

Hebrews 12:14-29
“Living in Light of Grace”
November 27th 2011

Introduction

- Ø So we are coming to the end of the book of Hebrews – Pastor Rob is going to wrap up this book in a week or two

But our text this morning will make a lot more sense if you remember the context

- Ø The Hebrew believers the author of Hebrews is wanting to minister to were going through some pretty heavy trials and persecution
 - And by the way, if you wonder why we go through trials and what God wants to accomplish in our lives through them, then you need to pick up a CD of last week’s study from Pastor Rob or listen to it online – it was great!
- Ø But the Hebrew believers were facing huge persecution
 - And the response of the Hebrew believers to the persecution was to go backwards

Some of them were going back into the throws of Judaism

- Ø it was difficult to be different than your family and friends and believe in Jesus
 - they were comfortable with the law and the traditions and so many of them were in danger of falling back into the bondage of the law again
- Ø Still others who realized the emptiness of Judaism no doubt thought, well why try at all to live like God wants me to do
 - I know Jesus’ death on the cross has saved me
 - And trying to live pure is hard – so give up

And this of course is a temptation for all of us as trials and tough times hit our lives

- Ø some of us are tempted to go back to that which we are comfortable with
 - and others just want to give up all together – why try to live like God wants me to live at all

And because this was happening to believers in the first century and still happens to believers in this century – the author of Hebrews and the Holy Spirit repeats over and over in this book – grace, grace, grace

- Ø But what does that really mean?
 - If you have been a Christian for any amount of time you have heard the term grace
 - And maybe you are even familiar with one of the many definitions
 - God’s Riches at Christ’s expense
 - Getting what we don’t deserve

But even though we are familiar with the term and definitions

- Ø What does it really mean to live in light of grace?
 - How does that work out in our lives practically, especially when we are facing trials and tribulation and wanting to go back to old things in our lives?
- Ø Well I believe the author in the verses we just read does exactly that for us – He explains what it means to live in light of grace

- And in doing the writer kind of attacks the topic backwards, by first showing us examples of what living in light of grace is not, before he shows us what it is suppose to look lie
- Ø 2 things for you note takers “Living in light of grace” is not

What “Living in Light of Grace” is not

#1 - Living in Light of Grace does not mean you can live anyway you want or Licentiousness – Hebrews 12:14-17

- Ø Sometimes we are so familiar with the teaching of grace, that I have not earned or deserve God’s favor, but He just loves me
 - I am so familiar with this teaching, that sometimes when trials come, a tactic of the enemy is to get us to get into sin
 - Come on – you know God will forgive you, you know He still loves you
- Ø So go ahead – you deserve a break – grace, brother

But precious friends, living in light of grace does not mean I can live any way I want

- Ø Some see grace as an arrangement between them and God, that I get to live anyway I want and God you have to forgive me no matter what
 - Friends that is not living in light of grace, that is licentiousness, it is carnal, it is sin and it needs to seriously be repented of

To reinforce this, the author reminds us of the cautionary tale of Esau

- Ø Esau, Hebrews says was “a profane person,” which means “a common person, one who lives for the world and not God.” (Our English word literally means “outside the temple,” or not belonging to God.)
 - And there were many examples of this in Esau’s life - The one the author of Hebrews refers to comes from Genesis chapter 25
- Ø Esau had a twin brother by the name of Jacob, but they could not have been any more different
 - Esau was a man’s man, a hunter
 - Jacob was basically a momma’s boy

And this day in Genesis 25, Esau has been out hunting in the field, and Jacob has been preparing soup

- Ø when Esau comes in he is starving, and says to his brother, give me some soup
 - Jacob who wasn’t just a mama’s boy, but also a conniver says – I will sell you a bowl of soup, for your birthright
- Ø You see Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, but Esau was older and therefore had the Hebrew birthright
 - It made him the spiritual head of the family

But Esau in this moment shows his true colors, he cares not for spiritual things, he cares not for spiritual blessing, he was one who lived for the world and the lusts of his flesh

- Ø and He was willing to trade the place of spiritual blessing for a bowl of beans – that’s dumb – story of my son and the 10 pennies, and man at the airport
 - its one thing to be ignorant because you are young, its another to stubborn in stupid
 - Esau was both

And as I used to read that story, I would think, here's the story about the idiot.

- Ø But I remember my last trip through as I was thinking about this passage, for in that time in my life, I was being the idiot.
 - I was selling out for a bowl of beans

We have much more than a birthright in Christ.

- Ø All the promises of God
 - Fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, kindness, gentleness and self control
 - And I see those things as what I desire

- Ø We have the promise of His presence working in our lives

But what I am afraid is so often we are willing to forfeit those things for something that is no better than a bowl of beans.

Jesus asked, “What does a man gain if he profits the world and loses his own soul.” Then He asks what would a man give in exchange for his soul.

- Ø And I ask us, what would we
 - 1 million dollars, probably not
 - But the sad truth is many of us are missing out on the blessings of Christ because we are selling out for something much less

Here me on this.

- Ø I don't care what it is.
 - Compromise for popularity around people who will never really care for you
 - For a moment of passing pleasure
- Ø What ever it is you are trading in for the richness of a close what with Jesus.
 - It is only a bowl of beans

And you can go down that path.

- Ø You can choose to go your own way
 - But when you come to the end, you will find out that all you have is a bowl of beans
 - That is where Esau was at
 - He was a carnal man, a man outside of God's blessing
 - A man who did not care about the blessing of God upon his life
- Ø But there came a time as Hebrews 12:17 says, that Esau wanted the blessing, but it was too late, the decisions had already been made, though he sought it with tears

He cried, it sought it with tears

- Ø But the reality is, you can't have the blessing without the birthright
 - You can't experience the blessing of God unless you are in a right relationship with God

To live in the light of Grace is not as some will say – it doesn't matter how you live, you can live for the flesh – you can't have backwards priorities

- Ø Just remember grace and do what you want
 - NO! – you are saved by Grace
 - You have God's favor and love by Grace
 - But do not be fooled into thinking that you can live in unrepentant sin and just be blessed by God because Grace man

- It won't work out
- Ø You will find yourself like Esau, weeping – why was I so foolish, why did I waste my life

And before we move on, one more thing to consider

- Ø Esau was a profane person
 - Extra biblical sources tell us the day that Esau sold his birthright, he had three sexual encounters, one with a virgin girl betrothed to be married
 - And whether you can trust that or not, it is safe to say, Esau was wicked
- Ø But when we think of living any way I want in light of grace, we do often think in terms of sexual sin, lying, stealing, drug use, those things but us outside the temple, and they certainly do.
 - But the writer begins in verses 12 and 13 - by talking about something as simple as bitterness
 - And we need to keep that in mind
 - God desires holiness
- Ø There is no part of us that we can just explain away and say – oh grace, it doesn't matter that I'm addicted to pornography, it doesn't matter I abuse alcohol, or even it doesn't matter that I am continually bitter at people
 - No – it does matter – that is not the point of living in light of Grace

What “Living in Light of Grace” is not

#1 - Living in Light of Grace does not mean you can live anyway you want or Licentiousness – Hebrews 12:14-17

#2 - Living in light of Grace also doesn't mean you go back to the law or legalism – Hebrews 12:18-21

- Ø As most of this book has taught us – the law can not bring you into the promise land
 - You can not put God in your debt by your many works
 - Because you works are filthy in His sight – even the best things we do are tainted by sin in someway or another
 - We don't bully our way into the blessing by keeping the law – because you won't keep the law
 - The answer as the author is saying is not in the example of Esau or found at Mount Sinai, where the Law was given

The author uses Mt Sinai (where the Law was originally given) to illustrate going back to the law and legalism

- Ø Imagine what it must have been like to be there the day the law was given – the people went through days of consecration, the ground shook, the mountain seemed to be on fire, voices and trumpets of angles boomed, and if anyone came close they were to die
 - it would have been a terrifying thing – and such was most Jews relationship to the law of God ever since that day

We know the law was suppose to be a school master – showing them their need for a savior

Ø we understand that I John 5:3, that this is the love of God, His commandments – but they just understood this law was nothing to mess around with

○ And Such is the relationship of legalism

Some people define legalism today as anyone concerned with holiness

Ø that is not the biblical definition at all

○ legalism is to base my relationship with God on what I am doing – and that is a scary thing

Of course today's gentles are not in danger of returning to the Levitical law like the first century Jews were – but we invent our mini Sinai –

Ø our new laws by which we make ourselves acceptable to God

○ And it usually works out this way –

○ if you are more evangelical in your leanings then your little Sinai's may include Biblical ethics,

○ if you are liberal your learning then your little Sinai may include social issues of concern for the poor and down trodden

Ø and none of the above are bad to be concerned with

○ but when those things, begin to be stated – I do this and it makes me acceptable to God

○ I feed the poor and therefore God is really pleased with me

○ I keep this standard of holiness and God is proud of me

○ Well – it is our gentile version of going back to Sinai that the early first century church struggled with

Ø But neither legalism nor, licentiousness is what living in light of grace is really about

Well if living in light of grace doesn't mean you can do whatever you want, and it doesn't mean you go back under the law – what it left???

Ø Clinging to Jesus, Abiding in Christ

Living in Light of Grace is not licentiousness (living anyway you want), nor is it legalism (living in bondage to the law).

Living in light of Grace is a loving relationship with Jesus – Hebrews 12:22-24

Ø you have not come to the example of Esau – living any way I want

Ø you have not come to the mountain of Sinai – living in bondage to the law

○ But the author says, you have come to Mount Zion

○ You have come to Jesus!

The over arching teaching of the Book of Hebrews is Grace should lead us to Him – who is better than the angels, Moses, the law, the covenants – We come to Jesus - We cling to Him, We abide in Him

Ø We don't spend time away because I don't feel like I measure up

○ That is legalism

Ø We don't spend time away because I am living a life of sin

- That Licentiousness

Ø No – Living in light of Grace mean I can cling to him

Now that you know that – now that you have heard that, we need to really consider what the author says in verse 12:25-29

Ø we need to hear Him, we need to cling to Him

- Because a shaking is coming!
- Listen to verse 27 in the New living Translation

“This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain. Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. For our God is a devouring fire.” – Hebrews 12:27-29 – New Living Translation

Ø There is a shaking coming

- There a shaking coming for our world
- I believe there is a shaking coming for our country, we just can't keep spending money the way our government does – debt commission fails last week to cut 1.2 trillion, we are 15 trillion dollars in debt – there is a shaking coming

Ø And you know I believe for all of us there is a shaking coming

- Not one of us gets to escape God's refining fire
- There is a shaking coming

So because of that – What are you clinging to???

Ø If it is anything other than Jesus – you are going to be disappointed – it will turn out to be a bowl of beans

- What are you holding onto?
- Some sin – Some Sinful relationship - it will let you down
- Even good things – Godly relationship – it will let you down –
- A church will let you down –
- A pastor will let you down

Ø And we must lay down every law, and every dependence other than Jesus Christ

- We need to lay it down or it will be consumed – in either case it won't always be there to depend on – only Jesus will always be there

Read Hebrews 12:28-29 in the New King James

Ø we have a Kingdom that can not be shaken

- everything else will and must be shaken away

So I love it – let us have grace

Ø not grace meaning I live anyway I want and God will just have to understand

- oh precious ones, please don't be so foolish

Ø not grace where I develop my own law by which I am making myself acceptable to God

- now – Grace where, not because I deserve it or have earned it – but because He does and did – I cling to Jesus
- the only thing, that will not be shaken
- the only thing that will not be consumed
- do you hear my on this church

What are you living for?

What are you clinging to?

Ø I love it that this chapter ends with, our God is a consuming fire

- **That is not a scary thing to me**
- **Because I know the Lord – I know His consuming fire wants to consume all the things I should not be clinging to**
- **His consuming fire wants to ride my heart of everything that will be shaken**

Ø So lets take some time this morning to come to the God, the consuming fire

- **And lets allow Him to consume what needs to go**

God consume that which needs to be consumed, that which will be shaken in our lives – consume those things in us Lord – let's worship!!!!