

Remedies Against Weariness

Hebrews 12:3-11

Halifax: 3 March 2024

Introduction:

For several weeks now, we have been looking at the excellent highway that God has placed us on if we are His people.

- It is the way out of sin and misery and into His glorious house where we will be able to enjoy living with Him as our Father forever and ever.
- We have seen that the principal exhortation of Hebrews is found in Hebrews 12:1-2:
 - **Hebrews 12:1-2: Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

This epistle is written to those believers among the Jewish people.

- Some of them had grown weary and discouraged because of the opposition they faced from their own people for following Christ.
- And so this letter spends the first ten chapters setting forth the superiority of Christ over the Old Testament types and shadows, which served the glorious purpose of setting Him forth until He came.
 - Now that He has come, it would be foolish to return to them, even though they have more outward glory than the simple worship of the New Testament.
 - And for good reason: Now we come before our risen saviour who is enthroned in glory at the Father's right hand.
 - We are no longer trying to portray heaven on earth; we are rather enjoying fellowship in heaven through the word and Spirit.
 - We are going to God's house in glory, and we have a clear vision of glory now that He has been revealed. We run to His house with our eyes on Him—looking unto Jesus.
 - He is the author and finisher of our faith, the one who made it to glory and by whom the whole church comes. He has opened the way.
 - We look to His example as the one endured the cross (we must bear our own cross) because of the joy that was set before Him—the joy of bringing the whole church into His Father's house to dwell there forever.
 - And we look to Him to sustain us and give us strength to endure to the end.
 - Yes, we are to lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.
 - What a glorious pathway this is!

This talk about endurance is not without reason.

- This way, as wonderful and glorious as it is, is a difficult way.
 - There is a real danger, that like some of the Hebrews, we might grow weary and discouraged so as to slacken our pace and even to turn off the road altogether.
- Our text today gives us a fourfold remedy against weariness.

- I will read it now. Hebrews 12:3-11. This is the holy and helpful word of God.
- I will begin, actually, with verse 1... Hebrews 12:1:

Heb 12:1-11: Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and

scourges every son whom He receives.” ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Thus far the reading of God’s Word. Praise God for His word.

The words, “**lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls,**” make it clear that there is a real danger of this.

- The weariness and discouragement in view here the sort that causes us falter in the way, to slacken our pace.
 - Jesus was weary and discouraged at times—indeed He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He lamented over Jerusalem. He was grieved by His disciple’s slowness of heart to believe.
 - But He did not falter.
 - That is the danger that is in view here when it says: “**lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.**”
 - It is the weariness that keeps you from going on.

Before we look at the remedy, I want to explain why weariness and discouragement are so threatening for us.

- It is because **THE WAY IS HARD.**
 1. We are coming out of sin and going to God—and that is hard to do.
 2. It is hard because sin does not want us to go—it does not want us to enter God’s kingdom.
 - As long as we are in this world, though sin is defeated and we are following Christ (if we are redeemed through faith in Him), we still have corruption that remains in us until we see Jesus.
 - The road that we are on is the road of putting off sin and coming to God and His righteousness by way of Christ.

- And sin wants to hang on—Paul called it this body of death that he must bear about.
- 3. We are also called bring the world to Christ—and the world in its sin fights against us at every step.
 - Not only does it refuse to come, but it also tries to keep us from going—it wants to hold us back.
 - It does not want the kingdom of righteousness to come—that is its worst nightmare.
 - This makes the way hard because of persecution, rejection, temptation, and all the rest.
- 4. Perhaps the hardest part of that opposition is from the church—especially those who profess Jesus, but have twisted Him into an idol that approves of their sin and rather than saving sinners from their sin, condones it.
- 5. The way is also hard because the battle against sin is relentless.
 - We must constantly strive against sin.
 - We must daily take up our cross and persevere.
 - It is true that there are seasons of greater difficulty and that God sweetens the way with seasons of refreshment, but we will never be able to rest until we enter our heavenly Father’s house at the end of the race.
 - The way is hard and we can feel like giving up at times, but we must go on: we must endure to the end.
 - We must strive against sin until we reach our Father.

Now that we have seen the real danger of weariness and discouragement, let’s look at the four-fold remedy we have in this passage.

- Four things that will help you endure.

- First, it will help you endure if you:

I. Consider what Jesus endured.

- Verses 3-4 say: **For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.**

A. How much He endured.

1. He bore the full onslaught of Satan himself—that raging and roaring lion who sought every way he could to devour Him.
 - Keep in mind that Jesus was here in our flesh so that He was tempted in every way—yet without sin.
 - Satan tried to deceive Him, to entice Him, to discourage Him, to drive a wedge between Him and His Father—he used all of his tactics, but to no avail.
2. Jesus also had to bear the hostility of a sinful, covenant-breaking church.
 - The highest court of His church, the Sanhedrin, hated Him and ordered that He should be crucified.
 - They accused Him and opposed Him, called Him a devil and a blasphemer, a liar and a deceiver.

- They choose a murder and a robber over Him!
- 3. Jesus had to bear disciples who were slow of heart to believe, who opposed Him in the area where He could have used the greatest support—sustaining His resolve to go to the cross.
 - They even forsook Him on the night that He was betrayed and one of them was the betrayer.
- B. Jesus’s saving work demonstrates how difficult it is to bring sinners to God;
 1. to break through the barriers that separated us from God required Him to endure the cross to provide for each of us a new birth with a new life in the Holy Spirit.
 2. The difficulty was so great that no one could do it—no one could even dream of doing it, but He.
 3. As we have seen, He had by far the most difficult part—He had to provide the road, to be the road, for sinners to come to God.
 - He had to endure in making the way, and all we have to do is go in that way.
 - Not to say that this is easy for us.
 - Jesus said that many do not endure—many come on the road for a time, but leave because of the difficulty or because of enticements for other things.
- C. But if you are a child of God, it will help you very much if you will consider what our dear Saviour endured.
 - What you must endure is very light compared to what He had to endure.
 - You may have to endure to the point of death, but He had to endure the sufferings of hell for the entire church.
 - It is a shameful thing if you cannot endure the road that He has opened by His own suffering and death.

Consider what He endured... that is the first remedy.

- **Second, it will help you endure if you:**

II. Remember that chastening is a proof that you are God’s son.

- Verses 5-8 charge us with forgetting this when we falter: **⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.**
- It’s true, is it not?
- A. You can tell which child belongs to which parents by looking to see who chastens the child.
 - Sadly today, this illustration is weakened because Satan has deceived us into believing that it is wrong for us to chasten our children.
 - Many times, based on this standard, we might conclude that the child has no parents who love him.

- And in a way, it is true. A child without discipline and correction is child unloved. Such a child will be ruined.
- But God is the perfect Father.
- B. He will not leave His children in their sin.
1. When He adopts us, He finds us wallowing in sin and defilement.
 - He is not the kind of Father that will leave His children in such a condition.
 - They may scream and holler and protest and fight, but He will begin His work of correcting and training us.
 - He loves us too much to leave us in our wickedness and rebellion.
 2. His training of us is not easy for Him or us—as I have said—it is hard to bring sinners out of their sin.
 - There are many illustrations the scripture uses...
 - a. There is the refiner's fire.
 - He refines us as silver is refined—heating us up again and again so that impurities are separated. It is painful but purifying.
 - It is painful to have to be separated from our deceitful lusts and our sins, but at the same time is very freeing once it is done.
 - Oh, but how long it takes—back to the refiner's fire we go.
 - b. There is the threshing sledge...
 - A heavy sledge that was dragged over the wheat to separate the grain from the chaff—sometimes it was done with sledge and sometimes with stomping or with a hammer—but we must be sifted—the sin must be separated—and it does not let go easily.
 - Perhaps here we have not so much what is sinful in us as what is worthless—the things that we treasure in such a way that they keep us from the Lord.
 - It is painful to have them broken loose from us—sometimes it is even health or people or success or riches that we have made idols of sorts...
 - But again, how glad we are once they are removed and we can see our God in ways that we could not see Him and love Him in ways that we could not love Him when they reigned in our hearts.
 - c. There is pruning—all those beautiful branches in which we take pride in (look at my growth!) are cut back to the roots.
 - The achievements that we boast in have to be cut back because there is death in them—though they look alive to us.
 - Our pride must be broken—our sin must be revealed and cut away.
 - It is painful when we have the exposure, but it is at the same time delightful to have our eyes opened to what is true.
- C. If God is doing this work of refining, threshing, and pruning, it shows that you are His child—that you are a true son who will remain in His house forever.
1. If you are only a servant or an imposter and not a redeemed son, He will leave you to go your own way.

- You may have hard things—you may have a hard life—but you will not be made any better by it.
 - In fact, you will be hardened by your sufferings and turned more devotedly to your sin and your vain idols and your pride and glory.
2. Do you know His chastisement?
- Then do not be discouraged by it.
 - It is the pathway to God’s eternal home in Christ.
 - He is preparing you for glory.
 - Rejoice that you are God’s son.
 - How can you be weary and discouraged when you remember that?

TRANS> The next remedy against weariness and discouragement follows closely with this.

- **It will help you endure if you:**

III. Trust that your heavenly Father knows the best way to train you.

- By the way, the word *discipline* or *chastening* that is used throughout this passage refers to child training—which for us as sinners involves correction, but is broader than that.
- Verse 9-10 read like this: **9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit...**

A. When children with wise parents grow up, they often look back with appreciation on what their parents did for them.

1. My father died when I was only nine, but I deeply appreciate the training my mother gave to me—the discipline, teaching me to work and to be responsible and to care about others, and that God was important.
 - She usually listens to our sermons from her retirement home in Atlanta, so I hope she hears me say this. If not, I will have to say it to her this evening when I talk to her on the phone.
2. I respected her and submitted to her instruction at the time she was training me, but now I appreciate it more.
 - She still counsels me to this day, but the intense training was during my formative years, before I moved out—she chastened me, as it says in our text, for a few days as seemed good to her...

B. But how much more should we respect our heavenly Father who is intimately involved with training us from the day we are saved—and even before in our effectual calling.

1. We are foolish if we do not respect His wisdom.
 - If we think He is needlessly causing us to suffer, we will grow weary of Him and His way.
 - If we think He doesn’t know what He is doing, we will be discouraged about the refining and the threshing and the pruning.

2. What arrogance is this!

- Do we know what is best for us more than our heavenly Father?
 - Are we in the position to conclude that He should change His plan and give us a different cross, a different refiner's fire, a different set of trials—that we would be better off with a different sort of training?
 - What idiots we are if we think that!
3. How weary we will grow in His way if we do not subject ourselves to Him!
- He knows exactly what to do.
 - We need to yield sweetly to His plan and know that He will do what is best for us even when we do not understand it.
 - I have lived long enough to see even how He left things in my life that I wanted out in order to deal with things that I could not see.
 - How amazing it will be to understand the wise course He took us down when His work is complete.
 - But let us submit to Him with respect and confidence now lest we grow weary in the way that is set out before us to go from sin to Him.

And now we come to the fourth remedy against weariness and discouragement...

- **It will help you endure if you will:**

IV. Keep before you the promised outcome of your heavenly Father's discipline.

- Verses 10-11 tell us what the outcome of His training is: ¹⁰ **For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.** ¹¹ **Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**
- A. We are told with frankness that no chastening seems to be joyful for the present.
1. No indeed—being separated from our sin and our idols and our pride is very painful and requires much suffering.
 - That's one of the reasons that we can grow weary and discouraged.
 2. There is pain, and damage, and loss, and it comes from the hand of our heavenly Father.
- B. But I have noted already that it is for our good.
1. Here we are told that it makes us partakers of His holiness.
 - Holiness, to the world, seems like an ugly, narrow, frowning thing.
 - That's how it seems to sinners.
 - To often we think of it that way too.
 - But holiness is the most delightful thing of all.
 - It is conformity to our glorious God who is pure, beautiful, flawless, majestic, glorious beyond imagination, most loving, gracious, just, and wise.
 - When He makes us holy, He makes us conform to Him.
 - And the more He does, the more we love it, the more glad we are, the more full of joy and fullness we are!
 - The more we are able to see Him.

- See that you aspire to holiness and then you won't mind so much when the refiner's fire burns away your sin and threshing sledge breaks away the idols, and the pruning shears cut away your pride.
2. Our text also says that after these have done their work, it brings forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.
 - We become right—we become what we were created to be.
 - There is something in us that knows we were made to be much more—much better than we are—there is a kind of yearning within for wholeness, for satisfaction—
 - But until we come under the Father's refining fire, threshing sledge, and pruning knife, it is but a hollow ache.
 - What peace we have when that fruit begins to appear!
 - We know that we are finally on the right track.
 - The word *peace* refers to the settled satisfaction that we have in the fruit that comes.
 3. We become content and joyful in His way as He works in us—because we know where we are going.
 - We realise that it will be a grand thing when He completes His work, so we yield gladly to the way He has made for us to come to Him.
 - We are ready to bear the hard things—and are able to endure more and more as His work proceeds.
 - If only we could see the filth of what we are leaving and the glory of where we are going, it wouldn't matter anymore what He did.
 - It takes a long time for good fruit to ripen.
 - At first, it is not very palatable—it is sour and crabby—but we trust our heavenly Father to complete His work...
 - And so we go on in the way.
 - We endure the hard things because we know what the outcome will be in His wise and gracious hands.
 - Go on, Christian, go on.
 - Lean on Jesus to come up out the wilderness of sin that you might enter your Father's heavenly home.
 - You will not fail if you put yourself in the way your Father has provided.