

Sermon Transcript

09.13.2026

Hebrews 12:25-29

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- Good morning. Open your Bibles to Hebrews 12. We'll be in vss. 25-29 today.
 - As you do, I want to go back 25 years and 2 days into the past.
 - I was 23, about 4 months out of college, and 5 weeks into the corporate world.
 - Americans woke up to what seemed like an ordinary Tuesday. People ate breakfast, got dressed and went to work or school. Commuters were sitting in traffic. Some got on airplanes.
 - Only a handful of evil men woke up that morning thinking "the world is going to fundamentally change today."
 - Meanwhile in NY, thousands poured into two of the most recognizable buildings in the United States landscape, structures that symbolized American security and prestige, skyscrapers that seemed permanent and immovable.
 - And they seemed immovable for good reason. Some 8 years earlier terrorists had unsuccessfully tried to take down the towers.
 - But on this morning, our assumptions were exposed. Buildings that seemed unbreakable collapsed in smoke and rubble. Even the Pentagon, the center of our military complex, was attacked. Air traffic grounded. The stock market closed. Thousands perished.
 - And for a brief moment, an entire nation was forced to admit something we choose to ignore:
 - What we assume is permanent and unbreakable is anything but. Life is fragile. We can all be shaken.
 - These United States can be attacked. Buildings can fall. Planes can be used as missiles. Economies can collapse. Plans can change.
 - In the span of a few minutes, the world which seemed secure was shaken.
 - And that's exactly the kind of imagery the writer of Hebrews gives us in chapter 12.
 - All that can be shaken will be shaken until only what is unshakeable remains. What does that mean?
 - Let's pray and then we'll find out.
 - Self, others, me.
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- We started Hebrews back in May of 25 so by now you should be well acquainted with the author's logic.
 - What's the overarching concern? Well, these Hebrew Christians are facing persecution and suffering.
 - So what's the corresponding temptation? That they might apostatize. As we've seen through the book, the author isn't suggesting that true Christians can lose their salvation, but he is issuing that warning lest we presume upon our salvation. So that danger of apostasy has been described using various metaphors: falling away, drifting, and shrinking back for example.
 - In various ways, using various images, the author has offered various warnings against falling away. In fact, our passage today is the fifth and final warning that we see in the book.

- And in addition to the warning, the author gives encouragement. So there is both carrot and stick, warning and encouragement. That encouragement exists in the form of an exhortation that reminds us that Christ is better.
- In the context of Hebrews, the author seems concerned that his readers might drift back to Judaism, back to the Mosaic Law, back to the synagogue. So the book is one extended exposition of Christ's superiority to and supremacy over the law and Moses and the Levitical priesthood.
- The rhetorical effect of the argument should be obvious. If Christ is better, why would you drift? No one would intentionally choose what they genuinely believed was inferior.
- That's why faith plays such a prominent role in the book. An entire chapter was devoted to expounding the meaning and demonstration of faith because faith is what allows us to see Christ's supremacy and to therefore live in light of that. Faith sees beyond what is seen into what cannot be seen. Faith is what drove Abraham to leave his family and land and what caused Moses to reject the privileges of Pharaoh's household and what allowed Daniel to see beyond the lions and his friends to see beyond the furnace. That was chapter 11.
- Then in chapter 12, we shifted from indicative to imperative. Indicative refers to what Christ has accomplished whereas imperative refers to what we do in light of what Christ has accomplished.
- We are to run with endurance and throw off sin and consider Christ and embrace discipline and avoid bitterness and sexual immorality and so forth. We are to do that because Christ is a better priest who has offered a better sacrifice that has made better provision as part of a better covenant built on better promises.
- That better covenant has actually affected our salvation. Christ has done what the law and Moses and the tabernacle and Levitical system could not.
- Then last week, we saw the author begin the section that we'll finish this morning.
- He compared and contrasted the experience of Israel at Sinai with our experience at Zion.
- Remember the setting. Sinai was a scene of terror and dread because Sinai represented the imperfection and inability of the Mosaic Law and covenant whereas Zion is marked by joy and feasting because it represents the perfection of the new covenant.
- At Sinai Israel could not draw near or touch the mountain as a symbol of God's unapproachable holiness and transcendence, but at Zion, we draw near and approach God with confidence.
- And in light of the greater access, we have a greater obligation. With great power comes great responsibility as Uncle Ben says.
- We'll see that greater responsibility starting in vs. 25.

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. (Hebrews 12:25)

- Well, if you've been with us for the past year, perhaps you've noticed that the book has come full circle. Back in chapter 2, we read this:
 - *Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard... (Hebrews 2:1-3)*
- Notice the similarities:

- Chapter 2 talks about what we have heard. Chapter 12 about God's speech.
- Chapter 2 talks about neglecting. Chapter 12 about rejecting.
- Both chapters use the word escape.
- And in both we have an a fortiori argument. A fortiori means to the stronger and its where you argue that because something is true in a lesser case, its also true in a greater.
- If you would be crushed trying to bench 225, then you'll be crushed by 315.
- If you get a ticket for going 10 mph over the speed limit, how much more for going 40 over.
- In Hebrews, the author is saying that if God punished those who rejected the lesser glory of the Mosaic covenant, how much more will He punish those who reject the greater glory of the new covenant? If those who rejected Moses faced judgment, how much more judgment for rejecting Christ. If neglecting the word spoken at Sinai was bad, how much worse, to reject what God speaks from Zion?
- So, again, this argument is based on the idea of the superiority and supremacy of Christ. Because Christ is better, the consequences for rejecting or neglecting Him are severe.
- You have these two theophanies. BTW, a theophany means an appearance of God. As we saw last week, these two theophanies are set in contrast, that of Sinai and that of Zion. That of the Mosaic Covenant and that of the New Covenant. That which was mediated by Moses and that which is mediated by Christ.
- If there are consequences for failing to respond rightly to the shadow, how much worse for failing to respond to the substance?
- But to really grasp this, we need to shed ourselves of our therapeutic, humanistic conception of God. We talked about this a bit last week.
- God is not to be mocked. As we'll read later in the passage, our God is a consuming fire. A neglected but fundamental aspect of God's nature and character is His holiness. He is wholly other, singularly unique.
- But as we said last week, part of the reason that we take God for granted today is that we feel far too entitled to grace and mercy. We've jettisoned His jealousy and wrath. We've diluted His holiness.
- We've turned God into the tooth fairy or Santa Clause, some grandfatherly figure who never gets mad, never punishes, always just gives us candy and hugs, never frowns or raises His voice.
- That's why the beginning of chapter 12 was so important where it established how divine love is disciplinary. God chastises those whom He loves. In other words, love hurts.
- This past week in our Wednesday morning Bible study we were looking at the parable of the tenants from Mark 12. You may recall the story.
- A man plants a vineyard and then leases it out to tenants to look after for him. A typical harvest takes a few years for a new vineyard so those tenants begin to feel entitled and entrenched in the intervening years. Eventually, its time for the harvest so the owner sends servants to claim what is rightfully his, but they beat and mock and even kill the servants.
- So eventually the man sends his own beloved son. As heir, the son has legal rights to press the matter for the sake of justice. But what do the tenants do? They kill the son as well.
- So what's the response of the father? In Mark 12:9 we read:
 - *What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.* (Mark 12:9)
- Matthew's telling is even more descriptive:

- *They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” (Matthew 21:41)*
- Well, that’s like the situation that the author of Hebrews is describing. If there were consequences for rejecting God’s servants, Moses and the other prophets, how much more severe for rejecting God’s very beloved Son?
- This is in keeping with the opening verses of the book of Hebrews which read:
 - *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (Hebrews 1:1–2)*
- Notice the contrast. Before God spoke at many times and many ways by many prophets. But now He has spoken a singular word, a definitive word, a final word by His Son.
- But there is something interesting that the author does in Hebrews 12. In chapter 1, we emphasized the decisive nature of the speech about the Son. Whereas the prophetic warnings were all progressive. In other words, each successive prophet builds upon the revelation given to previous prophets. So whereas the prophetic warnings were all progressive, Christ’s revelation is final. He has spoken in Christ. The son is God’s final mic drop.
- But now in chapter 12, we see an ongoing element to the speech.
- Notice that its present tense. He IS speaking.
- Now, don’t misunderstand. This isn’t new word that’s a substitute for or even supplement to Christ, but rather He is still speaking about Christ. Christ is the final word, but that word is still being spoken.
- As we read in chapter 3. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.
- Right now, God is speaking. He is saying, Christ is better. Christ is sufficient.
- There will be no other word, no other option. We either hear and heed that word or we hear a word of condemnation and judgment and feel the fear and dread of God’s fury.
- Therefore see that you don’t refuse Him who is speaking. Because if you refuse the one who speaks, then you refuse that which is spoken, the very Word of God, the very Son of God.
- Let’s keep going. Vs. 26.

At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” (Hebrews 12:26)

- In vs. 25 we saw a contrast between the warning on earth and the warning from heaven which corresponded to Sinai and Zion.
- As we saw of Sinai last week, God’s presence brought dread and fear. And it shook the mountain. We read about that in places like Exodus 19:18
 - *Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. (Exodus 19:18)*
- Perhaps you’ve heard before that the underlying idea behind the word glory is weight. God’s glory is His weight, not physically, but the weight of His importance and majesty. And when something of substantial weight falls on something else, there is a physical response. Drop a stone into a pond and it creates waves. A meteorite which hits the ground causes a seismic event.
- Well, likewise, when God’s glory descends to earth, earth responds in shivers and tremors as we see at Sinai.
- And then speaking of that experience, later authors pick up that imagery such as in

- *The mountains quaked before the LORD, even Sinai before the LORD, the God of Israel. (Judges 5:5)*
 - *the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel. (Psalm 68:8)*
- So the author seizes upon that imagery of shaking and it leads him to another OT passages that uses that same picture and that is Haggai 2:6 which we'll read shortly.
- But first, to really grasp why he quotes Haggai, it's helpful to understand the context of this prophetic book. After all, how many of us are familiar with the message of Haggai off the top of our head?
- So let's try to get an idea of what is happening in Haggai.
- The book is set in the sixth century B.C. Exiles have returned from the Babylonian captivity only to find the temple isn't quite what they had hoped. You may recall, that it had been rebuilt in the days of Ezra, but lacked the luster of its former glory.
- As Haggai 2:3 says:
 - *Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes? (Haggai 2:3)*
- But all hope is not lost as the book functions as an apologetic for the fact that God will once again restore the glory of His presence among His people.
- As we read in vss. 6-7
 - *For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. (Haggai 2:6-7)*
- Notice that in response to the diluted glory of the temple, God will one day fill the house with glory. And He will do it by means of shaking the heavens and the earth, the cataclysmic, apocalyptic imagery for God's inbreaking into human history.
- God will intervene and that intervention will affect all of creation and vindicate God's people and His presence will be evident throughout the world.
- So this imagery of shaking is a way of referring to divine judgment. As you might shake out a rug to remove dirt and dust, so God will shake out the heavens and the earth to remove any residual impurities.
- And the inclusion of the heavens as well as the earth is important because it shows the holistic comprehensive nature of God's salvific work. Even the hostile spiritual powers will be shaken out in that day.
- The author will explain the imagery a bit more in vs. 27 so let's turn there.

This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. (Hebrews 12:27)

- When we say once more or once again, we understand those idiomatically.
- For instance, your coach might tell you, let's run that play 1 more time & then repeat that 6 more times. Or if I'm throwing my kids on the bed, they will say one more time literally 150,000 times.
- So in everyday English usage, once again doesn't necessarily mean one and only one more time, but in Hebrews this is more dramatic.
- In the phrase yet once more, the emphasis is on the word once.

- In contrast to all of the previous shakings, such as God's appearance at Sinai, there will be a final decisive shaking. One that fully and finally deals with the underlying problem unlike all the previous shakings. Sinai shook the mountains and shook the people, but didn't really shake loose the hold of sin as evidenced by the fact that as the mountain was shaking, the people were worshipping a metal cow.
- As we've talked about before, the old covenant didn't deal with the root issue, it cleaned the outside of the cup, but didn't clean the heart. Like an agitator in the washing machine, it shook the clothing, but couldn't actually remove the deepest stain.
- So underline or highlight or circle the word once. That's a load-bearing word here.
- There will be a final, decisive, ultimate, consummate shaking.
- And that shaking will reveal a distinct contrast between that which is shaken & that which is unshakable.
- And it might seem natural to assume that the dividing line between the two is creation vs. Creator. After all, the author says, that the things that are shaken are things that have been made, but the argument is actually more subtle than that.
- The dividing line isn't actually Creator and creation or between what is spiritual and what is physical since we ourselves are created and partake of both flesh and spirit and yet we are receiving an unshaken kingdom.
- So the difference between what is shaken and what is not is the kingdom of God. That which is not of the kingdom will be shaken loose from the kingdom.
- Now unlike in the gospels and some of the epistles, the imagery of the kingdom isn't as pronounced in Hebrews though we have seen it before.
- In chapter 1 we read this in vs. 8
 - *But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. (Hebrews 1:8)*
- But as we've seen, the author doesn't spend as much time on expounding Christ's office as king, but rather His role as prophet, the final word of God, and as priest. In fact, most of Hebrews is an exposition of Christ's role as a priest better than the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood.
- But the fact that he hasn't emphasized the kingdom in explicit terms doesn't mean that he's unaware of what is ultimately at stake in the book. He's simply chosen to use other images to build his argument.
- We'll get to the kingdom in vss. 28-29, but 1st let's consider the argument he's making in vs. 27.
- He is picturing a final and decisive eschatological judgment where anything which isn't connected to the kingdom, that is which isn't connected to the king, will be shaken and removed.
- Remember that image from earlier in the book of Christ going through the heavens and going into the very throne room of God and placing an anchor there on the very throne of God. And that anchor is what keeps us tethered to Him such that when He shakes all things, we are secure.
- The image that I think of here is a roller coaster. Now, I hate roller coasters. My stomach drops in an elevator so there's no way I want to ride in a coffin with a lap bar that's held together by rusty bolts and optimism.
- But picture a roller coaster and imagine that your lap bar is broken. What's gonna happen? You might very well get thrown out.
- And yet, in theory, that lap bar is designed to keep you from shaking loose. Well, that's what Christ's blood is for us. It's what makes atonement and carries the anchor into the throne room

such that when the heavens and earth are shaken, we remain. We remain because we are attached, tethered, united to one who cannot be shaken.

- And that word remain is important.
- It's a characteristic of God Himself. In Psalm 102, which was quoted in Hebrews 1, we read:
 - *Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.* (Psalm 102:25–27)
- And as we'll read in a couple of weeks in 13:8
 - *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* (Hebrews 13:8)
 - That is the picture of someone who is immovable, immutable, unchanging, unshaken.
- So that which is united to God Himself, the unchanging one, the remaining one, remains. While that which can be shaken is removed which pictures this cataclysmic eschatological judgment.
- And if the judgment for rejecting Moses was severe, how much worse for rejecting Christ. That's the argument.
- Therefore at least part of the implication and application of this passage is to not place too much hope in this present world which is fading away.
- In the context of Hebrews, that would mean to not sacrifice your testimony in order to be relieved of some suffering. To not capitulate in the face of persecution.
- In our context, placing our hope in this world might mean forsaking the church so your kids can be great athletes or forsaking your family or compromising your convictions to get that promotion at work, or refusing to discipline your kids so that they will like you, or refusing to talk about Christ because you're afraid of the mockery or any of hundreds of temptations to forsake living waters for broken cisterns that can hold no water.
- If creation will be shaken and if much of what we invest our time and energy is shakable, then we need to realign our priorities.
- Now, even as I say that I want to make sure we don't swing the pendulum. Some Christians have historically taken these passages on judgment and the reality that the world will not continue as it is as license to just circle the wagons. If my company or this nation is going to be removed, then why invest time and energy into it?
- We've talked before about how silly and disobedient that way of thinking is. Yes, the world will be drastically transformed at the return of Christ and yes our ultimate hope is not in our own efforts, but throughout Scripture, God corrects His people from pessimism, apathy, and laziness.
- When Israel is in exile, facing God's judgment in the book of Jer, there were some who were just waiting around hoping for an eventual return to the promised land, but how does God respond?
- He rebukes them. He tells them to build houses and have children and seek the welfare of the city in which they dwell.
- And He says the same to us. Yes, the heavens and the earth will be shaken, but we have opportunity and obligation in the meantime to seek the welfare of our family and nation. To get married, have kids, disciple and discipline those kids, share the gospel, make money to fund family and ministry, get involved in politics, invest in community, and so forth.
- If the dividing line between what is removed and what remains is the kingdom, then nothing done in and for the kingdom is in vain.
- Let's keep going. Vss. 28-29.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:28–29)

- If what is shaken is removed, how then should we respond for receiving an unshakable kingdom?
- With gratitude, worship, reverence and awe.
- In other words, for the saints, divine judgment shouldn't cause despair or depression, but joy and gratitude.
- So earlier we saw a contrast between two mountains. Sinai and Zion. One which shook and the other which cannot be shaken.
- And since we are citizens of the kingdom that cannot be shaken, we like the mountain, are immovable. We see that in places like Psalm 125 which says:
 - *Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. (Psalm 125:1)*
- So the author is drawing on that sort of imagery, but also on the kingdom imagery of Daniel 7.
- You may recall the image of the son of man and the ancient of days from vs. 13-14 which reads:
 - *I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13–14)*
- There is a picture of the king receiving His kingdom. But notice what Hebrews does, it pictures US as receiving a kingdom. Let US be grateful for receiving a kingdom.
- That comes from vs. 18 which says:
 - *But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever. (Daniel 7:18)*
- In other words, the eternal immovable unshakable kingdom which belongs to the Son of Man also belongs to His people. And the only proper response to this is gratitude.
- Why is that the only proper response?
- Because we receive it not on the same basis as Christ received it. He received it by merit, by obedience, by inheritance whereas we receive it by grace.
- And gratitude is the natural response to grace. You see, when we aren't grateful it shows that we feel entitled, we think we've earned something. If you promise me \$25 to mow your lawn, I'm probably not all that grateful for that money because I think I've earned it. But if you just walk up to me and hand me \$25, now I'm grateful.
- And the entire book of Hebrews has focused on the gracious character of the New Covenant in Christ.
- For instance, Hebrews 4:16 tells us to draw near to the throne of grace.
 - *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)*
- And the final verse of the book says:
 - *Grace be with all of you. (Hebrews 13:25)*
- And this tracks with the overarching contrast between the old and new covenants because though the old covenant was founded upon God's gracious character and works, His deliverance from Egypt, yet at the same time, that covenant concerned works because it was

tethered to the law and dependent to some degree on obedience whereas the New Covenant doesn't ultimately rest on our performance, but on Christ's obedience and sufficiency.

- As Hebrews 10:1 said
 - *For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.* (Hebrews 10:1)
- The law could never make perfect and yet perfection has been achieved, not by us, not on the basis of our own merits, but by Christ. As 10:14 says:
 - *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.* (Hebrews 10:14)
- As has been said, we contribute nothing to our salvation except the sin that made it necessary so what other response can we have but gratitude?
- Where we are not grateful that shows entitlement, that shows arrogance, that shows pride, that shows a hardened heart which is the very danger that we read about earlier.
- Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.
- And if we're grateful then we'll offer sacrifices. Not like the sacrifices of the old covenant, but rather the sacrifice of worship. As Romans 12:1 says:
 - *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* (Romans 12:1)
- We no longer offer the flesh of animals, but we do offer ourselves, our worship, our obedience.
- And we do so with reverence and awe.
- In other words, there is a sobriety to our worship. Much that ails modern evangelicalism is that it lacks reverence and awe. And why wouldn't it since our conception of God is so diluted and cavalier? If Jesus is our homeboy, then church and worship just becomes a big party.
- We treat it with a consumer mindset by asking did you like services today. You know what, I don't really care if you liked service or liked the sermon. Some of the best sermons I've ever heard were sermons that I disliked. Some of the best songs are songs I don't like. My preferences aren't the measure of goodness or godliness.
- Or we dilute worship by making it too casual. We become flippant and nonchalant with the songs we sing and how we sing and the way we dress and how we speak and pray. We lack sobriety and gravitas.
- I talk to my kids about this all the time. We'll be praying and and they're sitting next to me and then when we say amen, I'll open my eyes to find that they've crawled halfway across the room so they can pet the dog or play with a toy. That's treating lightly the sanctity of prayer.
- Am I saying there should be no joy in worship? Of course not. But there is a reverential way to show joy and an irreverent way to express joy.
- If your kid scores a goal, you should clap. But if you decide to take off your shirt and run through the stands chest bumping other parents, that's gonna cause a scene.
- And I think that illustration is helpful for understanding the difference between reverential and irreverent worship. What would you say of the parent who engages in over-celebration? 9 times out of 10, that celebration isn't really about the kid, but more about the parent. They're living vicariously through that kid. They've made it about them.
- And such is the case with much of modern American evangelical worship. We've lost the reverence because we've forgotten the essence of worship. We've made worship about what we like and how we feel and what we want and think rather than what God delights in and demands.

- This is especially true of churches which practice what is called the normative principle of worship. The normative principle of worship says that unless God has forbidden something then it is permissible in worship.
- This is opposed to what is called the regulative principle which says that unless something is commanded, then it's forbidden.
- You'll notice where we land on that spectrum by our liturgy here at Reformation. Every single week we have the same basic structure. We pray, read Scripture, preach, sing, partake of communion, and then encourage the body to stick around to linger and fellowship. All of that is explicitly biblical.
- I wouldn't go so far as to say that anything outside those boundaries is necessarily sin, but I would say that by sticking to those boundaries, we can greatly avoid making our worship frivolous and flippant.
- One of the things we want to communicate is the sanctity of this morning. There is something different about Sunday as we gather to hear the Word. The average person hears and reads tens of thousands of words every day and the vast majority we can ignore.
- Every advertisement, every spam email, every wrong number text, all of these words float through our lives like ticker tape, without substance or meaning.
- And yet there is a warning attached to the words we read and hear on Sunday mornings.
- As we began this morning.
- *See that you do not refuse him who is speaking.*
- God is speaking. Even now. He is saying my Son is all-sufficient. My Son is better. My Son has made atonement. My Son has sat down at my right hand. Therefore draw near. Don't drift. Hear and heed. Obey. Submit.
- Draw near with confidence, but not arrogance. With reverence and awe for the fear of the LORD is the beginning of all wisdom and our God is a consuming fire.
- That's a quote that takes us back to the wilderness and Dt 4.
- In 4:21-22 we read:
 - *Furthermore, the LORD was angry with me because of you, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance. For I must die in this land; I must not go over the Jordan. But you shall go over and take possession of that good land. (Deuteronomy 4:21-22)*
- Why couldn't Moses enter the land? Because he didn't sanctify the worship of God. Because he struck the rock rather than simply speak to it. He treated God's word lightly. In that moment he didn't worship with reverence and awe. When God rebukes Moses He says;
 - *And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them." (Numbers 20:12)*
- That seems like such a harsh response. Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it and so he never enters the promised land. Why is God so angry?
- But even asking that question shows how irreverent we are, how accustomed we are to tiny compromises, how little we think of God's holiness and our absolute obligation to submit. We've forgotten that the slightest trespass is infinitely offensive because God is infinitely good.
- Keep going.
- In 4:23 we read
 - *Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. (Deuteronomy 4:23)*

- See how that also corresponds to acceptable worship with reverence & awe. The warning against idols is a warning to beware of worshiping what you please in any way in which you please. God defines the boundaries of our worship.
- And immediately after that, Moses says:
 - *For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.* (Deuteronomy 4:24)
- In other words, God demands not merely worship, but that we worship Him in ways that He regulates, God demands not only THAT we worship, but that we worship the right being in the right way.
- Starting next week we'll see a number of ways in which God has regulated our worship which extend well beyond the corporate gathering and encompasses our entire lives.
- We'll read about how acceptable worship touches upon brotherly love, hospitality, sexuality, financial generosity, submission to authority, suffering and so forth.
- We serve a God who has spoken. We serve a God who still speaks, not a new word, but the final word about His Son. So may we be a people who listen. Who hear and heed the word of our God who is a consuming fire.
- Let's pray.

Communion

- Fence table
- As we partake today, I want to do so in light of our passage which told us to not refuse the one who is speaking.
- And that relates to communion which John Calvin called "a kind of visible word." In communion, the invisible word is made visible.
- We see a representation of the body of Christ broken for us, of the blood of the Son shed for us. We taste and see that the Lord is good.
- We taste the bitterness of sin and death, but also the sweetness of redemption and resurrection.
- And as a visible word, there is thus an objective reality to this meal.
- The meal is a means of grace. As we partake we are objectively sanctified.
- And that should cause gratitude. In fact, the historic name of this meal was the eucharist which is from the Greek eucharistos which means to give thanks.
- So let's spend a few minutes examining our hearts for residual sin and expressing gratitude to our Lord and then we'll partake together.
- On the night...