

Persevering Faith

"For you have not come.....But you have come"

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Hebrews 12:18-29

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Memory Verse (August)- *"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."* Hebrews 13:20 & 21

Outline:

I. The Focus on Doctrine (1:1-10:18)

II. The Focus on Practice (10:19-13:25)

A. The Superiority of the Believer's Privileges 10:19 - 12:29

B. The Superiority of Christian Behavior 13:1-25

Theme:

In coming to Christ, we receive the spiritual privileges spoken of in this chapter. These blessed truths are all fitted to encourage the fainting heart, to win the affections of the soul, to inspire with hope, to strengthen the Christian's resolve to faithfully persevere in the faith and to avoid anything which would jeopardize the eternal interests of our souls.

6 Warnings in the book of Hebrews – to stir the readers to action: [J.MacArthur]

- Warnings against drifting from "what we have heard" (2:1-4)
- Warnings against disbelieving the "voice" of God (3:7-14)
- Warnings against degenerating from "the elementary teaching about the Christ" (5:11-6:20)
- Warnings against despising the "knowledge of the truth" (10:26-39)
- Warnings against devaluing "the grace of God" (12:15-17)
- Warnings against departing from Him "who is speaking" (12:25-29)

I. "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God..." (Hebrews 11:15)

II. "For you have not come..." (vs 18)

Mt Sinai (Old Covenant)	Mount Zion (New Covenant)
Forbidding, terrifying, alarming	Inviting, gracious, winning
Law	Grace
Commandment, judgment, condemnation	Forgiveness, atonement, salvation, acceptance
Unapproachable God	Approachable God (through Christ Jesus)
Man's imperfect works	Christ's perfect work
Closed to all	Open to all who will come to Christ
No one pleases God on Sinai's terms	God is pleased to save sinners through Christ
No one saved by it	All saved who come to Jesus Christ
Death	Life
If you come into God's presence you die	To come into God's presence is to live

III. "But you have come..." (vs 22)

Barnes notes, "Through this epistle the writer is showing that the Christian system was far superior in every respect to the Jewish religion. Every circumstance at Sinai is fitted to fill the soul with terror, but Mount Zion is of a different character. It is not enveloped with smoke and flame, and the thunders of the Almighty do not roll and re-echo among its lofty peaks. Zion presents stronger motive towards perseverance in the service of God."

When we come to Jesus Christ, when we come to true biblical Christianity - We come to these 7 Blessings:

1. **The Heavenly City** (22)-
2. **The General Assembly** (23)-
3. **The Church of the First-Born** (23)-
4. **God, The Judge of All** (23)-
5. **The Spirits of Righteous Men Made Perfect** (23)-
6. **JESUS!** (24)-
7. **The Sprinkled Blood** (24)-

A very good summary statement by John MacArthur:

"For every man the choice is the same. Whether Jew or Gentile, to try to approach God by our works is to come to Sinai and to discover that our works fall short and cannot save us. Whether we are Jew or Gentile, to trust in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ is to come to Zion, where our heavenly High Priest will mediate for us and bring us to the Father, and where we find reconciliation, peace, and eternal life. And if you have truly come to Zion and received all its blessings, it is inconceivable that you would want to hold on to Sinai in any way."

IV. "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking." (v25)

V. "Let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service (v28)

Implications

1. "But you have come to Mount Zion..."(22) with its 7 blessings & more! - Periodically take a spiritual inventory of what God has done for your soul (Psalm 66:16). Compare what you have in Jesus Christ with what you thought you had in your former foolish beliefs, wayward philosophies, and false religions.
2. "Let us show gratitude" – (Hebrews 12:28) – Be very grateful that God didn't leave you in the darkness of sin, guilt and shame, but instead has completely forgiven you through the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary – and you are now found "in Christ!" We could've been left with Mount Sinai, but instead we've been blessed and saved by the God of heaven! The verse goes on to say that in our gratitude, we go on to offer God an acceptable service with reverence and awe!
3. Guard your heart from any temptation or sin that would stop your forward progression in following after Jesus Christ. Many of us know of others who have left the faith and how tragic that is. Run the Christian race with endurance (Heb. 12:1), and never quit. By God's grace, persevere! Stay in His word, stay in prayer, stay in the church, always looking to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.
4. Watch out for others who may be spiritually on the fence or have one foot out the door. Encourage them by using the Word of God, pray for them, attempt to discover the real reasons behind their lack of commitment to Christ, and spend time encouraging and warning them from God's word. (2 Tim. 2:24-26)
5. Live a godly example before the lost world and the struggling church. Whether you realize it or not, people are watching to see if you will really live what you say you believe. Persevere in the faith, keep on keeping on, live godly, live above the world, live in such a way to make the gospel attractive, adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect (Titus 2:10), and be a shining example of who Jesus Christ is and what it means to be one of His followers!

Notes taken from: J.MacArthur Study Bible, J.MacArthur Hebrews Commentary, Barnes Notes, and/or Kistemaker Commentary