**Sermon Title: Enemies of Courage**

**Sermon Text: Hebrews 12:1**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to avoid the sins and entanglements that hinders us from running the race of courageous faith in Jesus Christ.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 6 warnings provided about the enemies of saving and living courageous faith.**

**Introduction:** The theme of Hebrews is the superiority, finality, and fulfillment found in Jesus Christ, and nowhere else.

“So then, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us, too, put aside every impediment – that is, the sin which easily hampers our forward movement – and keep running with endurance the contest set before us,” – [**The Complete Jewish Study Bible: Insights for Jews & Christians, p.1747**]

**I. The enemy known as drifting away. Hebrews 2:1-4**

**II. The enemy known as hardening of the heart. Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-3**

**III. The enemy known as dullness of hearing. Hebrews 5:11-14**

**IV. The enemy known as regression. Hebrews 6:1-8**

**V. The enemy known as deliberate sin. Hebrews 10:26-39**

**VI. The enemy known as refusing God. Hebrews 12:25-29**

**I. The enemy known as drifting away. Hebrews 2:1-4**

 **Verse 1** – Both the phrase “earnest heed ….drifting away” have nautical connotations. The first refers to mooring a ship, tying it up at the dock.

 The second was often of a ship that had been allowed to drift past the harbor.

 The warning is to secure oneself to the truth of the gospel, being careful not to pass by the only harbor of salvation. There must be close attention and there must be a proper response to the life giving message of the Christian faith. The hearer is in danger because of their apathy, of living shipwrecked on the rocks of this life/world. [**John MacArthur Study Bible, p.1898**]

 **Verse 2** if

 The Greek term assumes a fulfilled condition and caries the idea, “In view of the fact that.”

 Transgression and disobedience

 The word transgression means to step across the line, in an overt sin of commission.

 The latter carries the idea of shutting one’s ears to God’s commands, thereby committing a sin of omission. Both are willful, serious and require just judgment. [**Ibid., p.1898**]

 **Verse 3** – how shall we escape

 If disobedience to the old covenant of law brought swift judgment, how much more severe will be the judgment of disobedience to the New Covenant message and principles of the gospel of salvation?

 The New Covenant which is mediated by the Son Jesus Christ, who is Superior to all of the Old Covenant.

 The messengers and message of the New Covenant are Superior than the messengers and message of the older covenant. The greater the privilege the greater the punishment for drifting or not heeding the gospel of salvation. [**Ibid., p.1898**]

 **Luke 10:29** But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

 **Luke 12:47** "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

 Just as the gospel began to be spoken by the Lord, and by them who heed Him.

 This phrase reveals the succession of evangelism. The generation of Hebrews would not have heard if the previous generation of witnesses had not passed the message along.

 **2 Timothy 2:5-7** And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. **6** The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. **7** Consider what I say, and maythe Lord give you understanding in all things.

 **Verse 4**  signs … wonders … miracles … gifts

 The supernatural powers demonstrated by fears and by His Apostles were the Father’s divine validation of the gospel message of Jesus Christ, His Son, and His Apostles.

 Holy Spirit – The epistle’s first reference to the Holy Spirit refers in passing to His ministry of confirming the message of salvation by means of miraculous gifts. [**Ibid., p.1899**]

 1. Holy Spirit involvement in revelation of Scripture.

 **Hebrews 3:7** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,

 **Hebrews 10:15** But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

 2. Holy Spirit involvement in teaching.

 **Hebrews 9:8** the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.

 3. Holy Spirit involvement in pre-salvation operations (correcting work).

 Common grace

 **Hebrews 6:4** For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

 **Hebrews 10:29** Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

 4. Holy Spirit involvement in ministry to Christ.

 **Hebrews 9:14** how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

**II. The enemy known as hardening of the heart. Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-3**

 A. The lesson from the **past** related to hardening of the heart. (**Hebrews 3:7-11**)

 B. The lesson for **today** related to hardening of the heart. (**Hebrews 3:12-14**)

 1. Watch out for an evil heart lacking trust. V.12a

 2. Watch out for apostasy. V.12b

 3. Exhort each other every day. v.13a

 4. Hold firmly to biblical convictions. V.14

 C. The lesson from **yesterday** until **today** related to hardening of the heart. (**Hebrews 3:15-19**)

 The cause of unbelief is the problem of a hardened heart, which leaves the unbeliever under the wrath of God.

 D. The lesson of a **lifetime** related to hardening of the heart. (**Hebrews 4:1-3**)

 The themes of the exposition include urgency, obedience in a response of faith, perseverance and rest.

**III. The enemy known as dullness of hearing. Hebrews 5:11-14**

 Dullness of hearing always leads to spiritual **immaturity**.

 The word “dull” reflects the people’s spiritual lethargy and slow response to gospel teaching, which hindered additional teaching at the time.

 1. This is a reminder that failure to apply the truth of the gospel produces stagnation in spiritual advancement and growth.

 2. It also creates an inability to understand or assimilate additional truth that is taught.

 (**Romans 1:18-20** Gentiles)

 **John 16:12** "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.

 3. Rejection of God’s revelation of Scripture results in a process of hardening of the hearts.

 (**Romans 1:21-32**)

 A. Dullness of hearing creates a lack of **teachers**. V.12

 Every believer should be a teacher on some level when it comes to the truth or witness of the gospel of salvation.

 (**2 Timothy 3:15**)

 **Colossians 3:16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

 **1 Peter 3:15** But sanctify the Lord God1 in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; **Deuteronomy 6:7** "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

 B. Dullness of hearing creates **spiritual** immaturity. V.12-13

 Information without application in obedience does not advance us into maturity, but makes us immature like babies, to infantile, and unskilled to comprehend or practice, let alone teach others, the truth of God, Jesus Christ, and salvation, etc.

 C. Dullness of hearing **confuses** the hearer on the message of righteousness. V.13

 Salvation is by faith rather than works!

 (**Romans 3:21-22; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; Titus 3:5**)

 D. Dullness of hearing **robs** the hearer of salvation. V.14a

 This refers to the completion or perfection which comes when someone becomes a believer in Christ, rather than referring to a Christian who has become mature.

 E. Dullness of hearing manifests in lack of **discernment**. V.14b

 The one who has come to Christ by faith for spiritual completion, is then trained like an athlete who competes, by the Word of God to discern truth from error and holy behavior, from unholy behavior, and spiritual things from non-spiritual things.