**Theme: Fixing our Hearts on Jesus**

**Title: Encouragement to Persevere**

**2 different types of encouragement to persevere**

**#20 Hebrews 10:26-39**

When is the last time you warned someone about something?

Hey that coffee is really hot….That intersection is really dangerous….it is really sunny outside, bring sunscreen and drink a bunch of water….

We warn our kids all the time…I remember talking constantly to my kids about making sure on hot days they stay hydrated. Recently we warned our kids, what happens when you get a cut and you don’t take care of it…what could happen if it gets infected, and how infections from seemingly small wounds can be very serious.

I don’t know about you, but every time I mow, I look at the warning about a person cutting their fingers off…every time…I am 45 years old…why do I need that reminder…I do though…I know there is going to be a time when there is something on the ground, and I am going to want to lean over and put my hand down by the mower…and every time I need that warning, to stop the mower and then grab it…I’m a grown man and I still need the warning that I might lose my fingers if I am not careful. I know it sounds funny, but it helps me every time mow wisely, and I tell my kids about it all the time.

The point is…I need warnings, I need strong warnings, I need serious warnings where I wrestle with the consequences of not heeding a warning….Recently I was doing some metal work, and I was cutting and grinding some steel and I had my glasses on but I did not have safety glasses, and I can’t remember how many times I have told my kids to wear safety glasses when weed whacking, when working with a saw…and here I am letting tiny metal shaving fly right under my glasses into my face and my eyeballs. I can hear myself warning my kids…this is how you can go blind…this is serious…I needed that warning, bc sometimes I minimize things…So I went and put on safety glasses…and went back to work….and then I cut my finger…no I am kidding.

When you tell someone to wear safety glasses, there is a two fold warning.. a positive and a negative encouragement. The positive is when you have safety glasses on you can focus on what your working on, you can do a better job because you can get closer to what you are working on….the negative is if you don’t wear this you could go blind…that is a pretty huge difference…you can make something really good, or you can not see the rest of your life…we often encourage and motivate people with good rewards, good reasons…and we also warn people with the possibility of how serious this is if you don’t take the warning.

The book of Hebrews wants us to see how Jesus is better than everything…How drawing close to Him is worth more than anything….holding fast our confession is of the utmost importance and the blessings that come from attaching ourself to Christ are so worth it…but the author of Hebrews also gives the most powerful and strong warning as the other side of the encouragement…and both are needed, believers need both…for one, it helps us understand that some people are just around the church, around the things of God simply because they get something from it, but they do not really have a saving relationship with Jesus, it helps us not be surprised by that….but these warning are also for believers….a strong warning helps us turn to Christ and stay focused on the blessings because we understand how serious this is…this is not a game where we have the option to go someplace else for eternal life…the warnings help us stay laser focused on Christ because we need to wrestle with what is means to fall away from the Lord and how serious that is.

All of that reminds us how important it is to continue to **Fix our Hearts on Jesus**….

Last Week Pastor Wetterlin helped us Review our Hebrews study as we transition from the summer series back to our Hebrews series.

 We highlighted the 3 commands from Hebrews 10:19-25

* To draw near with a sincere heart (v. 22)
* To hold fast our confession without wavering (v. 23)
* To stimulate one another to love and good deeds (v. 24)

I love the connection to Faith, Hope and Love…as shorthand to consider how we respond to who Jesus is and what he did.

The last part emphasizes not forsaking the assembly of coming together for the purpose of encouraging one another….It was a such a great application to consider how you encourage others and others encourage you in the body of Christ…I hope there was a desire in your heart to get more connected to the body of Christ so you engage relationally to encourage others and let others encourage you…to stimulate other and to let others stimulate you to love and good deeds for the glory of Christ.

All of this leads to our message this morning….as we focus on the…

**Encouragement to Persevere**

The reality is we need each other…to remind each other about who Jesus is…what He did…How he is worthy of our love, trust and devotion. We need encouragement both positive encouragement and strong warning to help us persevere….

Just as there is a community to help us…we also have to take individual responsibility…and this next section is a strong warning…to help people individually address where they are with Jesus…and continue to hold fast to Him all the way to the end.

READ Heb 10:26-39

So this morning let’s look at

**2 different types of encouragement to persevere**

1. **Consider the warning for continued disobedience**
	1. **The terrifying judgment of the Lord**

**Hebrews 10:26–27 -26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.**

The author of Hebrews is describing a person who knows about Jesus. Understands what He has done, and that He is God in the flesh…and then goes on sinning willfully as if the Lord has no authority over their life.

If someone turns away from the provision of the Lord….there is no sacrifice for sins…there is no other way to atone for ones sins…all that is left is the terrifying expectation of judgment. In other words the importance of holding fast to Christ is not an option…there is believing who Jesus is and holding fast to Him…or there is eternal judgment.

We all sin…the difference is a follower of Christ admits it, repents, is broken about their sin…and finds assurance in who Jesus is and what He has done…This passage is describing someone who can get the answers right on a test, but they willingly sin, they don’t care and they have no desire to change… they do not have a heart that is soft to the things of God where they want to obey the Lord…for them it is like Jesus is not important…and so for them there is no sacrifice for sins because what He did on the cross has no impact on them and how they live.

the author wants all who read this to take it very seriously. So he makes a comparison…we see a…

* 1. **Comparison of more severe judgment**

**Hebrews 10:28–29 -28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?**

So it is hard for us to understand and contemplate the depth of eternal judgment. So the author takes a severe example so help us understand better.

If you read Deu 17 we get a picture of what it looks like to Set aside the law of Moses…it is when you do not trust the living God, and you go to worship and serve other false gods… This is saying the true God of heaven, what he commands… has no authority on my life…I can do whatever I want, worship water I want…and if you set aside the law of Moses…and 2-3 witnesses confirm you are basically living in a way with no authority over you, you dishonor God, and put your whole community at risk to lead them away from the Lord and bring death and judgment into the community, and so there is no mercy……and so it is so serious that the punishment is death. The witnesses are important because f you bear false witness, you actually receive the punishment of the person you were falsely accusing…so turning away from the Lord was a matter of life and death.

So how much more sever is it to not simply set aside moses who was a servant in God’s house, but to set aside Christ who is the son of God….it is even more severe…is there a more severe punishment than death….yes…Eternal death….separation not simply from your body, but separation from God, your creator…the source of life…separation from Him for eternity….that is how much more sever it is to reject Christ.

The terminology is to trample under feet the son of God…to regard unclean the blood of the covenant….to insult the spirit of Grace.

This is saying Christ is nothing…I can stomp on Him…the blood that cleanses us from sin and makes us acceptable to come into the kingdom of God…I think that is unclean, it is unclean like a leper and I want nothing to do with it just as a leper was to be far away from the people outside the camp…So that person is saying not only is the blood of Christ unnecessary, but worthless, something to separate yourself from.

For a Jewish person to say the Law of Moses doesn’t apply to me…I don’t need it…would be severe….how much more severe is it for someone living on this side of the cross to say…I don’t need grace…I don’t need the Holy Spirit to renew me…I can save myself…I don’t need a savior…I don’t need Jesus…he is just some guy and He has no authority over my life…I don’t need the blood of His covenant….So the author is talking about the sin of unbelief…the sin of rejecting Christ.

If you reject Christ, there is no other pathway for your sins to be forgiven…the new covenant has replaced the old covenant, and so there is no other way to address your sins.

The consequence is eternal separation from God in Hell…There is no other name given under heaven among men by which we must be saved….and to turn away from Christ brings about the most severe consequence ever.

That gets your attention…believers will say, the way I think about Christ is really important…believers will take this warning and look at their heart and say…am I setting aside who Jesus is and just doing whatever I want as if I am my own standard of righteousness. Believers will respond to this and say, woah…I want to make sure I am cherishing Christ…I want to know what He says and want to obey Him each day.

Now If someone warns you…or someone even questions your relationship with the Lord…people may not do that perfectly…but consider that may be the most loving, most kind, and most thoughtful thing a person could ever do.

If someone wants to get your attention spiritually, and they are asking you about if you are walking in a manner worthy of the gospel….that may be difficult to process, but many times that is someone wanting what is best for you, not just in the short term, but for eternity. Sometimes conversations like these get our attention.

The author goes back to the law of Moses bc that gets the readers attention….and so we have a quote from Deuteronomy, from the song of Moses, and there are two truths that really can help God’s people…so as part of this strong warning, we want to see….

* 1. **Two truths about God from the song of Moses**

**Hebrews 10:30–31 -30 For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

This is a direct quote from Deuteronomy…and it is interesting how much the Psalms and other places in scripture goes back to the song of Moses.

**Deuteronomy 32:35–36 -35 ‘Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them.’ 36 “For the Lord will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants, When He sees that *their* strength is gone, And there is none *remaining,* bond or free.**

Notice the warning…vengeance, retribution, calamity…it is right and good for a holy God to judge wickedness and rebellion….it is good for us to understand that…

* + 1. **Vengeance belongs to the Lord**

We are not to look at all the sinfulness and wickedness around us, and seek to take our own vengeance…the Lord will address the sinfulness of this world…and so it is wise for us to recognize our own sinfulness…its hard to endure if you are focused on vengeance…that will exhaust youi.

**Romans 12:19 -19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God,* for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.**

But notice also how…

* + 1. **The Lord judges - vindicating the innocent and punishing the guilty**

We can endure bc one day there will be righteous judgment…but It is not just one sided…He also vindicates the innocent…and Jesus in His resurrection was vindicated, that indeed he was sinless, that he innocently took the punishment in our place…so now anyone who draws near to God based on the provision He gives them, based on His salvation….He vindicates them, He judges them as innocent.

And He is the only one who can do that…you cannot judge your self…You cannot vindicate yourself…you must hold fast to the One who judges and judges righteously. For someone holding fast to Christ, that is a sweet truth to cling to …for someone holding on to their own righteousness, that is a terrifying reality to have to truly address.

{Gospel} – So If you have not placed your trust in Christ to vindicate you….if you have not recognized your guilt before a holy God, I would encourage you to do that today…and put your faith in Christ…the one who died an innocent death in your place and was vindicated…and so in Christ you too can have his righteousness, and be vindicated in Christ….so you can hold fast to Jesus and not to your own righteousness.

So this warning has great encouragement and positive motivation for believers…not just a warning to persevere…but an encouragement to persevere.

1. **Consider the positive motivation for continued obedience**
	1. **Remember the suffering and obedience from the past that we go through together.**

**Hebrews 10:32–33 -32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.**

The author reminds them that they have suffered, and they have endured…they have gone through trials and they have not abandoned Christ…They have been embarrassed, they have suffered…all because they have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit…they have believed the word of God…they have embraced Christ as the messiah, the son of God, God in the flesh…and they were persecuted because of it…and they endured…they bonded together with others who love Jesus and they suffered and they endured….

Remembering Perseverance in Past suffering and past endurance, motives us to keep going.

* When your kids get afraid of something, do you remind them, last week you did this and you were not afraid, lets put off fear this time too.
* You ate this meal last week and you loved it…remember that…now eat your food.
* You worked hard last semester and you did well on your exams and they were hard…don’t give up…keep studying….
* You have gone through marriage difficulties in the past…the Lord has been faithful to help you work through them…keep going, don’t give up.
* You have had difficult deadlines and too much on your plate before…you have had difficult bosses before and you have sought to lift high the name of Christ…keep doing it…He sees it…He is worth it, and when you persevere again it is going to be such a delight that you pointed others to the one who is helping you persevere when it is hard.

The reason to persevere is there is something better on the horizon…we need to

* 1. **Focus on the better and lasting inheritance**

**Hebrews 10:34–35 -34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.**

Don’t throw away your confidence…don’t throw away where you have placed your hope….have you put your confidence in what you have built, what you can do….I think when someone takes away or destroys what you have accomplished, it really challenges us to think about where our confidence is…

Can you imagine someone taking your house bc of your faith…something maybe you build with your own hands or you worked for years to afford and then pay off….maybe your house has been in your family for generations…maybe your grandfather laid the foundation…your dad put a new roof on, and you have made it your own….it has appreciated in value every year…and when you sell it you can buy a RV and have extra money to travel and see the world….and then someone takes your house and puts you on the street and you have to leave town looking for work and a new place to live.

That is what happened to many of the Jewish Christians….they got kicked out of town and they lost their property…Jesus had to be of great value to a person in order to joyfully accept that as part of His plan.

You have to believe he is priceless in order to give up something of great value, knowing there is no comparison….no one is taking our houses because of our religious beliefs…I know most Americans would rise up and take up arms if that were the case…but what do you joyfully give up that is of great value to you each day….because you have a focus on an eternal reward…and eternal inheritance…and you want to please God and so joyfully giving up what you want and what you value is a daily occurrence.

Maybe no one is forcing you…but when you cultivate that mindset when you deny yourself, you focus on what the Lord wants…if anyone does really jam you up, it does not stop you…you persevere through it….is it an opportunity to show them where your confidence is…where your lasting reward truly is…

The hard part is doing that consistently…doing that with endurance…making that an everyday part of our lives…where the value of Christ impacts everything we think, say and do….and we don’t value getting our own way, getting what we want as much as we focus on the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus our Lord.

**Philippians 3:8 -8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,**

We need to have that focus everyday to persevere in a world where we don’t get what we want, this world is not our home, there is disappointment and loss is a regular part of our lives…we need to endure through the trials.

We all need to grow in endurance…even if you believe Jesus is better than everything, you have been fixing your eyes on Him…we all struggle doing that over the long haul, doing that when we get weary, tired, when there is physical suffering, where there is emotional turmoil, where there is spiritual warfare, and relational hardship and conflict.

We need to be reminded that…

* 1. **Endurance is pleasing to the Lord and results in a great reward**

**Hebrews 10:36–39 -36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. 38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**

The best way to finish a race is to stay focused on the finish line…to consider how many miles you have left and to stay focused on the end.

You have to trust, you have to have faith that the whole race is worth it, that the promise and the reward at the end is worth it…it requires faith that God’s will is more important than your will… faith requires humility to trust someone other than yourself. And that helps you keep going instead of giving up….… there is someone else for you to focus on, there is someone else for us to live to please, there is a reason outside of ourselves to keep going….

The text reference the book of Habakuk and it says…

**Habakkuk 2:3–4 -3 “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. 4 “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.**

A humble person will wait, will endure…will trust the One who said He is coming soon. A proud person says I want things in my time, and I want things to be all about me…and so I don’t really have to trust anyone else…

The righteous will live by faith…by trusting the provision of the Lord, trusting the promise of the Lord, trusting the plan of the Lord…and that will lead us to endure.

Part of the reason we can endure is that we believe this will not last forever. In a little while Jesus is coming back. If you think something will never end, you will want to quit, but if you focus on how the Lord has set the limit and one day we will see Him….that allows us to endure.

The reward is that we get to see Him face to Face….there is no greater finish line….We want to like Moses see the glory of the Lord…we look forward to the promise…the promise of eternal life, just as James says…

**James 1:12 -12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.**

But as we wait…we live by faith….we move forward…We focus on what pleases the Lord…we don’t shrink back to avoid suffering…we don’t shrink back because of peer pressure or persecution. We keep our eyes fixed on Christ, believing he is better than everything, and he is worth any suffering He calls us to go through.

The author of Hebrews wants to warn God’s people, but he also wants to encourage God people…He said earlier in Hebrews in another warning…

**Hebrews 6:9 -9 But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.**

He says something similar in verse 39….

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

So I pray you will take the warning seriously and it encourages you to endure…often those who take these warning the most seriously are the ones who need it the least…so if you take these warning seriously, that is a good sign. But allow the warning to help you draw near to Christ, and hold fast your faith, hope and love for Jesus and your trust for what He has done for you…and then seek to endure…seek to persevere until the end…

press on and seek to live by faith….to apply your faith in Christ to every aspect of your life so you endure… reminding yourself that the reward is worth it, Jesus is worth it…

be sure to connect to others in the body so you can encourage them to persevere bc Jesus is worth it…and let them encourage you as well so we persevere through trials together…may we look forward to seeing Him face to face…and enjoying Him for all eternity.

Lets pray.