

Bible Study April 19, 2023

Jesus our Founder, Trainer, Judge - HEBREWS 12 (ESV)

Now that you know the theology of how Jesus is so much better...I don't know who you place your trust in but Jesus is better, He is better...

Let Us...

- **Hebrews 10: 22** – ²² *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*
- **Hebrews 10:23** - ²³ *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*
- **Hebrews 10:24** - ²⁴ *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,*

Jesus our Founder

¹ 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,

Some considered it an honor to be persecuted for your faith in Christ.

- **Matthew 5:11** *“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*
- **Romans 8:35-39** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*
³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This “great crowd of witnesses” contains all the people described in Hebrews 11. Their faithfulness is a constant encouragement to us. We do not struggle alone, and we are not the first to struggle with the problems we face. Others have run the race and won, and their witness stirs us to run and win also. What an inspiring heritage we have!

On race day, their clothes are lightweight and their bodies lean. To run the race that God has set before us, we must also strip off the excess weight that slows us down. How can we do that?
(1) Choose friends who are also committed to the race. (2) Drop certain activities, such as continually scrolling social media, or shopping for nonessential items. They may be adding unnecessary weight. (3) Get help for addictions and secret sins that disable you such as pornography, gambling, painkillers, or alcohol.

² 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.

³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

- **1 Peter 4:12-16** “¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name”

When you face hardship and discouragement, it’s easy to lose sight of the big picture. But you’re not alone; you can get help. Many others have already made it through the stage of life you are in, enduring far more difficult circumstances than you have. Suffering provides the training ground for Christian maturity. It develops our patience, makes us realize our need for Christ, strengthens our resolve, encourages humility, and ensures our final victory.

The Christian life involves focus and training. It requires us to give up whatever hinders or endangers our relationships with God and to run with stamina and commitment in the power of the Holy Spirit. We will stumble if we look away from him to worry about ourselves or look at the opposition, trials, or suffering facing us. We should be running solely for Christ, not our own glory or success, and we must always keep him in sight.

Jesus Our Trainer

⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood

These readers were facing difficult times of persecution, but none of them had yet died for their faith, though many Christians would die in the future. Because they were still alive, the writer urged them to continue to run their race. Just as Christ did not give up, neither should they.

⁵ 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. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Writer quotes: Proverbs 3:11-12 ¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, ¹² for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.

⁷ 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? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ 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? ¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

Who loves his children more—the father who allows them to do whatever they want without restraint or the one who corrects, trains, and even punishes them to help them learn what is right? No one likes to be corrected and disciplined by God, but his discipline shows his deep love for us. When

God corrects you through his Word, circumstances, or other people, see it as proof of his love, and ask him what you need to learn.

We may respond to discipline in several ways: (1) We can accept it with resignation; (2) we can accept it with self-pity, thinking we really don't deserve it; (3) we can be angry and resentful toward God; or (4) we can accept it graciously, letting it accomplish its purpose in our lives.

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

We should think of God as not only a disciplining parent but also an Olympic-style coach who pushes us to our limits and requires discipline so we will win the reward of heaven. Although we may not feel strong enough to push on to victory, we will be able to accomplish it as we follow Christ and trust him to strengthen our grip. Your encouragement can strengthen them, show them that God knows what he is doing, and teach them how to cooperate with his plans and trust in his promises.

¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

In God, holy means morally perfect; in us, it means morally clean, set aside for his service. This holy living will result in peaceful living. A good relationship with God leads to good relationships with fellow believers. Although we will not always feel loving toward all other believers, we must pursue peace as we become more Christlike.

¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶ that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

Esau's story shows us that mistakes and sins sometimes have lasting consequences (Genesis 25:29-34; 27:35-41). Even repentance and regret could not restore what he had forfeited. The Jews saw Esau as immoral and godless because he took his eyes off God's promise to the family through Abraham and traded everything for a quick meal. How often do you make decisions based on what you must have right now rather than on God's promises to you in the long run? Evaluate the long-range effects of your decisions and actions. Some decisions and actions you can't take back or do over.

Judge of Two Covenants – Sinai and Zion



18 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest 19 and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. 20 For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." 21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."



22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel

Mount Zion is another name for Mount Moriah, the hill on which the Temple had been built. What a contrast between the people's terrified approach of God at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:10-25) and their joyful approach at Mount Zion in his holy city! What a difference Jesus makes!

The Unshaken Kingdom

25 See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire

We have a kingdom that cannot be shaken, there for let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.

When God spoke to the people of Israel the first time, his voice shook the earth (Exodus 19:18). Later, the prophet Haggai foresaw the glorious expectation of God's powerful revelation (Haggai 2:6-7). Eventually, the world as we know it will crumble, and only God's Kingdom will last. Those who follow Christ are part of this unshakable Kingdom, and they will withstand the shaking, sifting, and burning. When we feel unsure about the future, we can draw confidence from these verses. No matter what happens here, our future rests on a solid foundation that cannot be destroyed. Don't put

your confidence in what will be destroyed; instead, build your life on Christ and his unshakable Kingdom. (For more on the importance of building on a solid foundation, see Matthew 7:24-27.)

He cannot be contained. Yet he shows us compassion. He saves us from sin, and he will save us from death. But everything temporal, worthless, sinful, imperfect, or destructive will be devoured by the fire of his wrath (see Deuteronomy 4:24). Only what is good, true, sacred, and righteous will remain. What a catastrophe for anyone considering turning away from God!