

Main Idea: According to Hebrews 12:14-24, the solution to missing the grace of God is a corporate matter, a church matter. We’re not to do it by ourselves. In fact, that’s when we get in trouble, according to this passage. If we want to make sure no one misses the grace of God, we must together embrace two realities.

- I. We have corporate responsibilities (14-17).
 - A. Here are some things we are to work together to accomplish (14).
 1. We should pursue peace together.
 2. We should pursue holiness together.
 - B. Here are some things we are to work together to eliminate (15-17).
 1. We ought to be concerned when we see our brothers missing opportunities to experience God’s grace.
 2. We ought to be concerned when we see any hint of bitterness.
 3. We ought to be concerned when we see any hint of sexual immorality.
 4. We ought to be concerned when we see any hint of worldliness.
- II. We have a corporate identity (18-24).
 - A. We shouldn’t find our identity at Mount Sinai (18-21).
 1. They saw fire, darkness, and a storm there.
 2. They heard the voice of God there.
 3. They were terrified there.
 - B. We should find our identity at Mount Zion (22-24).
 1. We have a heavenly hope.
 2. We are going to the city of God.
 3. We are going to see a joyful assembly of angels.
 4. We are the church.
 5. We know God the Judge personally.
 6. We’re part of a righteous people.
 7. We belong to Jesus and His new covenant.
 8. We have experienced the power of His blood.

The Bottom Line: To avoid missing the grace of God...

1. We must appreciate who we are.
2. We must show our appreciation for one another.

A little intro before I read today’s Scripture. When you do a topical series, as we’re doing, it’s sort of subjective. I choose the texts we’re considering. That means I also have to choose which passages to leave out.

I didn’t know where we were going to land when we began this series I’ve called “Amazing Grace.” I just started tracing the word “grace” in the concordance, looking for places it appears, and we’ve probed those texts, a dozen so far. We’ve found passages that have thrilled our souls, such as...

- October 21 *Never Beyond Grace* (1 Timothy 1:12-17)
- November 4 *The God of Grace* (2 Timothy 1:8-10)
- November 11 *By Grace Are You Saved* (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- November 18 *The Grace Exchange* (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- November 25 *Grace: Past, Present, and Future* (Titus 2:11-14)
- December 2 *The Throne of Grace* (Hebrews 4:14-16)
- December 9 *Grace in Action* (Rom 12:3-8)
- December 16 *When Grace and Truth Came to Earth* (John 1:17)
- January 6 *Sufficient Grace* (2 Cor 12:7-10)
- January 13 *Standing in Grace* (Romans 5:1-5)
- February 3 *Abounding Grace* (Romans 5:18-21)

Wonderful, encouraging, hope-giving passages that help us celebrate and appropriate God’s amazing grace. And we could stop right there. Yet...

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached in the Hebrews series on 5/31/09.

Yet there are other grace texts that are not quite so positive and encouraging. They're actually controversial, and convicting too. We looked at one last week in Romans 6 in a message entitled, *The Problem of Cheap Grace*. And this morning we come to another in Hebrews 12:15, which says, "See to it that no one misses the grace of God."

That's a command. See to it. It's also a warning. See to it that no one does something, *misses* something very important. Misses the grace of God. In the ESV "that no one fails to obtain the grace of God."

Is that possible? It must be or the warning wouldn't be here. But what does it mean, and how can we prevent it from happening? No series on grace would be complete without giving careful attention to this text which warns us against missing the grace of God.

I'd like us to begin by reading the chapter and putting this verse in its context.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12

Hebrews 12 begins with the exhortation, "*Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*" What picture comes to your mind, what kind of *race*, when you hear those words? I'm going to describe two different races and you tell me which fits best the racing scene the writer of Hebrews has in mind.

In the first race the contestants line up as the finalists in an Olympic marathon. When the gun sounds these athletes begin a grueling 26 mile course that will consume every ounce of energy they possess. There will be very little chit-chat along the way, for each runner is consumed by one ambition, to do his or her best as an individual runner and hopefully win the race. Each thinks, "I want to run the race with perseverance!"

The second race is also an Olympic race, but the atmosphere is quite different. A few years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win.

All, that is, except one boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and looked back. They all turned around and went back. Every one of them.

One girl with Down's Syndrome bent down and kissed him and said, "This will make it better."

All nine linked arms and walked across the finish line together. Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story.²

So which of the two races best portrays the exhortation, *Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us*, the first race or the second? As Christians in the west, we far too often read our Bibles with a very individualistic slant. This text is talking *to me*. What does it say *to me*? What do *I* need to do so *I* can run *my race* with perseverance?

But please notice again the final two words of Hebrews 12:1. The race marked out...*for us*. The writer is talking about a race we are in *together*, and we're supposed to run it *together*. It's not just how I do in this race that should matter to me. It's *our* race.

I hope you are concerned about finishing well in the Christian life, for there are no rewards for merely starting well. But whose finish should matter to us? According to Hebrews, it should be *ours*.

There's a corporate emphasis in the New Testament that we tend to miss. We're not just marbles in a bag, but a body with connected parts. Christ gave His life not merely to save individuals, but to form a people for His glory.

² <http://www.rogerknapp.com/inspire/olympics.htm>

That perspective is vital is vital if we're going to rightly interpret and apply the grace text before us today. According to Hebrews 12:14-24, missing the grace of God is a corporate matter, a church matter, and the solution for it takes every one of us. We cannot apply this verse by ourselves, indeed, that's when we get into trouble, according to this passage. If we want to make sure no one misses the grace of God, we must give careful attention to two things. First, our corporate responsibilities (14-17). Second, our corporate identity (18-24).

I. We have corporate responsibilities (14-17).

In other words, in Christ we are a community, a people, a body, and as such there are some things we are supposed to be doing *together*. Yes, I should be concerned about *my race*, in the words of Galatians 6:5, "Each one should carry his own load." But we're also to "carry each other's burdens," as Galatians 6:2 puts it, for we're in this race together.

Our text identifies two types of corporate responsibilities, the first are some things we need to pursue together (14), and the second are some things we need to remove together (15-17).

A. Here are some things we are to work together to accomplish (14). "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

Make every effort, says the writer. We're about to be confronted with a couple of things that don't come naturally, yet are essential if we're going to finish well. They're so important that we need to *dioko* them, to strive after, to press forward to attain them (the verb is elsewhere translated "persecute").

1. *We should pursue peace together.* "Make every effort to live in peace with all men." "Peace" in the Bible means more than the absence of conflict, although that's included. There's a negative side to peace (no fighting), and a positive side (the wholeness of right relationships, both with God and fellow man). Peace is...*shalom*, the state of being in right relationship with God and man. And that's what we're to be running hard after together.

In Christ, peace is something we have (Eph. 2:14). But it's also something we must pursue. It takes work to experience it, thus this charge to pursue it. Make every effort to live in peace. If there is not peace in a relationship, we do everything we can to pursue it.

With whom? *With all men*, says this text. Strive for peace with everyone. Think of your relationships, at home, at work, in your neighborhood, classmates, in the church. We are to make every effort (and it is hard work, continual work) to live in peace with all people.

Will peace always result? No, it takes both parties working at it to experience peace. We can't make someone live at peace with us. But we can, indeed as Jesus' followers we must, make sure we are making every effort to pursue that peace.

We don't give up. We seek forgiveness. We grant forgiveness. We treat other people the way God has treated us for Jesus' sake. "If it is possible, as much as it depends on you," says Romans 12:18, "live at peace with everyone."

We have such an opportunity these days. All around us people are fighting, attacking, misrepresenting, undermining each other. But we're Jesus' people who, rather than joining the fight, work hard at pursuing peace with all men, and in so doing we put Jesus Christ on display for all to see. But not just peace.

2. *We should pursue holiness together.* "Make every effort...to be holy," says the NIV, literally "pursue holiness." Again, as with peace, holiness is something we have in Christ (see 10:10). But it's also something for which we must labor.

Hebrews 10:14 says, “By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” In Christ we are perfect, yes, but we are also *being made holy*.

What exactly is this “holiness” that we are to be pursuing? Our text says you can’t see the Lord without it, which makes this a top ticket item. The root of holiness, of course, is *holy* (Greek word *hagios*), which by definition means *different, separated, set apart*. William Barclay explains, “Although he lives in the world, the man who is *hagios* must always in one sense be different from it and separate from it. His standards are not the world’s standards, nor his conduct the world’s conduct. His aim is not to stand well with men but to stand well with God.”³

God’s agenda is that we be *holy*. That’s why He sent His Son into the world, to pay the penalty for our lack of holiness through His death on the cross and His triumphant resurrection, and provide a way for us to be holy through the merit of His Son’s perfect and holy life. This is the good news we preach. Through faith in Christ, sinners are declared to be holy in position and are given the potential to become holy in practice.

This means that when God’s agenda is our agenda, we’ll be in the world but we won’t look like the world. We won’t even want to look like the world for a higher pursuit captures our attention. We’ll want to stand well with God, and we’ll want to see our brothers and sisters do the same.

Peace and holiness. Those are two essentials that we ought to be pursuing together. We ought to be working hard to see them become a greater reality in our lives.

On the other hand...

B. Here are some things we are to work together to eliminate (15-17). “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.”

See to it, we’re told in verse 15. The writer uses an unusual word (*episkopountes*). In the noun form it’s the word “bishop” or “overseer.” Here it carries the sense of oversight, emphasizing that believers are supposed to be looking out for each other.

Specifically, there are four things that ought to concern us greatly and that we should seek to eliminate from the church. These four things are barriers to the peaceful relationships and holiness that verse 14 exhorted us to pursue. Here’s the first one.

1. *We ought to be concerned when we see our brothers missing opportunities to experience God’s grace.* Verse 15, “See to it that no one misses the grace of God.” If we’re going to pursue peace and holiness, then we need grace, for we cannot attain peace and holiness on our own. We need God’s unmerited favor and help, God’s *grace*.

And we have it, as 2 Peter 1:2 explains, “Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” So it’s through the knowledge of God, and particularly through the knowledge of Jesus that God gives us His grace in abundance.

But there’s a problem. We can miss it. “See to it that no one misses the grace of God.” The ESV puts it this way, “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God.”

In Galatians 5:4 Paul speaks of Judaisers who have “fallen away from grace,” by their insistence that a person must keep the law to be justified. In 2 Corinthians 6:1 he warns church members not to “receive God’s grace in vain.”

This is a serious matter. Missing grace. Failing to obtain grace. Falling away from grace. Receiving God’s grace in vain.

³ William Barclay, pp. 181-2.

Yes, our God is full of grace. He delights in giving sinners what they do not deserve so they can experience life as He intends. But as sinners, we can foolishly cut ourselves off from these opportunities to experience His grace.

Just what are these opportunities, these means God has given through which we can grow to know His Son better and thus experience His grace?

One is His *Word*. When we read the Word, meditate on it, hear it preached, we are taking in a means of God's grace.

Another is His *church*, which the writer of Hebrews emphasizes here. People who are in the Word and in the church are taking advantage of two key God-given means for growing in the knowledge of Christ and thus experiencing the grace of God. Conversely, when people are *not* in the Word and *not* in church, they are missing out on opportunities to experience God's grace.

And the writer of Hebrews says that's something we should *not* allow to happen. *See to it that no one misses the grace of God.*

So do you know any brothers or sisters who aren't in the Word and in church consistently? What's your response been? Are you merely content because you yourself are in the Word and in church, and that your race seems to be going well? It should matter to us, beloved. We're in this race *together*. When a brother goes down, we ought to notice, go back, and take action to get him back in the race.

Is it easy? No. Will our brother or sister always appreciate our attempt to help? Not always, not at first. We must proceed with wisdom and tact and...a ton of grace. That's our objective, to see to it that no one in this churches misses the grace of God.

2. *We ought to be concerned when we see any hint of bitterness in our church.* That's the end of verse 15, "See to it...that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

It's interesting to me when I recall the kinds of complaints I've heard over the years regarding the church. "Pastor, I'm concerned about our music." Or, "Pastor, I'm concerned about the length of the sermons." Or, "Pastor, I'm concerned about the temperature in the auditorium." And constructive feedback always has its place, but here's my concern. I don't think we express concern enough for the kinds of things the writer of Hebrews says we ought to be concerned.

Right here's an example. Does it concern you when you see someone in your forever family exhibiting a bitter spirit? What is bitterness? It's a sourness of soul, a negativity that seems to color every conversation. Our text says that when we see that, whether we see it in ourselves or in brother or sister, it should grab our attention and move us into action. *See to it that no bitter root grows up.*

Bitterness seems so insignificant at first, yet here's the problem. Our text says it's like cancer. It spreads. It "grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

"The implication," says Philip Hughes, "is that one embittered and rebellious person in their midst can have a disastrous effect on the community as a whole...One person in whom discouragement because of the hardships of the contest has hardened into a bitter and rebellious spirit and caused him to abandon the race could by his apostasy cause incalculable damage."⁴

Friends, we've all seen rock-solid relationships go south and somewhere in the mix of contributing factors was bitterness. Bitterness may not seem that significant, yet it has the capacity to destroy friendships, families, and churches.

⁴ Philip Hughes, p. 539.

This verse shows there's a connection between missing the grace of God and letting a root of bitterness spring up. We must not let that happen. See to it that no root of bitterness springs up.

You say, "How do we stop it?"

First, you start with your own heart. If you sense a bitterness developing in your soul, you go to your prayer closet, get on your face before God, confess this sin to Him, and plead with Him to remove it. Then you ask Him to help you replace the bitterness with Christ-like kindness, compassion, and forgiveness towards all people (Eph. 4:31-32), particularly towards the one who was previously the object of your bitterness. You resolve to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Next, if you see bitterness developing in a brother or sister, first, you pray fervently for that person, then you pray some more, and then you keep praying and go on a rescue mission. That's the perspective that's needed. You're going to rescue your brother from a dangerous situation that will only get worse, if not addressed. But you go, as Galatians 6:1 says, in a spirit of gentleness, keeping watch lest you too are tempted and drawn into this bitterness.

"Brother, I'm so thankful for you, and I'm concerned. I could be wrong, but I'm sensing a bitterness that wasn't there before. Am I right?"

Your brother drops his head and says, "Yea...I am bitter. Something's happened, and I don't know what to do about it."

"I may not know either, but here's a great place to start. Let's pray together right now. Let's confess this sin of bitterness, and let's ask Him for wisdom on what He wants us to do. He will help us. Let's not miss this opportunity to experience His grace."

And so you pray, and God pours out His grace. And the bitterness is removed, and the Body is protected, to the glory of the God of grace.

3. *We ought to be concerned when we see any hint of sexual immorality in our church.* Verse 16 begins, "See to it that no one is sexually immoral." *Pornos* is the Greek term and it refers to a person who uses sex in ways never intended by our Creator.

When the Lord created His image-bearers, says Genesis 1-2, He created them as sexual beings, male and female, intending for them to use their sexuality within the marriage bond for two service-oriented purposes: procreation and pleasure. As 1 Corinthians 7 later explains, a husband is to view sex as a God-given gift with which he can serve and bring satisfaction to his wife, and vice versa, the wife to her husband.

But to use sex before marriage, or outside of marriage is to abuse the purpose of God's good gift. It's like using a hammer to cut a board. That's not the intent its designer had in mind and it's going to make a real mess of things.

So ponder this exhortation, "See to it that no one is sexually immoral." It indicates we're supposed to be looking out for each other, making sure that no one in this church family is cheapening sex by using it for purposes other than God intended. How should we respond when we learn that we have a brother who is viewing pornography, or a sister who's flirting with another woman's husband at work?

Brothers, if that man happened to be me, I hope you would love me enough to come after me and help me get back into the race!

Keep in mind that the misuse of sex isn't restricted to the physical act. We can use sex in God-dishonoring ways in the jokes we choose to tell, or in the movies we choose to watch, or in the clothing we choose to wear.

Ladies, it's cold now, but warm weather is coming. What should be a godly woman's response when she sees a sister in Christ wearing provocative clothing? Will she love her brothers in Christ enough to pray for that sister, get to know her well enough that she can lovingly and graciously talk about how our clothing choices affect our brothers?

When God's Word says, "See to it that no one is sexually immoral," that's our corporate responsibility, to work hard at getting rid of anything in our church family that might undermine God's good purpose for sex, or put positively, to do everything we can to protect and promote God's sacred, joy-producing purposes for sexual intimacy within our marriages.

Hebrews 12 makes it clear, it's not just my race I should be thinking about. We're in this race *together*.

4. *We ought to be concerned when we see any hint of worldliness in our church.* Verse 16 continues, "See that no one is...godless like Esau." The Greek word for "godless," *babelos*, describes the unhallowed life, the life that's lived without an awareness of or interest in God, a "completely earthbound life," as Barclay puts it.⁵

As an example of that kind of person, we're told to think of Esau. Esau was a secular-minded, sensual man who repeatedly chose the course of immediate gratification with little thought of the future. He followed his fleshly instincts, which is why he married two Hittite women who worshipped pagan deities and not the true and living God (Gen. 24:34-35). It's also why he sold his inheritance rights for a single meal. This man's stomach mattered to him more than God's redemptive purposes.

Later, of course, he regretted his choice and even cried about it, but it was too late. As verse 17 explains, "He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears."

So what should be our attitude towards this spirit of Esau, this spirit of worldliness? How should we respond when we see it raising its head in our midst?

See to it that no one is godless like Esau, says the Holy Spirit through this writer to the church. When we see this, it should produce great alarm in the church.

Let's be clear. This command has to do with Christians. If a visitor comes to this church and is not a Christian, we don't tell him to clean up his godless life. We rejoice at the opportunity to give him the gospel which, when believed, will transform his godless life into a godly life. This is saying, see to it that no one who is in the family of God is godless like Esau.

A godless person is someone who, while *saying* he believes in God, acts like God isn't there. Do Christians ever do that? Sure, when we do things that we wouldn't do if we knew God was standing there watching, we are being godless. We are living life exactly the way the ungodly live it, hence, we are being *worldly*.

And any hint of worldliness in our church ought to concern us greatly. In my own life first, then in my brothers' and sisters' lives.

If we want to make sure that no one misses the grace of God at WBC, we must embrace our corporate responsibilities. We want everybody to finish the race well. When one goes down, we all go back and do all we can to get that person back in the race. So we work together to accomplish some things, like peace and holiness. And we work together to eliminate some things, like bitterness and sexual immorality and worldliness.

Let's be honest. This is a pretty radical way to live. So why do it? Here's why. What we do should always flow out of who we are. And who are we? That's the very issue the writer addresses next for us.

II. We have a corporate identity (18-24).

What is our identity? It's a contrast between two mountains.

Verse 18—"You have not come to a mountain that can be touched."

⁵ William Barclay, p. 183.

Verse 22—“But you have come to Mount Zion.”

There’s quite a difference between these two mountains, one you can see, the other you can’t see; one is physical, the other spiritual; one pertains to the past, the other to the present and the future.

What’s the name of this first mountain? The writer doesn’t give the name, for his first readers already knew. In fact, some of them wanted to go back there and live.

To Mount Sinai. Now there’s nothing wrong with Mount Sinai. Fourteen centuries before Christ, God met with Moses and the Jews at Mount Sinai. He revealed Himself at Mount Sinai. He gave His Law to His people at Mount Sinai.

But here’s the problem. Since the Messiah has come...

A. We shouldn’t find our identity at Mount Sinai (18-21).

“But God spoke with us at Mount Sinai,” some were saying. “He gave us His Law and the sacrifices at Mount Sinai. You’re not going to turn your backs on that are you?”

To which the writer of Hebrews says, “Hold on. You’re not remembering the whole story. Here’s the truth about Mount Sinai. Three things happened there.”

1. *They saw fire, darkness, and a storm there.* That’s verse 17.

2. *They heard the voice of God there.* That’s verse 18.

3. *They were terrified there.* Verse 19 says they “begged that no further word be spoken to them.” Why? Verse 20—“Because they could not bear what was commanded.” What the people heard at Mount Sinai overwhelmed them, indeed *terrified* them so much so that even Moses trembled with fear, says verse 21.

“Why would you want to go back to *that*?” says this new covenant preacher. That’s not our identity, not if we’ve come to know the Christ as our Savior.

Don’t misunderstand. It’s not that going to Mount Sinai is bad, just insufficient. The truth is, we all need to go to Mount Sinai or we won’t see ourselves the way God sees us, as sinners in desperate need of a Savior.

Indeed, some of us this very moment may need a trip to Mount Sinai, for we’ve yet to see ourselves as we truly are. If we think we’re okay with God because we’ve done a lot of good things in our lives, we need to travel to Mount Sinai where we will quickly see that we are not what God created us to be. We are guilty of breaking the law of God, and thus we are not fit to enter the presence of God.

Is there a solution for our sin problem? Praise the Merciful One there is! But you won’t find it on Mount Sinai. You must travel to another mountain, the one the writer describes in breathtaking detail beginning in verse 22, “But you have come to Mount Zion.”⁶

This is what we have done, every one of us in this forever family. We have come to the mountain where Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again. We’ve put our total trust in what happened on that mountain.

But to make sure no one misses the grace of God, something else is needed.

B. We should find our identity at Mount Zion (22-24).

This isn’t just where we were saved. This is our identity. Eight wonderful things are true of us because we’ve come to Mount Zion.

1. *We have a heavenly hope.* We have come, says verse 22, “to the heavenly Jerusalem.” That’s where Zion is. It’s not a mountain in the Middle East. It’s an out of this world city, a heavenly city, and therefore an eternal city.

We have this, dear friends. We have a heavenly hope.

⁶ With those words this preacher once again is expressing his confidence in the spiritual security of his readers. He’s put some pretty serious warnings before them in this letter, designed to cause them to do some soul-searching (in 2:1-4, in 3:7ff, in 5:11ff, in 10:19ff). But now he affirms his conviction that while some readers may have been wavering, they were still secure in Christ.

2. *We are going to the city of God.* That imagery picks up on a word picture the writer already described back in 11:10 where he told us that Abraham was looking forward to “the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Abraham’s city is our city, too, beloved. We’re going to the city of God.

3. *We are going to see a joyful assembly of angels.* “You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,” says verse 22. The party isn’t on Mount Sinai. It’s on Mount Zion. Can you hear the angels celebrating? If you are in Christ, you will.

4. *We are the church.* You have come, says verse 23, “to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.” When God rescued you from your sins, here’s where He brought you. *To the church.* He placed you into the assembly of His called out ones, those whose names He recorded in heaven.

I hope you love the church. It’s where God intends you to be if you are His.

And here’s something else that’s true of us on Mount Zion. “You have come to God,” says verse 23, “the judge of all men.”

5. *We know God the Judge personally.* And unlike the folks at Mount Sinai, we’re not terrified in the presence of this Judge any longer. Why not? Because we’re not in our sins any longer.

6. *We’re part of a righteous people.* “You have come...to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.” Brothers and sisters, we’re going to be seeing the Old Testament saints soon. Abraham, Moses, Ruth, David, and all the rest. That’s our identity. We belong with those people, not in this world, but with *righteous people*, with people who were *made perfect* by the grace of God.

And how did all this happen? It’s all because of the One who is the guest of honor on Mount Zion. “To Jesus,” says verse 24. “You have come...to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant.”

7. *We belong to Jesus and His new covenant.* This is why we don’t live on Mount Sinai under the old covenant. We’ve come to Him who fulfilled the old covenant and mediated the new!⁷ And how did He mediate the new?

The writer reminds us, “We have come to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” Abel was killed by his brother and Abel’s blood cried out from the ground for justice. But Jesus’ blood speaks a better word, for it offers forgiveness for rebels, even the killer Cain himself, if they’ll but come to Him.

And by the grace of God, we have! Yes...

8. *We have experienced the power of His blood.* Not on Mount Sinai. We’ve experienced it because we’ve come to Mount Zion.

The Bottom Line: To avoid missing the grace of God...we must do two things daily.

1. *We must appreciate who we are.* We have a corporate identity beloved. This is who we are, and it matters not whether we’ve been saved five decades or five days. We are His people. We are a people who, by His grace, have been invited to Mount Zion, and likewise by His grace we are heading for Mount Zion, our eternal home. That’s our identity, our corporate identity. And because it is...

2. *We must show our appreciation for one another.* When a runner goes down, we go back. We don’t want anyone to miss the grace of God. In light of who we are, we do whatever we can do to make sure that we all finish well *together*. That’s our responsibility, our corporate responsibility.

⁷ Leon Morris points out that the word for “new” is applied to the covenant only here. “It refers to what is recent,” says Morris (p. 143).