rather than a harsh judge. The sermon concludes with a reminder to show brotherly love and to be open to entertaining strangers, as they may be angels in disguise.

Transcript

So we turn now to Hebrews chapter 12. Wherefore, seeing we are also encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. Now, what this does not mean is that the Old Testament saints, which are spoken of in chapter 11, are sitting there in heaven watching the activities on the earth.

It doesn't mean that they're just watching us to see how we're going to react and respond. And we got this big gallery up here of Old Testament saints. It does mean that their life of faith and accomplishments through faith are a witness to us of what faith can do when we exercise faith in our own lives.

Their lives bear witness to us of the value of walking with God. And seeing that their lives are such a witness to us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us as we look unto Jesus. So their lives become an example to us of the life of faith.

But we look from them to the greatest example of all, and that is of Jesus Christ. So we're encompassed with this great cloud of witnesses. They bear witness to us of the value of living for God, living a life of faith and commitment to God.

Life here is likened unto a race as it is many places in the New Testament. Paul said, I've fought a good fight. I've finished the course.

I've kept the faith, the race course. I've completed it. He said, they which run in a race run all.

Only one receives the prize, so run that you may obtain. Give all you've got to this race. Go all out.

Seeing we're encompassed about with this great cloud of witness, let us run with patience the race that is set before us as we look unto Jesus. This word look in the Greek is an interesting word. There are several Greek words translated look or to look.

One is to glance. One is to study. One is to look and to contemplate.

This particular Greek word is used only here in the New Testament. It isn't used anywhere else in the New Testament. The word literally means to stare with sort of awe and admiration just to stare at Jesus as we see the fullness of God's glory manifested in him.

He is the author and the finisher of our faith. Now, God has given to every man a measure of faith. The faith that I have in my heart is a gift of God.

Paul said, by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. So our salvation, the faith by which I believe is God's gift.

In First Corinthians 12, Paul lists faith as one of the gifts of the spirit. Jesus is the author of our faith. He's the one who's planted faith in our hearts.

He also is the finisher. He which has begun a good work in you shall continue to perform it. I am persuaded that God will perfect that which concerns us.

So having begun, he continues his work in our lives. He's the author, the finisher. He's the beginning, the end.

He said, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. And that's true of creation, but it's also true of God's new creation in us. He is the author of it.

He's the finisher of it. He's the author and the finisher of our faith. Looking unto him, the author and the finisher of our faith.

Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Now, Jesus is our example as we run the race. There are going to be hardships along the way.

God doesn't promise us an easy life. In this world, Jesus said, you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I've overcome the world.

After he describes the characteristics of the Christian in the Sermon on the Mount, then he said, Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely. Who? The peacemakers, the merciful, the good people. Life isn't going to be easy because you are an alien in this world when you walk with Jesus Christ.

You're out of step with the world. The world doesn't like that. You're a threat to them.

You cause them to feel guilty. They don't like feeling guilty. They like to go ahead and just be filthy and dirty without having to be concerned with the fact that I'm dirty.

They're offended because you don't like their filthy stories. It sort of cuts them when you say, oh, that's filthy instead of laughing hilariously. And they don't like that.

And their response is that of striking out, of persecuting. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you. Christ is our example.

Look at what they did to him. But who for the joy that was set before him now in running the race, the prize of winning is the incentive, the glory that comes to the victor, the joy of victory. In Christ's case, it was the joy of being able to bring to us victory over sin, freedom from sin, forgiveness of sin.

The joy of being able to redeem us from our lost condition. Who for the joy that was set before him and with Christ, also the joy of just doing the will of God, for he said, I delight to do thy will, O God. The joy of knowing I'm doing what God wants me to do.

Do you have that joy in your life? Do you know that you are doing what God wants you to do? Hey, there's tremendous joy in that. Just knowing I'm doing what God wants me to do. My life is in harmony with the eternal plan of God.

For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross. I think that sometimes we are prone to think that the cross was just sort of a duty that Jesus accepted and, you know, that he just sort of part of life. No, he despised the shame of the thing.

He endured it, despising the shame. In fact. It was loathsome to him.

You remember in the garden, he was praying that God, if possible, would take an alternate course. Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but I will be done.

If man can be saved by being religious, by being good, by being sincere, by being anything, let this cup pass from me. But Jesus drank the cup, he endured the cross, though he despised the shame. And is now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, having triumphed, he now sits there in the eternal glory.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. The contradiction of sinners. Here's a man whose life was marked by love, by goodness, by good deeds.

One time when they took up stones to kill him. He said, hey. I've done a lot of good things.

You know, I've healed the blind. I've caused the lame to walk. I've restored life to the dead.

For which one of these things are you going to stone me now? Hey, we're not stoning you because you're being a man or constantly saying you're the son of God. But you see, he went around doing good. And yet the most evil deed ever was perpetrated against him when they crucified him on the cross.

Here, the man who did nothing but good is the victim of one of the foulest deeds. Here, a man who proclaimed and taught love as the supreme value of life and then demonstrated that love being. Killed in the most hateful way.

Receiving the venom of man, such contradiction of sinners against himself. In other words, as we run this race and we face the difficulties, sometimes we are prone to get weary. The obstacles, the hurdles as we're doing this cross-country run, and we're prone to get weary in life of persecution because I've been good, taking it on the other cheek because I won't strike back.

Consider him, the contradiction against sinners that he experienced, lest you be weary in your own mind for which one of you have actually resisted unto blood as you were striving against sin. Here was Jesus striving against sin and he resisted unto the shedding of his blood. But you don't have it that bad.

None of us have been martyred for our faith in Jesus Christ. We may receive some verbal abuse and it is possible that some of you have actually experienced physical abuse. Could be that you have family that don't understand and you've experienced physical abuse, but really so little compared to what Jesus endured.

Now he changes the subject and deals with the subject now of God's correcting procedures with his children. Our father is a loving father and he loves us so much that he corrects us when we do wrong. Now, I want you to notice that God's work in our lives is not that of punishment.

And I think that in dealing with our children and in their mistakes that they understand that we are not punishing them, but we're seeking to correct them. God's dealing with us is dealing with us for correction and correction is for our good and for our benefit. I think that so often we picture God in the wrong posture.

And I think that this probably is a reversion many times back to Sunday school that, you know, the Sunday school teacher to keep us in line sort of warns us about God. You know, if you're bad, God's watching you and God doesn't like you to be bad. Well, he doesn't like us to be bad, but he likes us.

He doesn't like our badness. But he likes us. And like my little grandson, who I shared with you, came home and said, Daddy, is God watching me? He said, Why do you ask that? Sunday school teacher told me.

Why did your Sunday school teacher tell you? Because I was bad. But is it true? Is God watching me? Chuck said, Yep, it's true, William. God's watching you.

Because he loves you so much, he can't take his eyes off of you. It's true. God does watch us.

Not as a policeman to put the handcuffs on us the moment we do something wrong, throw us into jail. Watching us as a loving father so concerned with his child, he just can't take his eyes off it. Have you ever had that kind of an experience? I know my little grandkids.

They come over and I just watch them constantly. I can't take my eyes off of them. Everything they do is just so cute.

It's amazing. Even their naughty little spells. My wife and I will turn to each other and say, Isn't that cute? Look at that.

You know, they're having a brainstorm. Man, things for which we would have really whacked our own kids. They're cute now with our grandkids.

Boy, we spoil them something horrible. God spoils us something awful too, but he loves us. But he loves us enough that he does correct us when necessary.

Have you not forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as unto children? My son, despise thou not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receives. And if you endure chastening, God is dealing with you as sons.

For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then you're actually a bastard and not a son. Don't despise the chastening of the Lord. It's proof that God loves you.

It's proof that you're a son. Now, if you can do evil and get by with it, then be very concerned. You know, if you've been cheating over a long period of time, you've been getting by with it.

You've been living in a false relationship for a long time. You're getting by with it. And you better be careful.

That's a good indication you're not a son. You're in a dangerous place. If you can sin with impunity without getting caught.

But you know, the neat thing about God is that he loves us so much he's going to make sure we get caught. And that sometimes is a cause of great consternation in the mind of the Christian because everybody on the job may be cheating a little bit on their time card. And so, because everybody is doing it, I'm tempted.

And so I, you know, cheat on my time card. Whack. I get zapped right like that.

But they all did it, you know, none of them got caught. Well, they're not sons. They're not sons.

God won't let you get by with it, you see, because you're a son. God's going to see that you get caught. So that's not fair.

Well, it really is. It really is. God will not let you get by with sin.

God will not let you get by with evil because you're his son. And though everybody else may get by, not you. So when you get caught, just rejoice.

Say, oh, all right. I'm his son. He doesn't let me get by with evil.

And it's proof that you're his son. If we endure chastening, God deals with us as sons. If you're without chastisement, then you're not a son.

Furthermore, we had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of spirits and live? For they barely for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now our parents corrected us for their pleasure.

In other words, to make it easier on them. Many times, you know, we had rules in our house that were just making things easier on my parents. And a lot of the correction was for their convenience, or a lot of the rules were for their convenience.

They weren't necessarily thinking of my good. Always. They were thinking of their own convenience.

Many times. How many times I heard that story now, son, this hurts me worse than it hurts you. Somehow I never believed that until I became a father.

Then I understood when God corrects this, it's always for our profit. It's for our benefit. Now, if we revered our earthly fathers.

Who trained us and brought us up in the right path. How much more should we respect our heavenly father? Who for our profit. Corrects this.

Now, no chastening for the present seems to be joyous. And I'm sure we can all say amen to that. When you're going through a chastening process, it's never a real joy.

I mean, how many of you really enjoyed the spankings that you got? You know, it was to me, you know, I would always go into that. Nobody loves me mood. I'd be in the dark bedroom because dad to take me in the bedroom.

Family be out there playing in the other room, you know. You could hear all the noise out there. But you'd be in the dark bedroom and dad would talk to me.

And then he would spank me. And of course, I would yell so that he, you know, go easier, you know. Make him think he was really getting through.

And then he'd walk out and close the door. It'd be dark. I lie there on the bed.

I'd cry. Wish I were dead. They'd be sorry then that they spanked me.

You know, they came in and I was dead. And then I'd think of my little brother, how he would be crying if I were dead. And I'd cry more, you know.

Now, if any of you are psychologists, you can have a lot of fun with that, I suppose. But, you know, you lie there for a while and you go through the whole little routine. And then it's all over, you know.

Sounds like they're really having fun, you know. What am I doing in here? Go out and see what's going on, you know. Why are they laughing? And so you go out and you join in with the family again.

And I can join in again. You see, I've been punished. Now, before, I really couldn't join in because I was guilty.

Boy, at dinner time, I didn't get the second. I didn't want to ask for the second piece of pie. I really wanted that second piece of pie.

And I was guilty. I'm not going to ask for that, you know. And I couldn't really be a part of the family because I was so guilty.

And Dad said, after dinner, son, we're going to go in the bedroom. And man, it's hard to eat. Hard to swallow.

Hard to, you know, you know you got it. And but once you've been corrected, punished, you become a family member again. No more guilt.

It's all over. But during the chastening process, it isn't pleasant. It isn't joyous.

But what is great is the fruit or the result of it. The relief of the guilt. Oh, how beautiful that is.

When it's all over and you feel the sense of guilt is gone. Yes, I had disobeyed my dad. I did what he told me not to do.

I got caught. And now I've been punished. And I'm no longer guilty.

I'm now again a member of the family. And I can go out and play Monopoly with him, you know. And I can join in and participate.

But during the chastening process itself, not so joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, the fruit of it, the after effects of it, the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. If I will accept this as God's correction.

I've been wrong and God now is correcting me. Not easy. Not an easy thing to take.

But I'm his son and he loves me. He's not going to let me get by with it. And after he is correct to me, that peaceable fruit of righteousness, that peace that I feel within, as now fellowship with God is fully restored.

Wherefore, lift up the hands that hang down. You know, we get sort of beat when we're going through a chastening process. We are not so apt to be lifting our hands in praises to the Lord.

And when God's really dealing heavy with us, we sort of, you know, have our problems rejoicing and praising God. But lift up your holy hands, which are hanging down and the feeble knees return to that place of worship, return to that place of full fellowship and make straight paths for your feet. Or even path, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

Follow peace with all men and holiness. Without which no man shall see the Lord. Interesting, isn't it? Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Follow peace with all men and holiness. We have a tendency to put down holiness because what people have done with holiness, making holiness a way of dress, making holiness a thing of outward appearance. And so we have what are known as the holiness groups, the Pentecostal holiness, the pilgrim holiness and other holiness groups.

And to them, the interpretation of holiness is often the women not wearing any makeup, not wearing any gold jewelry and a matter of the way you dress. And we have properly revolted against that interpretation of holiness. Holiness is a thing of heart, not of dress.

You can, you know, go through all of the outward appearances of holiness according to their standards of holiness. And they do have, you know, their published standards of holiness. And you can deny yourself all of those things that they say are not holy.

But within your heart, you can still be just as filthy and impure as anybody else. The true holiness is a thing of heart. Jesus said, it isn't what goes into a man's mouth that defiles a man, it's what comes out of his mouth.

Because out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Holiness is not and cannot be manifested in a person's dress. It's in a person's heart.

That desire for God and walking with God. And really, I think that holiness comes from the consciousness of the presence of God. When I'm aware that in Him I live and move and have my being, that I walk in His presence continually, that has more effect upon the way I respond and everything else than anything else I know.

And it isn't the outward observances of a bunch of rules. Boy, you ought to have read the list of things that were the do-nots for me as I was a little kid growing up in a holiness church. I mean, you know, about the only thing they left for us teenagers was necking.

Going out in the park, you know, I mean, you couldn't go to shows, you couldn't go to dances, you couldn't do anything, you know. Fortunately, they never put a prohibition on that, so we were left something. And here we thought we were all these righteous little prudes, you know, because we didn't do all of these negative, horrible, awful, worldly, sinful things.

Jesus really laid it on the Pharisees because their whole concept of holiness was outward. It was in rules and regulations. It was in outward conformities to certain laws.

But there was such inconsistencies there. And Jesus pointed out the inconsistencies, but they didn't like that. He said, you strain at a gnat, but you swallow a camel.

Now, it was a common sight to see a Pharisee on the street corner putting his finger down his mouth trying to regurgitate because as he was walking along, a gnat happened to fly in his mouth and got caught in his throat and he's, you know, and got to get that thing out because it hadn't been bled yet and you can't eat meat that isn't bled. It's against the law. So you'd see him straight, you know, trying to get rid of a gnat.

But he said, man, you know, the outside of the platter is so clean, but inside it's filthy. You're like the whitened sepulchers and they would paint the tombstones with this whitewash. And so you're all white outside, but inside, he said, you're full of dead men's bones.

You're like these sepulchers. The outward righteousness, standards of holiness. But yet because of that, we should not neglect the fact that there is a true holiness that each of us should aspire to.

Living a holy life, living a pure life, living a life that would be pleasing to God. Without holiness, no man shall see God. That should concern each of us.

Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God. Now, there has to be real care taken that we do not presume upon God's grace. It is not a cloak to cover our lasciviousness.

It is something there for our benefit and for our good. That we will rely and trust totally in Jesus Christ rather than trusting in our own works. It is there to bring us to God because my works can never bring me to God.

But it is not there just to cover over any kind of lying and stealing and cheating and all that I might want to do. Saying, well, God's grace covers. We actually then fail of the grace of God.

We don't understand the grace of God. Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled. So, bitterness is something that we have to really guard against.

What a destroyer it can be of ourselves. Oh, the problems that a bitter attitude can create physically to you. The chemicals that are produced by your glands.

When your heart and mind are filled with bitterness. Destructive chemicals tearing your body and what it does to others. Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau.

Who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. He came in. He had been out in the fields.

He was hungry. He was famished. And there his dainty brother Jacob had been fixing up some delicious tidbits.

Oh, give me some of that. Smells great. Jacob said, well, trade it for your birthright.

Hey man, I'm going to die of hunger. What's as good as my birthright? Sure, you know, he didn't care about his birthright. Sold his birthright for a mess of pockets.

For you know how that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected. For he found no place of repentance. The reason for his rejection.

He found no place for repentance. Now beware. An unrepentant heart set in my ways.

I won't change even though he sought it with tears. Now don't make a mistake here thinking that he could not repent. He was trying to repent and couldn't know what he sought with tears was the blessing.

When Jacob received the blessing and Esau finally came in with a venison for his old man. And he said, hey, dad, I fixed the barbecue venison just like you like, you know, and he says. Then who was it that was in here earlier? I've already given the blessing.

He said, no, dad, I'm Esau, your son. Well, he said, it must have been Jacob then, but I've blessed him. He said, oh, but bless me.

And he started to cry. He wanted the blessings of the father. And he sought the blessings with tears.

And he said, I can't. I've already given everything to your brother. And so though he sought the blessings with tears, there was still no repentance, no place of repentance in his heart.

All he wanted was the blessings, the benefits. And there are a lot of people like that. And we are told to beware lest we be like Esau, who.

Really disregarded the birthright, didn't care about it and thus lost the blessing. Some of you don't really care about being a Christian, but oh, you want the blessings of Christianity. I want to live in a Christian nation.

I don't want to live in a pagan nation, no but all. Me, a Christian? No way, man. But hey, live in Russia? No way, man.

I want the blessings of freedom that Christianity brings wherever it goes. But there's no place of repentance. Now, the contrast.

He's writing to Hebrews. Who had been under the law, who were now come to a new covenant through Jesus Christ and thus a new relationship with God in the new covenant. He speaks again and contrasting now the old covenant of the law.

And he said, for you are not come unto the mouth that might be touched, that burned with fire, nor into the blackness and the darkness of the tempest. And the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the words, which voice they heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. For they could not endure that which was commanded.

And if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a spear. And so awesome was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. Let's go back for a moment to Exodus chapter 19 and read the account of Mount Sinai, where God gave the law to Moses.

Let's start reading with verse 14. And Moses went down from the mountain to the people and he sanctified the people and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, be ready.

For in the third day, do not come to your wives. And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud upon the mount and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud so that all of the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace. And the whole mountain quaked greatly.

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mount. And the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount.

And Moses went up. And the Lord said unto Moses, go down, charge the people lest they break through unto the Lord and gaze. And many of them perished.

And let the priests also come near and so forth. And here is this awesome scene. And then in the next chapter, God gave the law to Moses.

Now, he said, you haven't come to this awesome scene of Mount Sinai, a mountain that could be touched with hands, but people dare not come close. The mountain that was covered with the smoke and the fire and the thunders, the darkness, the tempest, the trumpet sound. So awesome was the sight that Moses himself quaked.

But you've come to a different mount, to Mount Zion. And unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, unto an innumerable company of angels, unto the general assembly in the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks of better things than that of Abel. Haven't come to the Mount Sinai, which, you know, if you came to it, you'd be thrust through or stoned.

We've come into another mount, to Mount Zion. And unto the city of the living God, this heavenly Jerusalem, the myriads of angels, the church of the firstborn, born again, and to God, spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus. So, see that you refuse not him that speaks.

Now, God, who at sundry times divers manners spoke to us through the prophets, hath spoken to us through his own dear son. He's coming back now to the first chapter, the introduction to the book. The book of Hebrews is the message of God to man through his son.

The better covenant that God established through the son, the better way, the better sacrifice. So, be careful that you not refuse him that speaks. That is Jesus Christ and the word of God and the revelation of God given to us through him.

For if they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, that is Moses, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven. And so, Jesus came down to speak to us the words of God, to reveal to man the truth of God. To speak to us the truth of God.

So, be careful that you don't refuse that word of Jesus Christ. For they that despised Moses' law, rejected it, were stoned. If they had two or three witnesses against them, how much more shall we not escape if we turn from the word of Jesus Christ spoken to us, this heavenly messenger, whose voice then shook the earth.

But now he is promising yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also the heavens. There is going to be a tremendous cataclysmic catastrophe that's going to befall the universe. The Bible speaks about it in several places.

The Bible says the heavens are going to be rolled back like a scroll. The earth is going to stagger to and fro like a drunken man, be moved out of its orbit. It speaks of the meteorite shower falling to the earth.

A tremendous shaking, not only of the earth, but of the heavens too. And this word yet once more signifies the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made. And those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

So, God's going to shake the earth once more. He shook it when he spoke from Mount Sinai. But once more he said, I'm not going to shake just the earth, I'm going to shake the heavens too.

Until everything that can be shaken will be removed. And only that which cannot be shaken shall remain. Peter, in talking about this great cataclysm that is coming, talks about the heavens being on fire, melting with a fervent heat, the elements dissolving.

Seeing then, he said, talking of the material universe, that all of these things are to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be? All right, everything that can be shaken is going to be shaken. That is the material world. Only those things which cannot be shaken will remain.

That is the spiritual things. You see, you have only one life and it will soon be over. And only the things that you do for Christ are going to last.

Everything else is going to be destroyed. The whole material universe is going to go up one day. It's going to be wiped out.

Now, if you put all of your value in material things, when this material universe goes, or when you go, when death comes, you're going to be totally wiped out. Because your entire value system was based in the material world around you. If your value system is placed in the spiritual world, then that can't be shaken.

That'll last forever. That cannot be dissolved when the elements are all dissolved with a fervent heat. What manner of persons ought we to be? Peter asks, we should be spiritual.

We should put our value in spiritual things. We should be walking after the spirit. We should be living after the spirit.

And that is essentially what the Bible encourages us all the way through, telling us that the life of the spirit is superior to the life of the flesh. And that basically is the message that the world hates. They don't want

to hear that.

They're all caught up in their little material gods, their material possessions. Their whole value system is in that. And to say that that's all going to get wiped out, that's all going to be destroyed, that's a threat to them.

They don't want to hear that. But it's true. So God said, I'm going to shake once again the earth and the heavens.

And that signifies that anything that can be shaken is going to be removed and only that which cannot be shaken shall remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved. All right.

Our heavenly kingdom. Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.

Very interesting. We are told in Isaiah that when God destroyed the largest Assyrian army that had come against the southern kingdom of Judah. In one night, an angel of the Lord went out to this Assyrian army and wiped out 185,000 troops one night, destroyed the army.

One angel. And in the morning, when the Israelites got up, looked out to see the enemy that had been camped around them, there was nothing but these dead corpses, 185,000. And it said a fear gripped the hearts of the sinners in Zion.

Those were in the city who were sinners. Man, they really got scared. They saw what the fire of God could do.

They said, who among us can dwell in the midst of this devouring fire? I mean, they got panicked when they saw what God's fire can do. Our God is a consuming fire. Well, that all depends.

Fire is an interesting phenomena of nature. One thing you can say about fire is that it is everywhere. There is what they call aramachusis.

Long word. But it means the slow burning fire of nature. Take a piece of metal and just lay it outside here.

And in just a short little while, that bare metal, you'll see little brown specks on it. What are those little brown specks? Oxidation. The slow burning fire of nature as nature starts to deteriorate that piece of metal starts to eat it away.

Slow burning fire of nature, destroying, eating away. You know, no sooner did we drive the last nail into this building, then the thing started slowly eroding. Aramachusis.

We've got to keep this thing up. We've got to keep painting. We've got to process a continual renewal of this thing because of aramachusis, the slow burning fire of nature that is gradually devouring everything.

Now, fire an interesting substance because it can consume. But fire is also used to transform into permanency. You put the alloy into the fire and you heat it, it becomes steel.

Hardened, tempered by the fire. So fire is interesting. It can transmit some things into permanency while consuming others.

You see, it all depends on the material that it's working with. The sinners in Zion said, who of us can escape the fire of God? The answer is no one can escape the fire of God. It's everywhere.

You can't escape it. The question is, what is it doing to you? And it all depends on what you are. If you are a child of God, the fire of God's transmitting you and transforming you into permanency.

If you're not, it's a consuming fire that will one day totally consume you. Chapter 13, closing out the booklet, brotherly love continue. And don't forget to entertain strangers for some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Interesting, I believe it. I don't think I've ever really entertained angels to my knowledge. And I have never really, you know, thought, I wonder if that was an angel.

I haven't really had that kind of an experience. But I would not challenge it. Now, there are stories about angels and all, but I sort of, I guess in some ways, I'm a skeptic to a lot of rumors that go around.

And yet, I surely do not dismiss the possibility because it's here in the scripture. That it is possible that angels could come in disguise as people and we wouldn't even know it. That'd be sort of awesome, but remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.

Now, this is one of the reasons why I think Paul was perhaps the author of Hebrews, because he was in jail so much. And when he was in jail, he was encouraging the people to remember him, pray for him and all pray for him and his bonds. And here is encouraging those to remember those that are in prison as bound with them.

And those which suffer adversity as being yourself also in the body. He taught in 1 Corinthians 12, we are all one body in Christ. And when one member suffers, they all suffer.

So, if one within the body of Christ is suffering adversity, be in prayer, remember them because we're all one body. Now, I personally feel very guilty that I do not spend more time in prayer for the Christians in Russia. You see, I like you have been such a victim of propaganda.

Everybody in Russia is a horrible atheist. You know, there are no good people in Russia, they're Russians. How can they be good when they're wanting to destroy us? But that is not so.

In Russia, there are many beautiful, godly people who have really suffered for their faith in Siberia. Multitudes of people. They're suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ.

And, you know, I rarely think about praying for them. Yet, they're all one body with me in Christ. They're a part of the same family.

They're really my brothers and sisters in Jesus. And yet, I really don't pray for them very often. I don't think of praying for them.

And that is wrong. They should be on our prayer list. And the thing that really convicts me is when I get letters smuggled out from a group there in Siberia who listen to translations of my tapes in their Bible studies.

And they write and tell what a blessing it is, and how that they pray for Calvary Chapel every day. And I think, oh God, I forget to pray for them. And they're really going through it.

And here I am, living in these conditions, so blessedly, and they're praying for me. And I forget to pray for them. And that's not right.

Remember those that are in bonds. Those that are in prison in China, in Siberia, for their faith in Jesus Christ. Those that are in the church that is suffering behind the iron curtain.

Remember them in your prayers. Hold them up. Because we're all one body.

And when one member suffers, they all suffer. Marriage is honorable in all. The bed undefiled.

There is a proper place for close, intimate, sexual relationship. Within the bonds of marriage, the bed is undefiled. God has purposed that it be a beautiful experience whereby two lives might be made one.

But whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge. Let your manner of living be without covetousness. And be content with such things as you have.

Paul, the Apostle said, Godliness with contentment is really being rich. I've learned whatever state I'm in to be content. Here again, be content with what things that you have.

For he hath said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. I mean, I've got so much. I've got Jesus.

Be content with what you have. If you've got the Lord, you've got everything. You know, he is, he's everything.

He's our resource, all that we need. For he said, I will never leave you or forsake you. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper.

I will not fear what man is going to do unto me. Oh, I love that. If God before us, Paul said, who can be against us? The Lord is my helper.

I will not fear what man might do. When Asa, the King of Judah came to the throne, the Ethiopians invaded the land with a tremendous army. Hopelessly outnumbered, he prayed unto the Lord and said, oh God, it's nothing for you to help those who are strong or those who have no power.

Help us, oh Lord. For in your name, we're going to go out against this huge army. Don't let man prevail against you.

I like that. It's a lot of wisdom in that prayer. God, it doesn't make any difference to you whether or not we have a huge army or we have no army.

We need your help. We don't have any power. We need your help.

And it's in your name, we're going to go out against them. I mean, and don't let, you know, your name get whipped. Don't let man, Lord, whip you.

We're on your side. It's not, hey God, please get on our side. Help our program.

God, we're just getting on your side and don't let man prevail against you. The Lord is on my side. I will not fear what man is going to do to me.

The Lord is my helper, my strength. Remember them which have the rule over you. And this is spiritually.

Those who are spiritually responsible for your spiritual welfare. Remember them who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow considering the end of their manner of life. I mean, the end of the godly life, the end of a life following Jesus Christ, considering the end of that kind of a life.

So, remember them which have the rule over you, have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow. And then this interesting verse, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines.

For it is a good thing that your heart be established with grace and not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. So, that our faith be established in grace, not in works, doctrines that would stress the works of man, the works of righteousness that we might do. The, you know, the things that I can eat and can't eat and so forth.

Don't be carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. He's really referring here to men like Herbert W. Armstrong, who, you know, tells you the types of meats you should eat and shouldn't eat and so forth. That your righteousness becomes a manner of keeping the law and the Sabbath law and so forth.

It's a good thing that your heart be established with grace and not with outward ordinances, the meats, which have never profited anybody therein. Now, I'm going to read a passage that I found that got all involved in those things. We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp. Now, when they would use a animal, the carcass of the animals that they used for the sin offerings, they always took them outside of the camp and cremated, to burn them outside of the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.

That is why in Jerusalem I do not feel that the church that the Catholics have built over the supposed site of the cross of Christ is legitimate. It's within the city. And Jesus was taken without the gate.

That's why I think that the area of the garden tomb across from Herod's Gate, across a block or so away, is probably the more legitimate site of the crucifixion of Jesus, because it is outside of the Damascus Gate. Wherefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go, therefore, unto Him without the camp.

That is, without the camp of Judaism, without the law of Israel, and without that religious system, let's go outside of it that we might bear His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we do seek one to come. Now, we are like Abraham who was searching for the city which has foundation, whose maker and builder is God.

We have no permanent residence here. We are pilgrims and strangers on the earth. We are just passing through.

We do seek that permanent city, the city of God, where we shall dwell with Him. By Him, that is Jesus, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

And so with these sacrifices, God is well pleased. God spoke of His displeasure with the sacrifices that they were bringing. He said, I'm sick of your offerings.

Sacrifice and offering thou wast not, but a body thou hast prepared Me, the prophecy concerning Jesus. Now, here is the sacrifice that is acceptable to God. Our praises, the fruit of our lips.

Rather than taking a little goat to the priest to be slain or something, let's just give thanks to God. Let's just praise the Lord. Spend time in praising the Lord.

That is the sacrifice that is well pleasing unto Him. But to do good and to communicate, don't forget. That is to help those that are in need.

For with such sacrifices, and another thing by which we can sacrifice is in the giving to others. God is well pleased with that. Obey those that have the rule over you.

Now, here we were told earlier to remember those that have rule, and now obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves as they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you. John wrote and said, I have no greater joy than to know that my children walk in truth. I think that's the story of every pastor.

No greater joy than to know that your children walk in truth. Pray for us, the author said, for we trust that we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly. But I beseech you, the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

In other words, pray for me, and I really ask you to do this that I might be restored sooner, because remember those that are in bonds, I'm in prison, and I want to come to you, and so I want your prayers that I might be able to come sooner to you. Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do as well. This beautiful benediction, the God of peace, brought from again, brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep.

Jesus said, I'm the good shepherd, I give my life for the sheep. He's the great shepherd of the sheep. May He make you fully matured, the word perfect in Greek literally is fully matured, in every good work to do as well.

Working in you, that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Now I beg you brothers, allow the word of exhortation to be a blessing and receive the word of exhortation, for I have written a letter unto you in a few words.

Know ye that our brother Timothy has been set free. He probably was in prison with the author, now has been set free, with whom if he comes shortly, I will see you. Greet all of them that have the rule over you and all the saints, and they of Italy greet you.

So this letter was written from Italy, probably from the prison in Rome and probably one of Paul's Roman epistles. Grace be with you all, amen. Fabulous book of Hebrews, so much, so rich.

When we get into James, he is going to exhort us, be ye doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves. We've been given a lot of exhortation in these two chapters this evening. It would be well for you to go and read them again, review them once more.

Review again the exhortations, praying for those that are in bonds as being bound with them. Remember those who are suffering for their witness of Jesus Christ, because we're all one body. Don't forget to

communicate to those that are in need.

Give a helping hand. Great exhortations. Now, let's not just be hearers of the words.

Yeah, we really ought to pray for those in Siberia. Let's pray for them. Let's put Christianity into action.

Be doers of the word and not hearers only. We don't want to deceive ourselves. May the Lord be with you as you put your faith into practice.

As you put into practice the things of the word. As you begin to walk obediently to the injunctions of the Scriptures. May the Lord be with you and may the Lord bless you and may He guide you and keep you in His love.

Fill you with His peace. Cause your heart and life to overflow in the richness of His goodness as you walk in the consciousness of His presence day by day this week. May your life be deepened in the Lord and in the things of the Spirit as we deny the flesh to take up our cross and follow Him.

In Jesus' name.

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