

SERIES: **Better- Hope from the book of Hebrews**

Q: (picture this) What words would you have for a long-distance runner if you knew that your words had the potential to make all the difference for them in the race?

If we thought about it long enough, my bet is that most of us would have some combination in our speech of a **warning** and an **encouragement**. Here's what I would say:

"My friend, the journey ahead will be difficult. Very soon the thrill of the race will fade away and all that will be left... will be to run. You will be tempted to take shortcuts. Don't. You will be tempted to quit. Don't. You will be filled with doubt and begin to question why you run. And when that happens, remember the finish line. Many will not make it, not because they couldn't, but because they quit before they finished. As for you, expect to grow tired, so that when fatigue sets in, it does not take you by surprise. When exhaustion and weakness shout and demand for your attention, disregard their cries and keep your eyes on the prize."

This is exactly what the writer of the book of Hebrews is doing. These Christians were weary and in need of a stern warning, and an uplifting encouragement.

Meet me in: **Hebrews 10:26-39**

TITLE: **Don't Draw Back, Draw Near**

(That title is really the main emphasis of the sermon today)

OUTLINE:

- **The Truly Troubling Warning (V26-31)**
- **The Tremendously Thrilling Encouragement (V32-39)**
- **Some Questions to Consider**

Hebrews 10:26-31 For if we deliberately go on sinning 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 about to consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses died without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, who has regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know the one who has said, **Vengeance belongs to me; 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.**

Here's what I find to be troubling on top of an already troubling warning passage: **that it was written to the church.**

This warning is directed towards those who sit in churches...by implication, to us!

In fact, all the warnings in Hebrews so far have been to Christians!

Hebrews 2:1 Pay Attention to the gospel so that you won't drift away

Hebrews 3:12 Watch Out that there won't be an unbelieving heart in you

Hebrews 6:4-6 Don't Fall Away because of stunted growth

Hebrews 10:26-31 Don't sin deliberately and in so doing turn away from Jesus' grace

Even the warnings still left in the book are to who? Believers

How do we reconcile **10:26-27** with **10:18** (read)????

What it cannot mean: Sin disqualifies you from Grace

The context not only of the whole book, but of the whole Bible is that Grace is for sinners!
That's actually a requirement!

It cannot mean that Jesus' sacrifice doesn't cover the sins of a repentant heart;

What then does it mean? There is no available forgiveness where there is no repentance

In other words, a heart unbothered by sin is calloused towards the grace it so desperately needs

Deliberately go on sinning?

We all sin! We sinned before coming here, we've likely sinned while being here and we will most certainly sin after we leave! And can we be honest?....sometimes it's on purpose!

It's not falling into sin that you *hate*; that you *regret*; that you are *weak* towards;
that's a clear sign this warning isn't to you if you're actively wrestling sin.

It's speaking about intentionally moving towards sin and embracing that over embracing Christ.

**There's a difference between wanting grace to free you from sin
and wanting grace to excuse you of sin**

And the difference between those 2 is life and death! Look at the warning:

V26- **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**

V27- **terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire**

V28-29- If God punished people who knew the Law but rejected it (and that was only a picture of what was to come) how much worse is it to know the grace of Jesus and reject that!

- **trample the Son of God- rejecting the identity of Jesus the Christ**
Jesus and the Father are one= Jesus is God (**John 14:10-11**)
- **regarded as profane the blood of the covenant- to not believe that the sacrifice of Jesus is all that is necessary for our purification from sins**
It's treating the sacrifice of Jesus as not enough (profane = ordinary)
- **insulting the Spirit of grace- attempted to exploit grace** (as if loophole)
blasphemy of the Spirit, rejecting the convicting voice of the Spirit of God

If you won't accept the only remedy, the only solution to cure you of your sin and the curse on you because of it, then- (v26) **"there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins"**

If we reject Jesus, the only thing left for us is Judgment

to deliberately reject God's savior is to embrace God's severity

You have to understand that our natural state is as enemies of God (**Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21-22**)
and the only thing that can shake God's target off our back is repentance and surrender to Jesus!

V31 **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

Hell will be full of people who clearly understood the gospel but defiantly refused to submit to it

2 Peter 2:20-21 For if, having escaped the world's impurity through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in these things and defeated, the last state is worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy command delivered to them.

So that's the warning: ***Don't Draw back, away from Jesus and His grace;***
but in the book, every warning comes with an encouragement-

³² Remember the earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings.

³³ Sometimes you were publicly exposed to taunts and afflictions, and at other times you were companions of those who were treated that way. ³⁴ For you sympathized with the prisoners and accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions, because you know that you yourselves have a better and enduring possession.

³⁵ So don't throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

³⁶ For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised.

³⁷ For yet in a **very little while, the Coming One will come and not delay.**

³⁸ **But my righteous one will live by faith; and if he draws back, I have no pleasure in him.**

³⁹ But we are not those who draw back and are destroyed, but those who have faith and are saved.

(V32) Remember the earlier days... you endured a hard struggle with sufferings.

Sometimes Mel and I think about life when we first got married-

her cooking is amazing now but it was deadly then! (Chicken dinner)

those memories propel us now, especially on tough days.

(V33-34) Today may be difficult, but the journey has always been tough....impossible even would it not be for the grace of Jesus Christ that pushed us forward

Becoming a Christian doesn't mean suffering less; it means suffering better

Lessons from these Christian on suffering-

- **A willingness to endure suffering** (don't be surprised when it comes)
Losses are opportunities to see where your hearts really at, how well you've matured in Christ
- **Loving on other sufferers** (look outside of yourself)
Comforting others with the comfort we have received ourselves is life-giving to both
- **Joyfully facing suffering** (remember the reward outweighs the pain)
An eternal perspective keeps all obstacles and afflictions in their proper perspective.

(V35-36) If I asked you "describe the Christian life in one word" you might say: Love; Surrender; Holiness... but chances are most of you would not say "**Endurance**".

Yet repeatedly in every warning so far in the book, the message is the same- *make it to the end!*

Christians aren't sprinters, we're long-distance endurance runners. "...**you need endurance...**"

Undoubtedly as with any long race, times of doubt and weariness will come. (It's actually why this book was written) What is the motivator to keep going in the long-haul?

The reward. Keeping a heart on the reward.

This is why for the Christian loss, pain, trouble can be so fruitful, it reminds us to look ahead with our hearts set on pilgrimage (Psalm 84) as we long for our reward.

How often do you ponder on our heavenly reward?

What's the reward?

Revelation 21:3-5 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. ⁵Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."...

Look back and remember how far the Lord has brought you (V32)
while **looking forward** to what God is bringing you to (V36)

MAIN POINT- Don't Draw Back- Draw Near!

(V38-39) We live by faith. **We're not just saved by faith, we live by faith.**

By faith consider the warning to never set Jesus aside;

By faith consider the encouragement to endure.

From my heart, let me warn and encourage you today:

"My friend, the journey ahead will be difficult.

Very soon the thrill of the race will fade away and all that will be left... will be to run.

You will be tempted to take shortcuts. Don't.

You will be tempted to quit. Don't.

You will be filled with doubt and begin to question why you run.

And when that happens, remember the finish line.

Many will not make it, not because they couldn't, but because they quit before they finished.

As for you, expect to grow tired, so that when fatigue sets in, it does not take you by surprise.

When exhaustion and weakness shout and demand for your attention, disregard their cries and keep your eyes on the prize."

Some Questions to Consider:

Q: How would your life be different if what motivated you was not only fear of judgment but the joy of heaven?

Q: What if running better didn't mean finding your strengths, but surrendering to God your weaknesses?

Q: Have you truly embraced the salvation Jesus secured for you with His own life?

*****CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM & PRAY

BULPEN-

V26-27 The Warning: Don't exploit grace

V28-29 The severity of the warning

V30-31 The beautifully terrifying side of God

V32-35 The 1st Encouragement: Keep Confident

V36-39 The 2nd Encouragement: It's worth enduring

Apostacy- the abandonment and renunciation of the beliefs one once held

V29 here is an enigma-

One can be secure eternally in their salvation as evidenced by sanctification

One can be sanctified in some sense and then profane the blood of Christ

I have a sign in my office that reads: "Don't quit before you finish"

V39 ends this section with strong hope and faith

Is this warning for Christians?

Some would say no, others would argue yes. Here's what we can all agree on- this warning is for those who would hear it in the church gathering

Isaiah 26:9-22 I long for you in the night; yes, my spirit within me diligently seeks you,
for when your judgments are in the land, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

¹⁰ But if the wicked man is shown favor, he does not learn righteousness.

In a righteous land he acts unjustly and does not see the majesty of the Lord.

¹¹ Lord, your hand is lifted up to take action, but they do not see it.

Let them see your zeal for your people and be put to shame. Let fire consume your adversaries.

Numbers 15:27-31 "If one person sins unintentionally, he is to present a year-old female goat as a sin offering. ²⁸ The priest will then make atonement before the Lord on behalf of the person who acts in error sinning unintentionally, and when he makes atonement for him, he will be forgiven. ²⁹ You are to have the same law for the person who acts in error, whether he is an Israelite or an alien who resides among you.

³⁰ "But the person who acts defiantly, whether native or resident alien, blasphemes the Lord. That person is to be cut off from his people. ³¹ He will certainly be cut off, because he has despised the Lord's word and broken his command; his guilt remains on him."

Romans 6:1

If grace is nothing more than a free-to-sin pass, you have not only attempted to exploit Jesus, but you have also brought judgment on yourself

The warning passages are written to....Christians- or at least, professing Christians

There is a terrifying warning:

What is the threat?

Terrifying expectation of judgment

Fury of a fire

Vengeance from the Living God

Who is it for?

As best as I can see, there is a contrast in our verses:

V26-31 are those who have received the gospel of grace and at some point decided it was garbage to trust God (v29)

V32-39 are those who have received the gospel of grace and although it has been difficult, they keep trusting God

Adversaries- its not so much that rejecting Jesus makes you an enemy of God; rather, we were already by our sin nature enemies of God! Repentance towards Jesus is the only thing that can take that label off of us

Romans 5:10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.

Colossians 1:21-22 Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions. ²² But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him