

Persevering Faith

Hebrews 12:18-29

“For you have not come.....But you have come”

Crosswords Sunday School 8/20/2017

Dave Jeffries

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)

A. The Superiority of Jesus Christ's Position 1:1-4:13

B. The Superiority of Jesus Christ's Priesthood 4:14-7:28

C. The Superiority of Jesus Christ's Priestly Ministry 8:1-10:18

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 for Today's Lesson:

In coming to Christ and receiving the blessings listed in this chapter (heaven - the city of the living God, the company of angels, the church, Jesus the great Mediator, His atoning blood, etc), these blessed truths are all fitted to encourage the fainting heart, to win the affections of the soul, to inspire with hope, and to strengthen the Christian's resolve to gratefully and faithfully persevere in the faith.

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)

J. MacArthur- “The fear of those on the verge of accepting Christ should not be of persecution they might receive for believing in Him, but the judgment they will inevitable receive for rejecting Him. Their fear should not be of coming to Mount Zion... but of turning back to Mount Sinai. This contrast in our text is vivid.”

<u>Mt Sinai (Old Covenant)</u>	<u>Mount Zion (New Covenant)</u>
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

II. “For you have not come...” (vs 18)

J. MacArthur, “The Old Covenant was associated with Mt Sinai because that is where God spoke to Moses when that covenant was instituted. It was a covenant of law, and it was also a covenant of judgment and of fear. It said, ‘Do this, or do not do that, or you will be judged.’ In some cases it said, ‘Do not do this, or you will die.’”

III. “But you have come...” (vs 22)

The author is showing his readers that in the gospel of Jesus Christ (that they have professed to believe) they had NOT come to Mount Sinai with all its terrors, gloom, blazing fire, and the impossibilities of saving yourself with human efforts – BUT they have come to Mount Zion which is far better.

In coming to Mount Zion, in coming to Christ Jesus by faith in His finished work – they have come to several blessings the author will use to contrast the Old Covenant with the New Covenant.

And for us today - when we come to Zion, when we come to Jesus Christ, when we come to true biblical Christianity....we come to the following 7 blessings!

7 Blessings for our Consideration

1.The Heavenly City (22)- the city of the living God

The Apostle John describes it in Revelation 21:1-4 as,

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’”

7 Blessings for our Consideration

2. The General Assembly (23)- innumerable angels in heaven

3. The Church of the First-Born (23)- the firstborn is Jesus

Barnes Notes, "By becoming Christians, we have become in fact identified with that happy and honored church, and that this is a powerful motive to induce us to persevere. It is a consideration that should cause us to adhere to our religion in the middle of all temptations and persecutions, that we are identified with the most eminently holy men who have ever lived, and that we share their honors and their joys. Every true believer should feel it an honor to be a Christian. He should never yield to any temptation which would cause him to depart from so goodly a fellowship called the church."

7 Blessings for our Consideration

4. God, The Judge of All (23)- we can come into God's presence and live!

5. The Spirits of Righteous Men Made Perfect (23)-

Albert Barnes, "This is a consideration which ought to influence the minds of all believers. They are now united with all the redeemed of heaven. They should so live as not to be separated from them in the final day. Most Christians have among the redeemed already not a few of their most tenderly beloved friends. It should be a powerful motive with us so to live as to be prepared to be reunited with them in heaven."

7 Blessings for our Consideration

6. JESUS (24)- the Mediator of a new covenant

“...you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save
His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

7. The Sprinkled Blood (24)-

Barnes Notes, “The highest consideration which can be urged to induce anyone to persevere in a life of piety is the fact that the Son of God (JESUS) has come into the world and died to save sinners!”

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)

Albert Barnes, “The meaning here is, that God had addressed them in the gospel as really as He had done the Hebrews on Mount Sinai, and that there was as much to be dreaded in disregarding His voice NOW as there was THEN. He does not speak, indeed, amidst lightnings, and thunders, and clouds, but He speaks by every message of mercy; by every invitation; by every tender appeal and warnings of the gospel.”

Another good summary statement pulling the lesson together:

“By all these tender and solemn considerations, therefore, the author of Hebrews urges the friends of God to perseverance and fidelity in God’s service. God’s goodness and mercy; the gift of a Savior to redeem us; the revelation of a glorious world; the assurance that all may soon be united in fellowship with the angels and all the redeemed; the certainty that the kingdom of the Savior is established on a permanent basis; and the apprehension of the dreadful wrath of God against the guilty...all of this should lead us to persevere in the duties of our Christian calling, and to avoid those things which would jeopardize the eternal interests of our souls.”

Albert Barnes

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!

Implications

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)

Implications

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!