

I. Lesson: The Better Reward Pt. 2 (Hebrews 12)

A. We can look at Jesus (12:1-11)

1. The writer reminds the congregation of the witnesses who surround the believer who died in faith, all who ran faithfully. This reminder is to suggest that nothing should hinder us, though we have much that seems to be distracting. We have to look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.
2. But persecution and life's troubles will come. But these hindrances only serve as opportunities for growth. The writer suggests persecution should work the "fruits of righteousness" (v. 11). In other words, though tribulation the believer endures is for the purpose of producing greater things. God's chastisement of us is out of his love for us to make us more like himself (v. 10).

B. We can see good fruit (12:12-17)

1. The writer challenges the church to "lift the hands" and "weak knees" (v. 12). These were signs of discouragement in the congregation due to the increased pressure on the church. But tells them to walk in the straight paths, don't be crooked, or one will fall. That is, do not slack up on one's devotion to the Lord but stay the course unless something worse happens. In other words, keep the faith, do not lose hope in what God has promised in Jesus Christ.
2. When people do not do this, a "bitter root" (see Deut 29:18) can spring up. This person is someone who turns from the Lord and causes trouble within the congregation. The writer says, remove such a person from among you who constantly causes trouble and causes others not to seek the Lord.

C. We can see our eternal blessings (12:18-24)

1. Exodus 19 forms the background for this description in these verses. God showed up on the mountain of Sinai and punished those who tried to touch it. The reality of God was too much for them to handle, yet they took it seriously.
2. But now, we have not come to that mountain but the "heavenly Jerusalem" (vv. 22-24). We have so many better things we are able to see in the Lord Jesus Christ because of the covenant we are under with him.

D. We can see our consequences (12:25-29)

The writer comes back to the idea from Ps 95, the day you hear his voice do not harden your hearts. The writer warned the congregation not to go back, not to disobey the word of the Lord, compelling them to move forward in faith. Their trust in the word of Jesus granted them access to an unshakeable kingdom (see Hag 2:6-7). God shook everything so that what could not be shaken would remain, that is, the kingdom of God with Jesus as king. The world of Judaism had been turned right side up with the coming of Jesus. Now, all that remained demanded they stay with him or be consumed by God's judgment. God is a consuming fire (v. 29). The same goes for us, we have no other place to go but with God through Jesus Christ.