

## **Matchless part 28**

### **Hebrews 12:12-17**

#### **Title Of The Message: “Clearing The Way”**

#### **The Key Word: Strengthen**

**The Thought:** When we choose to worship the Lord, He strengthens our hearts and experience the blessings of God.

#### **The Breakdown:**

##### **Verses 12-13 Getting It Together**

##### **Verse 14 The Goals**

##### **Verses 15-17 On The Lookout**

##### **Verses 12-13 Getting It Together**

**Hebrews 12:12** NKJV - Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,

**Therefore...** All through this book we have seen therefore after therefore and for good reason it's the drawing back to remember, why? Because to put it simply we are forgetful, when it comes to spiritual things, those things we find in the Word of God. We can remember the stupid jingle of a commercial or remember a secular song word by word but not a worship song or a bible verse and so we have to have reminders, and we have to purposely seek the Lord because the Flesh, Satan and the World do everything they can to distract us in order to keep us from remembering.

So what is this therefore there for? Its to remind us of what was said in verses 6-11 to remind us that because we are children of God and we are loved by God, He chastens us, that is He has graciously but firmly trained us on how to live in this world for Him, its also there to remind that we are running a race as it says in verse 1, Warren Wiersbe says it almost sounds like a coach strengthen those hands, strengthen those knees, get your feet under you! Now get ready to run!

**Strengthen the hands...** Notice Paul says strengthen the hands, so how does the christian strengthen the hands? The answer is simply but the doing can be hard especially after being chastened, like kids that have just been disciplined by their father, who wants to go and give them a hug and say I love you? Oh Dad your the greatest, let me just give you a big hug, while we are rubbing our butt! The answer to strengthening the hands is to raise them up to the Lord but sometimes we just don't want to because we've just been disciplined by Him, but if we see that he has done this knowing what we need and what's for our best then we need to raise our hands to Him, He deserves our praise and worship because He is worthy of all praise.

**Psalm 96:4 (NKJV) For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.**

**Revelation 4:11 (NKJV) "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."**

**And the feeble knees...** For the Christian we strengthen feeble or weak knees by going down on our knees in prayer, we strengthen our knees by sharing our hearts with the Lord, again after being disciplined its hard to do, I mean who goes to their Dad after being spanked and says hey Dad how's your day going, I think you were a little harsh with me, if we would just again grab onto the fact that He's doing this with what's better for us then we can because we know that any loving father hates to discipline his children, he takes no joy in these things but because he

loves his children he knows its necessary because in the end its good for them, otherwise they will have to learn the hard way. When we choose to lift up our hands in praise to the Lord and hit our knees in communication with the Lord then we are surrendering our lives to the One who will strengthen those weak hands and those weak knees making us stronger than we could ever imagine.

**Hebrews 12:13 NKJV** - and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

**Make straight paths...** Paul goes on to say make straight paths for your feet, the enemy throws things in the path so that we can get tripped up and even have a leg or an ankle hurt or dislocated to some how slow us down or even take us out of the race, but if we clear the way of the obstacles that we can clearly see then we have a better chance of healing. We are already lame out the gate we have a handicap called sin its trying to hobble us if we clear the road then we can heal and walk easier, but notice also that even if we have a dislocated knee or ankle we don't stop because it says make the paths straight in order that we might be healed.

## **Verse 14 The Goals**

**Hebrews 12:14 NKJV** - Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

**Pursue peace...** Notice now that the Christian has two goals in mind, first it is to pursue peace, this wasn't only important in their times as they were experiencing persecution but its also important for us to do the same since we have these challenges of the virus, losing jobs, losing businesses, maybe even losing unemployment or disability payments, plus the fear that is seeking to inject itself into our lives because of the virus, this virus has been a big shake up in the church its understandable in the world where they have no hope but in the church! We are to be

people of faith not of fear, faith drives us to do what needs to be done to guard against infection but at the same time doesn't get paranoid but trust in the Lord, because we live by faith not by sight. I believe that its the greatest time of all to be alive but not just alive alive for Christ!

**Romans 12:18 (NKJV) If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.**

Notice he says if possible, as much as it depends on you... we can't control the actions and attitudes of others and so therefore should not expect much, but we can control our own actions and attitudes and surrender them to the Lord, and let Him deal with things we can't control. So even when others don't want to have peace with us we can still pursue peace with all people and walk away from those who choose not to have it. It's the peace of Christ that allows us to live and even thrive when others can't, and the crazy thing is that His peace is available to all of the body of Christ.

**John 14:27 (NKJV) Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

**And holiness...** Notice not only are we to pursue peace with others we are to pursue holiness, the word "holiness" is translated as "sanctification" now there are two parts to holiness first God makes us holy positionally.

Vines defines it this way, **"Sanctification" is thus the state predetermined by God for believers, into which in grace He calls them, and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it. -Vines Dictionary**

**1 Corinthians 1:30 (NKJV) But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—**

**2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV) But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth...**

Since we have been made positionally holy we now are to follow after or pursue holiness, this what we should be on a daily basis, it means that we are growing in the Lord consistently, we are to separate ourselves from wickedness, Jesus said that its not what goes into a mans mouth that defiles him but what comes out of his mouth, because it comes from his heart, Jesus would go on to say that the heart is full of envy, murder and strife and things like this, unholy Christians are like the Pharisees who are caught up in legalism, they tend to focus on the external not the internal, they can't see that the inside of the cup is filthy, they are like beautiful white washed tombs that are full of dead mens bones, they make sure they have clean hands and forget about having a clean heart, they strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

### **Verses 15-17 On The Lookout**

**Hebrews 12:15 NKJV** - looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

**Looking carefully...** Because there are unholy Christians in the church we need to be diligent, looking carefully at ourselves and at others so that we don't get caught up with legalism, or even have an attitude of legalism. Making sure that we aren't falling short of the grace of God. Too many people take God's grace for granted and use it as an excuse to sin, or as Peter and Paul would say not to use grace as a cloak for sin. If this is your attitude then you truly have no clue of what grace is all about, grace is there for our benefit, grace is there so that we can put out trust and reliance totally and completely in Jesus Christ, and not in the works we produce, we need God's grace because grace has the ability to bring us to God, where works can never bring me to God. There has in the past been a war over grace, some think that it encourages people to

sin and others believe it produces a false sense of security and so we need to rely on our works as proof, grace isn't there to cover our sin, to cover my lying or cheating, but again the person who thinks they can go on sinning because grace covers all, doesn't understand what grace at all.

**Lest any root of bitterness...** Grace allows us to keep from getting a root of bitterness, but it is possible for a root of bitterness to be planted in the midst of a church, it happens when someone gets hurt by the leadership of the church or by some or someone in the body of Christ and they hold on to that hurt, that root generally speaking isn't usually known right away, but eventually the fruit of that root of bitterness shows itself and it is not only destructive to the church but also to the person themselves.

William Barclay has this perspective on the phrase **“Fall short of the grace of God”** he says it can be translated as **“Failing to keep up with the grace of God”** past the pain and hurt of the past. We should move on also. -William Barclay

I think that interesting because we have all encountered bitter hearts in the congregation and we can fall into that heart or attitude of bitterness, if we are not careful. The fruit of bitterness can affect all of the church as it is shared from one member to another, convincing us to turn against one another, causing us to forget the grace that had been shed on us, I've seen this first hand in other churches, and I've seen it happen in our own church. A bitter root is a root that bears bitter fruit, so how do we combat or take away the effects of bitter fruit? We must go back to grace, to remember that God shed His grace on us knowing that without His grace we could not be saved, and if God could have grace on us, people who continually hurt others, grieve the Spirit, and sin constantly, have unforgiving hearts at times, if we remember all the grace God has poured out on us then we need to pour out that same grace on others, to pour out grace on those we believe have hurt us, sinned against us, grieved us, and have not forgiven us. When we choose to do to others

what God has done with us then grace becomes like round up and kills the root of bitterness, and keeps it from producing its poisoned fruit, unfortunately some have grown comfortable with bitterness and wrap themselves up in it like a cozy comfortable blanket, may the Lord open their eyes to it that they might experience the true grace of God once again.

**Hebrews 12:16 NKJV** - lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

**Lest there be any fornicator...** When the fruit of bitterness infects a congregation it produces fornicators and profane people like Esau, the word “**profane**” means “**common**” and here has “**the idea of a common person, one who lives for the world and not God**”

What made Esau profane is that he never had in mind the things of God he sold his birthright for a bowl of menudo, he didn't consider it valuable enough to be willing to die for, not that he was, he was just hungry and wanted to eat!

**Hebrews 12:17 NKJV** - For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

**For you know...** This verse has been at the center of many arguments between many people but especially between believers and unbelievers who argue that forgiveness isn't for anyone who wants it because Esau sought it and couldn't get it, but is that what is really going on? No! Esau is called profane because he didn't want anything to do with God he was all about what he could get, that why he gave up his birthright he wanted the physical food and left behind the blessing, but when those blessing meant he would inherit all of his fathers wealth then he wanted the birthright, but by the time he came to get it, Jacob had already come in and took from under his nose, he wasn't crying for the blessings of God, and he wasn't looking to repent, but he was looking for and crying

about the physical blessings he would lose out on, he wanted all of the benefits and none of the responsibility. That's the way some Christians are today they want all the physical blessings but they don't want the responsibility, they don't want to live for God, they don't want to pray or read their word, they don't want to go to church or serve others, they aren't looking to repent because of their sin, but they want the benefit of the blessings that come to those who do those things they are looking for the reward and not for repentance.

**Application:**

- 1. If we are to gain strength we must clear the way of those things that will keep us from healing.**
- 2. When we clear the way we can pursue peace with all people and pursue holiness.**
- 3. When we clear the way we can see all the grace God has poured out on us and then turn and pour grace out on others, keeping a bitter root from destroying us and our church.**