

## Hebrews 12:1-29 **Motivation for Faithful Endurance**

### Cloud of Witnesses – Jesus Author and Finisher of Our Faith

<sup>1</sup> Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

### You have not resisted to bloodshed

<sup>3</sup> For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. <sup>4</sup> You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

### Endure the Chastening of the Lord

<sup>5</sup> And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; <sup>6</sup> For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

### Value of Chastening

<sup>7</sup> If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup> For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

<sup>11</sup> Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

### Exhortation to Steadfast Endurance

<sup>12</sup> Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, <sup>13</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

<sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

### Guard against falling short

<sup>15</sup> looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; <sup>16</sup> lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. <sup>17</sup> For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

### Old Covenant

<sup>18</sup> For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> (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.")

### New Covenant

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.

### Choose Well – Consequence is great

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, 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.

### Need of Reverence and Godly Fear

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. NKJV

### Facts Revealed:

#### Cloud of Witnesses – Jesus Author and Finisher of Our Faith [Hebrews 12:1-2]

✠ The Great cloud of Witnesses mentioned here is a reference to the testimony in the lives of all the Saints mentioned in chapter eleven and all throughout history whose lives were examples for us, victorious in faith, along with those who have suffered and died as martyrs for their faith.

✧ Following their example, we are exhorted: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with patient endurance the race that is set before us."

✧ The weight and sin that so easily ensnares us, is the cares and desires of this world, These we must set aside. [Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:18-19, Luke 8:14]

✧ Only then will we be able to run the race of our calling unhindered and fruitful.

✧ Our example is Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. "Who **for the joy that was set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. "

✧ Like Jesus, we have assurance of the glory promised for the overcomers in Heaven.

✧ This knowledge strengthens us to become victorious overcomers in our own time.

#### You have not resisted to bloodshed – Call to endure the Chastening of God [Hebrews 12:3-6]

✠ The danger for believers is that we may become weary and discouraged in our soul from the onslaught of persecution for the faith.

✧ If we thoughtfully contemplate the things Christ suffered to the point of death on the cross, and consider Him to be our example, we will be strengthened to stand firm in our own persecution when it comes.

✧ Besides, we have not yet endured to the point of shedding our own blood in our resistance against sin. As Paul said: "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:"

"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." [Proverbs 3:11-12]

### Value of Chastening [Hebrews 12:7-11]

✧ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

✧ This statement of the chastening of the Lord is in the context of reference to those who have suffered persecution and martyrdom of the past and appear in Scripture as examples for us today.

✧ By this chastening the Lord is demonstrating to the world that He views us as His children.

✧ This is similar to the case of Job, who suffered unimaginable torment as God allowed Satan to test Job, to prove to Satan that Job really was all that God had said he was, and that through it all Job would remain faithful to God. The end was a blessing and hope.

✧ We should therefore, look at our chastening as a compliment from God, demonstrating to the world and to Satan that we are of the strength of character that God can boast about, and realize that it is confirmation that God counts us as His beloved children.

✧ Paul compares it to a human father correcting his children out of love, they do it as seems right to them, but God has a much higher purpose that will work out for our good, **that we may be partakers of His holiness.** [Hebrews 12:10]

✧ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the **peaceable fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it. [Hebrews 12:11]

### Exhortation to Steadfast Endurance and strengthening others [Hebrews 12:12-17]

✧ The right understanding of life's trials and God's hand in it all, serves as encouragement to strengthen each of us, and helps us to strengthen others by way of confirmation, with the goal of their healing.

✧ Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

✧ God's purpose is to develop strength of character in His people resulting in holiness.

✧ The importance of holiness is that without it no one will see the Lord.

✧ Great is the danger of falling short of the grace God has extended toward us.

✧ We must constantly be on guard against falling.

✧ Our defilement is brought about by bitterness, human lusts such as fornication, and even the value we place on things God has given us, and like Esau who sold his birthright, we may profane our selves by our own natural desires.

✧ Esau is an example to us in that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

✧ Remember we were already warned of the danger of irreverent disrespect toward holy things, because we can come to the point where we are unable to repent as required for Salvation. [Hebrews 6:4-6]

### Old Covenant [Hebrews 12:18-21]

✧ For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 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. (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." And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

- ✧ This is a reference to the giving of the Law by God as He appeared and spoke audibly to the Children of Israel at Mount Horeb (Sinai). [\[Exodus 19:16 through 20:22\]](#)
- ✧ God continued to give the Moral Law to Moses speaking to him from Heaven in the hearing of the Children of Israel before He called Moses up on the mountain for 40 days. [\[Exodus 20:22 through 23:32\]](#)
- ✧ Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel were called up on the mountain where they saw the God of Israel before Moses was called on up to God for 40 days. [\[Exodus 24:1-11\]](#)
- ✧ Despite the fear experienced when God gave the Moral Law to Israel audibly from the mountain with such a fearful appearance of His presence, the Children of Israel were not able to continue faithfully in obedience.

#### New Covenant [\[Hebrews 12:22-24\]](#)

- ✧ But you have come to **Mount Zion** and to the **city of the living God**, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, to an **innumerable company of angels**, 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**, to **Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant**, and to the **blood of sprinkling** that speaks better things than that of Abel.
- ✧ The New Covenant introduces us to a much greater place with God Most High, with much greater need for respectful Reverence.

#### Choose Well – Consequence is great [\[Hebrews 12:25-27\]](#)

- ✧ It comes with a warning against refusal of God Who speaks to us through the Gospel message.
- ✧ 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** whose voice then shook the earth.
- ✧ The mountain quaked greatly at the presence of God. [\[Exodus 19:18\]](#)
- ✧ But now He has promised, saying,  
"Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."
- ✧ 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. [\[Hebrews 12:27\]](#)

#### Need of Reverence and Godly Fear [\[Hebrews 12:28-29\]](#)

- ✧ 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**.
- ✧ God requires reverence and godly fear from His people, which is appropriate since He is the final Judge and is the One who pronounces our fate, either welcoming us to the Kingdom of Heaven, or casting us into the Eternal Lake of Fire. [\[Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-14\]](#)
- ✧ For our God is a consuming fire. [\[Hebrews 12:29\]](#)
- ✧ We must not treat the Grace of God given to us in Christ Jesus with disrespect, trampling the Son of God underfoot, counting the blood of the covenant by which we are sanctified a common thing, and insulting the Spirit of grace. [\[Hebrews 10:9\]](#)
- ✧ God will not tolerate such an arrogantly presumptuous attitude on our part.