

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Heb. 12:1-17)

We have seen in our study thus far in the book of Hebrews that the only way that we can access God and live in fellowship with Him, is by faith. It is called the new and living way in contrast to the way of Moses and the Law. Last week we saw that faith is the substance of hope, without which we cannot live; that faith is the evidence of things not seen; and without faith it is impossible to please God. This week, we want to see several things about faith. 1. The way of faith is a race; 2. The way of faith involves chastening; 3. The way of faith is the way of holiness.

I. The way of faith is a race. Vs. 1-4

- A. There is a graphic picture drawn in verses one and two to illustrate the way of faith, for the Lord knows how lazy we are and how the flesh loves ease and pleasure; but these war against the soul.
- B. There is a great stadium, filled with the saints that have gone before; Witnesses they are to the way of faith, for they went that way before. Many of them are named or mentioned in Hebrews 11: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Amram and Jochabed, Rahab, Gideon, David, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Samuel, the prophets, the suffering saints of the Old Testament, including Isaiah, who was sawed in two according to tradition; Jeremiah carried by his own people to Egypt and thence to Babylon where he died. Their example should stir us up to run the race faithfully, for

we have been delivered from this present evil world, so that we might serve the Lord without fear all the days of our lives, in joy and gladness.

C. Most of all, we have the example of the Lord Jesus who:

1. Is the author and finisher of our faith. In chapter six we read, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him...." Vs. 8,9
2. Endured the cross and despised the shame....
3. By faith He saw the joy before him: Bringing many sons to glory.
4. Is now enthroned in Heaven at the right hand of the Father until all his enemies become his footstool.

D. We must look unto Christ and consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Him; or we will become weary and faint in our minds. It is not those who start, but those who finish, who win the race. Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of our faith.

E. We have the examples of all the saints that lived before from the beginning of the world; but chiefly we have the Lord Jesus, to whom we look; we must set our affections on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Jesus said that no man who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God; not like Lot's wife who held back and longed after Sodom and was destroyed. No, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The way of the faith is the way of the Lord Jesus. Our affection is set on Him and we prize His approval above all else, so that in that last day we may hear His voice, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of the Lord, into the eternal inheritance prepared for you from the foundation of the world" Amen and Amen. He is our joy and our crown.

II. The Way of Faith Involved Chastening. Vs. 5-10

A. The way of faith involves waging war against sin: vs. 5

1. First of all in ourselves. Paul said, "I keep my body under...." The body is to serve the spirit, and not be the servant of sin, but the servant of righteousness. Self-control and temperance is the rule. To bring the body into subjection. To seek those things which are above.
2. Secondly, because we have received Christ's anointing of the Spirit "HC 32: why are you called a Christian? A32: Because by faith I am a member of Christ and thus a partaker of His anointing, in order that I also may confess His Name, may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him, and with a free conscience may fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter in eternity reign with Him over all creatures." Jesus said that if we are not for Him we are against Him. There is no neutral ground in this conflict.

B. In order for us to be effective in the work that He sets before us, we must be trained to the battle. The battle is His and we do not choose our way, but He chooses it for us, and prepares us to do well.

1. The training involve chastisement, or rebuke and scourging. We are not to despise this chastening, nor faint in the day of trial and tribulation. Vs. 5

2. The chastening is the mark of sonship and the love of God. Every father who loves his children will rebuke and chasten them in order for them to be strong in the work of life. Vs. 6-8 Fathers must prepare their children for the tough things of life; an ill trained soldier will do badly in the battlefield; so discipline and training will equip our children for the hard things of life.
  3. The proper regard that we are to have for our parents, represents how much more we are to be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, the Triune God. The Fifth Commandment requires us to honor our Fathers and our Mothers; how much more are we to honor our Heavenly Father.
  4. Fathers are to set a good example by instructing and chastening their children, just as God instructs and chastens His children.
  5. Vs. 10: Fathers can only derive a human benefit from teaching their children to obey; but God chastens us for our benefit, an eternal one.
  6. Chastening is not pleasant and no one enjoys it; but it is necessary.
- III. The Way of Faith is the Way of Holiness. Vs. 11-17.
- A. Those who receive godly chastening will see the fruit of righteousness, though the chastening if not joyous, but full of grief.
  - B. Therefore when we go through trials we are to lift up our sagging hands and strengthen our feeble knees and not mope around, but thank God for the toughening that we are receiving. Let us consider the things that chastening is supposed to correct:
    1. We are to walk straight—showing a good example to others. Walk according to the rule.
    2. We are to seek peace with all men. Don't take your discontent out on others.
    3. We are to seek holiness, without which no man can see the Lord: wholly dedicated to Christ and His service.
    4. We are to be diligent not to fall from the grace of God. But be a good example to others; not to fall from the sound doctrine of the grace of God, or from the life of the Holy Spirit.
    5. We are not to be fornicators or profane: worldly, disloyal to Christ and seeking worldly things as if our life consists of the abundance of the things that we possess. Rather, we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Of course literal fornication or sexual uncleanness is not to be thought of amongst the people of God; but He speaks of spiritual unfaithfulness to God which is the root of all other spiritual diseases and corruption. Profane = common, not consecrated: out of the temple, unclean. Esau is an example, for all he wanted was a mess of pottage, a red stew. He cared nothing for his birthright. He sold his birthright and no amount of tears and sorrow could get it back for him.
    6. We are engaged in serious business

Application: It is similar to what we have made the last few Sundays:

1. God does not leave the way of faith just up to us. If you are elect to sonship, then you will receive the chastening of the Lord to set you in the right path and to keep you in the path.

2. This path is described as the new and living way: the way of faith: The particulars of this are in Heb. 10:19-25 [which see]
  - a. We enter the presence of God only by the blood of Christ. It is through His blood we enter behind the veil.
  - b. We have a high priest: Jesus Christ who is seated in heaven, a priest after the order of Melchisedek.
  - c. We come with a true heart in full assurance of faith, justified by faith, baptized in pure water.
  - d. We persevere in our faith, which is the gift of God; not something we or somebody else talked us into.
  - e. We love the people of God, in love and good works. Vs. 24
  - f. We go to church vs. 25; so as to encourage and exhort one another. It isn't just about me, me, me.
3. In other words, the justified shall live by faith, not drawing back to perdition, but believing to the saving of the soul, for faith is the foundation and prop of hope; and the invisible evidence of invisible things, and anybody who was saved in any age of the church was saved by faith. The just shall live by faith.