

“Kingdom Living”
Hebrews 12:25–13:7

March 8, 2015

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^A Exodus 19:8, 20:19; Deuteronomy 5:27; John 18:36

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^C Haggai 2:6, 9; 2 Peter 3:10-12

^D 1 Corinthians 15:58

^E Romans 8:17; John 13:35

^F Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9

^G Matthew 25:34-36, as well as context

^H Matthew 6:24, 16:26; Psalm 118:6; Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6

A. Introduction

1. The Way to Live

Hebrews 12:12-17

- a. in our study of the book of Hebrews, last week we were looking at an earlier part of chapter 12
- b. that chapter addresses the question as to the way that we should live as the children of God – whose children we are if we have come to faith in Jesus Christ for our salvation
 - (A) there is the reminder given: ‘whom the Lord loves, He disciplines’
 - (B) as children of our earthly parents, we accept their imperfect discipline which is for just a short season, and respect them
 - (C) so as children of our heavenly father, we should expect and accept His perfect discipline which leads us to eternal glory
- c. some of the things that God’s discipline is intended to teach us are
 - (A) to live a life supporting others along their Christian pilgrimage – to be helpful and healing to other Christians
 - (B) to live peaceably with all men, in so far as it lies in us
 - (C) to pursue holiness, purity of life in thought, word, deed – submit our wills and desires to the purifying work of God’s Holy Spirit
 - (D) reflect the grace that we receive from God by having a grateful attitude rather than one of bitterness and complaint
 - (E) be spiritually minded, keeping in mind the counter example of Esau whose only thought was of the here and now
- d. next, we came to ...

2. Two Mountain-Top Experiences

Hebrews 12:18-24

- a. we read the background to these verses which is found, first in the history recorded in the book of Exodus, and second, in the recounting of that history by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy
- b. suffice it to say that you cannot read those passages
 - (A) the description of the fire, the thunder, the trumpets
 - (B) the mountain shaking, the voice of God
 - (C) the danger of approaching the mountain, the people’s fear
 - (D) without having a deep sense of what an awesome God we serve

- c. this was the first of the mountain-top experiences – God’s people there had an OT, Mount Sinai experience
 - (A) a fearsome and fulsome realization of God’s glory and majesty
 - (B) their response at that time was commendable – a realisation that as sinful human beings they could not meet this Holy God and live
 - (C) and the people at that time had a repeated response:
 - (1) “All the people answered together and said, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do!’ ...” (Exodus 19:8)
 - (2) “Then they said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.’” (Exodus 20:19)
 - (3) “Go near and hear all that the Lord our God says; then speak to us all that the Lord our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.” (Deuteronomy 5:27)
 - (D) remember that: they had a healthy respect for God and a desire to obey Him – but there was a barrier between them and God
- d. next, the writer of Hebrews describes our NT, Mount Zion experience
 - (A) “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, ...” and so on (Hebrews 12:22ff)
 - (B) and the mark of a Mount Zion experience is that the barrier between God and man has been removed
 - (C) now fellowship between God and man is possible
 - (D) that possibility exists, we are told in 12:24, because we can come to Jesus who is the Mediator of the New Covenant (NT), who by His death and resurrection has rent in two the veil between God and us, as well as the wall of partition that separated God’s OT people from His NT people
 - (E) a Mount Zion experience is to have eternal fellowship with God and with all those that belong to Him
- e. those two mountain-top experiences also illustrate the major difference between the OT and the NT aspects of the kingdom of God
 - (A) the OT kingdom was an earthly kingdom, governed by a law given by its King to Moses from an earthly mountain
 - (B) the NT kingdom is a heavenly kingdom – Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” (Jn 18:36)

B. The Kingdom of Our God

Hebrews 12:25-29

1. Listen to the King! (25)

- a. “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who

warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.”

- b. we read the words of OT Israel saying they would obey God’s word
 - (A) the Lord God is repeatedly said to be the King of Israel
 - (B) at Mount Sinai Israel repeatedly said they would obey His words
 - (C) the sad history is that instead they repeatedly disobeyed
 - (D) nor did they escape punishment for their repeated disobedience
- c. in their cases, the King spoke to them from an earthly Mount Sinai
 - (A) but now our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, speaks to us from a heavenly Mount Zion
 - (B) hence the warning as in Hebrews 2, ‘[how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was first spoken of through the Lord ...](#)’ – so, watch out that you pay attention to Jesus’ words!

2. One Kingdom Passes ... (26-27)

- a. “[26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.” 27 This expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.](#)”
- b. The quotation here is from Haggai 2:6 which had to do with the inauguration service in the rebuilt temple after the return from exile
- c. but it is also a passage which Jews and Christians consider to be an announcement of the coming of the Messiah
- d. for the Haggai section concludes, “[“The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the Lord of hosts.](#)” (Haggai 2:9)
- e. so the point of these verses 26-27 is that in the light the Messiah – the Prince of Peace – who has come once and is coming again,
 - (A) the kingdoms of man are given by God but they will disappear
 - (B) the OT covenant given by God was even then disappearing
 - (C) this physical world along with the physical heavens, is seemingly so stable, is only held together as long as God purposes it
 - (D) so that Peter writes, “[10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!](#)” (2 Peter 3:10-12)
 - (E) and all the tiny little works which we busy ourselves in are going to disappear like so much straw in a fire

at the same time;

f. what is passing is the kingdom of this world; but

3. ... Another Kingdom Has Come (28-29)

- a. "28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire."
- b. the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, of which citizens we are, will not pass away, nor the works of service and worship done in it
- c. with great confidence, therefore, we can labour in Christ's service, "... knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- d. that provides us with the proper foundation to having ...

C. The Kingdom View of Life

Hebrews 13:1-7

1. Love for the Brethren (1)

- a. "Let love of the brethren continue." (Hebrews 13:1)
- b. this is the first of seven things that Christians who take a kingdom view of life will observe – because they are citizens of the kingdom
- c. it is the recognition that we enter this kingdom – not by filling in all sorts of immigration papers; nor by working to acquire certain skills so that we will be desirable immigrants to this kingdom – but because by grace, through faith, God has accepted us to be His children
- d. "and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." (Romans 8:17)
- e. which should completely reverse our outlook on life, that we are now part of a loving family; God's family
- f. for Jesus has said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35)

2. Hospitality to Strangers (2)

- a. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2)
- b. Christians travelling from one place to another on business would be specially glad of hospitality from fellow-Christians. Inns throughout the Roman Empire were places of doubtful repute, ... and would provide very uncongenial company for Christians. ^{-{2}}.

- c. but though there was a special need to show hospitality to Christian travellers – and indeed they could be special messengers of God – yet the text really does not limit hospitality in this way: it is to strangers; yet Romans 12:13 and 1 Peter 4:9 indicate a special responsibility in this matter to Christians – a practical sign of love for one another

3. Sympathy for the Suffering (3)

- a. "Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body." (Hebrews 13:3)
- b. Hear the words of the King, Jesus, to those inheriting the kingdom: "34 ... 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'" (Matthew 25:34-36) – speaking of what these people had done for their Christian brothers
- c. it seems that sympathy for the suffering is an outcome of hospitality
- d. in NT times, the visiting of prisoners was a necessity for the sake of the prisoner who had no necessities provided, but doing so could bring the same fate to the visitor as to the prisoner
- e. we prayed today for the persecuted church – we should take due care of the organisations who solicit funds for these people but nonetheless turn prayer into action – FAIR working with girls in Lebanon

4. Purity in Marriage (4)

- a. "Marriage is to be held in honour among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13:4)
- b. we bemoan the moral backsliding of our western culture, the systematic destruction of God's basic social unit, the family
 - (A) this is a work of Satan and it is not new
 - (B) Communist Russia treated children as wards of the state
 - (C) chastity in a man or woman is treated as a joke
 - (D) unfaithfulness in marriage is portrayed as fun and exciting
 - (E) in NT times, a lot of Jews treated marriage with laxity, and among pagans immorality was commonplace – sound familiar?
- c. in the midst of all this temptation, the 'everybody does it' attitude, it is more important than ever for us to strive for Christian purity

d. man may laugh at this, but God's judgement will be the final one

5. Godliness with Contentment (5-6)

- a. "5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' 6 so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5-6)
- b. the 7th commandment against adultery is closely related to the 10th against covetousness: Leon Morris has written, 'The covetous man pursues his selfish aims, whether sexual or financial without regard to the rights of others' ^{3}.
- c. note that it is not money, but the love of money, that is a root of all evil – Jesus spoke truly, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (Matthew 6:24)
- d. and again, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)
- e. the argument in verses 5-6 is similar: on the one hand you can pile up all the possessions that it might be possible for you to acquire; now on the other side of the scale, put the promise of the abiding Christ
 - (A) all those possessions will rot and decay; at best they fly away
 - (B) but Christ is the eternal possession of the child of God
 - (C) in both the Hebrew original, Psalm 118:6, and the Greek version here in verse 6, the words "Lord (Yahweh)" and "man" are at the opposite ends of the verse – God our Rescuer puts us far out of the reach of what any human enemy can do to us
- f. small wonder that Paul could say that he had learned 'contentment' (Philippians 4:11), and that he instructed Pastor Timothy, "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment." (1 Timothy 6:6)

6. Remembering Godly Leaders (7)

- a. "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith." (Hebrews 13:7)
- b. we shall return to this verse next week, but for today I would point out that this seems to be spoken about Christian leaders who were now dead – the remembrance of these men was neither that the readers should pray for them nor to pray to them
- c. but it was to consider the gospel – with a Jewish audience, the phrase 'word of God' would particularly mean the

- gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which would take them out of Judaism into Christianity
- d. and the fruit of those who brought them that gospel, so that they might imitate their – that is, seek to have the same – faith as they

D. Conclusion

1. let us leave here this morning seeking to apply three points
 - a. to rejoice in the fellowship that is ours by a Mount Zion mountain-top experience through faith in Jesus Christ
 - b. listen in obedience to the voice of our King Jesus from heaven
 - c. change our view of life to realise that we are citizens of His kingdom
2. not a citizen? Go back to that first step to trust in Christ for salvation from sin and its guilt.

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh
- BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
Hebrews, by Leon Morris
- EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton
Hebrews, by Marcus Dods
- Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.
- Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
- NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Epistle to the Hebrew, by F. F. Bruce
- RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
- TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*
Hebrews, by Donald Guthrie

2. NICNT, *in loc*

3. EBC, *in loc*