

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

"For every look at self
take ten looks at
Christ"
- Robert Murray
McCheyne

1. What areas of your life reveal that you are running back to Sinai –as opposed to running to Christ? Are you looking to law-keeping or your own merit as a basis for acceptance before a holy God?

"Lord, stamp
eternity on my
eyeballs."
- Jonathan
Edwards

2. Which mountain are you running towards as you reflect on and evaluate your life? What does a person's life look like that is running towards Mt Sinai?

3. If you are a Christian, "You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (v.22). Do you trust and believe that Jesus Christ has credited to you His righteousness and holiness by His grace? Do you trust and believe that the thunder of the law has been hushed because Jesus has satisfied it? How have these truths changed the way you are living now?

4. Read Hebrews 12:28 again. How might this passage change the way that you worship?

6. What habits or patterns of life do you need to repent of that reflect a reliance upon self and not on God? What will God do once more (12:26)? What implications does this have upon how we live here and now? If Christ was coming tomorrow to "shake the earth," what would you change about the way you are living right now?

"Christian, eternally
justified in Christ
alone, you are no less
saved on your worst
day and no more
saved on your best."
- Jared C. Wilson

"Pastoral discipleship from the pulpit for you through the week.
Each of our pastors has designed content with you in mind."

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

If you want to connect with our family ministries, contact Pastor Ken (kenc@fpcrome.org)

1. These verses compare the two mountains that represent the old and new covenants. These two mountains are Sinai and Zion.
 - a. Ask your children what they know about mountains. If your family has gone hiking or visited mountains, then ask them about their experiences. What did they like and dislike?
2. Ask your children to tell you how Mt. Sinai is described in verses 18-21. Talk about how Mt. Sinai is described as "what may be touched" meaning that it has been created and will not last for eternity. Also talk about the images of fear, gloom, and danger.
 - a. If you have older children, then ask them why Mt. Sinai would be described as that which is frightening. Or if they are younger then talk with them about one of the primary reasons God gave the old covenant was to point us to our sin and need for a Savior. The author is trying to remind us to not look to following Commandments or the Law as our source of salvation.
3. Ask your children to tell you how Mt. Zion is described in verses 22-24. Make sure to talk how it is described in joyful and heavenly terms and is centered on Jesus as the mediator. The "assembly of the firstborn" is imagery for believers as those will inherit the new heavens and new earth based on Jesus' blood shed for our sins.
4. Read verse 28 and ask your children what it means that we as Christians receive "a kingdom that cannot be shaken". You will want to talk with them about how the Kingdom of God is eternal and therefore cannot be shaken or destroyed.
 - a. Ask your children what reaction is given in verse 28 that should be given by us as Christians. The answer is to worship God.
 - b. Then ask them how this verse describes our worship as described in this verse. Ask them if they know what "reverence and awe" mean.
5. Ask your children how these verses encourage us to not give up or grow tired as we live our Christian lives. You will want to talk about how our hope as Christians is based on Jesus' victory and how God promises us an eternity with Him that has no more sin and struggles.

Scriptures for further study:

Exodus 19 to study more on Mt. Sinai

Revelation 21-22 to study more on Mt. Zion.

Big Idea

As fellow pilgrims in the great marathon, we must not veer off course toward Sinai, because Jesus has met Sinai's great demands for holiness and perfection at Calvary atop Mount Zion.[1]

Outline

1. Mount Sinai (18-21)

2. Mount Zion (22- 24)

3. Applications (25-29)

Gospel Applications

1. Run to the Mountain of Grace in Christ (v.25)
2. Gratitude and Worship (v.28)

[1] R. Kent Hughes, Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2015).

"God the Father's Loving Training"

Hebrews 12:18-29 ESV

18 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest **19** and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. **20** For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." **21** Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." **22** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, **23** and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, **24** and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. **25** See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. **26** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." **27** This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken--that is, things that have been made--in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. **28** Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

Historical Context

"The paragraph is situated in a context where the readers are exhorted to hold fast and not to fall away (10:19–31). They will hold fast if they believe and run the race to the end as OT saints and Jesus did (11:1–12:3). They are called upon to endure the fatherly discipline they are receiving (12:4–13) and to continue in holiness and godliness so they see God and receive the final reward (12:14–17). Verses 18–24 emphasize why they must continue to persevere in holiness. Hence these verses themselves do not constitute an exhortation. Instead this section "summarizes the main points and themes throughout the theological sections of the epistle," such as, "angels," "heaven," "first-born," "perfection," "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" and "sprinkled blood." The fundamental reason the believers should endure is that they have not come to Mount Sinai (12:18–21) but to Mount Zion (12:22–24). Mount Sinai was terrifying because of God's awesome and holy presence, and those who transgressed the boundaries were threatened with God's judgment. In other words, free access to God was denied. Mount Zion, however, is the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where the church of Jesus Christ is already gathered in heaven. The believers must continue until the end because they have come to something better than Mount Sinai; they have come to Jesus who is the mediator of a new and better covenant, to the mountain where they reside in God's presence because their sins are forgiven."

FOR STUDENTS

If you want to connect with our student ministries, contact Pastor Jimmy (jimmyl@fpcrome.org)

1. Do you sometimes live the Christian life as if you are under the old covenant? How does this passage change your outlook?
2. What excites or encourages you about the heavenly Jerusalem? How does knowing about the new creation help you better run the race?
3. How might a passage like this change the way you worship?
4. The seven points the author lists in 12:18-19 describe the scene of the giving of the Law to the Israelites (Ex 19-20). Read Exodus 19-20. Should we fear God? Might it be said that there are two kinds of fear: Fear out of awe and respect; and fear from danger? Which occurs in Exodus 19-20? Which kind should we have?
5. Look up Abel in the concordance in the back of your Bible. What is significant about "the blood of Abel"? How does Jesus' blood "speak a better word"? What is the effect of this "better word" on our lives?

**Select questions borrowed and adapted from Hebrews for You by Michael J. Kruger and Hebrews: How Jesus Speaks into Everything by John D. Barry*

Scriptures for further study:

Exodus 19-20

Haggai 2:6

Ephesians 5:20

Colossians 3:15-16

Romans 1:21

- Thomas R. Schreiner, Hebrews, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 395–396.

Scriptures for further study:

Exodus 19-20

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

Scriptures for further study:

Revelation 21

Revelation 22

1. The writer takes us from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion, which is one way of depicting the movement from being under the old covenant (Law) to experiencing the new covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. But let it also serve as a picture for us of what it is like to move from unsaved to saved, from fear of God to loving and close relationship with him.

2. This passage hints at the ways in which we enter right relationship with God: by being born again (v.23), by being made righteous and perfect (v.23) through the blood of Jesus (v.24), and by having your name written in heaven (v.23). (See also Luke 10:20 and Revelation 21:27.)

3. Our passage gives us a beautiful picture of what heaven will be like. It will be a festal gathering of people, angels, and the Lord God himself. Read more about this in other passages like Revelation 21 and 22. Trust me, you don't want to miss these coming attractions! (For further reading, I suggest Randy Alcorn's book simply entitled Heaven.) s.

4. There is nothing in this world and in this life that is permanent. The writer describes everything as being shakable (vv.26-27). Therefore, do not put your trust in the unstable things of this world. Rather, the writer tells us that the one sure and unshakeable thing is becoming a believer in Jesus Christ and having the absolute stability of knowing you are forever a part of his eternal kingdom (v.28).

5. The passage ends (v.28) with an exhortation to be thankful and to worship God. This is the right and most important response to God for all he has done for us in Jesus Christ. And gratefully worshipping him is not only something we will do throughout our lives here on earth, but forever and ever. And though we no longer need to fear God, we should note that our worship of God should still (and always) be characterized by an attitude of reverence and awe!

Like Christina. But even more so...we need something to fix our gaze upon...we need a home to pull us forward...and according to Hebrews, that is Jesus Christ...like the home on the hill in the painting, Jesus is the pinnacle of God's plan of redemption...so considering this painting and background, here these words afresh from Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so, church, let's begin this journey in Hebrews together...which is not disconnected from our humanity and our struggles...for we to live in Christina's world...a world of suffering, pain, and hardship...but we are in a relationship with the savior, Jesus, who has overcome the world...and because of His supremacy, calls us to fix our eyes on Him in order that we might persevere in faith. -Tremper Longman, EBC, 23-25

About the artwork

Andrew Wyeth is perhaps the most famous American artist of the 20th century. He, along with John Singer Sargent, are the only two American artists invited into the Academy of Fine Art in Paris, France. President Kennedy awarded Wyeth the presidential medal of freedom, the only visual artist to receive such an award. He was also awarded presidential medals from George H Bush and George W Bush.

His art is connected to his humanity. He was a man that experienced loss and grief in this broken and fallen world and often expressed his pain in visual form through art.

His most famous work, and the one that best expresses his struggle with pain and grief, is a painting called Christina's World (1948). Christina is a friend of Wyeth and had a disease that left her unable to walk. Instead of choosing a wheelchair, she preferred to crawl using her arms. The painting is a picture of her struggle...but it is also a picture of her hope...in the painting her hands are gripped to the ground portraying her daily suffering, yet her body is leaning towards the farmhouse, which was her home. Life was a struggle, but her gaze and hope were on her home, which kept her moving forward and not giving up.

The book of Hebrews has a very similar theme...the writer expresses the hope and gaze of home in the person and work of Jesus Christ...the struggle to give up or turn back was very real for the audience...most scholars believe the original audience was Jewish Christians who were facing persecution...it would have been a struggle for them to keep moving forward in the profession of Jesus Christ because with that profession came pain and hardship.

ADDITIONAL NOTES



What is Pulpit Driven Discipleship?

Discipleship from the pulpit to communities therein pressed into the head, heart and hands of image bearers of God every day.

Pulpit Driven Discipleship is the name of a process of discipleship. Discipleship begins on Sunday with the sermon faithfully preached by our pastors then the message of sermon is digested and pressed into the heart throughout the week through prayer reflection and discussion in the home or in smaller discussion groups. It is in this context that life transformation and growth occur.

The pastoral leadership team and the Adult Discipleship Ministry Team are excited to walk together through the Book of Hebrews. Please prayerfully consider incorporating PDD as your primary means of discipleship. We believe that PDD is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and groups of all kinds. This great resource can be found in the bulletin on Sunday, and will be available on-line and via email each week.

Director of Adult Discipleship Rob Davis welcomes discussion, questions, and comments of all kinds. Rob Davis 706-252-5216, RobD@fpcrome.org

PULPIT DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP



Andrew Wyeth, Christina's World, 1948 ;

Perseverance by Promise ***A Study of the Sermon to the Hebrews***

June 12, 2022
Hebrews 12:18-29 ESV