

# Hebrews 12:1-13

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     the consequence of persevering faith it's my title the consequence of persevering faith it was about uh 10 years ago 10 11 years ago um organization by the name of reach life ministries walked into the office of then pastor john piper and they were excited there's a few guys man by the name of lecræe moore uh trip lee and pastor miguel devia and a few others and they walk into the office excited about what god is doing excited about what the ministry is doing where they're going in the urban context a resurgence of the gospel men and women who hadn't been to seminary going back to the text wondering is this what i should be living my life as and they go into the office and they say pastor piper yeah we're from texas we're moving down to atlanta we're going to start a church it's going to be great and he looks back at him and goes so that's what you're supposed to do and they're like yeah yeah we're going to do it and uh he's like well good luck he wasn't trying to bust their bubble or or hinder their steps at all he was simply tempering their excitement for the journey ahead that's it's not unfamiliar territory it's the natural reaction to anybody who is steeped in the scripture in community and they realize we should start a church they need a church here well by the grace of god they did start their church still living still active still moving in atlanta blueprint church miguel is in hampton roads virginia with our dear friend ben leinert trip lee is a pastor in atlanta as well but the idea of taking you from this height of glory so that you can see with clear eyes that what you're about to walk into is going to take a little bit more work than you may think it might cause cost you more than you are willing to pay and you need to know and as the scripture says you need to count the cost there's a consequence in persevering in faith ladies and gentlemen there's a there's a cost that comes to the believer the book of hebrews is written to a people who are in need of encouragement need of uplifting the author begins with a thesis back in chapter one verse one and two long ago and many times in many ways god spoke to us by the prophets spoke to the fathers by the prophets but in these last days he is speaking to us by who by his son who he has named the heir of all things through whom also he created the world there's our thesis for the entire book and it assures us basically that god is not done speaking uh his plan is not thwarted uh he has not forgotten about you it's assurance for a people who might be lacking in warfare mentality coasting getting beat up it's a sermon meant to jolt a drifting crowd back into alignment you'll see that in verse 13 as we end off chapter 11 we were ending with a uh cliffhanger of these uh the orchestra of men and

women who have lived by faith through history who are in concert waiting on those that god will call home himself the end of chapter 11 and and we're rejoicing because oh man there are people cheering us on waiting for us to to get in there like come on you're invited to the wedding supper of the lamb our emphasis today as it has always been is enduring endure to the end in light of who christ is in hebrews the greater priest the greater king the greater prophet endure till it's done endure till it's over and what the world needs what you need is a persevering faith uh one worth persevering for uh faith doesn't come without its bumps and bruises it doesn't come without its scars the consequence of persevering faith in case you thought this life was the best it gets it gets better in christ our writer this morning wants us to toss out our false ideas of faith and uphold the truth of faith so what are these consequences uh what are the outcomes of this persevering faith from the text this morning i just want to draw out three ideas uh everybody say three three ideas um the first one being persevering for the joy persevering for the joy verse one and two let's look at it one more time therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us also lay aside every weight and sin that 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 it's interesting guys that this phrase let us is plentiful throughout the book of hebrews you get a bunch of let us's throughout the text you you might have seen it in chapter four verse one where he says let us fear lest we come short of the promise and he keeps going let us labor it to enter the rest let us hold fast our confession let us come boldly let us draw near to the throne of grace the emphasis the main verb in verse one and two is let us run let us run let us run but you also get these dependent clauses so if you have let us run you get these dependent clauses in the text it would be let us lay aside sin and let us look to jesus the way you run is by laying aside sin and looking to jesus a new testament scholar tom schreiner wrote a book called the race set before us a biblical theology of persevering assurance he writes in response to his book i have urged in this book that the warnings and admonitions in the scripture have particular function have a particular function by them believers are warned against departing from christ and the gospel if they do not apostatize apostatize then they will face i'm sorry if they do apostatize then they will face final damnation in other words the idea that the warnings relate only to the losing of rewards schreiner goes on that are beyond eternal life is a mistake if you think that you're only losing some rewards by dwelling in your sin that is a mistake the admonitions and threats in the scripture address the issue of eternal life nor are the warnings addressed to those who are nearly christian they are addressed to those who have received the holy spirit to those who are genuine christians a friend of mine ezekiel azanwu is a poet

from california he has a poem called almost you can look it up when you get home but i'm gonna read a snippet from it because it's an amazing poem just a small poem he goes like this see an almost christian looks right but lives wrong they can't stand the conviction in romans so they sit down to be comforted in psalms nowadays christianity is like a louis rag no function or use but we rock it because it's stylish not righteous just right ish i took heed as he goes on i took heed to a modern prophet who proclaimed it was time for change now i no longer now i'm no longer bound to sin point blank off the chain you can ask umar abdul mutalib he'll tell you the same see you don't almost go to jail when you almost blow up a plane like you don't almost go to hell when you almost get saved i think it's no middle ground here when we're looking at the text today our examples of persevered faith in chapter 11 this great cloud of witnesses in verse 1 uh gives us a people who all ran the race yes not perfect yes sinful but people who persevered in the faith for the joy with joy verse 1 since we're surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses since we're surrounded by a great cloud of martyrs people who have gone before us examples and then that one little phrase that you might miss let us also the text seems to show us that since this is the way it's been done this is the way it should be done don't skip out on the historical people that have gone before you have shed blood given up their lives their time but let us also lay aside every sin and weight let us also look to jesus the image here of verse one and two is of an athlete it's an athlete running laying aside sin and weight it's kind of they used to run naked and i hope none of you guys do that but they they would run naked so they would make sure they had no hindrances on them so that they can get the best speed as possible nowadays we have some you know material that help you get faster you know some shoes and things like that but the image there is an athlete running full speed with nothing distracting their focus what distracts your focus what's your weight if you notice in the text is weight and sin the author separates the two weight could be something that's just unnecessary it doesn't necessarily be sin but it could just be unnecessary um i get updates all the time from the nba the nfl the nhl everything basically sports wise and the bible's clear lay aside the distractions lay aside the weight but then he goes on lay aside the sin and what does he say about sin it easily what entangles you while sin is what entangles us and keeps us from finishing the race the author implores us to cast it off to keep shedding it continue running while shedding the weight and the sin and continue casting it aside so that you can finish the race ladies and gentlemen the reason why we're casting aside weight the reason why we're casting aside sin is because sin is not our master if you're a christian you have no business with sin you have no dealings you don't make cahoots you don't coddle it i'm allergic to cats and uh my mother has a cat and she and our door doesn't close all the way

and she comes in and just wants to lay there and um and i don't want to touch her because you should you know and it's okay i can just go to another room but when you think about sin a lot of times people treat sin kind of like eh um sin is power and you don't have enough power to handle even your own sin i mean shed it get rid of it john owen says sin is always at our elbow you can't trivialize sin you can't dumb it down you can't suppress it no you get entangled in it what i've learned about sin is the more you flirt with it the easier it becomes to do the less satisfying it is how do you view sin how do you view the sin laying dormant in your heart how do you view the sin of the world do you welcome it do you tolerate it do you resign to fatalism i guess this is what i mean i've been you know whatever the principal duty of the christian is to run the race set before him just like every other christian has before them run it with patience endurance laying aside every weight of sin and then verse two it's not just the business of laying aside sin but it's looking to jesus while the art of laying aside sin is what every christian does this simply isn't enough the incentive is to run the consequence of running is the joy set before you look to jesus look at his example jesus the coach jesus the exemplar jesus the model the teacher looking to jesus the founder and the 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 you persevering you keeping the faith does not work based on you uh the word looking to jesus it could be translated fixing your gaze on him concentrating directly on him i did some musical theater at one point in my life and when we had to do turns during dances we had the teacher would say focus on one thing and then when you turn just focus on that one there you'll get dizzy and fall out some of y'all just need to focus on christ because that's the reason you're faint-hearted that's the reason you haven't endured in this race thus far the focus of christ and and why did christ do it for the joy uh set before him his perseverance for joy is our perseverance christ endured the cross suffered perseveringly to the point of death he became obedient to death christ as example despised the shame what does it mean to despise the shame he allowed no sin no evil no wait to hinder his flow his running for the joy set before him in other words christ suffering for the joy set before him was the anticipation of glories do you anticipate the glories are you satisfied with what you got here today i got news for you it's all gonna burn it's it means nothing it's just plastic i just want the real jesus did truly believe the promises made for him jesus did truly come uh to do the father's will jesus truly did trust the father who would raise him jesus trusted that the father will lead him through this life and we have a marvelous example even more than the witnesses mentioned before

christ is the better example looking to christ fixing our gaze on christ and his work is how we truly can persevere for the joy set before us and then number two persevering as sons look at verse 3 through 11 here persevering as sons as we shift the way in which we view christ in the case of the hebrew listeners our writer is possibly dealing with a people that have gone apostate amongst them folks that are believing other beliefs choosing other ideologies poisoning what the gospel is and he says you know what consider him who endured from sinners such hostility when he now when he's talking here he he's saying consider for a second the physical beat down of jesus christ i often say my sins alone were enough to beat christ down make them bloody now you add the sin of the world but he's he's not necessarily focused on his deity right now but this physical suffering the the motivation for persevering faith is the champion jesus christ who uh endured hostility from men from sinners verse 3 consider him who endured ponder in comparison to your life in verse 4 ponder him who endured the the word endured give us gives us this idea of being under uh something or being placed under something but also uh persevering under the pressure abiding in the audience is to consider this and specifically the hostility he faced from sinners compared to what they're facing in the day the physical death of christ lest you forget he was fully man and fully god consider the one who endured consider the one who endured the hostility the contradictions as it's translated of the people the blasphemies the the false accusations the cursings the opposition verse 4 compares christ's hostility to the people despite what you faced listen up despite what you face your great high priest your big brother has faced more and he has endured and then you add the wrath of god on top of that the full cup of god's wrath this struggle with sin is meant to express that you're not greater than the one jesus christ you're not greater in your struggle because you might have endured some things in christ and what he has endured we're dealing with a identity crisis here because if you're sons you count jesus as best as greater if you're sons you know that christ is gone before you he's your forerunner the the this jesus the son of god perseveres so that you as sons of god can persevere verse 5 and 6 the text takes a step further uh as it inputs solomon of proverbs chapter 3 verse 11 and 12 and it does this for two reasons the first reason one is an exhortation he says have you and have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons it's meant to allure us as sons it's kind of like when your child's playing outside if you have kids or if you were a kid and you remember your parent calling you and you just knew it was their voice oh that's dad okay guy i'll holler at y'all later bye um i'll call you back my dad's gone you know all the stuff that it's it's meant for the sons to know that there is an exhortation all the way throughout the hebrew text even to today that god is calling

[ 20 : 20 ] his children as a parent calls their child the second is a rebuke have you forgotten that no matter what you're facing no matter what hardships no matter what trials turmoil that that should never change your understanding of who god is it's amazing the statistics of students that go off to seminary even and come back atheists do not forget the one who has called you and what he has given you and what he has done for you uh do not regard lightly is what he says or disdain the the discipline of the lord readers are to know that the discipline ultimately points us to the true nature and the character of god if you're hearing this you you are seeing a glimpse of the nature and character of who god is especially towards his children specific grace the occasion of god's discipline is chastisement and it's love the consequence of god's chastisement towards his children is endurance see the occasion is love and the consequences that we endure to the end now let me say this way the evidence that you are loved by god is his chastisement on your life the result is that you endure persevere sons and endure and daughters but sons in general seven through eleven though he keeps going further with the idea of this uh fatherly discipline the lord disciplines uh for his children his discipline is a family discipline verse seven perseverance means that god calls you his sons and treats you as sons in fact in verse eight if you weren't chastised if you weren't disciplined what does he call you illegitimate you're not his son you're not his daughter you're not in the family it's a warning to us this part of hebrews is weighty for us not necessarily in its theological implications where there are theological implications it's more weighty to us because it hits home i don't know your relationships with your fathers i don't know everybody's situation but a lot of times we can allow our different viewpoints and standpoints and our different histories to tweak the text and he says no i am the ultimate father whether you knew one or not i know you and i can call you home i'm disciplining you this part is weighty for us uh the calling to persevering persevering faith as sons means the consequence is a great challenge but it also means it's a great reward uh this is why first peter 5 9 says resist him speaking of the devil firm in your faith knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world you see when you endure in the discipline when you endure in the suffering when you endure in the pain you're testifying with brothers over in tunisia africa asia canada everywhere and you don't want to misrepresent your family right i know that's a big deal your heritage but it also yields some rewards verse 10 says that we may share in his holiness verse 11 it yields peaceful fruit you almost hear the echoes of psalm 95 verse 12 through 14 as he says blessed is the man whom you discipline o lord of whom you teach out of your law to give him rest from the days of trouble until a pit is dug for the wicked for the lord will not forsake his people

he will not abandon his heritage the lord's chastening is meant to be received as a blessing you hear a lot of talks about blessings today right but you never really hear about the lord's chastening as a blessing i mean it's not like something you just kind of throw in a song like any discipline in me you know he chastens us to conform us though he disciplines us to keep us from falling away um he is also chastening us to prevent us from sinning lastly we get to verse 12 through 13 persevering with strength you see the people in hebrew our text is admonishing us even today persevere with joy persevere as sons and persevere with strength verse 12 through 13 therefore lift your drooping hands strengthen your weak knees make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed i couldn't find any uh medical examples like i wanted to for this but the author does return to this athletic sense to where you know when an athlete is injured they're gonna need some stuff they're gonna need some healing they're gonna need some some cold or some heat and a friend of mine was telling me this week how he didn't realize his shoulder was dislocated for about a month and he went to the doctor and they brought in this big machine he's like what's going on oh your shoulder is dislocated we're gonna pop it back in the joint and uh as they were getting them set it popped back in the joint itself and he was like oh thank god i mean he didn't feel any pain but it just kind of you know got oh i think you're good now okay well what thing what does god have to do to get us back into alignment a lot of times when i hear about people going astray uh falling away doing some things that they weren't taught by their parents i'm usually maybe even unwisely saying something like i hope they hit rock bottom so that they can look up and see christ well we're meant to be pointed back to the right track uh this this admonition this admonishment here this exhortation in 12 through 13 uh there's a negative view here that uh the growing weary is pointed back to in verse 3 um the hostility faced in verse 5 uh but the strength on display in 12 through 13 is so that we can continue the race and not be discouraged so that we can continue the race and not give up so that we can continue the race and not lose heart so if there was a weakening resolve amongst us in here this morning amongst the hebrews of the day our author seems to be concerned that they do not give up before reaching the finish line thomas watson says tis sweaty work all the way to the finish line the life of persevering christians is not a weakness don't be fooled it takes strength to be a christian a lot of times we're portrayed as you know just kind of blanket blind followers not necessarily knowing our right from our left but there's a strength that comes it takes strength to be at a school where you're the only christian and stand up and say for christ i live and for christ i'll die and not get a date to prom

maybe that's just my story sorry uh it but it takes it takes strength and i'm talking and i'm not talking about self willing strength there is a supernatural faith persevering strength that god bestows on all his sons and daughters so that they can continue the race and keep the fight think about the roman church caesar comes in with the incense and your mom has to stand up as you guys are in line and throw the incense in the fire and what the soldiers want her to say is caesar is lord but what she stands up there and says is jesus is lord and before she even finishes the word lord a sword slices her at the neck it takes more strength for you to get up right after her knowing what's about to happen and say the exact same words sure we might not be facing that explicitly today but there are others who are for some of us we just might have to die socially economically financially uh just relationship wise my wife and i have a statement first one to the cross wins it's not always lived out but uh first one to the cross in any argument wins who's gonna die today on this argument right who's gonna do this one well the author is here is making an illusion for us lift up your drooping hands strengthen your weakened knees back to isaiah 35 verse 3 this is what he says strengthen the weak hands make firm the feeble knees i also like how he finishes it in isaiah 35 in verse 4 he says say to those who have an anxious heart do you have an anxious heart today be strong fear not behold your god will come with vengeance and with recompense of god he will come and save you we need god to save us this morning there's a hope isaiah spoke about it just a second ago and there's a future hope there's a now hope but but we look forward to the day that we can see christ you might have heard of a man named william montague dyke william montague dyke was a blind man he was blinded at a young age went to cambridge fell in love with a girl he couldn't see and uh a few weeks before the wedding he subjected himself to an experiment that the people said well we can test on you and see if this experiment works so that you can regain your sight now all the way up to this point he had been blind from four to however old he was one writer said william montague dyke had lived in darkness studied in darkness won high university honors in darkness he had met his affinity in darkness meaning his wife-to-be learned to love her in darkness wooed her in darkness i mean you know i gotta facebook see what she looks like you know he's like nah i love her even though i haven't seen her and so he goes and gets the surgery and they say okay just so you know you won't be able to unwrap the bandages to see if it actually is a success until the day of your wedding do you want to just postpone he was like no



no actually i would like for it to be unwrapped as my wife is walking down the bride as my bride is walking down the aisle and so he told his father as she comes down start unwrapping it and you know the whole church is quiet as she's coming down because they're like oh my gosh i hope i don't know what's about to happen so and his father's unwrapping the blind and then he says i'm gonna say it the way i think he said it oh snap you are more beautiful than i've ever imagined well you get the sense there that today we might live in some dark areas you might know in part you might see through a mirror dimly but the words of paul in first corinthians 13 but then we'll see face to face and and we'll get a chance to see our savior but you have to endure you have to fight the good fight our motivation this morning when looking ahead while running the race since we have a great leader who endured hostility looking forward to the joy set before him since you have not suffered as martyrs because everyone's sitting in here today so i know you're not dead you definitely haven't endured what christ endured for three hours on the cross since your heavenly father is proud to call you his sons and daughters and the proof is your status of discipline in him or the proof of your status is discipline in him it proves that his love is bestowed upon you and that he sanctifies you endure the race persevere to the end and the outcome is the crown of life and once you receive that crown you'll turn around and look back at him and you'll realize it wasn't i that was at work it was him who was at work in and through me to work for his good pleasure to the glories of god and you'll hand that crown back to him and lay it at his feet and worship for all eternity i'll end with one of my favorites elizabeth elliot wheaton grad died june 15 2015 at the age of 88 husband jim elliot a martyr in ecuador she wrote a poem back in wheaton college and she said it like this perhaps some future day lord thy strong hand will lead me to the place where i must stand and utter alone alone oh gracious lover but for thee i shall be satisfied if i can see jesus only i do not know thy plan for years to come my spirit finds in thee its perfect home sufficiency lord all my desires before thee now lead me on no matter where no matter how i trust thee let's pray god we need your strength we need you we cannot endure this life on its own on our own we cannot endure this race we cannot even be about the business of laying aside weight and sin unless you are before us god i pray for every person in here who is in need of encouragement to endure i pray that you will guide them to your truths direct them in your paths and show them

that you are the greatest example that they can look to in jesus name stand and sing with us