

Living in Hope Part 2

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- [0 : 0 0] We're probably going to be down a little bit today. Some people have already warned me they would be gone for Christmas already this weekend. And it was 5 degrees in my house this morning, so some of our older people maybe...
- Yes, that was outdoors. But it's going to warm up today. It's supposed to get all the way up to 16.
- Yeah. Yep. Hebrews 12.
- Hebrews 12. All right. We're done with the Romans 12, so we'll be going somewhere else.
- So Romans 13, right? Wasn't planning to, but good. I don't know. Maybe. You don't want to? Chapter 12? In Romans, I wasn't. I picked out Romans chapter 12 because it has to do with the Christian life and how to live it.
- [1 : 1 1] Do you live in the history? I don't know yet. I'd like to study it. Got a week or two before I do that. All right. Hebrews chapter 12. We've been talking about living in hope.
- Chapter 11, remember, is living by faith. Chapter 12, living in hope. And we said the reason we can connect these two chapters is the first word of chapter 12. Wherefore? Because of living by faith, we can now live in hope.
- And what God has done for us. And we said the reason for that hope is the fact that we have Christian life. We have Jesus. Keep our focus on him.
- And going back to chapter 11, you know, Abraham, Moses, and all of those that it mentioned, they had things that happened in our life they were not necessarily anticipating, ready for, but they learned to live by trusting God.
- And it's the same thing we need to do. We need to learn to live by trusting God and what he has done for us. We went to Luke 23 where it talks about the crucifixion because verse 3 says, for consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners.
- [2 : 2 9] And we talked about the fact that, you know, the soldiers were down underneath the cross gambling over his clothes. Religious leaders were mocking him.
- The government officials were mocking him. Even the other thief on the cross was mocking him and stuff. He lived under the contradiction of sinners. We have to do that sometimes. Contradiction of sinners come to us as well.
- Then the second thing we talked about was the rigor of discipline. How do we get so we can live for Christ? Well, sometimes it takes some discipline. It takes some chastening. And in verses 4 through 11, he talks about that discipline that comes to us.
- And he talked about the fact that God sometimes will discipline us. And verse 4 says, you have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin.
- He says, look, you're facing persecution. You're facing things. But he says, you haven't had to die for it yet. Christ died. Many of those back in chapter 11 who lived by faith died.
- [3 : 3 6] He says, you haven't got to that point yet. You're just facing some different trials and things. Stand fast. Keep going. Be ready for whatever God brings your way. And he says, look, keep on living under that chastisement.

Keep living under that discipline because you're going to learn from it. He says, God's not going to do anything that is not going to help you.

Verse 7. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But ye, if ye, be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then ye are bastards and not sons. Furthermore, if ye have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the father of spirits?

He says, look, you take correction from your fathers here on earth, and you still love them, you still respect them, you reverence them for who they are.

[4 : 48] He says, how much more are your father in heaven? He's going to treat you right. He's going to make sure that you're taken care of. He is trying to help you become the person he wants you to be.

And then we come to the third point. Response of diligence. When we are chastised, when we go through things, how do we respond?

Are we diligent to listen to what God has to say to us? Are we diligent to obey him? Let me ask you this. Name some ways that children respond to parents' discipline.

When you discipline your kids, how do they respond? They don't like it. Okay. How else do they respond? They rebel.

Okay. A lot of anger sometimes. A lot of crying. A lot of crying. They might obey.

[5 : 48] They might obey. I was going to say, we're doing all the negatives. How about sometimes they actually do what you ask them to do. Sometimes they actually like, oh, okay. Yep.

Did they do it? That finger, you got to watch out. But more specifically, they would ask questions. Some would ask questions. Some would ask questions. Wow. Why is this happening?

Why? Yep. So there are a lot of ways. Now, why does the... I guess I said so. Yep. That's one of them. I guess I said so. Yeah.

Now, question. Why does the response matter? Huh? They understand better why they're being corrected.

They understand what the purpose is. Sometimes, I always tried to do this with Angela. It was, okay, I'm correcting her, but I'm going to give her the reason why. You're being corrected because of this.

[6 : 54] To help her learn. I wasn't just a... You know, sometimes it is just because I said so. Don't go play in the street. Stop. Right there. Just because I said so.

Because you're in danger. You know. And I'll explain it afterwards, yes. But for right now, just stop. You know. But... I remember as a kid, the times I do remember, that my father had to correct me.

And, you know, set me back. He would leave me for a few minutes after he thanked me. And then he'd come back in. And that's when he would talk to me. And that's when I cried the most.

Because he explained to me about how he had to correct me because I needed a different direction. And I always appreciated that when I looked back upon that.

And it was, okay, I got the correction. But I also got the instruction and the insurance of love. And he wouldn't have done that unless he was a buddy. Yep.

[7 : 55] So, Jerry? And see, that's just the thing, too. I've seen that so many parents just want to, you know, be their best friend. And, you know, just want to be their buddy or whatever. And it's amazing how you see that they don't take that time to correct them in a way the Lord would see fit.

It carries over. And sometimes for the rest of their life. You know, like, the best thing I've ever heard. You can, like, choose a consequence of your sin. You can choose your sin, but you can't choose a consequence of your sin.

Yep. And it really stuck with me. Yep. So, one more question. How should we respond to our Heavenly Father's discipline?

Accept it. Huh? Accept it. Do it in love. Accept it in love. Because we trust him. Because we say... Yeah. Because we were doing wrong.

Yep. Which way did I go wrong? Or what didn't I do? Yep. So, we need to learn to accept his discipline. Because we know, first of all, it's coming from him.

[9 : 02] And he only wants what's best for us. Like the shepherd with the shepherd's hook. Like the shepherd with the shepherd's hook. Yeah. He'll just reach out and kind of bring them back. You know, you're going to get in trouble if you go that way.

Come back this way. Yep. Okay. My philosophy on bringing up a child. Hmm? This is how I was brought up. And that's how I brought my children. Mm-hmm.

You teach them no means no for the time they're two. Mm-hmm. That they pay attention. It doesn't mean go ask mother. Yep. It means no. Because she will say no too.

Yep. But the point being, once they have learned that, from that day on, even today, I mean, my kids bounce their questions off of me. What do you think about?

Well, that goes the same way with God. Mm-hmm. You use him as a guidepost. And you ask him the question. Mm-hmm.

[9 : 57] Should I? Oh, shouldn't I? Yep. And then you read the word and say, okay, this is the way I need to go. Yep. So, good. So, he says, look, God is disciplining.

God is correcting. God is chastising. But he's doing it for a reason. One of the verses in here, he says, verse 10. He says, for they verily for a few days chastised us, chastised, chastened.

There we go. That's the word I want. Chastened us after their own pleasure. But he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. He's doing it for a reason.

He's doing it to profit us. He's doing it to help us be holy. And if we're holy, living a holy life, we're more in closer contact with him than we ever were before.

Just need to learn from what he's doing. As I said, these people were facing attack. They were under persecution. Things were happening around them.

[11 : 04] And because of their faith in Christ. But some of them were getting tired. Some of them were getting discouraged. And frustrated.

Notice verse 12. It says, Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees.

And make straight paths for your feet. That which is lame be turned out of the way. But let it rather be healed. He says there's some who have drooping hands.

There's some that have weak knees. There's some who are getting tired. And he's urging them to say, look, be encouraged in what God is trying to teach you. Be encouraged in what God is helping you and to mold you and shape you into someone that he can use in this life.

He says, look, some, they're becoming lame. Do not give up. Do not succumb to the persecution and things that you're fighting.

[12 : 09] He says, look, there's a lot of things taking place there. But resist the temptation. Temptation. Temptation to be either to stop.

Don't continue on. Do your own thing. Forget about what God wants. Or the temptation to retaliate. That's a temptation as well.

How am I going to treat these people who are causing these things and these problems and things? What am I going to do? He says, as much as is possible, live peaceably with all men.

Look at verse 14. Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. He says, try as much as possible to live at peace.

Now, it's not always possible. There are some people who just thrive on drama. There are some people who just thrive on always having conflict and things.

[13 : 13] He says, as much as possible, live with them peaceably with all of them. I didn't get a lot of sleep last night, so my mind kind of, eh. It was one of those nights.

So, we can't be right with God if we're handling things in the wrong way. So, he says, don't give up. Also, don't try to retaliate.

Neither one of those. He says, live at peace with everyone. Look at verse 15. He says, looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God.

Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. He says, be so careful. Because what happens if we allow ourselves to go either of those directions?

He says, we're going to get bitter. We're going to have an attitude that just kind of, I'm upset with God, and I'm upset with people, and I'm upset about this, and I'm upset about that.

[14 : 21] He says, you're going to get a root of bitterness. And then what does he say? Excuse me. He says, thereby many be defiled. You ever been around people who just seem to be bitter about everything?

They're not good for you, are they? They get you complaining. They get you thinking about things. They get you going in a different direction. He says, don't get around those people.

Don't have those people being your best friends and different ones. He says, live peaceably. The Old Testament gave us examples of people of faith there in chapter 11.

The Old Testament also gave us examples of people who did not live that way. He goes on there. Look at verse 16. Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected. For he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

[15 : 31] For ye are not come unto the mount. I'll read that one in a minute. He says, look at Esau. Esau gave up his birthright. For what? Some stew.

Jacob says, yeah, I'll make you some stew. You just give me your birthright. And Esau's like, okay. Not understanding how important that birthright was. Not understanding everything that went with that.

And he gave it up. And then he finds out afterwards what it's all worth. And he's like, oh, wait a minute. I didn't want to do that. That's no. Too late.

See, we have to realize there's consequences in the things we do. So when we allow ourselves to go a sinful route, when we allow ourselves to get upset with people, when we allow ourselves to get frustrated, we allow ourselves to want to retaliate, He says, there are consequences that go with those things.

Be so very careful of what you're doing. He says, instead, do this. The next one, number four, reward for faithfulness.

[16 : 36] Reward for faithfulness. Look at verse 18. I'm going to read down through 24. He says, verse 18, For ye are not coming into the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest.

And the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that 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 and thrust through the dark. And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

Stop there first. I'll get to the other part in a minute. What's he talking about? Remember back when the children of Israel were by Mount Sinai?

Moses was getting the Ten Commandments, and God was speaking to them and everything. And they sinned, and they had to get the second copy of the Ten Commandments and everything.

[17 : 44] And God gave them the law, but he also gave them a talking to. And he did it through a storm.

His voice was coming out and it appeared to them like a great storm was taking place. And when he spoke, it frightened them. So much so that they're like, Moses, you've talked to God before.

You've seen, you've been up there with him. You go talk to him. We'll just stand back here out of the way, away from the mountain, and you go do it. And that's what he's referring to here. He said the voice frightened the people so much.

He said, Moses, you be our mediator. You go and talk. Everything about this situation showed that the distance between God and the people of Israel.

They did not want to become near him. They were afraid of him. They were not listening to what he had said. They had sinned. They had gone their own way, done their own thing. And God was chastising them.

[18 : 46] And they did not like it. As a matter of fact, it was so bad. Notice what it said there in verse 20 about the fact that even an animal, if it touched the mountain, they were supposed to kill it.

Because God was in the mountain. And God says, don't come near. Don't, you know, take that compared to the New Testament when we have Jesus Christ there.

Jesus Christ came to take the punishment for our sin. Jesus Christ came to make a way for us. He is the way, the truth, and the life. I can come to Jesus at any time.

That middle wall of partition has been taken down. He says, you can come before the throne of grace at any time. So it's a matter of, I can go to Jesus.

Here, in the Old Testament, God said, nope. Not now. Not right now. You're sinning. Jesus came to take our sin and make it so we can just, we can go to him at any time.

[19 : 59] So it shows this contrast between those different things that God has done. The superiority. This book, remember, has been about the fact that there is a better way.

You know, there's better sacrifices. There's better covenants. There's better this. There's better that. There's better that. The whole thing is about being better. And the superiority of Jesus is being taught here. Look at verse 22.

He says, But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the holy Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and 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, tend to Jesus, the mediator of the new government, and to the blood sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

He says, Jesus is superior. Jesus is better than anything you've learned up to this point. Just trust Jesus in everything that he is doing.

Then notice the reverence of God. Reverence of God. I'm trying to finish this up today, so I'm kind of going through things a little quickly.

[21 : 23] The reverence of God, verses 25 to 29. Christ has provided a much better approach to God. He's given us a way to come to God, straight to that throne of grace.

He says, you know, the sinful Israelites, they didn't escape God's judgment. They had to face the things that God held them accountable for. Verse 20, look at verse 25.

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped and not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

He said, if they had to, if God came down to Mount Sinai and spoke to the people and they were afraid and he's giving them things that they needed to know and things that they, he's telling them you did wrong here, here, and here.

He said, if God came down, how much more is it for us to go against the God of heaven? He says, oh, be so very careful.

[22 : 30] Then he comes to verse 26. In 27 he says, Whose voice then shook the earth. When he was on Mount Sinai, his voice then shook the earth. But now he hath promised us, promised saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as are things which are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

He's quoting from Haggai. And he's talking about the fact that God prophesied there would be future judgment. There was a shaking of Mount Sinai when he was, when he was there talking to him.

He said, there's going to come a time where there's going to be a shaking, not just of Mount Sinai, not just of the earth, but the entire heavens. Now we know that's coming in the future because of the things that we read in the word of God.

He's going to separate what is righteous and good and eternal from that which is sinful and evil. He says, I'm going to shake everything out. And only the good is going to remain.

[23 : 38] He says, look, you Hebrew Christians. He says, You're part of a kingdom. A kingdom that is very special because look at verse 28.

He says, Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

He said, Shook Mount Sinai. Sometime I'm going to shake the earth and the heavens. But you're part of a kingdom that cannot be moved. Doesn't matter the shaking that takes place around you.

You're part of a kingdom that is solid, steadfast, not going to move at all. And he says, So, okay, you Hebrews, you're frustrated. You're tired. You're upset.

There are things happening and you're wondering what should we do. He says, Remember where you are. You are part of God's kingdom. Don't let these things around you be bothering you.

[24 : 39] You're part of an unshakable kingdom. So what is chapter 12 all about? Chapter 12 is about showing us some certainties that God has given to us.

Three things. Hebrews 12, verse 2. Verse you know well. 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Looking unto Jesus, What happens? He says, You keep looking unto Jesus, You get the attitude he had. Who for the joy that was set before him. He says, One of the certainties you have in life, That comes from knowing Jesus, That better sacrifice, That better covenant, That better whatever, He says, You get joy.

We come to Christmas. One of the themes of Christmas. Joy. He says, You get joy when you know Jesus. What else do you get when you know Jesus?

Look at verse 22 again. Oops. 22 says, But you are come unto Mount Zion, And unto the city of the living God, The holy Jerusalem.

[25 : 57] He says, You get a new city. You only get joy from God. You get a new city. You get a place to live.

God says, I'm preparing mansions for you. Preparing where? And then in verse 28 there, What do you say? You get an unshakable kingdom. So he says, You live by faith.

In verse 11, Chapter 11. He says, Then you come to chapter 12, And let me tell you what. You live by faith like these guys did. You're going to have joy. You've got a heavenly king, A heavenly city in Jerusalem.

You have an unshakable kingdom. Learn to live by faith. And look at what you get When you trust God. Next week, We'll start in chapter 13.

Okay? That's our word of prayer. Father, Thank you for this time this morning. Amen.