



Discussion Questions • Hebrews 10:26-39 (NIV)

A Stern Warning

Pastor Jeff Bucknam

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

Ah one of the worst drives I've ever had in my entire life has been over the Coquihalla Highway. It's not the first time you've heard that sentence I'm sure in your life - there are lots and lots of people who would echo those sentiments. Where I grew up in the Seattle area - we have lots of roads that go over the mountains as well; I used to ski all the time in a place called Snoqualmie Pass and Stevens Pass and stuff but the roads there are really, really well lit. It's heavily travelled area, it's very near Seattle and so you get lots and lots of lights and every year they put new lines on the roads and so the really really, reflective, if there's a curve that is even gentle, they'll put these massive flashing signs, "Slow Down, Slow Down, Slow Down!" It's like a really big deal. I thought, assumed anyway that that was the way it was going to be over the Coquihalla Highway. We drove over the first time to the Kelowna area going east of course and during the day. So when we were coming back we were staying with some friends and I was like, "Oh well we'd like to stay the whole the day with you." And they kept saying, "Oh, maybe you should get going back cause the roads are going to be bad." Maybe that or they just wanted to get rid of us, but I was like, "Well you know I've driven in the dark before, it's not a big deal." And they said, "Yeah you've not driven that road in the dark." I'm like, "Ah how bad can it be?" "No," they said, "it gets really misty and foggy in the evenings and it's difficult to see things." And I was like, "Oh okay." So we ended up taking off, of course we made it to the top of the Coquihalla in the dark and started coming down the other side, and I realized either somebody had stolen all the signs or somebody had just forgotten to put them up there. There was a section actually - there was nobody on the road - there was a section - we were going through the fog - there's a section where I, my wife was sitting next to me, she was saying, "Oh God, oh God, oh God." You know like, "Please help us, please help us." And she said, "Can you see anything?" And I'm like, "Nah." [Laughter]

"Are you sure you're on the road?"

"No I'm not at all?" You know every once and a while you'd hear the rumble thing <brrroo>, oh that's too far that way, <bbrraaah> you know you're going back and forth across the thing. <Laughing> It's like, "We're probably going to die here honey." [Laughter]

Um, the only other place I've been actually in my life where it's been similar to that is where I used to live in New Zealand, a town of Nelson, every road out of Nelson is super, super windy - you get used to it, pretty quick. In fact when my mother-in-law came and visited one time, she threw up. It's a story for another day actually. But you have to drive around these really windy roads bits and they go through the mountains and so there are sections of it where it just drops off and you'd imagine



somebody would put a guard rail up there but apparently the Kiwis are like, “Ehh she’ll be alright.” [Laughter] And so there’s no guard rail or anything you can just hop out of the car into your death, seriously the only signs that you have are the crosses that are left at the top of some of the locations. You’re like, “Oh that’s probably a dangerous one, I better slow down.” Roads like that, don’t you long for somebody to warn you. You’d not even bothered by a stern warning. I’m not bothered by the big signs that flash and say, “Slow Down! Slow Down! Slow Down!” They’re overkill. I want ... I want a stern warning. Stern warnings keep us safe - yes? They tell us to avoid great dangers. If you have a child and you live on a main road or a busy thoroughfare of some variety you will take your child at some point and say, “You see the edge of the grass, that is as far as you’re allowed to go. If a ball goes beyond there, it’s gone. I’ll get you another one. I’ll get you 30 other ones. Just don’t ever go beyond the edge of the grass.” Now from the child’s point of view they’re probably freaking out, “Why are you so mean and talking so harsh?” But you know why you’re talking harsh, because you really want to get across the severity of the danger. Stern warnings serve that kind of function.

But what we’re going to look at here is a stern warning. It’s actually one of the sternest warnings in the Bible. In the book of Hebrews - the whole book itself quite honestly, is a stern warning. It’s written from an author who is writing to a group of Christians who are under persecution - people are getting angry with them and treating them very poorly and they’re thinking, most of them come from a Jewish background, a Hebrew background, and so they’re thinking, “Listen if we go back to Judaism we won’t be treated so badly. So we’ve turned to Jesus; now we’re being treated really badly, our lives are a mess, we’re facing all sorts of suffering and persecution - if we go back to Judaism, we won’t have that difficulty anymore.” So they we seriously considering doing this. So the author sits down and he basically pens a sermon to them. It’s a long sermon - think mine are long, this one’s like a lot of chapters. It grows in intensity, he stops along the way and he gives these like therefore statements, these warnings along the way. And the warning passages in Hebrews - they grow in intensity. Let me show you what I mean. Hebrews 2:1-3, it’s the first warning passage says,

“We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?”

In other words - don’t go back, don’t drift away, don’t pay less attention - you need to keep going, because if you don’t keep going in the faith, it will all be for not. Only those who finish the race win the prize. But he’s gentle, right, at the beginning there. Well he ratchets it up a notch in Hebrews 6:4-6,

“It is *impossible* for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. [Impossible if you experience all of those things, and you turn away, you become what we call apostate. It’s impossible to be brought back to repentance. See] To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”



It's a little more intense. And then when you've reached Hebrews 10, the passage that we want to study here <laughing> like he just pulls off the gloves, ready. Hebrews 10:26-27,

"[Look] If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, *no sacrifice* for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of *raging fire* that will consume the enemies of God."

In case you weren't listening before, he just put it to you straight. It's like a massive traffic, flashing sign. Right, "Be Careful!" If you're considering turning away from the living God - going back and dropping your faith, *careful!* There's nothing for you there. Keep running.

So this passage is really aggressive. It's actually quite honestly, it's meant to be a motivation. It's like every stern warning, it's meant to be a motivation. But this isn't the only way he motivates. He very much like a coach who comes in at half time and starts giving the team speech right - to his team who's not doing very well. And he motivates them through several different means. The first he motivates through warning, right - *beware!* He also motivates by remembering, telling them to remember the past - *remember!* And then finally, just through encouragement, he says, *c'mon!* So those are my titles; beware, remember, c'mon!

[Beware]

Here's the first of them, here's the first motivation for continuing in the faith because everything's at stake. Beware, Hebrews 10:26-27,

"[Look] If we deliberately keep on sinning [this is what I just read, if we deliberately keep on sinning] after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."

Now listen if you, by deliberately sinning, prove yourself to be - even though you profess faith in Jesus, by deliberately keeping on sinning, you show yourself to be actually an enemy of God, which is what he's saying here, who deserves the raging fire of judgement. You and I better be very careful to stop and say, "Okay what does it mean to deliberately keep sinning?" I say that because most of the people in here like, if you're ... if you're a Christian in the room, you're thinking, "HmMMM I have deliberately kept on sinning." Like every Christian I know, if you've looked deep in their lives, they're like, "You know I don't want to sin, I just find myself sinning." They're lots of places where even in the moment I'm kind of like, "Nah I'm going to choose sin." But then afterwards I'm like, "Ah no, I'm terrible." And you repent and then you sin, and then you repent, and you sin - like my whole life is this back and forth. If that's the case - you're a true Christian, I'm just going to tell you that right now. That's not what he's talking about - like if that's the mark of your life I'm going to tell you that's a true sign that you're in the fight baby, welcome to the club. What he is ... he's not talking about that - what he is talking about is persistent, unrepentant, willful, and deliberate rebellion against God. Saying, "Listen I know, I call myself a Christian, but I know that this thing is wrong and I'm going to do it



anyway because I know better than God.” It’s called sinning with a high hand in the Old Testament. Now that’s language that comes from a passage, the language that scholars use, that comes from a passage in the book of Numbers. Let me show it to you, Numbers 15:28. So in the Old Testament when you’d come and you’d worship at the temple, there was some people who could bring sacrifices and their sins would be forgiven, some sins were forgivable others were not! The ones that were not were the one done with a high hand, notice Numbers 15:28, 30-31,

“The priest is to make atonement before the Lord for the one who erred by sinning *unintentionally*, and when atonement has been made, that person will be forgiven [Right it’s not - they don’t want to be sinning they are sinning even in the moment they might be sinning deliberately but they’re repentant about it afterwards. They’re bringing a sacrifice]...But [verse 30] anyone who sins *defiantly* [see that’s different], whether native-born or foreigner, blasphemes the Lord and must be cut off from the people of Israel. Because they have despised the Lord’s word and broken his commands, they must surely be cut off; their guilt remains on them.”

There’s the difference between that kind of high handed, deliberate, continual, unrepentant, persistent sin and - “Man I keep falling into sin and I’m fitting the good fight.” If you know - if you have kids you know the difference, right. So imagine you have your child and there room is a mess, and you say to them, “Listen I want you to clean your room.” And your child says, “Oh yeah, I meant to get to that but I’ve been so busy.” By busy, means, I’ve been watching my phone and doing all sorts of other things like laying around and chilling. This is isn’t of course about my children, but [laughter] ... so, “I need you to clean your room. I can’t see the floor, it’s a horrible mess. Can you please clean it up?” “Ah yeah Dad, I’ve just been forgetting about it and it’s been a problem and I’m sorry.” And then they clean and they’re like, “Yeah I’ll try to keep it clean next time.” And a week later, “You need to keep cleaning!”

“You’re right Dad.” This is an agreement with the command. “I agree with you Dad, I’m just not very good at keeping it.” Compare that to this - ah you say to your child, “I need you to go clean your room.” The child’s like, “Nahhh, I don’t want to.”

“I need you to clean the room because I pay for the house.”

“Umm, ah get off my back.”

“Okay we’re going to walk deep. Hold my hand.” And then we’re walk down the door. And they go inside and they’re just, “Let go of me.” And they stand in the room and they pick up their clothes that are on the floor right, you can finally see a little piece of floor when they pick it up, they hold it, they turn to you, look you dead in the eye and go, “Eh! <deliberately throw clothes back on floor>”

“<angry noises>” You know, that’s okay, we’re at war now right! That’s with a high hand. You’re my enemy, you’re showing yourself to be my enemy by sinning with this high hand.

My niece, her name’s Lyndsie, when she was like six years old, my brother-in-law went into her room cause she was in trouble and he said to her, “Listen you need to obey your mommy and daddy.” And she said, “Ah, why?” And he said, “Look because we’re your mommy and daddy. Look Lyndsie, this can either be done the hard way or the easy way - which one is it going to be?” And she said, “The hard way.” [Laughter] Right - that’s a high hand! Now listen, here’s what’s really important for you to



understand. This kind of open rebellion, despite profession, you can profess that, “I’m a Christian.” You go to church - do all the stuff, but this kind of open rebellion saying, “I don’t like your way God and I’m going to deliberately keep walking in justifying my own way despite what you say.” Even though I’m trying to cover it up with all my religious duties - that kind of action makes you not God’s friend, but his enemy. Again just listen to the severity of the warning. Hebrews 10:26-27,

“[Look] If [you] deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of *raging fire* that will consume the enemies of God.”

Cause that’s what you are. Now he knows that this is a provocative statement so he’s like, “Alright, alright, alright, let me give you some proof on this. So let’s go back to the Old Testament and show you the way that God responded to people who sinned with a high hand.” So Hebrews 10:28-29,

“Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [So if you knew what God commanded you to do and you said “I don’t care God even though I’m part of Israel and I’m still carrying on the feasts and the worship days and all that, I’m still going to do my own thing.” You’ve deliberately and persistently disobeyed the command of God. You would be killed on the testimony of two or three witnesses - you’d lose your life.] How much more [verse 29] severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”

You got to see the reasoning that he’s using here. Imagine that you’re in a classroom beginning of the term - you know, university maybe. And you’re sitting next to a friend and the teacher’s about to begin, you’ve been told about this teacher, that they’re very, very deliberate, very good teacher, but very strict in some ways - they like things the way they like it. You’re sitting there and the class starts and its ten o’clock in the morning and the bell goes and class starts and teacher starts teaching and student comes in you know, two, three minutes late, makes a rustling noise, tries to find his seat. And the teacher says, “Alright stop! You!” And he points to the person who came in late, “You, listen to me. What time does the class start?”

“Um 10:00am.”

“What time is it now?”

“10:03am.” Takes his pen from the whiteboard, throws it at the kid. “Get out! If you can’t be on time, don’t come at all.” Kid gathers his stuff up and just of course, tail between their legs, scurries out of the room. Then you say to your friend when you’re sitting next to them, “Man can you imagine, he just did that over three minutes late, what do you think he’d do over twenty?” That’s his reasoning. He’s saying, “Look.” The writer of Hebrews is saying, “Look, if you go to the Old Testament and you see that God judges people with this deliberate high hand and saying he judges them by killing them - when they reject the law of Moses. Imagine what he will do if you deliberately and persistently reject the Son of God after coming to a knowledge of the truth - you just turn away from him. Because the law of Moses was the lesser revelation, Jesus is the greater revelation - if he treated you that way with



the lesser revelation and the lesser sin, imagine what it's going to be like for the greater sin. Hebrews 10:30-31,

“For we know him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ [See] It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Written to professing Christians ... church people! This is a dreadful thing to fall into the hand of a living God. Now listen I've got to tell you like when I read that I'm like, “I don't like that picture of God. I don't - I prefer the grandfather God.” Do you know what I mean? Like most people in the Christian church these days, we tend to like the grandfather God. I'm using that language because C.S. Lewis in his book, *The Problem of Pain*, used that language of grandfather God. Here's what he said. He said,

“We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a grandfather in heaven—a senile benevolence who, as they say, 'liked to see young people enjoying themselves' and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of each day, 'a good time was had by all'.”

[Laughter] You know what I mean, rocking chair, you know, lemonade, “<geriatric voice>Oh doesn't matter if your baseball went through my front window! You're a good kid,” tussle of the hair, “See you later.” Honestly the way I hear God described in some circles, he's like that, “He's a really, really nice guy. He's love to forgive people and be really kindly and nice and all these ways.”

See whenever I think about this, I think about this experience I had with my wife's grandfather whose first wife had died, and he had remarried. He had remarried to a woman who came into his house, didn't share a room with him, but took all of his money and gave it to her kids. For all sorts of things - their cars, their band, the buying of a shop that they wanted, I mean he went poor. She ended up leaving him and when she left him she ripped all the TV's out of the wall, in the dark of night. He struggled, his name was Joe - he struggled with a little bit of dementia. I remember standing there at the door of the shop that these folks owned and the grandchildren who had received all of the money that the wife was stealing from him - would walk over to him and say, “Hey Grandpa Joe!” And they'd pat him - he's bald man, he's about 5'6”, they'd pat him on the head, he'd smile. They'd look at him and then look at us and shake their heads knowingly, “What a fool.”

Listen if you believe that you can pull one over on God with all your religious duties and yet *deliberately* disobey his command and persist in it and justify it - if you believe that, you need to know that God is not mocked. He's not your grandpa. You reap you will sow. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[Remember]

So that's meant as encouragement <laughing>. Right! *Beware!* Son - don't go beyond the street, *beware!* This is the God with whom you have much to do. You say, “I don't like that encouragement.



That doesn't help me at all." Alright try this one. He changes tacts. Right, or changes tact. And here we go, remember - so *beware* and then he moves to remember. Hebrews 10:32-35,

"Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. [Remember back in those - when you first started the faith remember how it went. Remember how God acted toward you and you acted toward God.] Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and [you] joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded."

If you've ever been at a half time speech of a coach - I've had some coaches who've given some great half time speeches, I've given a couple myself. Here's usually how they go, okay? Your team comes in, they're down 40, right and they walk in cause you stink, and they walk in, you're doing nothing that the coach taught you to do so you're sitting there, you quietly mumble, you're sitting on the edge, you don't make eye contact with anyone cause they all think it's your fault and you know it's their fault. So you're sitting there looking at the ground, shaking your head. If you sat on the bench, "If only I was in." Nobody's looking, coach comes in, he stands in the middle and he says, "Alright." Usually he starts with a, "Listen to me, if you can't get this right, I will find someone who will, beware!" But then he usually knows that you know, sticks don't work as well as carrots and so then says something like this, "Look I know we're down by 40, but do you remember 4 weeks ago when we were playing in this same gymnasium and we were down 45 then! And you sat in these same seats and I looked you all in the eye and I said to you, if you go back and you fight you might actually see something great happen here. And you went back out there and you gave everything you had, and we lost by 80," no usually not how it goes [laughter], "And you fought and you fought and you fought and in the last dying seconds, little Joey launched the 3 point shot and we won! You've been here before! All I'm asking you is to do it again. Remember ... remember, and do it again! Go out and put one foot in front of the other - do it again."

This is what the author's essentially saying here, "Look you guys, you've faced so many difficulties in the past and God has come through for you, remember when you had all of these experiences in the past and God saw you through and you were faithful each and every morning you got up. Even though you didn't know where it was going to lead, you were faithful to put one foot in front of the other and God came through for you. You remember that? Do it again! You don't need to solve tomorrow's problems or next years problems, you just need to solve the next steps problems - do ... it... again - cause if you do, you'll see God do it again.

It's interesting you know, like what these people went through as well. <Chuckles> It's no small matter, did you notice what, what it says about the past conquest of these Christians? You notice this? Ah they were publicly exposed to insult and persecution. So look in the 1st century the way that it worked is that the, the Roman world was a polytheistic world, meaning many gods. And the Christians were a monotheistic group, meaning one God. So if you were going to be a faithful Christian you only worshipped the one God, and not the many. Now the way that they believed, the way that the



Roman society thought about their lives - was like, look if good things happen in our society it's because the gods, plural, are all happy with the amount of worship they're getting. If things go badly in our society it's because the gods, plural, are upset because they're not getting enough worship. So along come these Christians and say, actually the way forward for us as a society is to worship the only the one God and not the many. So then all the sudden, more and more people come to faith in Jesus, and more and more people are worshipping the one God and not the many, and then something bad happens in this society and all the rest of the society says what? "The reason that bad things are happening in our society is because you Christians are only worshipping the one and not the many. All these other gods are jealous and angry and that's why they're making the walls of that building fall in, or my grandmother's sick, or whatever. So the just and right thing for us to do is actually to imprison you or kill you. We got to figure out a way to get you to worship the many so our lives our better." Tertullian, who was one of the church fathers said it this way. He said,

"If the Tiber floods [the Tiber's a river, if the Tiber floods] the city, or if the Nile refuses to rise [so there's too much water or there's not enough water], or if the sky withholds its rain, or there [if] is an earthquake, a famine, a pestilence, at once the cry is raised: 'Christians to the lion.'"

This was the way people viewed them, they were the wart on the side of the Roman society that should be burned off. And yet they walked through that, they didn't turn away. It would have been so easy to say, you know what, it's so much easier if we don't follow this Jesus and we worship the many. But they didn't, they kept following. And also it said they stood side by side even with those who were persecuted even when they were in prison. So some of the Christians who ended up being put in prison. The way the Roman prisons worked by the way, is that there was holes in the ground, and you would be thrown into the hole in the ground and nobody came along you know, three times a day and said, "Here's your gruel." There was no gruel. The only way for you to survive in that Roman hole was for you to have friends who would come along and give you food or give you blankets or give you clothing. When the Apostle Paul, he writes about this, he's so thankful for his friends - while he's in prison to come and show their face. And the reason he's thankful is because there's all sorts of reasons for you not to show your face with your friend who's in the hole in the ground. Because if you go show your face helping the guy in the hole ground you might end up in a hole in the ground. Right, this is part of the reason we don't step in when somebody's being bullied. Cause we kind of think to ourselves, "Ahhhh if I step in, those punches are going to eventually be thrown to me. Do I like this guy that much?" So this is the attitude that it costs you a lot to stand and identify yourself with somebody, stand side-by-side with somebody who's been imprisoned by the Romans and yet they did it willingly. And some of the result of it was that they lost all their property. People just went and stole stuff from their houses because they were the enemy. But they looked at the stuff that was being stolen and they were like, "You know it doesn't really matter, because I've got better and lasting possessions with God."

The whole point here is that this writer is urging them to remember the past, to spur them onto the future, "You guys were great back there, you faced harder difficulties back there, just do it again, just do it again. I know you're facing difficulties, just do it again." That's the way it works by the way. It's the power in the remembering what God has done in your past, it drives you.



So my son, and the rest of my family were driving down to California a few years ago. And I had driven through the night and my wife had picked up the duties for a few hours in the morning - we stopped in the middle of nowhere California, it's actually called that, middle of nowhere. And there's a gas station there that had a Cinnabon, which of course we're stopping at that one, right. So we stop, we need to get gas, everybody gets out of the car, we're not that far away from our destination - at least it doesn't feel as far when we started. So we get out of the car and we walk inside the place, grab some Cinnabon, Slim Jim's, all other kinds of American nonsense, and we pull back with our arms full - get back to the car, and I look at my wife, she looks me at me, and I look at the kids, we all stand there for a few seconds outside of the car and I say, "Honey, the keys? You were driving - the keys?" She went, "Oh! Oh yeah." And then she pulled out her purse, gentlemen you know this purse, it's the Mary Poppins purse, it's the one that she's pulling out lampstands and oh there's the cat... you know like you get all sorts. "They're not in here." Suddenly I hear my younger son on the other side of the car, he said, "Dad," he's got his hands to the window, "Dad, you're not going to want to see this." [Laughter] So I walked over and I looked in and there they were sitting on the front seat, almost deliberately taunting me. Right, they were right on the seat, and so I went for a walk. Right, <grrrr> so I went back in sat down at the Cinnabon and I had a conversation with the Lord our God. And I said to the Lord our God, "Listen this is ridiculous, you can not ... it's bad enough that I got to travel in this stinky car and now I'm all the way down here and we're dealing with all of this, and now the keys are locked in the middle of the car. I don't even know where we are - like we might be in Mexico for all I know. I was asleep for a while, but here we are in the middle... I don't know what's going on and this is ridiculous, and how can you be doing this to me God?" Been there before? My son comes in, the one who found the keys, he said, "Dad, there's a man who's trying to get in our car." I was like, "Ohh my goodness." I walk back outside and some guy who was in a truck, he had come by and he had found this big, long wire in his car, you know, and he was shoving it through the window of my car, you know through the gap or whatever. "Is this okay, like if I do this?" I'm like, "Yeah, you know what, I don't care we're going to break the window soon." So he's reaching in there and he can't get it to work, he's bending it and stuff until my 16 year old's like, "You give me that, I can do this." And so he ends up bending this thing in just such a way - we're there for like an hour, and every time my hands on the hood going, "Oh God help me not kill this woman." Anyway, no! [Laughter] So anyway... I'm kidding - she's delightful. [Laughter] Anyway so ... my son, my 16 year old finally, after an hour, just pulls the handle and it pops the door open. And I'm like, "AHHHHH!!" And I grabbed the keys and I put them in my pocket and I hugged my son and say, "You might never turn out to anything, but at least you can still steal cars." Right [laughter]. He said, he pulls this, "What do you want to do with the wire." I said, "Give it to me." And I put it in the back and I put a towel over it and pet it, and I brought it all the way to California, all the way back. This - it sits actually to this very day in a special spot in my home, this particular thing. You know why, is because I don't care where I am in the house, sometimes I walk by it and I look at it just leaning there and I look at it and I think, "Oh yeah, that's right, that's right." You might think, "What are you doing putting the stupid wire in your house?" C'mon man you need to have stuff like this in your house to remind you of what God has done because you're facing things today that are worse than then. And what you need is a God who is reminding you through those artifacts that I've been here before, you've been here before, and we made it through it - let's do it again.



I know you're facing all sorts of difficulties and challenges and things in front of you - God's not asking you to solve all the world's problems right now, he's just saying, "Get up tomorrow, put one foot in front in of the other and we'll do it again."

There's an old story about a pastor who said, he was being interviewed and they were asking, "So why, how is it that you've been able to be in this church for so many years faithfully and continue serving for like 35 - 40 years. So many people shoot at you, you know verbally and other ways. How do you live through that?" I was at a conference and the guy paused and said, "Well yeah people do shoot at me, but what you learn is that eventually the bullets go through the same holes. Right, the things people said years ago, that bruised me and made a hole but eventually people say the same things and just kind of goes through you, cause I've been here before and I've seen God take care of me before, and he's going to do it again."

[C'mon]

Beware! Remember. *C'mon!* Here's the last, it's not very long, Hebrews 10:36-39,

"[See] You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. [See that's the way it works, you don't get the prize of salvation for giving up halfway through. You get it when you finish the race.] For, 'In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.' [So Jesus is returning, the dawn is coming] And, 'But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.' [So in the meantime, don't shrink back have faith.] But we do not belong [verse 39 we do not belong] to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but [we belong] to those who have faith and are saved."

Yeah isn't that great, that's like the final salvo from the coach in the locker room, right. "Beware I'm going to get rid of you and this team." Or, "Remember we made it back." And then finally, "Young man, young woman there stands before you two options. Two pathways diverge against the woods. You could go back out there and you could give up, you could put your tail between your legs and you can get going. You can start thinking about lunch and how many oranges you're going to eat, you can do that here, you can shrink back, or you can go out and you can fight, and fight, and fight and you can see something great today." Kids at the end, "Aaaaaahhhhh!!!" you know they're "Frrrrahhh!" And then out the door - so good.

It's essentially what he's doing here though right. Right he's said look there's two paths that sit in front of you. There's the shrink back and are destroyed path - it's easier in the short term, I know. There's the give up, it will probably relieve a lot of the tensions that you have but it leads to destruction, or there's the have faith and be saved, and let me tell you, he says, let me tell you about the people in whose footsteps you walk today, whose blood is coursing through your veins Christian family. Let me tell you about them and what they did. And then he launches into Hebrews 11 with these litany of names of people, he's just kind of throwing at 'em, Moses and Abraham and Jacob - what did they



do? Shrink back, or have faith? They didn't know the outcome of their actions, they didn't know whether or not they're faithfulness in the present time was going to lead to success in this life, but they still got up and put one foot in front of the other and they saw their God move. Just look at it, Hebrews 11:29-12:3,

“By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. [Can you imagine standing there on the edge of the Red Sea, like they didn't know the future, all they knew was that God said, ‘Go forward.’ Moses said, the sea had parted and to go forward. And they had to trust every step of the way that God wasn't going to close that sea over them. So they did, they put one foot in front of the other. Verse 30] By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. [What a stupid idea, ‘I want you to march around that seven times and the walls are going to fall down.’ Like really? This is our battle plan. But they did, they got up each morning and they followed the word of the Lord even though it didn't make sense in the present moment. But they did and they saw the victory of their God.] By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. And what more shall I say? [He says, Look] I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. [See in all of that happened in their lifetime, they walked faithfully and God came through and they rejoiced in that, but it doesn't always work that way does it? Sometimes you're faithful and you don't see the outcome in this lifetime, but we have family that walk that way too, he says] There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—[see] the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. [You see, everyone of them kept walking because they saw the promise of God and they trusted that that was going to be the case and then he climaxes like crescendo with this] Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, [all these people testify to you, they are your mommies and daddies and aunties and uncles in the faith and they've walked this path before and they know where it leads and they are shouting to you, ‘Do it again!’ We are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses] let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us *run* with perseverance the race marked out for us, [and I'm telling you that your race is different than your race is different than your race is different than my race and there it lays in front of you, each and every day for you to get up and to walk, you just need to put one foot in front of the other in God's way. We fix] our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, [he sat



in that garden and he said to God, 'I don't want to do this but not my will but yours be done.' And he went to the cross and so he] and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [So] Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

I got to be honest, we get weary and lose heart a lot these days. There's nothing for you back there, and yes it's hard in the moment and it looks like the darkness has taken over and the night is so long and yet dawn is on it's way. And between now and then, do it again. We belong to a long line of overcomers, that's who we are... we're not those who shrink back and are destroyed we're those who have faith and are saved. Let me pray for us.

Father, I pray that my language and tone have matched the language and tone of this particular text. And that, that your Spirit would take these feeble words from a feeble man and you would just infuse us with desire and energy and firm conviction that we will walk with Jesus until our dying breath, and we will receive what has been promised because you said you would make it so. So we give praise and honor to the one who will finish the work he's begun in us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.