

OPEN

Today we're having our final look at Hebrews 12.

⇒ Everything written in this chapter is aimed at changing your life.

In fact the message of the whole book of Hebrews says:

- Strip off the weights and sins and run the right way
- Pursue peace and holiness
- Fix your eyes on Jesus

And so we come to the last section of Hebrews 12 which is verse 18-29

We're presented with these 2 contrasting mountains – Mount Sinai and Mount Zion

- One which sounds quite appealing and one which doesn't
- This passage juxtaposes the reality of the cross with the OT reality of Mount Sinai

Let's read

¹⁸ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

This is a picture of OT worship. Mount Sinai is actually referring a few verses back to Esau who was flippant and sold his birth right for a meal. The point being that when he realized what he had done and tried to buy it back, there was no means to do this.

And so perhaps Mount Sinai is like Jacobs Stew that Esau gave up his birth right for, while mount Zion is like Esau's birth right

What do I mean? Mount Sinai was seen, heard and smelt, and felt. Where the birth right had far reaching blessings but it was unseen. Mount Zion is the mountain that we worship on and the mountain to come.

Can you see how far we've come? The OT experience of worship was one of fearful and divine holiness without a mediator.

- **No one could doubt** the presence of God during this time
- **The mountain was so Holy**, that it couldn't be touched. You could see this mountain, you could hear it, you could smell it. But yet God was so unapproachable by sinful man that not even animals could touch it.

There's something about spectacular that draws us in.

- ⊙ **Revenge of the mummy 0-60kph in 2 seconds with a 1.7 G pull. Some loops and pull backs that exceed 4G's. S space shuttle launch is around 3 G's.**
- ⊙ **I'm standing in the queue edging closer and all I can think about is finding the exit**

Mount Sinai was spectacular. But it was a mountain where there was no direct access to God because of sin. Sin was and is the problem. God couldn't not tolerate sin.

- ⊙ **Think of COVID-19 regulations.** Why do we follow stringent protocol? Because any exposure can lead to an infection. Any exposure to God would have led to death. It was for our own good.

It was this awe and fear that inspired the Israelites to follow the commandments. The law was the only way that people would live without being condemned. There was such a need for a saviour

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And so we come to the second mountain, the mountain that we worship on today.

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

- ⇒ **Now as Christians,** we don't have to go to an earthly mountain to meet with God right. **Imagine we had to climb Chapmans Peak** every time we wanted to worship God. It's not Geographical. It's a heavenly gathering with a great cloud of witnesses.
- ⇒ **Most importantly,** we have a MEDIATOR in Jesus. Through Christ we have direct access to the father.
- ⊙ **Insurance mediator** – we recently needed to make an insurance claim for our car.
 - We happen to go through a broker, and can I tell you how effortless the whole process was having a broker.
 - Speaking to the same person every time.
 - Being told that they would push for the highest payout.
- ⇒ **We know our mediator, we have relationship with him, and we have received the greatest payout, direct access, an awesome inheritance.**

What's interesting is that the voice on mount Sinai wasn't tolerable. The people begged it to stop, whilst Jesus' voice to us is one which says: I love you, I forgive you, I purchase you, I cleanse you, I protect you, I keep you, I will always be there for you.

Don't get me wrong, God the father isn't the bad one here, before Christ, Mount Sinai was the only way to have relationship with God.

- **Our motivation is not one of fear,** it's one of grace and forgiveness. It's a sweet mountain to be on

Verses 25-27

²⁵ See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

Here we see a warning

In other words, even though we're not called to fear, it's important that we know what a fearful thing it is to reject Christ's love and sacrifice for us.

☉ **If you've had a near death experience**, you'll know the fear and respect that comes from realising the fragility of our human body. There's a healthy fear that shakes us back into reality. Reverence (Deep respect) points us back to Jesus.

☉ **It's a fear intended to shake us back to love and commitment.**

Then we see the promise

²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."^[c] ²⁷ The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

One day everything that is unstable - anything that makes us feel insecure - will be removed. And all that will be left will be the rock-solid unshakable kingdom of God.
If anything, COVID-19 should serve as a reminder of how temporary and unstable this life is.

Life is:

- Fragile against disease, against weather
- Fragile against violence, against our own emotions,
- Fragile against economic collapse, Life is very fragile. '

But God promises that all that shakes will be removed and the great unshakable kingdom of God will remain.

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And so we come to the last 2 verses:

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our "God is a consuming fire."

Huh? We're on mount Zion, but we're back to the reverence and awe part?

How do we worship God acceptably?

Well bring in John 4: 23-24 – Jesus is sitting at a well chatting with a Samaritan women, and she asks him, which mountain do you worship on? And he says this (MSG)

²³⁻²⁴ "It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration." (MSG)

⇒ Sometimes we can be so convinced about our mountain, our style or way of doing things in worship, When Jesus is saying: Hey guys, it's about the heart.

Worship should flow out of our hearts. In fact from the overflow of our hearts.

- How often is your heart overflowing in worship?
- Well ask yourself, what is it that you're placing value on?

⊙ **KITCHEN SCALE** – Many things in life are worth their weight right?

Take rice, or oats, maybe take a something of more perceived value, a car, a phone, a relationship.

Our scale can only take on so much, we can only place so much value on certain things, until our limit is reached, we become preoccupied, and start thinking about what we value. The problem is that when it comes to worship, if our scale is full, we have no weight to place value on God, because we're occupied.

⇒ What ingredients do we need to remove off of our scale to place weight and value on God?

- **Worship comes from the flow of our hearts.**
It's the Holy Spirit that empowers us to worship.
Styled by God's words and saturated by Christ

At the same time, worship should incorporate reverence and awe.

Why? because the more valuable something is the more respect we place on it.

Think of a new phone? You're protective over it. When our worship is weighty and of value, we honour God.

Younger generations today tend to struggle with the concept of fear and awe in worship.

Can I say this, particularly to the Millennials and Gen Z's.

Don't lose an AWE for God in worship. Seek out what it means to bring acceptable worship, pleasing worship to God.

- You can say that you're being sincere in your worship, but you can be sincerely wrong.

So what are some simple ways to worship God acceptably? These aren't all the most popular things to do.

- 1) **Prepare your heart for worship.** Just like you would prepare for a meeting, or a conversation, or a date. Prepare your heart
- 2) **Express your worship** – A heartfelt response is one that expresses adoration to God
- 3) **Be authentic in your worship.** Search for the real and search for truth
- 4) **Confess your sin to God**

James 1:21, NIV: "Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you."

Getting rid of sin must come before we can receive God's word. Now do we always know what we're guilty of, sometimes, but we need to ask the HS to reveal this to us.

5) Focus on God-Centered prayers

CLOSE

When the argument becomes about stylistic preferences, we've missed the point. What is important is that we place value on Him. They we worship authentically.

So is worship what we do on Sundays? or is it a daily lifestyle that we live? We'll it's both. And it matter how we respond.

So I end with this question:

How weighty is your worship? How shared is your worship?

Is it shared with material objects, investments, medical help, a relationship? Stylistic preferences?

- ⇒ **Pleasing worship to God,** isn't about consuming worship, or culture, it's about engaging our spirit in the pursuit of Truth. When we worship out of our very being!
- ⇒ **When we place value on Christ, we place value on what he did for us:** "I will forgive you, I will cleanse you. I will accept you. I protect you. I keep you. I will give you an unshakable home. And I will always be there for you.
- ⇒ **The weightier your worship, the firmer your identity.**
How weighty will your worship to God be today?