

Reading Together
New Testament Bible Reading
March 7 - 13

Monday, March 07 – Hebrews 5: 11 – 6: 12

The last few verses of chapter 5 encourage us to grow and mature in our faith—to be able to take solid food rather than just milk. What the writer of Hebrews is saying is that our faith should be growing and maturing, and not standing still. If we take in God’s word and do nothing with it our faith and our learning is proved to be worthless. Genuine faith is a diligent faith that will one day inherit all of the promises that Jesus has made to us. This is not just about learning more things, but rather taking time to think about what these things mean for our lives.

Many times people struggle with Hebrews 6: 4 – 6. They believe that this verse teaches that you can fall away and lose your salvation, but that is not what these verses are teaching at all. What the writer of Hebrews wants his readers and us to understand is that if we reject the forgiveness and salvation offered to us in Jesus, there is nowhere else to go, and no other hope for us because Jesus is the only source for forgiveness and for salvation.

Tuesday, March 08 – Hebrews 6: 13 – 7: 28

In Hebrews 6: 13 – 20, the writer of Hebrews wants to make sure that we understand just how serious God was when he makes a promise to us. Notice how the writer makes a point of telling us that God cannot lie—it is completely against his character (verse 18)—but then, just to make sure we have no doubts, the writer reminds us that God went to the extraordinary measure of making an oath to confirm the truth of what he was saying. Because God’s promises are rooted in his unchangeable nature and his oath, they are like an anchor that holds us fast in the storms of life—an anchor that

is embedded in the throne room of heaven safe and secure forever.

In chapter 7 the writer of Hebrews goes back to comparing Jesus to Melchizedek the king and priest of Salem. His argument is that Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priests, because Abraham the forbearer of the Levitical priests showed honor to him by giving him a tithe.

Remember that the people the writer is writing to are people who are tempted to go back to the old ways of Judaism. So notice how the writer makes a point of telling his readers that Jesus is superior to any priest that ever served in Israel (look especially at 7: 23-28)

Wednesday, March 9 – Hebrews 8: 1 - 13

In chapter 8 the writer continues to make the point that Jesus is a great high priest who doesn't serve in an earthly temple made by men but serves in the true heavenly temple.

At the end of chapter 8 the writer of Hebrews quotes from Jeremiah 31: 31 – 34 and uses this passage to show how the new covenant in Jesus is far superior to the old covenant that Israel lived under prior to Jesus. His main point is why would you want to go back to the old covenant of the Law, when what you have in Jesus is so much better. That point applies to us as well. As Christians we too often look to the Law and our good works to try to justify ourselves, rather than resting in Christ alone.

Thursday, March 10 – Hebrews 9: 1 - 10: 18

At the beginning of chapter 9 the writer reminds his readers and explains to us how things used to be done in Old Testament Israel. He reminds his readers that the High Priest could only enter the Most Holy Place (behind the curtain where God dwelt) once a year and only after he had offered sacrifices for himself could he offer sacrifices for the people. Jesus is superior because he does not enter the

man-made Tabernacle (Temple), he enters the true perfect tabernacle. Jesus doesn't need the blood of animals to be able to enter the tabernacle because he was without sin and his sacrifice is once and for all because it is the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

In chapter 10 the writer reminds us that all of the Old Testament laws and sacrificial system were just a shadow of what was to come in Jesus. Because they are just a shadow they must be done over and over again. Jesus is the real thing, and through his sacrifice it is once and done. Because of his perfect sacrifice "our sins and lawless acts are remembered no more" (verse 17).

Friday, March 11 – Hebrews 10: 19 – 39

Now that we have seen how superior Jesus is to the old ways, the writer is ready to tell us what it means for us. We can come with confidence into the presence of God (The Most Holy Place), and we can draw near to God with clear consciences.

With all of that going for us, why would anyone want to go back to the old ways? With all of that going for us, we must persevere and in faith hold on to our hope. How do we do that? First, by being faithful to meet together with other Christians so that our faith is built up, second to turn away from our sins (stop deliberately sinning), and thirdly to confidently persevere so that we can gain what has been promised to us.

Saturday, March 12 – Hebrews 11:1 - 12: 3

This chapter is known as the hall of fame of faith. In this chapter the writer recounts the faithfulness of all of the heroes of the Bible, and how they continued on in faith even though often times they did not completely receive all that God had promised to them. Notice how the writer tells us over and over again how each of these people were looking

for something better than what they had and they lived their lives in faith trusting that God would one day do all that he promised for them. In the first three verses of chapter 12, the writer shows us how Jesus is both the ultimate example for our faith and the ultimate object of our faith.

Sunday, March 13 – Hebrews 12: 4 – 29

These verses deal with the subject of how God disciplines us to make us what he wants us to be. Look how the writer starts this section in verse 4 with the words, “in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.” Jesus resisted all temptation to the point where his own blood was shed. He is our ultimate example. There will be times in our lives when God will discipline us as a father disciplines his children. This discipline is not punishment for sin, it is to teach us how to avoid and resist sin, so that we become more like Jesus.

As chapter 12 closes the writer reminds us not to ignore God or turn away from God, or be afraid to approach God. In Exodus 19, when God gave the law to Moses, Mount Sinai trembled and smoked as the presence of God came down on it. No one was allowed near the mountain or they would die. But Mount Zion, the mountain Jesus brings us to, is not like that. We are welcomed to come to the mountain, welcomed to dwell with God as part of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, all because Jesus took the shaking (judgement) of God for us.