

Title: THE PROMISE OF HEAVENLY REWARD

TEXT: Hebrews 10:32-39 (10:32-39)

Would you take your Bibles, please, and turn to Hebrews chapter 10. There are notes in your bulletin; and a trust you will use them. They have been prepared so that you might understand the message of these verses of scripture. Our subject this morning is the promise of Heavenly Reward." Last week we deal with those verse which warn of the judgment of God upon those who reject Jesus Christ as the final and complete sacrifice for sin. Jesus said I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes unto the Father except by me." And God warns those who reject this message of salvation. And he says if you reject Jesus Christ you will face " a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries."

This is very serious; and oh, how we need to seek God's forgiveness and ask him to be our saviour. To come into our life. His promise is that if we confess our sins he will for give our sins and cleas us from all unrighteousness.

But, follwing this warning, Paul goes on to teach the promise of heavenly rewards to those who respond tto the call of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 10: 32-39. Our ~~study~~ will center around ~~verses 35-39~~. ~~Be~~ Follow along as I read. I am reading from the New American Standard translation.

Read 10:32-39

Shall we pray

Father we pray that in these moments together you would challage our hearts to the message of your Word. Father we pray that you would show us the great reward that is awaiting the believe in heaven. That all the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be comparted to the blessings of eternal life. We know that you tell us that the outward man is perishing, daily, but the inward man is being renewed by the spirit. Bless our study together. We ask this in the preious name of Jesus. Amen

I Remember Our Former Days

In Verses 22-34, we begin with a passage that ask us to remember our former days. You might not be able to identify with the Jews in this passage. But, you can in one sense. And that is to remember some of the testing that goes on in the life of a believer when they are growing spiritual with the Lord. As a matter of fact, some of you willn't have to remember because you are going through it right now. And you will identify immideiately..

I Remember Our Former Days

But in reference to our remembrance, what is it that we are to remember about our formaer days. There are four things from ~~this passage~~ verses 32-34 that I would like you to notice.

(1) First of all, we are told to remember the start of our ^{suffering} tribulations. When did they start? According to Vs 32 we read: "But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings."

The little phrase "after being enlightened," The same thing is said in chapter 6:4: "For in the case of those who have once been enlightened,"... It is refering to CONVERSION. The start of suffering is at conversion...

So often in telling a new convert that you want them to receive Christ, you tell this this person that if you only receive Christ you will have love - joy - peace - confort - all of these thing simple by accepting christ. Now, if he accept Christ and he finds himself in suffering and testing then he develop a creditablility problem...

You said that if he received Christ he would have love - peace - joy - etc...N_ow, all those things are part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. But, they don't automatical come...As a matter of fact, the Bible teaches that it is through suffering that you and I mature and grow... The very thing that we don't want to happen in our lives, is the things that God want there...The start of all suffering begins the moment you accept Christ..

Jesus often talked about counting the cost...before a man would build a tower. Count the cost to see if you have what it takes . Also, he said to count the cost before going into battle to see if the odds are against you..And he was telling his disciples that it wasn't going to be an easy road..Christ in all of his instructions to his followers - never once said that it would be an easy road.

And I hope we never ~~create the believe~~ ^{Teach} that Christianity is an easy road. For THERE IS TESTING --THERE IS SUFFERING -- THERE IS TRAILS....BUT THAT IS PART OF GOD'S PLAN TO BUILD US INTO THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT CAN REALLY BE EFFECTIVE...

Now, those christians who get wiped out by that testing get bitter, hostile, and all those attitudes of the flesh and they miss an opportunity of a life time...THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE OUR LIVES BUILT THE WAY ~~WANT~~ GOD REALLY WANTS. ~~TRIED TO GET~~.

It is interesting to read in James chapter 1 verse 2-5, that suffering is God's method of bringing the believer to maturity...It says to "let endurance have its perfect result that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing." God's method in bringing us to a place of maturity that we can be used in the lives of other people is based upon suffering. And as Vs 32 says: "We are to endure a great conflict of sufferings." Paul wrote in Romans 5:3: "we exult in tribulations; knowing that ~~the~~ tribulations brings about endurance; and endurance, character, and character, hope; and hope does not disappoint. Hope, not only of the second coming, but hope in what God is doing in my life, NOW. THAT THERE IS A POINT TO THE PRESSURE AND TRIALS THAT I AM RECEIVING...

God's method of bringing each of us to maturity is testing and trials..That is his method. And we are to endure - to remain up under it..And that endurance, itself, is building the maturity of our lives..

(2) The second thing that I want you to know about their remembrance, in vs 33, is the public spectacle these people became. The public spectacle they became.

This verse is quite interesting, in the original language. Notice, the little word "partly." It appears twice. Partly, you are made a public spectacle; and partly you became sharers or companions.. Now, what is the Bible talking about in this passage?

I believe that this passage clearly reveals that the people to whom this book was written did not live in Palestine but they were in Rome. They were Jewish Christians in Rome. And this little phrase "the public spectacle" is referring to the ARENA. The arena where many christians were thrown and torn to pieces by lions and wild dogs.. The passage says "you were made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations."

"Reproaches" is simply the idea of shame and disgrace. The Romans delighted in bringing shame and disgrace upon christians as followers of Christ.

omit

omit

The "tribulations" or "afflictions" can refer to all kinds of afflictions - whether, emotional, mental, or physical, or what ever. But, basical it was a continual pressure on them. And it was in open display before all the people. That is the unbelieving world. That is the meaning of public spectacle... Everybody was watching.

Well, where were they watching when the Christians were being persecuted .. ANSWER: IT WAS IN THE ARENA...It was in the arena (in Rome) where hundreds and hundreds of Christians died for their faith...

It is said of Nero that he used to light his gardens, where he had his orgies, with flaming torches of live christians....He was a wicked evil man.

But, how thrilling to realize that in spite of all of that, God was working his purpose. Paul wrote in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 22: "All the saints greet you, especially those of Caser's household." History records that Nero put to death his wife - his mother in law - and several relatives. WHY? BECAUSE THEY HAD BECOME CHRISTIANS...And when I think of this I am reminded of ~~Phil~~ Phil: 4:22: "All the saints greet you, especially those of Casers' household." There were Christians in Nero's own family because Christians were having a testimony - in spite off - terrible persecution. Praise the L_ord.

(3) ^{Second} The third things I want you ~~see~~ to see about ^{The Furman Boys} ~~the father/dave~~ ^{Prison} ~~sufferings~~, is: the sympathy the Jewish Christians did have for those Gentile Christians in the arena. The sympathy they had. Paul commends them for it. He does this with two statements.

At the end of Vs 33 we have the first one: "you became companions with those who were so treated." The phrase "so treated" or "so used" (KJV) is the phrase for ¹ manner of life or conduct. It was a way of living.

We that live in the 20th century will ~~hard/d~~ have a hard time identifying with this teaching. But it means that these Gentile Christians' pattern of living was suffering under the heels of Rome. Outward, open, persecution. And when you became a christian you knew you were a prime canadate for the Arena.. ~~This/was/there/manner/of/life!~~ And it is saying that this is how some christians were living. They were made a public spectacle.

But, Paul goes on to commend these Jewish believers for becoming sharers or companions with the Gentiles who were suffering. * What a ^{precious} ~~precious~~ things to have people who you know will become part of the burden that you suffer. Do you know people like that?

People, who will support you and walk with you when you have a burden or a problem or a decision to made. ^{Thank} That God for such people. For their ministry of support lefts the tired heart. For we read in Vs 34: "For you showed sympathy to the prisoners."

Oh, my christian friend, if you are one, that God blessed with this special ministry of support, let me encourage you to use it. And to remember the council of God's Word to never grow weary in well doing, for your reward will be with the angels in heaven.

Oh, we may not be facing the lions in the Arena. And we may not be prisoners in jail. But we do have the pressures of this modern age -- And there are many people who are hurting - They hurt within and they have no where to turn. God bless you if you have this ministry of compassion and concern for others.

(4) The ^{third} fourth thing that I want you to see about their suffering is an area where they really suffered. It was the siezure of their property. Vs 34: "For you showed symthy to the prisoners, and accented joyfully the seizure of your property."

Here is where the christian Jews were really suffering. They were hurting ecomonical. Now, some of us might read into that and say, "Well, the government is doing that to me." They just rised my property tax..... But the word "seizure" means to "take by force." And this is how Rome tried to solve the ^{christian} Jewish problem. They would go in and seize their property. The Jewish people have always been interested in financial gain. Their security was based in their material possessssions. It was true then as well as now. So you see, the very thing they were dependent upon was being take away.

But notice what Paul said: "They took it joyfully." It means that inside -- that took this - seizure of their property - their very existence - they took it with joy... They were glad... YOU KNOW WHY? ~~Paul know and he said so~~ ^{Because they knew they had} ~~you have~~ ^{in heaven} ~~for yourselfs a better possession and a hiding one.~~

And I believe that we who live today, often forget these very important principle. We place so much security in the things we prossess...Our security is built around a financial secure foundation. And we forget what is really important. "Lay not up treasures on earth, said Jesus, but lay them up in heaven."

And all the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. ~~I think a lot of us are having testings and~~

And a lot of us are having testings and problems and emotional conflicts in our homes and with one another, simply because we are centering in on the things that we possess or we don't have. And we have problems in the financial area.. And we have lost sight of what is really important and what really counts.

IT'S NOT

Where should our trust be? Vs. 34: "knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and abiding one." That is one of the most beautiful expression in the whole book of Hebrews. In spite of all pressures and persecutions, the Bible says that we know in heaven we have something that is better. ~~And/~~

Notice that word "better". It is a word used as a comparison. That which we will have in heaven is better than all that we have here in this life. Your standard of living in heaven will be better than any standard that this world has to offer.

Stop and think about this for a moment. Jesus said that in heaven you will be joint heirs with Christ. You will own everything with Jesus Christ. Now, it may be an ego problem, but I think that is fantastic. I own every thing -- EVERYTHING **EVERYTHING IN HEAVEN IS BETTER ..

You know we forget this at times - This world is not my home, I am passing through. We need to keep our eyes on heaven. Get a little bit heavenly minded and we will be able to handle the problems that confront us in this life. WHY? Because we will know that our security is in the Lord; and not in the things of the world. Things that will rust and soon pass away.

~~Many modern theologies will tell us that believing in heaven is just a cop-out on life - But, oh, know it isn't.. Heaven is much better. And I believe what the Bible says-- it is much better. And that faith causes me to endure and to be able to endure the testings and sufferings and pressures of this life. Because I know at any moment --SAP --RAPTURE --I will be with the Lord. And it keeps me going on -- no matter what the pressure is or the problems that I face. My Friends, we are on our way HOME.~~

And notice, also, not only is everything better, but it is "abiding" or enduring."

not something that will

It is not going to pase away. It ~~will not~~ be here today but gone tomorrow. Nothing in this world remains. But in heaven it is everylasting.

Why is it that in the midst of testing we get discouraged and we have feelings of wanting to quite and God's got to pick us up off the floor? I will tell you Why... Because we forget where we are going that is why.. We live from day to day forgetting the promises of God. And when things don't go our way, if there is to much pressure, we fold up, and we foreget where we are going. We are on our way to heaven. PRAISE THE LORD.
**** REWARDS

Now, we come to ~~an~~ ^{an} exciting verse. ~~For~~ ^{Ver 35} ~~verse 35-39~~ tell us about ^{that} the reward ~~that~~ is waiting in the future.. ~~And I believe there are~~ great ~~things being taught here as to the needs in the lives of believers.~~

~~If that is so, we have the need of encouragement.~~ Vs 35: "Therefore, do not ~~throw~~ throw away your confidence, which has great reward." The people to whom Paul was speaking was tempted to throw away their confidence. That is their faith in the promises of God. The word "therefore" refers back to Vs 34. Therefore since we have a better possession and an abiding one in heaven don't throw away your donfidence... Don't do it. *Which has a great Reward*

and The little phrase "great reward" literal is "payment of wages." You know, we are going to get paid in heaven???? Did you know that? Again I might be having an ego problem, but I am just telling you the facts. The word is "payment of wages." ~~We~~ are going to get paid in heaven..

We read in the Book of Matthew that Jesus has preparaed for us a dwelling place. And in the book of Revelation he tells us that that dwelling place will have its streets paved with gold and silver and gwelsls. Heaven is beyond our comprehension. But this I do know. It will be better than any thing we have down here.

Now, isn't that encourageing.... ~~Es~~pecial seen you have to go home to that dump you are living in - RIGHT???? FANTASITC.....DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE.....IT HAS GREAT REWARD.

You know, sometimes we get so discouraged under the pressures and testings of this life...that we forget the good news of the Gospel. ARE YOU LIKE THAT AT TIMES???

We need to be ~~be~~ encouraged. My Friends, the time is coming when Jesus will come. Itsn't it easy to lose sight of that. Satan would have us lose sight. So that, he can attack us with discouragements and pressures. Remember - Christ is coming. Andthe Bible tells us that this remembrance will encourage our lives.

Liston, go to the bed side of someone who is dieing. They have lived a long life for the Lord; And what is it that they want to do????THEY WANT TO GO HOME...THAT IS WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT. THEY DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE ANYMORE....THEY WANT TO GO HOME.

That is why we are living. We are ministering and we are doing the best we can and we are trying to do the best job we can. Paul said, Liston I know I have to remain in the flesh to do the job the Lord has for me to do, but if I had my desire I would like to depart and be with the Lord. ~~PA~~ Paul said our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for the return of our saviour.

Many modern theologies will tell us that believing in heaven is just a cop-out on life. It is pie in the sky in the sweet by and by. But don't you believe that. Believe what the Bible says; That heaven is a much better place. And that kind of faith causes me to endure and to be able to endure the testings and sufferings and pressures of this life. It helps keep my motives and attitudes and ~~value~~ value system in place. Because I know at any moment --SAP --RAPTURE -- I will be with the Lord. And it keeps me going on --- no matter what the pressure is -- or the problems that I must face. MY FRIENDS, WE ARE ON OUR WAY HOME . AND THERE IS A REWARD TO THOSE FAITH AND CONFIDENCE HAS PRESERVED THE SOUL.

SHALL WE PRAY

I don't know your pressure. But as I do know. keep your eyes on the clouds. For Christ is ~~going~~ coming.