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HEBREWS

Mount Sinai or Mount Zion

Hebrews 12:18-28

- I. No Higher Pursuit, No Greater Aim
 - a. Established the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ
 - i. No more valuable or worthwhile pursuit than that of Jesus Christ
 - ii. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him
 - b. Do you believe this? Are we confident in the foundational truth of scripture that we have all we need in Jesus?
 - i. We're surrounded by so great a cloud of witness, those who have gone before us and have proven the faithfulness of God
 - ii. Those whose confidence in the character of God have provided us with the substance of things hoped for, the proof of things that we can't see
 - c. In light of this, how then shall we live?
 - i. Run with endurance the race that is set before us, throw off every weight and the sin that imprisons us and look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith
 - ii. Considering Jesus as our example – who for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross
 - d. But that's difficult we might say - resisting my flesh, the devil, the world
 - i. I feel so discouraged, so beat down by the circumstances of this life, so powerless over my sin
 - ii. Get up, you're not bleeding
 - iii. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.
 1. Move past "I'll do it when I feel like it" too "I'll do it because it's right."
 2. Action often comes before the feeling.
 3. That's discipline - the mature believer embraces God's discipline (correction and direction) and self-discipline because they know discipline equals freedom
 4. Self-control - fruit of the Spirit - creates opportunities
 - iv. It is the sin and distraction that keeps us in chains, weighed down and immobile, unfruitful

Heb 12:18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

- II. Mount Sinai and Mount Zion
 - a. Author contrasts two mountains – Mount Sinai and Mount Zion
 - i. Mount Sinai – earthly mountain – represents the Old Covenant, the law, and the unapproachable righteousness of God
 1. A mountain that cannot be touched

2. A mountain burned with fire
 - a. A mountain of darkness and gloom and storm
- ii. The voice of God was so terrible that the people begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore
 1. It wasn't just the sound of God's voice, they could not endure what was commanded
- iii. Even Moses said "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling."
- iv. The author of Hebrews has already said "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
 1. Not because He is wicked or evil, but because He is perfect and righteous and holy
 - a. Worst possible situation a human being can find themselves in is standing before God still in their sins – unrepentant, unforgiven
 - b. Attempting to approach God on the basis of our good works alone
- v. God is just – we all want justice, we want people held accountable for their actions
 1. Until it comes to us – then we are full of justification and excuses
 2. ***Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.***
 3. That is not where our story ends
- b. Here is the encouragement – You have not come to this mountain! Verse 22 – You have come to Mount Zion
 - i. The heavenly mountain
 - ii. Represents the New Covenant
 - iii. The voice of God invites us to draw near because of the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ
 1. This is the New Jerusalem, the city of the Living God! The Kingdom all of creation longs for.
 2. We join a company angels too numerous to count, the gathering of the church made up of men and women who have their names written in the book of life, and most importantly we step into the presence of the almighty God, our righteous judge, and Jesus Christ our mediator – who is the mediator of the New Covenant
 - iv. God didn't change – we changed because of the work of the cross
 1. God is still the righteous judge of all – but at His right hand is our mediator, our reconciler – the one who endured the cross for this very moment – this was the joy that was set before Him
- c. Why do some people see God as an oppressive, vengeful, tyrant and others see Him as a loving and faithful Father?
 - i. Why are some repelled by Him and others drawn to Him?
 - ii. Same reason we resisted our parents when we were younger and now for many of us they are our best friends
 - iii. Our actions dictated the nature of our relationship with them – when we were engaged in behaviors that were harmful, and they stood in the way of those behaviors because they loved us, but we saw them adversaries
 1. Not until we grew up and had kids of our own that we realized they weren't fighting against us, they were fighting for us

12:25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,

III. The Voice of God

- a. See to it – do not refuse Him who speaks
 - i. ***Jer 42: 21 And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, or anything which He has sent you by me.***

- ii. *Jer 9:13 And the Lord said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it,*
 - iii. *Jeh 7:24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.*
 - iv. *Dan 9:11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.*
 - v. *1 Sam 15: 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?"*
 - vi. *Num 14: 22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.*
 - 1. The word we translate obey is not obey – heed gets us a little closer – the word is HEAR or LISTEN – the Hebrew word is SHEMA
 - 2. Shema Prayer – *Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!*
 - a. final prayer of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, and traditionally as the last words before death
 - 3. *5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*
 - a. Expresses the core of Judaism, that God should be loved and obeyed at all times
 - b. To hear God was to obey God – hearing and obeying could not be separated.
 - c. You did not heed my voice! You did not listen to my voice!
- b. Why can't I hear the voice of God?
 - i. To hear Him is to obey Him – have we refused Him who speaks
 - ii. God's Word brings life – whether it is a call to repentance and belief in His Son Jesus Christ or whether it is the day to day direction of His Holy Spirit and His written Word
 - 1. God is speaking, our prayer should be Lord, give me ears to hear
 - iii. To refuse God is to refuse life - *they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth* – Israelites who rebelled before Moses even returned from Mount Sinai
 - c. *much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven*
 - i. God has arranged all of human history to point to the forgiveness and redemption that is available through His Son Jesus Christ – God has spoken from heaven
 - ii. He has spoken through priest and prophets and shepherds and slaves and kings and commoners, and in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son – who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person
 - iii. *Heb 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

IV. Investing in the Eternal

- a. This is the constant theme of scripture
 - i. Building a house on rock or sand, seed the falls in good soil or in midst of rocks and weeds
 - ii. *1 Cor 3:11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*
 - iii. God is in the business of the eternal – He builds things that last
- b. *He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.*
 - i. *Hag 2: 6 “For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts. 8 ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts. 9 ‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the Lord of hosts.”*
 - ii. What lasts? The work we have done in cooperation with the Lord – as He guides and directs and empowers
 - iii. What will be shaken down and removed – anything built in the flesh – sin is not eternal, it will be removed
 1. We have been saved from sins penalty, we are being saved from sins power, and we will be saved from sins presence when God once more shakes the heavens and the earth and we are given a New Heaven and a New Earth
 2. We are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken – the already not yet
- c. Our God is a consuming fire
 - i. He doesn’t change – but we have been changed
 - ii. That consuming fire of judgement has become a refining fire – a purifying fire – because the eternal lives within us – the Spirit of the Living God