

Hebrews Overview

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[0:00] Open your Bibles, if you would, to Hebrews chapter 13. This morning I'm going to start us off with a brief overview of the book of Hebrews.

The author himself characterizes this letter in chapter 13, verse 22, by saying this.

I appeal to you, brothers. Bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you briefly.

He calls his letter of 13 chapters an exhortation. And I thought, boy, that's a term we should define if we're going to spend 13 chapters, Lord willing, at some point in time looking at this exhortation that he writes.

So I looked it up. I got four lines in my definition. First definition I came to, I agreed with all of them. So this exhortation is a powerful form of communication. It's meant to persuade someone to take a particular action.

[1:08] There's a target in mind. You're wanting to move somebody in a direction. It's an enthusiastic appeal to motivate. You're looking to motivate someone, not to beat them up, not to drive them down.

You're looking to motivate them. And then finally, it's a strong driver to appeal. And in Christ, when we exhort one another, it's to appeal to that new life, to that Christian birth that's gone on in you, to appeal to you to change in conformity to God.

So it's not a command. It's an appeal, and it's a strong appeal to change. So, an exhortation, a strong word of encouragement, but not a command.

So I think of Romans 12.1. Paul says, He's appealing.

I urge you. After 11 chapters of the gospel, God's sovereignty, His bringing all the elect into Christ, then I urge you.

[2:17] That's an appeal. The next verse, Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed. It starts like a command. Be not conformed to this world. So the difference between a command and an exhortation, kind of right there in Romans 12.1 and 2.

The book of Hebrews and the King James commands us to speak to each other's lives, to speak back and forth to each other, and to exhort one another how often?

Daily. This is something we are to be doing. It's a command there. Exhort one another daily. And again, an enthusiastic persuasion, an encouragement, not a one time and I'm done.

I tried and it didn't work. Daily we're to be doing this. Daily. But exhort one another doesn't come necessarily easy, does it?

What are some of the downsides, the negative sides of exhorting somebody? I'm opening the floor up. What's a negative side of exhorting somebody? If you've done it much, you've experienced it.

[3:21] What can be a negative side of exhorting somebody? What? Yeah, you can come across too harsh.

There's all kinds of people you could be talking to. You could be talking to me and maybe you could beat me over the head and I might not still get it. And there's other people, you could just give a soft word and you beat them up.

It feels to them like a club hit them. So there's different conscience. Just, you can be softer. Some are more tender. And being able to read that is incredibly helpful. Yeah, and it also should help us the way we approach an exhortation.

We'll talk a little bit about that at some point. But what else? It could come across too harsh. Yeah. There's two sides to what Jeff just shared.

Pride. You could offend them. Especially if you're not coming across as, I struggle with the same thing. I have this struggle. This isn't, we all share things in common. You could offend them or you could be offensive in how you're doing it.

[4:25] So either your pride condescendingly talking down or theirs just not taking the reproof. And that's something we all should work on, right? Because should we want people to speak into our lives like that?

Yeah, we should want that. That's a good sign of new life in Christ. On the opposite side, what's the positive part? They could feel guilt and shame.

And that's the negative. What's part of the positive things about reproving somebody or exhorting? Not reproving, exhorting. That's right.

You're doing this for their good. You're encouraging them. You're building them up. What else?

Yeah, ideally, it should do the opposite of the negative we talked about.

It should cause us to be closer together. Somebody is speaking into my life. They're exposing blind spots that I have. Or I see it and what I really need is somebody to confront me about it.

[5:28] Because I'm not going to do it on my own. The hook's set enough that I'm going to continue this path. And somebody coming alongside and saying, hey, I see this. I just wanted to share this concern with you. It's a beautiful thing.

So it's a risk to exhort. What does it say about the person who's coming to exhort you? What does it say about them? Yeah, they love you.

They care about you. It's not an easy thing to do. It's not a fun thing to do. It's a glorious thing to do, especially if it's done well. And if we as brothers and sisters receive it well.

If somebody doesn't receive an exhortation well, what can that tend to do to the relationship? It starts killing it off, right?

That's not what we want. We should really monitor. What they said is 97% not true. Take the 3% as a win. And think your brother or sister is trying to love you and serve you well.

[6:32] Three things I'd like to cover. Three points today. And I wanted to cover that exhortation because this is like 13 chapters of exhortation in the book of Hebrews. So if you feel exhorted, just receive it from the author of the book of Hebrews.

Or me trying to love. First, I want us to look at what we get to know about the author from his writing in this book. Second, what the author reveals about his intended audience.

What does he reveal about the people receiving this letter? And then what does the existence of this book say about us? This letter was written to them, but it was put in the New Testament. It's a book to us. What does that say about us? That would be the third point. So the author does not directly identify himself in this book. There are 13 books that are called epistles in the New Testament.

No, 13, 21. There are 21 letters that are called epistles in the New Testament. This letter here is one of only two that gives no clue who wrote it.

[7:36] The author does not identify himself. He doesn't put his name. The three epistles of John don't mention John's name, but two of them say from the elder. The elder clearly identified as John, and one just doesn't have his name at all.

So, the author doesn't give us anything but his heart. He gives us his heart. So that's what I want us to look at. What is the heart of this author?

What is he saying? What is he doing? How is he showing wisdom in loving others? Hold on here. How is he showing wisdom as he loves other Christians here?

Look at verse 13. Chapter 13. I told you to turn to this earlier. Verse 22. He says, I appeal to you, brothers.

Bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you briefly. I want us to pick up first, he asks us to bear with him. He's kind of already letting us know.

[8:37] I'm going to say some things that you need to bear with. That's a good example for us as we're going to exhort. Bear with me. Let me get through this. Let me try to show you love here in the best way I can do it.

So he asks them to bear with this brief word of exhortation. Brief. 21 books in the New Testament, 21 epistles. This is the third longest. If somebody writes you a 13-chapter letter and says this is a brief exhortation, how much more do they have to say?

And how much more capability do you have to hear? And yet that's what this brother does. He says, bear with my brief word of exhortation as he writes the third longest of all the epistles to them.

The author clearly believed these first century Christians needed this much exhortation. He clearly believes that. He believes there's weighty things on the scales of what they're turning away from

and what they're turning towards.

This is also a God-inspired New Testament scripture with application for God's people everywhere. What a risk he takes. Maybe that's why he didn't identify himself.

[9:44] I'm sure they knew who it was, though. But what a risk he takes to write this letter, to love them this much, in this way. Hebrews 3.13, in the King James Version, exhorts his readers to exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

So here he gives some motivation. Exhorting one another can soften our hearts. You can become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. That's what it does.

Just a little bit. And here, the biblical exhortation softens the heart. It exposes the sin, the deception, that you're kind of following in line behind. And it creeps in from all kinds of avenues and angles.

It may be, he says, don't forsake the assembly of yourselves together. Well, maybe you start missing a Wednesday night, here or there. You think, I'm getting fed pretty good. I don't really need to be at Wednesday night.

And then Sunday night comes into play. It's not always the most convenient. Just slowly, there's this creep and this drift. And sin hardens us like that. We need to not forsake the assembly of ourselves together.

[11:02] We are desperately needy people. When the author to Hebrews writes that we should approach the throne of grace boldly to receive help in our time of need, when is our time of need? I would say it's as long as you're in this flesh.

As long as you're in this flesh is your time of need. So you should approach the throne of grace boldly. Sin makes inroads. And the Hebrew Christians are being deceived.

And they're being deceived in a terrible way. Not that any deception is good. And the intention is to expose that deception. The author loves these people deeply.

He's concerned for their spiritual well-being. That's where we're going to... I'm going to show some of the devices he uses to communicate that love and kind of soften the blow of what he's going to say.

It's going to get heavy at times. And then he'll turn back to something positive. But he doesn't say, you guys, go this way. And you guys, go this way.

[12:04] He turns and says, come on, let us go. We're going together. Let us do it. I'm going to read 13 of the let us passages. And you heard them called the produce section of Hebrews.

I'm just going to read the verse that has that. And hear what he's calling them to with himself included. Let us do these things. There's also some let them and some other tools that he uses.

But chapter 4, verse 1. While the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear.

Lest any of you should fail to reach it. To reach it, the promise. 4.11. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

He's talking about the Hebrews falling in the wilderness wanderings and not entering the promised land. Let us strive so that we don't fail to enter that rest. Verse 14 of chapter 4.

[13:05] Then, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Don't let that slip away.

We need to hold fast to that. Hebrews 4.16. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace.

Find grace to help in our time of need. Chapter 6.1. Let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity. You're not growing like you should be growing.

Leave the elementary things. Let us do that and move on to maturity. Chapter 10.21.

And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near. This is what we should be doing. Let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance.

[14:07] Verse 23 of chapter 10. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. For he who promised is faithful. The next verse, 24. And let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works.

I love how the King James put this. Anybody know? How's the King James put this verse? Anybody else out there memorize King James? Provoke. Let us provoke one another to love and good works.

It's almost like that's behind the scenes here and what he's doing. But let us provoke one another. Let us stir each other up. Who likes to be stirred up? Yeah, not too many people.

I like to sit in the pew and when I'm done, get up and leave. He says, yeah, let's not do that. Let's stir each other up. I got a big stir stick up there this morning.

Chapter 12, verse 1. I love it when we get here. If we get here, Lord willing, some time down the road. This is, Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which clings so closely.

[15:16] And, another let us, let us run with endurance. The race that is set before us. We're to be running with endurance. Chapter 12, verse 29.

Therefore, let us be grateful that we've received a kingdom that cannot be shaken. And, thus, let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe.

And, I'll give this, turn the page, it's there. One of the let them. This is a revealing thing from the author, too. He reveals to them, Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account.

Let them do this with joy and not with groaning. So, a kind of given way, he's not one of their leaders. He says, Obey them and submit to them and let them do what they do with joy.

Don't be a burden to them. They're watching over your souls. But, he removes himself kind of from that. So, interesting look into who that may be or may not be.

[16:27] He doesn't seem to be one of their leaders. So, there's a little bit about the author. Let's turn to, who are these Christians? Who are they? What is going on with them?

Why this need for an urgent and strong appeal to take specific actions? He's going to call them to very specific things. Why this sudden, strong appeal?

And then, be thinking as we go through this, what do we share in common with them? They're Christians like we are. They're living in a world that's fallen like we are. What do we share in common?

How are we like them? Or, what do we need to hear that's in this book? So, let's turn to those Christians. Turn to chapter 10. Verse 32.

We're going to see how these Christians have lived their lives. Let's hear a little bit about the original audience. Starting at chapter 32, I'm going to read 8 verses to 39.

[17:31] Verse 32.

Say that again.

Verse 32.

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Now, the author encourages them to remember, verse 32.

But recall the former days. They have former days when things weren't like they are now. Recall those former days. You endured hard struggles.

[19:11] You endured hard struggles. Suffering. Public reproach. Afflictions. They have been through a great amount of suffering.

They have endured prolonged persecution. And the author says that they have need of endurance. Christians, don't throw away your confidence.

Don't throw it away. They are throwing away their confidence in this New Testament message.

Some of you have been students for decades of the book of Hebrews.

So I want to ask, what are these Hebrew Christians turning away from? And what are they turning to? That will help us.

Where is their struggle? Putting out to you guys. What are these Hebrew Christians turning away from? And what are they turning to? Why are this warning? Why are these stern warnings?

[20:11] He says, I have confidence you're not the kind that are going to shrink back. What are they shrinking back to? That's right.

They're shrinking back from Christ, the New Covenant, the New Testament. Christ and His finished work. And they're going back to Judaism. Because the early church is being persecuted.

If you're a Christian, you're being persecuted. If you're a Jew practicing the Old Covenant, that's been around for a thousand plus years. They're having comfortable lives.

They're being tempted to leave Judaism, or Christianity, to go back to Judaism because it's comfortable. What does that mean if you leave Christ and go back to the law?

Yeah, you've lost the gospel. You're returning to works, dead works that won't do anything to save you. The law is perfect, revives the soul, but it doesn't pay for sins.

[21:12] It exposes them. That's what it was designed to do. Be a tutor to train us that we need something different. Well, Christ comes, and they're being tempted to leave Christ and to turn back to the Old Testament symbols.

Judaism has been established, and it's still a welcomed religion. Christians are being blamed for a lot of things. Hebrews is a marvelous illustration of a Christian's understanding of the New Testament.

It will help you immensely understand the New Testament if you study well the book of Hebrews. In the book of Hebrews, Jesus is exalted as superior to all the Old Testament shadows and types. Chapter 10, verse 1. For since the law has but a shadow. So the law is a shadow. Of the good things to come.

Instead of the true forms of these realities. So my shadow, it's in more than one place at a time right now, because there's more than one light. But my shadow is not productive. Right?

[22:18] It points to the fact that I'm here, but I can't make it do anything. I can do all kinds of things up here, and it just moves around. It will accomplish nothing. The Old Testament law is referred to as a shadow of good things to come.

It's not the reality, but it's the shadow or the type of what was to come. The Jews have venerated these shadows for over a thousand years. These have been central to their culture.

The temple, the priesthood, all of these things become critical to them. The high priest. Jesus brings the substance that the shadows and types of the Old Covenant point to.

Jesus is the prophet, the priest, and the king that all the Old Testament prophets, priests, and king were a shadow of. He's the reality.

He's what was meant. What are some of the other shadows? What is the Israelite slavery in Egypt a shadow of for us? I want to help if some people don't understand shadows and types. And this is what Hebrews is talking about.

[23:24] What are some, what are, slavery in Egypt, what does that symbolize for us? I still agree.

Bondage to sin. That's right. They're in slavery in Egypt. And they have a taskmaster over them, Pharaoh. That's their bondage. And for us, that's our sin.

We're in bondage to sin. And Jesus clears us from that. He defeats Satan. And the last enemy of the cross that's going to be destroyed is what? Death.

The others have been destroyed. It's a glorious thing that Jesus has done in delivering us from our sin. The deliverance from Egypt. What does that represent?

It's not as easy as one. It's God destroying Satan. The place, the sin that is destroying our enemy in Christ.

[24:22] The enemy is, for the Israelites to leave Egypt, God had to defeat Pharaoh. He comes chasing after them and he finally destroys them in the Red Sea. But that captivity being set free, Satan is destroyed.

That's how we get delivered. Pharaoh was destroyed. That's how they got, and Egypt. That's how they got delivered. Forty years of wilderness wandering and dying in the wilderness. What's that symbolic of? Forty years of walking around in the wilderness and God saying, you're all going to die here except for the young generation and two others.

What are the wilderness wandering? Sanctification. It's the idea of making it to the promised land. You right now are living in the wilderness wanderings. Huh?

Sanctification is a fruit that they're working towards. The wanderings themselves are being, trying to get to the promised land. We're going to get to the promised land with different levels of sanctification, right?

We want to get there with as much as we can. The Old Testament promised land. What is it a type of, a shadow of? Heaven.

[25:35] They're trying to make it to the promised land. We're trying to make it to the promised land. We're going through these wanderings and this pilgrimage and this body trying to make it there. Now, we're not going to get there by our work.

We're going to get there because of the work of Christ. But we have to go through this pilgrimage. And you're right. Sanctification is one of the things God is doing in us as we go through this wanderings.

How about the Passover lamb? What was it a shadow of? That lamb couldn't do anything. But what was it a shadow of? That's right. The blood of Christ.

Our sins being atoned for. Bulls and goats can't do that. Christ can do that and he does it. He's the substance. So Hebrews is similar to reading like the Road to Emmaus experience.

These are a couple things I put in my mind when I think of the book of Hebrews. It just shows you the depth, some of the depths of what God is doing in Christ. And the disciples on the Road to Emmaus always would love to be one of them.

[26 : 36] Kind of also is like 1 Corinthians 10, 1 through 13, where God says all these things happen to the Israelites for you as an example to you so you don't die in the wilderness, so that you persevere until your last breath.

Scriptures lay out two ways, two main ways you can die that it's concerned about you dying. One way you can die is in the faith. Another way you can die is in your sins.

We're going to die in one of those two ways. In your faith doesn't mean you're holy and perfect and radiant and all those other glorious things. It means you're still looking forward. You're still looking forward.

You sin, you get up, you confess it like David. I'm an adulterer. But I confessed it. And I got up and I push on towards the prize. Murderers.

They get up, they repent, they confess, and they keep moving forward. Their goal is still forward-looking. Faith is the evidence of things hoped for, the writer of Hebrews will say. It's the evidence of what you're hoping for and living for.

[27 : 42] We get there because of Jesus. He's the reality. But sanctification is a process we're going through. And we keep forward-looking. To help us understand the relationship between the objects of the Old Covenant and the objects that the Jews venerated, including they venerated the covenant itself, given by Moses and angels.

And they venerated that covenant. Now that the Old Covenant has... It's not that the Old Covenant was bad, nor that it was imperfect.

It was perfect. It just was perfect to do something else. And Jesus did what we needed more than something else. It's weak. It's not designed for salvation.

The Hebrews are leaving the New Covenant and they're returning to the Old Covenant. Now I want us to hear another device that the author of Hebrews uses is repetition again on, this is better.

We have all kinds of better things in the book of Hebrews than what these Hebrew Christians are going back to in the law. And he lists nine of them, at least nine by saying, we have a better this, we have a better that.

[28 : 51] Don't turn away, we have a better this. So let's hear what those nine things are that are just separate. In chapter 7, verse 19, we have a better hope than the Old Testament Hebrews had.

chapter 7, verse 22, we have a better covenant. It was mediated by a better person, the Son of God.

We have better promises, chapter 8, verse 6. The promises made to us are better. Chapter 9, verse 23, we have a better sacrifice.

Nothing offered on that temple was as good as what was offered on the cross. Nothing. Chapter 10, verse 34, we have better possessions because they're abiding, they're abiding, they're eternal.

They last forever. We have abiding possessions. Chapter 11, verse 16, we have a better country. Our pilgrimage lands us in a better place as we go through these wanderings.

[29 : 57] We have a better resurrection, chapter 11, verse 35. And then this one is part of, I think, the heart of the book. Chapter 11, verse 40, God has something better for us.

And those five verses right around chapter 40, the end of the call of faith, the people who you look at their lives and think, what? They did all kinds of, but they kept getting up. They kept moving forward.

They kept coming back to Christ or to God and moving forward. Chapter 11, verse 40, God had something better for us. And then, last one, chapter 12, verse 24, the blood of this covenant speaks better word than Abel's blood.

Abel's blood cried out, he was murdered. Christ's blood cries out, we're clean. We're clean. We should memorize that.

We're clean. That is incredible. That's the hope of glory. So the Hebrew Christians are returning to the old covenant systems of work, which can't save.

[31 : 10] Their writer says they are doing this to their own harm. What they're doing is to their own detriment. The writer says, the author is very wise in exhorting the struggling Christians to action.

He's calling them back to Jesus, their only true hope. So there's a little bit about the Hebrew Christians and what's going on with them.

I want us now to turn to, just quickly, what does the existence of this book say to us? God put this in the New Testament. What is the application for us?

Satan has many devices he can use to cause us to drift away, Hebrews 2, or to fall away. There's many things he can use. You may not be tempted to go back to the law, to go back to the covenant, to go back to the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.

In some ways, we are all tempted to go back to works. We want to add something. We just think we have to add something. But that's not what's being talked about here. What are some of the ways, and I'm opening this up for answers from you all.

[32 : 24] You may not turn back to the law, but what do you turn to? What do we turn to? Let's put it in there because we all struggle with these things. What turns us away from an undivided life to Christ?

Comfort. Comfort. I want to be comfortable. When they come and talk to me about things like that, I'm not comfortable. They ask me to do this ministry or that ministry, I'm not comfortable.

I want to live comfortable. Anybody else? Oh, come on. There's got to be somebody else out there. What else?

Comfort can draw you away. The world. Yeah, the world has a current of its own. And if you're flowing down the world's current, you are drifting away quickly. It creates a current.

And it's not a pull towards Christ or godliness. It's easier than we're making. What can pull you away from Christ?

[33 : 33] How about your schedule? Are you too busy? Sometimes for God. How about your spouse? What are you making that face at me for, Jesus?

How about your spouse? How about your kids? Can you spend more time with them and not spend time with God? And just start putting God off?

How about debt? How about medical, school, sports, entertainment? There's almost nothing you can't name that can't pull us away from Christ.

Get us sidetracked. Get us focused on something else. And get us moving down this path rather than this path. It's just easy. We're easy. Satan, you've read the screw tape letters.

He knows us. Thousands of years of toying with us. Of tempting us. He knows you. God has gifted us all for ministry to the body.

[34 : 37] We can just think, I'm not gifted. God says you are gifted. I gifted you. I don't know what my gift is.

So how can I use it? Just start doing. We're all to be gifted to the body of Christ. This is where the warning passages come into the book of Hebrews.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time on the warning passages. But the warning passages get very serious and very heavy. They're where the author starts speaking a lot more directly. Like, he warns them, you ought to be teachers by now.

You've been in Christ long enough that you ought to be a teacher. Maybe not teaching here or teaching here, but you should be teaching. You should be comfortable teaching.

This is written to Hebrew Christians. By now you ought to be teachers, but you need what? Milk. You need milk. You're not ready for solid food.

[35 : 44] You're not even that baby bird with his mouth open waiting for somebody to pack it in yet. You need milk. The writer warns them, that's not where you should be. How did you end up like this?

What is going on? Have you drifted? You sitting there now, have you drifted? Are you falling? Are you moving in the wrong direction?

The author asks these questions. In Hebrews, there's a warning. You can still die in the wilderness. They didn't make it to the promised land. They died out there. And he tells us, we can still die in the wilderness, in this pilgrimage.

We have to persevere to the end. Not because of our works. We have to keep getting up and saying, I repent. I'm sorry. I need to move this way. I need brothers and sisters to come and encourage me.

That's what the writer of Hebrews is saying. We're kind of not so good with that. Come and do that with me. We need to be better at coming and do that with us.

[36:54] So, it starts getting heavy. Another warning. Are you trampling underfoot the blood of the covenant? I don't know if anything sounds more serious than that to me.

Those are just ugly words. You're trampling underfoot the blood of the covenant. That's serious. Now, the writer to the book of Hebrews comes back.

He doesn't leave it there. And once he gets to that point each time, he comes back and says something like, he comes back and tells them that I'm sure of better things for you.

I'm sure this isn't the case for you. But I'm going to warn you that this can happen. But when it comes to you, I've got better things in mind. You remember the past, what you were like.

We need to get back to that. Hebrews chapter 11, verses 39 through chapter 12, verse 2 is, I think, the pinnacle of the whole book of Hebrews.

[38:08] I think it's where we land. Like in Romans, when you get to chapter 12, 1 and 2, in Hebrews, when you get to chapter 12, 1 and 2, you've completed the large doctrinal portion of the text. And in Romans, Paul's going to make application.

And that's the, therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice. He's just urging them. Look at what God has done. Hebrews chapter 12, 1 and 2 is the same way.

I think it starts in the two verses before that. When we get there, I really look forward to doing this. He says, and all these, chapter 11, 39 through 12, 2, and all these, all these are the people he just went through in the book of Hebrews chapter 12.

From the creation of the world, we receive that by faith. To Abel and his blood. All these things, people who were sawn in two, who were put to death by the sword, who lived in caves, and never received the promises, but they were faithful, even though we know their lives are full of all kinds of sins.

They kept getting up and moving forward. They were faithful to the end. And all these, though commended through their faith, they did not receive what was promised.

[39:23] Since God had provided something better for us, that apart from them, that apart from us, they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run the race with endurance that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of God.

This is where we should turn over and over and over in our lives. We should throw aside the weights. anything that hinders. What hinders us from walking with Christ?

Anything that slows you down in the race. If it distracts you from the race, it's a hindrance, lay it aside. Sin. Put it out.

Meet with brothers and sisters. Be accountable. Run the race that's set before you. Other places, he'll say, in such a way as to win. If you're boxing, don't just beat the air.

Do it in such a way as to win. Run the race with endurance. That's what these Christians need to hear. That's what we need to hear. We need to run the race with endurance. And left to ourselves, left to our, I want to be comfortable.

[40:56] I don't want people approaching me. That's not my ministry. I don't want to get involved in this men's group or ladies' group. We need those things. We don't go just because we like them.

We need them. That's where we learn to be in fellowship, how to be accountable to each other.

Well, may we each one and all look unto Jesus to find mercy and grace in our time of need.

Amen.