

Hebrews (May 2, 2021)

OPENING QUESTION:

SERMON DISCUSSION: How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

READ Hebrews 12:14-17

1. The author in Hebrews 12:1-2, urges believers to “run with endurance the race that is set before us. Looking to Jesus...” What aims are given in Hebrews 12:14 to support believers in their pursuit of the race? With what relationships do these aims involve?

2. “Within the community of faith, there is to be no separation of peace and holiness. If ‘peace’ binds the community together as the achievement of Christ, ‘holiness’ is that quality which identifies the community as the possession of Christ.”

(47B Word Biblical Commentary p. 450 by William L. Lane)

Share your interpretation of the above quote. In what ways do you see the linkage between “peace” and “holiness” in the Hebrews 12:14 exhortation?

3. Hebrews 12:14 shows that we are to strive for peace with everyone. How do the following scriptures reveal believers’ called contribution to peace?

Psalms 34:14

Mark 9:50

Romans 12:16-18

2 Corinthians 13:11

4. What do the following scriptures disclose about holiness (also righteousness)?

Hebrews 12:14

2 Corinthians 5:21

Philippians 3:9

1 Peter 1:15

1 John 3:2

5. “Christian vigilance is the proper response to a peril that poses an imminent threat to the entire community. The danger is first envisioned as the forfeiture of the grace of God through carelessness.” (47B Word Biblical Commentary p. 452 by William L. Lane)

The Hebrew author’s concern for the spiritual health of the believers’ community is evident in the charge to “see to it that...” in Hebrews (12:15-17). For what should they be vigilant about? How would carelessness regarding these things impact the individual and the community?

6. What is the “root of bitterness” and what is its power according to Deuteronomy 29:18 and Hebrews 12:15?

7. Note about Hebrews 12:16

There is scholarly debate as to whether this verse implies that Esau was sexually immoral because there is no direct Old Testament evidence. However, it has been reasoned by many scholars that “Esau’s act in taking two foreign women as wives, who ‘made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah,’ must have been regarded by his parents as immoral and tantamount of the commission of fornication (Gen. 26:34; 27:46). Certainly, the tradition current among the Jews depicted Esau as a man of sensuous passions, and this would have been well known to the Hebrew recipients of this epistle.”

(A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews p. 540 by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes)

Read Hebrews 12:16-17; Genesis 25:29-34, 28:6-9; 2 Corinthians 7:10. What did Esau value and what did he disregard? Why was his attempt to repent rejected?

8. From this passage what has challenged you the most and/or motivated you into action?