

THE LORD'S TEACHING ON DISCOURAGEMENT

(Heb. 12:1-3)

Introduction:

1. We live in discouraging times, brethren. But we will only be discouraged if we allow worldly thinking to dominate our minds. Even though our nation (indicative of the world) is rejecting God outright, and the church is undergoing a period of contraction nationwide, we must not be paralyzed by discouragement.
2. Let us consider our Lord and the discouragement He faced and how He reacted to it. Only in that way can we be assured of what we should do in these troubling times. Consider John chapter 6...

Discussion:

I. John 6.

- A. John chapter 5 concludes with a long discussion where Jesus detailed all of the proofs of His being the Christ, the Son of God.
- B. John 6 begins with two miraculous proofs of Jesus' identity.
 1. VV 1-15 Jesus fed 5000 men (not counting the women and children that would have been present) with 5 barley loaves and two small fish, and they have much left over (12 baskets of fragments of bread). The people were so impressed that Jesus had to hide from them so that they would not forcibly make Him king!
 2. VV 16-21, Jesus walked on water to join his disciples on their trip to Capernaum.
- C. The second miracle is understood by the people when they came to Capernaum seeking Jesus (vv 22-25).
- D. Jesus delivers the hard truths of His kingdom.
 1. It is not a physical kingdom that would offer all the physical needs to everyone. If someone is seeking that kind of kingdom it is not the Lord's kingdom (vv 26-29).
 2. Instead it is a spiritual Kingdom and Jesus provides all that we could possibly need to sustain us in that kingdom (vv 30-34).
 3. Jesus declared His deity and they began to murmur against Him (vv 35-43).
 4. Jesus explained His role: to pay the price with His life for our sin and to provide the information necessary for us to partake of His sacrifice (vv 44-58).
 5. The crowds reject Jesus' teaching (v59).
 6. Even many of Jesus' devout followers reject Jesus' teaching (vv 60-66).
- E. Jesus turns to the twelve remaining to Him and asks if they would like to leave as well (vv 67). Peter declares another hard truth (to whom would they go?); there is nowhere else to go for eternal life, and they believe Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God (vv 68-69).
- F. Oh, the highs of the first part of chapter 6 contrasted with the incredible lows at the end of that chapter. How would our Lord react to such a turn of events? How should we?

II. John 7.

- A. Things are so bad that Jesus cannot even return to Judea for the Feast of Tabernacles because the Jewish leadership seeks to kill Him.
- B. Jesus' fleshly brothers (Matt. 13:55 = James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude) did not even believe in Him and chided Him about not going to the Feast (John 7:3-8).
- C. Jesus went cautiously to Jerusalem for the Feast, but it was not long before He was at the temple teaching large crowds (John 7:9-ff).
- D. How did Jesus respond to being forsaken by: the great crowds of John 6 who wanted to make them their king; many disciples who had followed Him for a long time; and even His own brothers? He went about the Father's work, fulfilling the Father's will.

III. John, 8-21

- A. “The rest of the story” is well known to us. Jesus spent the rest of His days trying to teach the people, and especially the Twelve.
- B. And what did Jesus do when His day had come and He would be taken away from His disciples before they were fully ready to carry on without Him? He promised to send them the Holy Spirit to complete their instruction and aid them in their work. And then He went up to Jerusalem, knowing that he would have to go to the cross alone.

Conclusion:

1. How did Jesus deal with the incredible discouragement of the crowds leaving Him and His own disciples leaving Him (Peter denying Him three times)? He submitted to the Father’s will and obeyed unto death, even the death of the cross.
2. We live in unfaithful times in an unfaithful land. What will we do in the face of discouragement from our nation turning away from God and even many in the church forsaking the Lord? Brethren, let us be strong and of good courage and submit to the will of the Father and obey Him unto death. All this we will do to glorify our God and in turn be glorified when our Lord returns.
3. Invitation.