

DAY 37 WEDNESDAY

HEBREWS 12:12-17 STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

¹² Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ¹³ “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

¹⁴ Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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.

We struggle in this life as a community. Using the herd-predator relationship from nature, we can see that we are never so vulnerable as when we become isolated from the group. The rule of the jungle hunter is to disperse, isolate and kill. Therefore as the body of Christ we need to think not just about ourselves, or even foist all the responsibility on our human leaders, but we must all take care for one another.

In this life, with all the pressure to conform to the ways of the world and our own rebellious and self-centered nature, discouragement and despondency are constant threats. We must take the love and concern of God, even that which is expressed in discipline, and use it to encourage one another in that God has not left us helpless. We are to show God’s concern for others through our concern for them. Through our example and ministry, we are to level the path for our weaker or wounded brothers and sisters.

The glue that holds the Christ community together, and is the only adhesive that can withstand the shear forces of this life, is a God-centered unity. Such a unity is not a passive state of existence, but a condition that is only established and maintained by concerted effort. Being inherently selfish, it takes a lot of effort to live in peace with others. Another consequence of our naturally rebellious natures is that we cannot approach holiness without much toil. In addition, without vigilance and constant reminders of God’s grace, bitterness and despair will grow in the community like crabgrass in a well fertilized lawn. But the effort is worth it. As we witness from the story of Esau, what we do here, both as individuals and a community, has eternal consequences.

Lord Jesus, may my heart be strengthened by your grace to be able to extend that grace to others. May my arms be strengthened that I might support those who are wavering. May my spirit be conformed to your Spirit that I might live a holy life pleasing to you. In all things may I always take delight in you. Amen.