

## HEBREWS – PRESSING ON

“Lord, Please Don’t Let Me Grow Mildew!”

Week 8

As a believer, I’m assured of heaven. The victory is already won. Jesus’ death on the cross, in my place, destroyed Satan’s power over death that was over me as a non-believer (Heb. 2:14).

Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” We CANNOT earn our salvation – our right relationship. It’s all of God.

So, why is the author telling the readers – and us – to be diligent – to and to “. . . run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1)?

Ephesians 2:10 tells us that we’re born again, we’re brought into a right relationship with God for a purpose: “ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

The FRUIT produced in our lives for God – following coming to faith in Him – PROVES that we’re in a right relationship with Him.

The author uses the Exodus generation as the prime example of NOT running the race. The Exodus generation (all those who were delivered from Egypt for whom God parted the Red Sea) all died in the wilderness except for Caleb and Joshua. The Exodus generation did not believe God’s promises. Their sin of unbelief is equated to disobedience (Heb. 3:18-19). They complained and they rebelled against God. There are consequences for sin. They didn’t enter God’s rest.

The readers of this book were immature (Heb. 5:12-14; Heb. 6:1). They were in danger of NOT entering God’s rest. They were veering towards going back to the law. They had Jesus – the fulfillment of all the promises God gave to the Jewish people. They were undergoing persecution because of their faith in Jesus. How would we respond under such circumstances? That’s why this book is crucial! Difficult times might occur – in our lives. The author, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is writing to the readers – AND TO US. . . FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS!!! Don’t cast away your confidence which has great reward! (Heb. 10:35).

How THRILLED the readers must have been when they read that the promise of REST still remains for the people of God – He gives rest now – in an ABUNDANT LIFE in Jesus – when we’re living for Him, faithfully and obediently – AND He gives us rest in the future - after we die.

Heb. 4:9 – there is a Sabbath rest yet for us to experience. (Only time in NT this word – sabbatesmos – for rest – is used). God rested after He had COMPLETED His creation – He enjoyed the works of His hands. God’s Sabbath rest speaks of a REST following a COMPLETED TASK.

The REST in Hebrews – AVAILABLE TO THE READERS AND TO ALL BELIEVERS IN JESUS – follows the completion of a task given to them/to us by God.

God had told the children of Israel through Moses as they were wandering in the wilderness – “. . . for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you REST from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety. . . you shall rejoice before the Lord your God.” (Deut. 12:9-10, 12).

The task is specifically stated in Deut. 1:21 – GO UP AND POSSESS THE LAND! Did they? NO! 12 spies – 2 said – let’s go; 10 wanted to turn back to Egypt! NO REST FOR YOU! After believing in God – they were given a task and they didn’t carry through!

What’s our task as believers today? Eph. 2:10 – to faithfully obey what God gives us to do – through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our good works PROVE our faith.

Can we NOT obey? Scripture teaches that we can quench the Holy Spirit. . . .

Can believers lose ETERNAL LIFE? NO, NO, 1,000 times NO:

- Romans 8:35ff
- John 10:27
- I John 5:11-13
- Ephesians 1:13-14

In John 10:10, we read that Jesus promises believers an ABUNDANT LIFE – NOW, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” Lexicon for “abundantly” - “Over and above, more than is necessary, superadded; more remarkable; more excellent.”

II Peter 1:5-13 – “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,<sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,<sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.<sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.”

SO – this person was cleansed from their sins – but has been CARELESS with his salvation – like the readers of Hebrews.

<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup> for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

John MacArthur states in his notes re: this passage: “An abundant entrance into eternal heaven is the hope and reality for a believer who lives a faithful, fruitful life here

on earth. Peter's point is that a believer who pursues the listed virtues (vv. 5-7) will not only enjoy assurance in the present, but a full, rich reward in the future life (Rev. 22:12).

Because the REST addresses the completion of a divine task – that rest equates to rewards (I Cor. 3:9ff; II Cor. 5:9ff)

Paul is assured of heaven. II Cor. 5:8 – “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

Read I Cor. 9:24-27. What does DISQUALIFIED mean?

Paul uses the analogy of sports – running the race – competing for a prize in sports. When one is engaged in sports and is disqualified – WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? We see the danger of being **BENCHED** – of NOT being USED!!!!

Paul told Timothy in his second letter to Timothy:

“. . . in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.<sup>21</sup> Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” (II Tim. 2:20-21).

There are consequences to not walking faithfully/obediently.

How does the application of God's rest look in our lives?

Phil. 1:6 – He Who has begun a good work in you will complete it. . . .

Phil. 2:12-13 – work out your own salvation. . . “work out” – complete the task – to bring something to completion – for it is God Who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Then we read - Phil. 2:14-16: “Do all things without complaining and disputing,<sup>15</sup> that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,<sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”

In the life of a believer. . . a child of God. . . .

Complaining – emotional rejection of God's will for our life.

If I believe that God is totally in control – should I be complaining? Of Whom am I complaining? GOD!

Disputing – criticisms – directed toward God!

Become – a process – growing toward what is not yet possessed

SO – if I don't complain/criticize, I may become:

Blameless – having a life that cannot be criticized!

Harmless – PURE/innocent

Pure means without anything that does not rightly belong. Complaining doesn't belong to us! We often think of purity as related to sexual purity. BUT – do we think of complaining as having IMPURE THOUGHTS?

Without fault – above reproach!

Our potential as believers – to shine like lights/stars – to be CONSPICUOUS – to be IN CONTRAST to the DARKNESS. Do you think people will be drawn to the Word of God – to God – if we complain?

As believers we have the privilege to hold fast – better translation – “hold forth” – offering the Word of God to others.

That we may REJOICE in the Day of Christ – Bema Seat/Judgment Seat – II Cor. 5:9ff; I John 2:28 – I do NOT want to be ashamed on this day!

Not running or laboring in vain – when I’m running in vain – I’m disobeying and striving against what God would have me do!

So, how do we stop complaining? STOP! Even within my mind? YES! Remember, God’s Word penetrates to the thoughts and intents of our heart.

- We need to recognize that we’re complaining.
- GTAA:
  - GRAB the truth of God’s Word (Phil. 2:14-16)
  - THANK Him for the situation in which you find yourself.
  - ASK Him how you should respond.
  - ASK Him what you are to learn from this situation.

Hebrews 4:11-13 addresses how God’s Word cuts to our very core and that no one can hide from His sight.

Hebrews 4:14 speaks of our great High Priest – our Advocate! The High Priest represented the people before God. The Gk. word for Advocate is paraklatos (parakleet) – one who pleads another’s cause before a Judge. An advocate is one who gives aid. Jesus is our Advocate – He comes alongside and helps those who have placed their faith in Him. He assists us. He pleads our case. Jesus tells the truth about what we’ve done and tells the truth about what He’s done. **Jesus shows His scars and claims legal acquittal because the judgment has already fallen on the cross.** Jesus shows the scars! He has those scars for all eternity.

Therefore, we can come boldly to the throne of GRACE (v. 16) that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We are responsible to take advantage of our High Priest to Whom we belong – and appropriate the blessings He provides.

Jesus emptied Himself of His glory for us – tho’ He was rich, for our sakes, He became poor that we might become rich in God! (II Cor. 8:9).

Heb. 4:14 – Jesus the Son of God passed through the heavens. . . .

Before Jesus ultimate sacrifice on the cross, the High Priest, on the Day of Atonement each year (Yom Kippur), passed through the outer court of the Tabernacle, passed through the Holy Place and into the Holy of Holies to sacrifice for his own sins –

and then to make atonement for the sins of the people (Lev. 16).

Atonement – covering for one year – to be repeated the next year.

Redemption – taking away of sin. Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself on the day of Passover was a “once for all” sacrifice (Heb. 7:27). DONE DEAL! No other sacrifice needs to be made! Hallelujah!

Jesus has passed through the heavens – into the very presence of God to become our Advocate – our Mediator – our Intercessor. He did not go into the presence of God the Father to minister for a while and then to return to earth. He ministers continuously in God’s presence on our behalf.

The High Priest, Aaron, could not bring into God’s presence those on whose behalf he ministered (the people could not enter the Holy of Holies; the veil was in place; only the High Priest could enter once a year).

At His crucifixion the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom. Jesus, our forever High Priest, brings us into the very presence of God!

Because our High Priest is *Jesus the Son of God* – we see His true humanity and His deity. The reality of God becoming flesh – restoring our destiny - gives us confidence in holding fast our confession.

Heb. 4:16 – Jesus was tempted in all points as we are. . .

According to I John 2:16, there are three channels through which we can be tested: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

In Satan’s temptation of Jesus, He, Jesus, was tested in these three areas:

When He hungered, Satan suggested that He exercise His divine creative power and turn stones to bread. This was an appeal to the lust of the flesh.

When Satan offered Him the kingdoms of the world, this was an appeal to the lust of the eyes. (Satan was offering to Jesus a means of bypassing the suffering of the cross!)

When Satan suggested that Jesus demonstrate His confidence in God by leaping from the pinnacle of the Temple, it was an appeal to the pride of life. Can you imagine what the people would have thought had they seen Jesus leaping and angels catching Him?

Because He is sinless, Jesus did not succumb to the temptation. And because of that, He bore a greater weight of temptation than any man has borne. When we’re under temptation – we give in/submit. Christ felt the full weight of the temptation because He didn’t submit.

Heb. 4:16 – we can come freely to the throne of grace – His throne which would have been a throne of judgment – has now been transformed to a throne of grace. We come to obtain mercy – not getting what we deserve – hell.

GRACE – getting what we don’t deserve. We deserve hell – but God offers us heaven – eternity with Him.

Mercy/Grace:

Mercy: you're speeding and a Policeman pulls you over. Instead of giving you a ticket, he gives you a warning. You don't get what you deserve.

Grace: you're speeding again. A Policeman pulls you over because you deserve it BUT he pays for the ticket that you should be receiving. You don't have to pay the penalty! AND, the Policeman gives you \$100!

After we come into a right relationship with God through Jesus – He gives us grace that provides divine enablement to meet any need!!!!

Just as Jesus is a Redeemer, Mediator, and Intercessor superior to Moses, so He is a High Priest superior to Aaron.

The primary job of the High Priest was to officiate, either directly or indirectly through lower-ranking priests, sacrifices unto the Lord. The HP offered both gifts and sacrifices. Not every sacrifice was a blood atonement for sin. Many of the ritual sacrifices were intended to be simple gifts to God, expressing thanks and desiring fellowship.

Hebrews 5:1-4 – two essential prerequisites for the priesthood:

- The High Priest must be genuinely human (5:1-3) since he represents man to God. If he wasn't human, he would not have experienced all that men experience and could not have compassion on mankind.
  - Under the Aaronic Priesthood, it was necessary for the priests to offer sacrifices for their own sins, demonstrating their true humanity.
  - Jesus took on flesh. He hungered, thirsted, and grew weary. And, because Jesus took on flesh, He does understand us. He does sympathize with us. He does care, and He is ever before the Father interceding for us!
- He must be called by God (5:4). God's wrath was to be satisfied through the ministry of human priests; therefore it was necessary that God appoint those whom He would accept as His representatives.
  - Psalm 2:7 is quoted in 5:5 proving that Jesus was appointed by God the Father.
  - The writer then quotes Psalm 110:4 further proving that Jesus was divinely appointed to the office of High Priest.
- Jesus' true humanity and His eligibility to represent people before God is seen in vv. 7-9.
  - "The days of His flesh" refers to the time of His life on earth in a mortal body.
  - "prayers" – specific requests; entreaties.
  - "supplications" - the word in Greek speaks of an olive branch. The one who offered supplications approached the one who would aid them with an olive branch to signify that they came as suppliants – those who would beseech/ask humbly and earnestly.
- The weight of all that lay upon Him produced "vehement cries and tears."

For what did Jesus pray?

- Some have suggested that Jesus, knowing what death He would die, prayed that He might be spared. HOWEVER, because Jesus frequently prophesied that He would be crucified and because He said He came to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15) (He came to fulfill all prophecies), this explanation seems unlikely.
- Others have suggested that Satan was in Gethsemane, making a final attempt to prevent Christ from offering Himself as a sacrifice on the cross. Because Jesus had already stated that He was sovereign over His own death (John 10:18), and His authority over His death could not be usurped by Satan, this could not have been the source of such agony in the Garden.
- Some have said that He was asking that there be no separation from God the Father on the cross. If there was – then the Godhead cannot be the eternal Godhead. Not for a moment would the Son be separated from the Father.
  - Psalm 22:24 – “For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard.”
- Another explanation is that Jesus was praying not concerning physical death but spiritual death – the wrath of God coming down on Him.
  - Jesus’ prayer was heard. Psalm 22:24b.

#### Hebrews 5:8-9

- “. . . He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” Jesus learned all obedience entailed
- “having been perfected” – there was no progression from incompleteness to completeness or from imperfection to perfection. Rather, when in His humanity His sufferings were completed (He completed the task He was given – John 17:4), He, because of His obedience, “became the author of eternal salvation. . .

#### Hebrews 5:10

- And so Jesus was called by God as High Priest.
- “according to the order of Melchizedek.”
  - Jesus did not come from Aaron’s line – the tribe of Levi. Jesus came through the tribe of Judah.

#### Hebrews 5:11-12

- The author tells the readers there’s much to say re: why the order of Melchizedek is superior to the order of Aaron. He can’t give a brief explanation.
- AND this truth is hard to explain to them because they have become dull of hearing!
  - It appears that they weren’t in this dull of hearing state previously.
  - They’ve regressed – moved backwards.
- So – the author is going to give another warning. . . .