

Making much of Jesus

present-day lessons from the letter to the Hebrews

Although written to Jews who had trusted in Jesus, and although drawing regularly on Old Testament references, the letter to the Hebrews has a very pressing contemporary significance.

This series of studies is intended to stir in our hearts both a deepening delight and a growing confidence in all that Jesus is and has done, imparting to us the fortitude and strength we need to serve Him faithfully in today's world.

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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14. Pursuing holiness (Heb.12.1-29)

[w/b Sunday 1st December 2019]

“.. that we may share in His holiness ..”

Holiness, rather than any mere ‘happiness’, is what the Lord is intent on securing for and in His people. In this next chapter, therefore, the writer moves his readers on from the upward look of faith to the forward look of hope.

Understanding what God is doing in our lives, and seeing, more particularly, the end to which Jesus’ ministry and sacrifice was directed, is crucial to our ‘persevering’: it’s that which the writer now explains more fully in this next chapter.

[Before attending your Community Group try to consider all 7 questions - even though your Group may not have time for them all. Key questions in this study are probably 4, 5 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. **Read Hebrews 12.1-24.** Reading the whole chapter will give you a sense of how the writer is continuing to motivate and encourage his readers to persevere (see 10.36).

How would you summarise the message of this chapter?

What bits do you have difficulty with?

2. Read Hebrews 12.1-3. These verses are the bridge between the previous chapter (on faith) and this one which addresses the theme of 'hope'.

How does 'fixing our eyes on Jesus' help us to persevere?

Have there been times when you have 'grown weary and lost heart' as a follower of Jesus? What brought that on?

3. Read Hebrews 12.4-6. Pastoral ministry involves more than an arm around the shoulders and a pat on the back: in the midst of our trials we sometimes need our perspective corrected.

What is the perspective the writer is keen to encourage in vv.4 & 5?

What is the lesson the writer means us to learn in the verses he quotes from Proverbs?

4. Read Hebrews 12.7-11. 'Discipline' here should be thought of more as 'training' than 'punishment' (although it can of course include that): God's 'disciplining' of us is now explained.

Why does God discipline us?

What does the writer indicate that discipline may involve, and how have you experienced that?

5. Read Hebrews 12.12-17. The need to persevere is clearly paramount: hence the writer addresses further exhortations to his readers on the back of what he's just said.

How does the statement "*without holiness no one will see the Lord*" square with the gospel of grace?

What is the point the writer is keen to underline by his reference to the example of Esau?

6. Read Hebrews 12.18-24. A contrast is again drawn between Mount Sinai (life under the Law) and Mount Zion (life now with Jesus) to highlight the importance of standing firm in their faith.

What characterized life at 'Mount Sinai' according to the writer (vv.18-21)?

In what ways (if any!) does the writer's manifold description of the 'Mount Zion' experience encourage and inspire you (vv.22-24)?

7. Read Hebrews 12.25-29. Against the backdrop of what he's just been describing, and pointing them forward to what's coming, the writer launches into a series of further exhortations.

To what are we looking forward, according to the writer?

What does the writer urge his readers (and ourselves!) to do through these final verses of the chapter?