

Hebrews 12

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine (LCMS)

Rev. Dr. Alfonso Espinosa

Outline:

12:1-13: Jesus as the Ultimate Example of Faithfulness

12:14-29: Warning against Disobedience, Using OT Examples

Part 1: 12:1-13:

### **Jesus, Founder and Perfecter of Our Faith**

**12** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

### **Do Not Grow Weary**

<sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup>In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup>And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

Verse 1: “cloud of witnesses” = not a heavenly arena. There is no disruption in glory. But the witnesses we just covered in chapter 11 and even beyond, the witnesses of the Holy Church. “Cloud” = surrounds us. Inspirational! “Witnesses” = martyrs

Verse 1: “lay aside every weight” = Luther described the old man, the sinful nature hanging around our necks. Our sin is a weight, a burden. We have to take it seriously and confess to God every day living in our holy baptism into Christ. Read Galatians 5:24. This is a daily activity with the “weight” of sin.

Verse 1: This sin “clings so closely” – discuss. Read the Luther quote in the TLSB 2124 for 12:1.

Verse 1: “let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” = the race is long-distance, like a marathon. This calls not just for a burst of energy, but for endurance which is a key theme in the book of Hebrews. In Revelation 14:12 gives two qualities for endurance:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 2: “looking to Jesus” is a great description to understand what saving faith is always doing. Jesus is the object of our faith. That which our faith holds to, clings to, countering the clinging of sin.

“founder and perfecter” = Jesus the Alpha and Omega has given us faith as a gift. And He completes our faith, keeps us faithful to the end. Our faith is utterly reliant upon Christ. How does He keep us in the faith? His Word and Sacrament AND through His life in and through us = faith active in love. His life through us as well.

Insert LW article for this June/July

Verse 2: See how Jesus went into His cross by looking at the joy beyond the cross and thereby despising the shame of the cross. We should look at our tribulations in the same way:

1. Look at the joy BEYOND them.

2. Despise them in the sense that we do not permit them to stop us.

Verse 3: What does faith always “consider” along life’s way? That is, faith is constantly getting back to what Christ has done for them. We are to be renewed everyday by returning to Jesus. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

Verse 4: Think of how far Jesus went in what He did for you so that you would not perish. This is our power: the Gospel, the cross of Christ for us! Christ for us! Of course, some Christians DO struggle to the point of shedding their blood.

Verses 5-6: ... “the LORD disciplines the one he loves” ... WHY? Because our sinful flesh bids us to forget about God every, single day. God is keeping us in the faith through: 1) Exhortation and Reproof (or correction, rebuking) and then; 2) active discipline or chastising.

Discuss

Verses 7-8: We are being treated as heirs of the Kingdom of God. Kleinig: “They ‘endure for the sake of instruction’ by God as they follow his curriculum for them.” (621) “Yet their success as his students does not depend on their efforts, because ‘God offers himself’ to them as his ‘sons’ and deals with them as their instructor along each stage of their way until they reach the goal that he has set for them.”

Good earthly fathers (notice qualifier) are an image of this truth.

Verse 9: God is our Father (see Romans 8:15 and 1 Corinthians 12:13)

Verse 10: Read Luther’s notation on this verse (TLSB 2125).

In the middle of discipline, it is easy to feel that God has FORSAKEN us, but what is God ACTUALLY doing in the midst of our discipline?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 11: What is the result of Godly discipline?

Verse 12-13: Therefore, how are we to respond to Godly discipline? 1) lift yourself up! 2) In the body of Christ, we help each other be properly aligned for healing.