

A Recipe for the Heart

Hebrews 10:32-34

Life Truth: Knowing the gospel builds enduring faith that overflows in joyful love towards God and others.

I. Intro. – What’s the question that needs to be answered?

A. Introductions

1. Greeting and where is Pastor Mike? Not grieving over the Vikings but serving some folks in NJ.
2. Read the focal passage.
3. Pray and introduce title.

B. Biblical Context

1. Painting the picture.
 - a. I’d like to start with looking at vv. 32-34 a little more closely, then expand to the verses before and after, and then look at what’s going on in the book of Hebrews as a whole.
 - b. So, let’s look at the plain meaning of our focal passage first, verse by verse.
 - c. Now, the verses that complete chapter 10, based on what has come before, give a challenge to endure and not shrink back into the old covenant of works, the old life, or the things this world has to offer. The encouragement is to keep the faith and to have faith like you did in the former days; right after God saved you from the penalty of your sins. As a matter of fact, chapters 10-12 are all about encouraging us to have enduring faith, joy, and love based on the truths of the gospel, even in the midst of suffering.
 - d. You see, the book of Hebrews is a sermon, written to Jewish Christians who were in or had just come out of some intense suffering and persecution, encouraging and challenging them with this truth, “To have Jesus is better than anything else, so don’t go back to your old life.”
 - e. One of the ways the author is encouraging them to endure is to help them recall the faith, joy, love, etc... they had when they were first saved.

2. There have been times in my life where God has used the testimonies of the early church to encourage, challenge, and convict me. Chapters 10-12, including vv. 32-34, are examples of some of those.

C. Life Context

1. Kevin's Jesus Story – Joy in ministry, service, and suffering.
2. Kevin's Legalism Story – Duty in ministry – No Joy – I believe many of you share a similar story.
3. As we look at vv. 32-34, we're encouraged and challenged at the same time.
4. To quote an old Steven Curtis Chapman song, "What kind of joy is this?" What kind of love is this? What kind of faith is this? How can I get or rekindle this kind of passion for Jesus?

II. Body – While not exhaustive, I believe vv. 32-34 give us a glimpse into the lives of these early Christians and what helped them endure, but not just endure...but endure with gospel feelings toward God, each other, and the lost world around them.

- A. The Former Days (v. 32-34) – Once again, the writer is encouraging them to rekindle the passion they once had, characterized by...
1. Compassionate Ministry and Joyful Suffering – the feelings that undergirded their ministry and suffering were compassion and joy.
 2. Enduring Faith – It was through an enduring faith that compassionate ministry and joyful suffering overflowed.
 3. Knowledge of the Gospel – This faith flourished and was grounded in knowing what God had done for them and where they were going...a better possession and abiding one.
 4. So, not only is the writer asking them to recall their former days of enduring faith but is giving them instruction on what will help them rekindle their passion for Jesus, even in the midst of suffering. This instruction is true for us today, which is:

Life Truth: Knowing the gospel builds enduring faith that overflows in joyful love towards God and others.

B. Fact, Faith, Feeling Evangelical Slogan

1. But how can we practically apply this truth to our lives?

2. I believe a popular slogan among older evangelicals gives us some guidance here.
3. Dangers of a slogan → Works - Natural or Supernatural? Formula - Train or Recipe? Well, a little of both. It can be a recipe for the heart, however, to help us sustain or rekindle our passion for Jesus and others.
4. Let's go back to when God first saved you from the penalty of your sins. The same process that led to our salvation is the same process God uses to sustain us and rekindle our passion for Jesus. Let's look at the order of salvation very simply...
5. Fact – Romans 10:17, and the whole book of Hebrews for that matter, points us back to the gospel for the purpose of building our faith.
 - a. John Piper says, "Faith is born and sustained by the Word of God..." - John 20:31
 - b. I love what PM said last week about Jesus being on every page of the Bible. The Word of God is the Word of Christ. I've also heard it said, "The OT is Jesus concealed and the NT is Jesus revealed." It is in the hearing of the gospel of Jesus, that faith is born and it is in the continued hearing of this gospel that faith endures or is rekindled.
 - c. What is the gospel in four words? Jesus died for sinners. Paint the picture.
 - d. Therefore, take every opportunity to hear, read, meditate, memorize, and share the gospel. It is of first importance, according to Paul. Jesus and Him crucified was his clarion call. CJ Mahaney says in The Cross Centered Life...start with the facts, but it's not just the facts ma'am, it's fact that leads to faith and feelings.
6. Faith – Ephesians 2:8 and Galatians 5:6 – It is through faith that you were saved and it is through faith that feelings overflow into acts of ministry and sacrifice. Faith will express itself through the fruit of the Spirit. Romans 15:13 speaks of joy and peace in believing; Philippians 1:25 speaks of joy of/in the faith. Life Truth again. Piper once again says, "Faith is born and sustained by the Word of God, and out of faith grows the flower of joy."
7. Feeling – Galatians 5:22 – The fruit of the Spirit is not duty, obligation, performance, or perfection but fruit that is filled/tied to feelings. Now, sometimes it's good to feel a sense of obligation or necessity when the feelings aren't there, but the fight to feel deeply about God and others, and to not allow your Christian life to slide into mere duty or obligation, is an ongoing battle. God's ideal for you is for the truth of the gospel to so permeate the inner man that faith explodes into passion for Him and others.
8. Kevin's battle – One of my battles is sliding back into thinking and acting as though mere duty, obligation, or service is a Christian virtue. From the time I became a Christian, I've had periods of falling back into mere works, but God has always been faithful to remind me of the grace He has shown me through the cross. Just like the writer in Hebrews, God is challenging us today to recall the former days of enduring faith that expressed itself in the passion we had for Him and

others, and the gospel of grace that made it all possible. Fact, Faith, Feeling...a recipe for the heart, if you will.

III. Conclusion – Who’s our example?

- A. There’s a testimony that points to the one who is our example. The testimony and execution of Tokichi Ichii. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
- B. Look to Jesus, Hebrews 12:1-2.
- C. Where do you find yourself today? Is your life characterized by passionate love, joy, faith...is Jesus your treasure today...or is your life characterized by joyless duty and service? The words of Hebrews are saying to us today...there is a better way, a more abiding one...let’s ask God to help us recall and rekindle the former days...or help you start today by receiving Him by grace through faith...His mercies are new every day... let’s pray.