



# Sermon Growth Guide

**February 23, 2025**

**God Sends a People - Hebrews 12:14-24**

**Key Verse:** Hebrews 12:23

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.

**Big Idea:** Having put our hope in Jesus, our transformed lives will be signposts to God's Kingdom.

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## Foundations

The Letter to the Hebrews is a masterful explanation of how Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises contained in the Old Testament. It is, as well, strong encouragement to keep moving forward in the life of faith.

The recipients, Jewish Christians, were undergoing some form of persecution and hardship and were tempted to go back to the old familiar life of Judaism. The writer of Hebrews encourages them to persevere in their new-found faith.

We have seen how these hard-pressed believers have been inspired to view their hardships as God's way of training them and making them stronger. But they are also strongly encouraged to move forward...to "run the race."

The writer compares their former life and their new faith using the imagery of the mountains of Sinai and Zion. We must be careful to not think of Sinai as bad, because the Lord did good things with His people there. The law came to God's people on Sinai. But on Mount Zion we find the cross.

And in finding the cross at Zion, we realize that we could never fully keep the law given in the past, but it was kept and fulfilled for us by Jesus. At Sinai only Moses could approach God, but in Zion, an innumerable company joins together in joyful worship and celebratory praise.

## Understanding God's Word

Together read Hebrews 12: 14-17. Pay particular attention to verse 14: Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. This is a strong command and fulfilling it risks falling back into the fear of legalism. What are specific ways in which keeping this instruction supports God's mission to see His Kingdom grow on earth? What is the connection between holiness and sharing good news?

## Applying God's Word

This passage tells us not to let the "root of bitterness" take hold in the life of the church. The Greek word that is used for "root" is riza, from which we get the English word rhizome. A rhizome is a horizontal weed that shoots up stalks all along its length. Pulling up rhizomes, like Johnson grass in Texas, is a frustrating task - you never just pull up one weed. Read Deuteronomy 29:18-29. According to that text, what causes this root to grow? How can we prevent its growth?

## Witnessing God's Word

Hebrews 12 is a powerful reminder that it is not just our personal lives that bear witness to the Kingdom. We must nurture carefully our life together so that others can "see the Lord (verse14)." In what ways can you contribute to the gracious and peaceful life of the church? How can you join God's Mission in pointing others to the Savior?