

Leviticus & Hebrews: The Necessity of the Cross

Lesson 17: Faith Through the Cross

Key Verse: ...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.~Hebrews 12.2

Congratulations on joining the gym, “Consuming Fire”! Your assigned Personal Trainer is also the **King of Kings**, whose personalized workouts, nutrition, and recovery days are guaranteed to make you look more like Him. Achieving this result requires absolute **faith** not only in your Personal Trainer’s regiment, but also in His desire to sculpt your spiritual physique to His Glory and your good. It’s time to sweat!

King of Kings, we acknowledge Your Holiness. Holy, Holy, Holy are You alone. Your power as our King is displayed in Your creative and unforgettable communication through Your creation in the past, and still to come. Give us faith in Your will. Build an encouraging community of fellow “gym rats” who come alongside us in the hard workouts, reminding us to consider Jesus, and to keep pressing on in faith.

Hebrews 12.1-29 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted. ⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

⁵ And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” ⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹² Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶ that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

¹⁸ For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰ For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” ²¹ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. ²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” ²⁷ This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Diamonds: Welcome to Paul’s spiritual gym! Here you will sweat, stretch, groan, complain, maintain proper posture, and develop a muscular spiritual physique. Your gym membership never expires, the workout sessions are full of intergenerational like-minded “gym rats”, the dieticians and nutritionist are there to support your total spiritual well-being (not to sell the latest supplements), and your Personal Trainer knows exactly what you need, when you need it, and how to support building your spiritual physique to perfection. He demands weekly rest

days! Most importantly, use the gym’s mirrored wall, remembering that you see yourself in the midst of strain. However, when your Personal Trainer looks in the mirror, He sees His perfected work – His strong, perfected, stunningly beautiful daughter!

1. It is time to get a look at the workout plan, as developed by your Personal Trainer. Identify the expectations of this workout plan from the list of action verbs found in Hebrews 12:

V 1 “lay aside”	V 12 “strengthen”
V 1 “run with endurance”	V 13 “make straight”
V 2 “looking to”	V 14 “Strive”
V 3 “Consider”	V 15 “See to it”
V 4 “struggle against”, “resist”	V 25 “See that”
V 7 “endure”	V 28 “be grateful
V 12 “lift”	V 28 “offer”

The other members of this gym are vital to your training (Hebrews 10.25). Though your gym membership has been paid in full (Hebrews 12.2), you remain responsible for maintaining a supportive culture, or vibe(!), in this gym.

2. Your membership responsibilities are found in the “let us” statements throughout Hebrews. What are your responsibilities from these statements?

4.1	10.24
4.11	12.1
4.14	12.28
6.1	13.13
10.22	13.15
10.23	

It is okay if after reviewing the workout plan and membership responsibilities you are asking for *another* sweat towel! Every great gym lines their walls with posters and pictures meant to inspire more grit, a willingness to endure, and to challenge your belief about what is possible (Hebrews 11).

3. Read and then write out the words of the “poster” you are looking at as you wring out your sweat towel. Hebrews 12.3:

kings when He ascended back to heaven. But this incomplete understanding prevents us from applying His truth as we wait to experience His rule in heaven. You see, this title carries great significance for His children right now!

Satan is the current ruler (or “god”) of earth, as well as both king and prince over demons.² (Matthew 12.24; John 12.31; John 14.30; John 16.11; 2 Corinthians 4.4; Ephesians 2.2; Ephesians 6.12; 1 Peter 5.8; 1 John 5.18-19; Revelation 9.11).

But even today God is King over Satan’s temporary kingship and authority! We see this over and over with the demons’ responses to Jesus’ presence and to their unavoidable obedience to His commands. Jesus’ intellectual and spiritual defeat of Satan’s temptations confirms and establishes Jesus as King over Satan, even though God has allowed Satan to currently reign as king of the earth (Luke 4.1-12). While it is beyond comprehension to know we will one day behold Jesus as King of kings in heaven, we must also behold Him *today* as King of kings over our sin, temptations, and the current ruler of this earth. Hallelujah!

7. The second covenant of the law of love, established in the death and resurrection of Jesus, is referenced in Hebrews 12.22-24. As we have noted throughout our study, while fulfilled in Christ’s advent, it also looks forward to the final fulfillment in His return (the eternal Jubilee!). Which details about this future fulfillment stand out to you in Paul’s description from Hebrews 12.22-24? How does your pondering from Question 4 of Lesson 16 (“Redemption Through the Cross”) give you a fuller picture of your future of the eternal Jubilee?

Doctrine: Faith~ (Hebrews) Faith means “trust”. “Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3.16-21). More than simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4.13-16), followed by a receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one’s life (John 1.10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.”³

“Faith comprises the essence of our hope for the future (Hebrews 11.1). In simple terms, this means that we trust God for the future based on our faith in what He has accomplished in the past...The only solid evidence we have for our own future is drawn from the promises of God. Here faith offers evidence for things unseen. We trust God for tomorrow...Faith includes believing *in* God. Yet that kind of faith is not particularly praiseworthy (James 2.19). To believe in the existence of God merely qualifies us to be demons. It is one thing to believe *in* God; it is another thing to believe God. To believe God, to trust Him for our very life, is the essence of our Christian faith.”⁴

While Hebrews 12.1 draws from the prior list of faithful heroes in Hebrews 11, it also allows us to consider our current condition of being surrounded by “so great a cloud of witnesses”. In fact, we could rename our small group time as “The Great Cloud of Witnesses”! Empathy is the cement of a supportive community. Rather than listening in an effort to fix someone else’s problems, the ability to first listen and come alongside the pain and heartbreak of one another allows trust and transparency. In first listening in empathy, the one speaking can then hear the exhortations, encouragements, and even admonitions with trust cemented in authentic, unconditional love.

8. Where do you see God empathizing with His people in Leviticus 25.23, “For you are strangers and sojourners *with me*”, alongside Jesus’ mental and emotional challenges at the Cross summarized in Hebrews 12.2, “despising the shame”?

² MacArthur & Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Biblical Truth*, pp. 680-681

³ The Gospel Project, *The 99 Essential Doctrines: #68 Faith*, Lifeway Christian Resources (2018)

⁴ Sproul, R.C., *Luke: An Expository Commentary* (Sandford, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2020 by R.C. Sproul Trust) p.192

9. How does this encourage your faith, or trust, in God and in His Son's salvation?

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:

Lecture Outline:

Aim: King Jesus makes His people unshakable.

- I. Unshakable Faith (Hebrews 12.1-17) **T1:** King Jesus gifts His people with an unshakable faith.
 - a. What trial or hardship is causing your hands to droop and your knees to buckle?
 - b. How do you respond when everything you know and love is shaken to the core?
 - c. How might King Jesus' gift of an unshakable faith comfort and strengthen you?
- II. Unshakable Future (Hebrews 12.18-29) **T2:** King Jesus gifts His people with an unshakable future under His reign and rule.
 - a. In what ways does your living...your doing...your being...declare that your future is unshakably secured by King Jesus?
 - b. How are you living as an "eternity-conscious" believer?

Hughes, R. Kent, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015) pp. 385-431

Phillips, Richard D., *Hebrews*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006) pp. 528-585