


# JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

HEBREWS READING GUIDE

WEEK 23



# JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

WEEK 23  
NOVEMBER 6, 2023



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

©2023 CHURCH IN THE SQUARE  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.



# WEEK 23

## HEBREWS 12:12-29

DAY 1  
HEBREWS 12:12-13  
BEING HEALED  
**5**

DAY 2  
HEBREWS 12:14  
BEING PEACEFUL  
**7**

DAY 3  
HEBREWS 12:15-17  
BEING HOLY  
**9**

DAY 4  
HEBREWS 12:18-24  
BEING CLEANSSED  
**11**

DAY 5  
HEBREWS 12:25-29  
BEING IN AWE  
**13**

# DAY 1 BEING HEALED

## First read Hebrews 12:12-13.

In a recent discussion on Brené Brown's podcast, Father Richard Rohr explored the purpose of the Church. While many Christian communities, particularly in Western traditions, see the primary purpose of the Church as teaching and, therefore, intellectual growth, Rohr ponders what would happen if the Church was known as a place of healing instead. *How would this change our sermons? The structure of our worship gatherings? Our small groups? Our relationships?*

When teaching is central, lessons are invariably about morality and its application. When healing is central, we're invited to **"lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees ... so that what is lame may not be put out of joint"** (v.12,13). It's the difference between information and intimacy.

Of course, information is not bad. It's vital. What we learn in our heads sink roots that blossom in our bodies and souls. Jewish people, to this day, ground themselves daily in this reality by quoting *Shema*; **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might"** (Deuteronomy 6:5). We are whole and connected beings.

This may be why the writer of Hebrews connects godly discipline with healing. (Notice how "therefore" connects v.7-11 with v.12-13.) You see, it's the Lord's loving discipline that lifts our hands, weighed down by the burden of sin. It's the Father's righteousness that empowers and guides us. It's God's grace that brings alignment to our disjointed hearts. Discipline, righteousness, and grace heal us by nurturing intimacy with our Heavenly Father. That's because he doesn't just give us information, through Christ he gives us himself.

# DAY 1 BEING HEALED

1. How have you experienced the healing power of God?
2. What wound or pain in your body, heart, soul, or mind needs healing? How about in your community?
3. How is the gospel information? How is it an invitation to intimacy and healing?

*Heavenly Father ...*

*We need to know the truth.*

*We need to be healed.*

*Thank you that in Christ we receive both.*

*In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# DAY 2 BEING PEACEFUL

## First read Hebrews 12:14.

Salvation grants us both peace and holiness. Nevertheless, we're called to strive for both. That's ironic, *isn't it? How exactly do we pursue what we already possess?* This is a tension throughout the Bible. Professor William Klein captures this tension by describing spiritual formation as the practice of becoming what you are. While at the moment of conversion, we are a new creation—*the old has gone, the new has come*—we spend the rest of our lives maturing into this new identity (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Peace is part of the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22). And yet, daily we're called to **"pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding"** (Romans 14:7). We're at peace. We have peace. But peace must be cultivated by naming our anxieties, casting cares on the Lord, and seeking and granting forgiveness. We're becoming what we are.

In Christ, we're made holy. And yet, daily we must learn to **"put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness"** (Ephesians 4:24). We're holy. But holiness must also be practiced by repenting of sin, allowing grace to wash away shame, and living a life of worship. We're becoming what we are.

These low-key ironies lead us to a major-key paradox: though we have seen God in Christ, if we don't strive for peace and holiness we won't **"see the Lord"** (v.14b). That is to say, becoming what we are, demonstrates who we are. Pursuing Christ, though we're already in Christ, proves we belong to him.

# DAY 2 BEING PEACEFUL

1. Why do you think God wants you to grow in peace and holiness?
2. How do you think God wants you to grow in peace? How about holiness?
3. How does Jesus secure our peace? How does Jesus make us holy?

*Heavenly Father ...*

*I want to be at peace, free from shame, guilt, and fear. I desire to be holy, set apart for your glory. Help me to trust that in Christ I am at peace and I am holy. Enable me by your Spirit to strive for both today.*

*In Jesus' Name, Amen.*



# DAY 3 BEING HOLY

## First read Hebrews 12:15-17.

God is holy. He's separated from all of creation. That's what holy means--*set apart*. His holiness causes even heavenly creatures to cover their faces and feet and shout back and forth, **"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"** (Isaiah 6:3). When we catch just a glimpse of his holiness we realized God is everything we are not.

However, theologian A.W. Tozer explains, "God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. ... To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard" (*The Knowledge of the Holy*). God is utterly set apart. Yet, he commands us to **"be holy, for I am holy"** (Leviticus 11:44). In other words, to be in relationship with him we have to be holy too.

Specifically, the writer of Hebrews tells us that holiness is freedom from bitterness, sexual immorality, and duplicity (v.15,16). To be sure, the list could be much longer (and some are). But this list is enough to expose our lack of holiness. *How can we be with God if we are separated so far from him?* In a word, grace.

Grace closes the gap between a holy God and an unholy creation. That's why the writer wants to make sure **"no one fails to obtain the grace of God"** (v.15). It's God's grace to us that produces God's holiness in us. Namely, through Christ. Jesus loosens the grip of bitterness by dying for you instead of remaining bitter toward you. Jesus redeems our bodies through his resurrection. Jesus embodies truth and love. In other words, instead of remaining set apart, in Christ God drew near.

# DAY 3 BEING HOLY

1. In your own words, how would you describe the holiness of God?
2. What unholiness is exposed in you when you consider the holiness of God?
3. What effect does it have on you knowing that instead of remaining set apart, God drew near in Christ?

*Heavenly Father ...*

*You are holy. There is no one like you. Though I bear your image, I am unlike you in so many ways. Forgive my sin. Thank you for your grace. Thank you that in your holiness, you drew near.*

*In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# DAY 4 BEING CLEANSED

## First read Hebrews 12:18-24.

Our writer contrasts two scenes. The first is Israel assembled at Mount Sinai (vv.18-21). It's filled with ***"blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest,"*** accompanied by chaotic sounds and messages from an unidentified speaker (v.19). The second scene is of Christians gathered at the heavenly Mount Sinai (vv.22-24). It's filled with ***"angels in festal gathering, and ... the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven"*** (vv.22-23). Like in the first scene, we are in God's presence. But here our judge is known—he is God the Father (v.23). And we have a mediator who ***"speaks a better word"***—God the Son, Jesus Christ (v.24).

At first blush, we may suppose the first scene is bad and the second scene is good. After all, one seems frightening and the other hopeful. *Unfortunate Israel. Blessed Christians.* However, that's not how the covenants work. Nor is that how God has orchestrated history. Rather, the second scene fulfills the first.

You see, without Christ, we all say ***"I trembled with fear"*** before God (v.21). When we experience God's holiness, righteousness, and glory we're exposed. In his presence, ***"all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account"*** (Hebrews 4:13b). We need covering. We need cleansing. We need ***"the sprinkled blood"*** of Christ to wash us of guilt, shame, and fear (v.24).

# DAY 4 BEING CLEANSED

1. What is a holy fear of God look like?
2. What guilt are you carrying? What shame are you feeling? What fear are you battling?
3. If you really trusted that Jesus covered and cleansed you, how would you live differently?

*Heavenly Father ...*

*Thank you that because of your Son, I'm safe, I'm clean, and I'm worthy of your presence.*

*In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# DAY 5 BEING IN AWE

## First read Hebrews 12:25-29.

We're always obeying a voice. Sometimes we're listening to the whisper of our own desires. James says, **"each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire"** (James 2:14). This inevitably leads to sin.

Other times we succumb to the opinion of prevailing culture. But this leads to the loss of community. Like when Israel demanded, **"there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations"** (1 Samuel 8:19-20). Suffice it to say, Israel's monarchy didn't always go well.

But there's another voice. The writer of Hebrews is warning us to not refuse the one whose voice shakes the earth and the heavens (v.26). A life that is abiding in the word of God **"is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither"** (Psalm 1:3). Obeying God's voice always leads to our good. *Why would we refuse a voice that leads to our flourishing?*

Well, we're afraid. We're afraid if we don't listen to our longings we'll lose a piece of ourselves. We're afraid if we don't go with the flow we'll be left out and left behind. Our fears reveal two lies about God—that he doesn't know who we are and that he doesn't want us to be whole. But neither are true. In fact, only in Christ are we promised a kingdom identity, community, and future which **"cannot be shaken"** (v.28).


# DAY 5 BEING IN AWE

1. Do you trust that God's Word is good for you? Why or why not?
2. What fears do you have about obeying God and refusing your desires and the common view of those around you?
3. How does the gospel prove the goodness and wisdom of God's Word?

*Heavenly Father ...*

*I'm so prone to listen to my desires and the opinion of my peers. Calm the fears that cause me to distrust your Word. Empower me by your Spirit to listen to your voice today.*

*In Jesus' Name, Amen.*



# JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

To receive updates about this reading guide and discover more gospel resources to help you enjoy the truth and beauty of Jesus, please visit [churchinthesquare.com](https://churchinthesquare.com).



**CHURCH** IN THE **SQUARE**

©2023 CHURCH IN THE SQUARE  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.