

Hebrews 12

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[0 : 00] The reading is Hebrews chapter 12, which you will find, as will I, on page 1210.

Hebrews chapter 12. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

In your struggle against sin, you have not resisted to the point of shedding blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, Endure hardship as discipline.

God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.

[1 : 36] Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of Spirits and live? They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.

Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.

See to it that no one falls short of 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.

Afterwards, as you know, when he wants to inherit his blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire, to darkness, gloom, and storm, to a trumpet blast, or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word would be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded.

[2 : 59] If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death. The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, I am trembling with fear. But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time, his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, once more, I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens. The words, once more, indicate the removing of what can be shaken, that is, created things, so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. This is the word

of the Lord.

[4 : 17] Thanks, Christina. Good morning. Do you want that back? No? Okay. My name is Darren, for those of you who don't know me.

When I agreed to do this sermon, I didn't realize it was the Wimbledon final and the World Cup final, and I also didn't anticipate the trickiness of the subject we're going to be looking at this morning. I just thought, oh, Hebrews. Hebrews is amazing. It's about all these stories of faith. But then you do come to this chapter, which, there's just no two ways about it. It's a passage which outlines that in the trouble and trials of life, that somehow God might be using that for us, for our good, for our holiness.

I don't know what you think about that subject, but for me, that's quite a troubling thing, like the idea that pain can have meaning. But it's a key, Hebrews outlines, to what endurance is about.

And that's what this passage is about. Michael gave the exact same caveat last week that I'll give. There's way too much in this chapter. I'm not going to go through this verse by verse or even section by section.

[5 : 23] But I hope that as we look at it, we'll look at the main beats as this kind of letter comes to a close. This letter is like a deeply pastoral and public letter to a group of people who are on the brink of giving up.

They're in a culture where they're so oppressed that they're done with this. I have not signed up for this would be the message they might give the new and early church. This was not part of the deal. And so we come to the end, to the climax of this letter that has been putting forward this argument, but more than an argument, an appeal to not give up on Christ because he has never given up on you.

As we come to this section, it is in the reality of life that somehow God might be using that. I'm going to pray and then we'll get into this a wee bit. Jesus, I thank you that when we look to you, when we consider you one of the commands in this passage, we do not see an absent God or a God who stands in the sidelines, but one who entered into human history, one who enters into each one of our lives.

And I pray that as we look at this this morning, regardless of where we're coming from, whether we think life's been some easy joyride so far or life has been really difficult, that you'd help us to engage with you in the fullness of who you are as the God who's the king and the God who suffers. I ask that in Jesus' name. Amen. This week, I went... Have any of you seen this film? It actually only came out two days ago. I'd be very surprised. The First Reformed is a new movie that has come out this week about...

[6 : 55] Ethan Hawke plays this minister in a small American town. And the film is essentially him keeping a journal as he struggles to try and reconcile what has happened in his life.

His son has died. His wife has left him. He has cancer. And he's presiding over this small church at the bottom of the street where there's this huge mega church called Abundant Life. And Abundant Life talk about the positivity of life.

And he sits. He's a functioning alcoholic. Part of the reason he keeps this journal is because he is trying to endure. He knows that his experiences of Christ are real.

But his experiences of life are painful. And so this journal that he writes is to try and reconcile the two things. He does not want to give up because he believes God does not want to give up on him. Now, if you go and see the film, the film actually becomes very dark. But the movement behind it is one of what's it mean to try and engage well with the things that we know in life. And while he is there also trying to counsel this young couple at the same time who've got their own stuff going on in life.

[8 : 01] And that's part of what Hebrews is doing. Hebrews, I'm pretty proud of this slide. It took me ages to make. Outlines this amazing whole narrative that Jesus isn't just a bit better, that everything the people of God would have looked to to take their identity.

He outweighs the whole thing. So he is better than angels and the Torah because he is God's living word. He is better than Moses in the promised land because he brings new creation and rest. He's better than Melchizedek and the Old Testament priests because he brings full reconciliation with God. He's better than any sacrifice or any covenant because he brings the new covenant and he is the perfect sacrifice that closes the whole thing together.

So this is the theme through the whole of the book so far. It's not just life's a bit tricky, hang on with Jesus because he might see you through. It is a sweeping look at everything the Jewish people would have looked at to take identity, meaning go, Jesus isn't just a bit better than that. He is supreme. He is way over that. It's not like in a fight Jesus might come out every now and then or I don't know, in the way that Croatia are better than England. He is way over the whole thing. [9:13] He is supreme. He overtakes it and he makes it new and sturdy. And it's with that that the author then comes into this start where he says, life is like a race.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes in Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, sat down at the right hand of the Father. Now, I know Michael talked about this a bit last week, so I'm not going to go over what he talked about.

One of the things I found interesting when looking at this passage is the word for race is the word *agon*, which is where we get the word *agony*. It's where we get the words *wrestle*.

Life can be an agonizing *wrestle*. It is one of the first things that the author is saying here. How do we endure? Chapter 11 was all about this exact samples of faith.

[10:17] Look at these people who lived at faith. But actually, the other part of how you run this race is to endure. And right up front, when you look at these words, is this idea of an exercise.

There's elements. You'll know that if you've lived long enough. There are seasons of life where you grow through being pushed. I mean, I work part-time as a therapist, and that is essentially the story and the journey I go through with lots of people that in the moments where they feel weakest is actually where they're learning most about who they are.

It doesn't mean it's easy. It doesn't mean it's good. It doesn't mean it's not painful. There's something going on there where we are invited to *wrestle* or deny. I don't know what you think about that when you think about this subject of the idea that God might take things.

Take things that are happening in their day-to-day life. Excuse me. I should have brought some water up here. And then use it in a way that is like working through something in life. So before we go any further, I'm not just doing this as a water break.

I did actually plan to do this. I'd like you to stop for a couple minutes and actually talk to God about this idea. The idea that we're going to look at. The idea that actually life can be a *wrestle*.

[11:31] It can be an *agony* sometimes. And actually, that somehow God might use that, allow that, in order to produce holiness. That's where the passage is going to go. That's where we're going to go this morning.

So just for a couple minutes, I want you to sit, reflect, talk to God, and just ask Him and speak to Him as you think about that message, as you think about that subject. Where does it bring you to when you think like that?

Then I'll start again. Okay, I know that's not very long, but it's such a tricky subject.

I know for me, it's quite a tricky subject to speak about because as soon as I hear any sort of acknowledgement that some of the pain and trials that happen in life, that somehow God might be behind or be allowing, there's something instinctively that rises up in my heart that says, absolutely not.

No, thank you. I signed up for God who loves me and wants good to happen in my life. So that is not what I signed up for. Or I go the other end of the extreme, which is any bad thing that happens anywhere must be God's fault.

[12:32] And I have done something cosmically that I need to kind of like fix in order to get rid of it. Or for my first three or four years of being a Christian, I thought there was two types of Christians in the world.

There was the Christians God loved and gave lots of great things to. And there was the types of Christians where God was kind of like kicking through reality and you would just learn. You would learn to love the Lord. And I was definitely the second and all the people I see was perfect were the first.

And it's a very almost kind of karma way of looking at Christianity if I do a bad thing, God does a bad thing to me and the whole thing will come back into balance. And we do not affirm karma in the scriptures.

We affirm a God who is beyond that and through that and good in the midst of pain. When I am, a few years after I'd become a Christian, we experienced in my family this traumatic, like, breakdown. I mean, my family, I apologize if they're listening to this. There's no way they're listening to this. It was not the most stable thing in the world anyway, but we had this huge breakdown of every level of who we are.

[13 : 34] During my mom's third divorce, there was involved court cases, people went to jail, there was revelations of sexual abuse, there was manic depression, there was people being made homeless.

And I had been a Christian for a couple of years and I was like, and none of them had any active faith. And I was like, what on earth is this? This is not part of the deal. How could God be present in this?

And in the pain and the turmoil, I remember speaking to one or two people and I remember a couple of people saying to me, don't worry, God has a plan. And the kind of special type of anger raised up in me at that point.

I've never come so close to hitting somebody. I'm not a very violent person and I don't have a strong punch anyway, but it was like, I was furious. It was like, how dare you say something like that? How could you possibly now know God's plan in this?

And I was conscious when I was writing this, this is just a sermon of caveats, not actually talking about what the actual passage is talking about. But it's an important thing to speak about when we talk about God's plan.

[14 : 34] How do we use those types of phrase? So I'm quite conscious of how careful I need to be when we talk about it this morning. Because actually, the truth is, a few years down the line, I have seen God move powerfully.

Does that mean God made A to make B? I'm not saying that at all. But this idea that we can throw that phrase out like some sort of, I don't know, plaster that makes everything go away actually can create real pain in people when they engage with it.

And I actually think the passage really helps us when it says, when you say, fix your eyes on Christ, it's not a God who has a plan as in he's taking things off and going, yep, you've made it to stage three Christianity.

It says, fix your eyes on the one who suffered with you, who suffers for you. It's a God who's not alien to the concept of pain. It's a God who understands pain and goes with us. There's a couple of principles I want to just draw out quickly that when we talk about suffering in the Bible or trial or error or all the kind of pain that we might face, there's lots of different versions of it.

But two perspectives which are different but complement is that actually God hates evil and suffering in the world. We see that right from the beginning. This was not the way things were to be. The way the world was created is one of no pain, no suffering, not anger but actually deep union with God, self and others.

[15 : 52] And actually, I think you see this most acutely for me anyway when Jesus is at the tomb of Lazarus and he is at the death of his friend. Now, if I was Jesus and I was walking into that scenario and I knew for a fact I could raise someone from the dead, I don't know, how would you wander in?

I'd maybe wander in and say, hey, it's okay. Don't worry people. All things are sorted here. He also didn't wander in saying, all things work for the good of those who love the Lord. He wandered in with force and raged at a tomb.

He wept and was angry because there was something about what he was seeing that echoes the heart of God. But he also did something about it. He then raised Lazarus. That's the beauty of that story.

But actually, what you see of God's character in that moment is not a God who's ignorant but actually a God who deeply engages with the reality of pain because he himself has been through that.

He himself goes through it. But also we see, as we see here in this passage, there is something about the idea that God allows certain things to happen in our life as a form of exercise.

[16 : 56] All the imagery, when you look into some of the, if there's Greek scholars in here, you can correct me on it later, but when you look into a lot of the Greek of some of the words like discipline in here, it is like exercise. It has got this kind of training-ness to it that the author is trying to get across.

One of the words you will see later when it uses the word discipline. When we hear the word discipline, I think we hear like punishment or something you've done wrong.

Like we used to get, I mean, this might show my age, but in high school, we used to get discipline exercises. If you did something bad, you had to go and write whatever the teacher wanted you to write. I only got three in my entire time at high school.

I was quite proud of that. Far better than my brothers and sisters. But actually, the word carries connotations of the word, which we'll come on to later. I've been reading this book by Sam Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

Have any of you come across it? I've been reading it with this guy who's an atheist who's trying to make me an atheist. And I'm trying to make him a Christian. And he said to me, why don't you read anything I read?

[17:56] And I was like, oh, that's a fair point. So we've been reading this and Sam Harris' view of the world in a very microcosm is that he's really annoyed at religious people for claiming morality.

He doesn't like that. But he's really annoyed also at secular liberalism for saying, there's no morality. We just do whatever we want. He says, this leads to chaos and this leads to restriction. We need to find an answer.

Science, he believes, will find the answer and that we need to re-embrace morality. He uses words like morality and truth and well-being. And he says, we need to find it all in our heads. Actually, for me, it's a really dark, dark book.

It says there's no meaning beyond some formula we might crack in our head one day. If we crack that formula then society will be amazing. But his conclusion is we don't know how to do it. Nobody really knows how to do it. But if we get rid of religion, it might help.

That's essentially his conclusion. But he thinks the thing that draws the goodness of humanity that will get rid of all suffering is well-being. It's essentially happiness. The very thing he criticizes kind of secular liberalism for doing, he essentially says that's kind of the point.

[19:01] If we add a bit of religion, add a bit of that, we'll be fine. And it really gets to the heart for me of a worldview that says, why do I exist?

It's to be happy now. I don't know if that's why you think you're alive today or why a lot of people operate today, but it's to be happy now in the moment with no other concerns. The problem with that worldview is suffering will always destroy that worldview.

Any level of pain will come into direct conflict with the reason we live. If that's your worldview, it's to never have pain but to always be happy. I don't know how you go through life without having that worldview not only threatened but continually undermined.

It's one of the problems of the book. And actually, it doesn't really give you any tools or resources to know how to deal with pain when it comes along. He has no offer of how to deal with pain beyond if we put enough money into neuroscience we might figure it out.

And if we all do what we want, it might be okay but we can't all do what we want because that would be chaos as well. And it's just full, for me anyway, it's just full of contradictions. And instead, Hebrews puts forward this idea that actually there's something within the trials that we face that are good for us.

[20:18] In the same way that commitment will never grow unless it's challenged or patience never grows unless you're angered and pushed by people. There's a similar way that the author is using these words here.

And instead of a tool we have something different. The word discipline here in Greek is *paideia* which is where we get pediatric. The author is asking us to look at these things through the care of a God who's trying to allow his children to grow.

That's the whole thrust of this section of why we are to endure, why we run this race. The challenge is can you see the things that are happening? And when it says the sin in verse 4 he asks in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

That's got like a double meaning. It's the sin that personally wells up inside them. It's also the sin that's being done to them. It talks about Jesus enduring and how they're enduring by things that are done to them for the fact that they are trying to live faithful lives as believers in this community. and that God somehow in the way that a pediatrician might take a child and go look let's push this muscle here. And what are you doing when you push a muscle? You're pushing it to the point of weakness so that what?

[21 : 34] It can grow. It's a complicated idea I get but in a very basic way the author is asking the reader can you see the trials that you face in life through this lens?

As a God who's not absent a God who understands suffering and actually God who as a kind of great pediatrician if you want is helping and actually wanting something to change and transform which gets to the heart of what it means to be a Christian.

If Christianity is just some sort of ideal mindset you have in your head and you sit around until you go to a better place one day you've missed the thrust of the whole scriptures it is about this movement this dynamism within us as individuals in a community that as we change to grow more into the likeness of God that has a ripple effect in his world as he is branching out and claiming beauty and truth for himself it's a very powerful and transformative thing yet one of the ways we know I'm sure you know of how do humans best grow and transform is it through good happy times we just sit around and have a great time or is it actually in those moments where we're pushed where we're exposed and the stuff within us comes flying to the surface and I know for me that happens pretty much on a weekly basis last week I was in a rage of a mood for about three days because I found out how much my new council tax band was and I found out all these different parts of myself and I sat at a trial though it's a really annoying thing in my personal life but it's those things where I can still quite quickly go to do something about this it provokes this internal part of who we are that God says it's not just that that's bad it's actually

I've got something better for you moving you in a different direction in life and we give this which I find very helpful verse in verses five and six have you not completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his sons it says my son do not make light of the Lord's discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines the one he loves and he chastens everyone he accepts as sons I think this is quite a nuanced way of looking at our pain in life because enduring is not some sort of stoic I shall never have any reaction when bad things happen it's not like what will be will be or have a stiff upper lip mentality actually it's saying do not make light of the Lord's discipline it's actually saying don't pretend it's nothing don't cut yourself off from it don't pretend there's nothing going on here all that does is lead to a hardness of heart or bitterness as this passage we'll talk about later yet equally depending on your background how you've been brought up you will react potentially one of the two different cultures react in different ways but equally the other end of the extreme which is probably

I would argue maybe a more modern way of looking at things if any bad thing happens anywhere you just lose it do not lose heart this is the other extreme it's just like there's no hope this bad thing has happened and this is it it's game over and actually the only people the only person the only thing that can ever say there's no hope is something that is omniscient that sees all things that knows all things we can definitely feel like we're in places I definitely know I've felt in places where it feels absolutely hopeless but the reality of there being no hope is only something God could ever know and I think the writer is saying to go to that extreme you kind of lose yourself there as well and that's why I think Christianity is hugely unique because in a secular worldview suffering is absolutely meaningless pain is pointless it's just a evolutionary quirk we need to get rid of one day and actually you should expect it if we go through the world as just purely natural beings it's supposed to happen you shouldn't expect things other than unless you've made a little structure that can somehow defeat it and even those time after time are proved not really to stop anything yet also in pretty much any other faith

[25 : 43] I can think of or see we may have God they may have gods but they don't have a God who engages in suffering Christianity I think is hugely unique for this one philosophy alone in some respects it's not a God who's absent and just looks at the mess of the world and goes well I've got nothing to do with this I don't care yet equally it is not something where it's just chaotic mess and therefore meaningless our pain our tears have got no meaning absolutely no direction at all just in shouting and screaming into the void because what else should you do our God suffers for and with us that's part of the joy that was set before him what was the joy that was set before Christ it was the joy of the father's will and what was the father's will to reclaim a people for himself therefore the joy that was set before him is us this is part of the reason he suffered is that he would bring a people back to himself so that he may be glorified through the very nature of those people going through the same process of where's our God he is here he is true he is good in pain and in good times in beauty and in the uglier parts of life can you go to the next side please and this is where

I think for I don't know for you but for me this is where it gets even more into the nitty gritty of why like why what is the point of enduring why do this why let God or even acknowledge a God who might allow things to happen well the author says in verse 7 endure hardship as discipline God is treating you as children for what children are not disciplined by their father and then he goes on to say they disciplined us for a little while as they thought best but God disciplines us for our good in order that we may share in his holiness there's that caveat there of your parents did as best as they thought which I think is a great acknowledgement to a huge mess of things that happened throughout world history but that's a different sermon but this idea that this paideia is for our good to share in our holiness which gets at really one of the cores of something I really struggle as as a Christian actually God is more for my good than I am even when I think I've got the best intentions for me

God is like no I've got far better intentions for you not just intentions what you do but who you are and who we are is wrapped up in his concept of holiness and God's holiness is about his power his power to God is the source of holiness and he is the definition of holiness he is the power to create as much as anything else he didn't he wasn't just like the best thing in creation he made creation he has the power to make and sustain but within that he also has the purity of goodness of beauty of justice of all the things that we look at and experience the world and go yes to that is part of the expression of God's holiness and there is something about that that he is drawing us into and the scriptures are quite clear that when we are exposed to God's holiness there is something in us that either makes us crumble away in fear there is loads of Old Testament examples of people who are exposed to the reality of God and they freak out and get me out of here because there is something raw when you are in the presence of such goodness but that is the reaction we have we might not like it but that is the reaction

I put the sun up there because I found that a helpful analogy it is like the sun is 96 million miles away yet we spend too long on it we get burned because in our solar system it fits the definition of holy in the universe it doesn't but in our solar system it provides power that gives life so it is raw power that produces life it is like a little example of how God is like yet does that mean I can go and have a picnic on the surface of the sun and expect to have a great old time no I would be absolutely incinerated it is a ridiculous idea but sometimes when we come close to the holiness of God and our flaws are exposed it would be like saying to the sun why are you so hot we do that I do that to God it would be like whenever he comes close and impresses something in my heart that reveals a part of my character I don't like I am like why have you got to be like this why have you got to be so uptight this is the nature of who God is and when we come into that presence it is shaky ground and that is where we end up in this passage the author goes on to compare two mountains

Sinai and Zion and that shaky ground that holiness when exposed without Christ is Sinai that is what the old test he goes on to talk about yeah the two mountains you came not to the mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire to darkness gloom and storm to a trumpet blast and one of the challenges with Hebrews is it's so part of the reason it's called Hebrews it's because it's written to people with a high level of knowledge of the old testament it is calling back to when the people of God out of slavery are now at the mountain God appears in his holiness and they are petrified they are like absolutely not and then later they're like they even say to Moses you go talk to him we don't have to talk to God we won't even be near him we're afraid we might die and that is one of the tensions that Hebrews is getting at that this holiness that is being developed in each one of us for our good to be more made into the character of God is actually quite in and of itself huge so powerful and exposing that it highlights our brokenness and our deficiencies and doesn't what do we do other than cower away in fear whereas with Zion the mountain where Christ dwells the new kingdom that is not the place you're left and that's the the heart of this if Jesus is better than this is Jesus is better than this actually in the raw crucible of life when you look to faith to try and endure but actually there's these things that are happening that God might take the outward brokenness of the world that we all see of war and poverty and racism and violence and somehow press against the inner brokenness of me and that exposes something and God says that is like me being a paediatrician because I want you to become something better and not something that just coers at the face of Sinai but actually is invited into Zion to this new party

[32 : 03] Zion is described like the greatest party of all time it is this place where God celebrates because of his son verse 22 but you have come to Mount Zion the city of the living God the heavenly Jerusalem you have come to thousands upon thousands of angels and joyful assembly to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven you have come to God the judge of

all to the spirit of the righteous made perfect to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel a better word than the blood of Abel what is that better word well Abel the innocent man was killed by his brother the malice and violence of the world whereas Jesus his blood was shed for the very people who would do things like that to welcome them into a new creation his blood is better because it wasn't just an innocent man that stands as an example like Abel but it was blood that was spilled that covers all of creation somehow and says you do not look at Sinai anymore as your primary relationship with God but Zion it's the same holiness of God it's the same power and intensity of who he is but because of this mediator we are now allowed access and that access changes us through and through doesn't mean it's painful verse 11 actually talks about how it's painful no discipline seems pleasant at the time but painful but later on it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace that those have been trained by it if we pick up as a church community that the way you deal with pain and struggling in life is just to be completely self-sufficient and be fine and just muddle on through unless things come really bad then you might ask somebody to pray for you then you're probably not following the tone of the scriptures

Jesus valued honesty even to the point where people couldn't express what they were thinking about all they could do was cry a broken and contrite heart the Lord does not despise in this journey we are not to just be quiet we are to look to Christ we are to seek him the one who endured the cross and suffered for us because he says I suffered for you in your suffering now seek me essentially where the whole of the letter goes in your pain and in your day to day reality do not think I am absent I know fully and actually I might be doing something in this that is good that is a hard message and I actually looked 10 years further I was home last weekend and I looked 10 years further down the line of that event I was telling you is my family sorted absolutely not they are wonderful human beings but they are not sorted but I cannot but deny that I have seen my mother come to faith my brother come to faith my stepbrother come to faith I have experienced reconciliation with my father in a way I never thought was possible definitely not perfect but it is definitely going somewhere to say that God made all this happen so all this would happen I don't know I don't know how you say things like that but to say can you trust that God in the midst of this might be using this stuff to do something new to do something beautiful that reflects what his creation is all about can we trust that that is the invitation of Hebrews in this reality can you trust that if so endure do not budge that is what endure means don't stop following this man who has gone before you because he is more than a man he is a God who is a father who is like a paediatrician who is somehow using the things in our lives that might redeem something new and beautiful I am going to end there we are going to have some prayer ministry somewhere probably there and there if you want to use that feel free and then Andrew will come up Jesus thank you that you are our mediator we thank you that this passage ends with the reality that you are going to shake all of creation and the only good will remain and therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire

Amen God that can be Ephraada have a healing being there no people, in Xiao that can be about the they hope help theitié