

## Lent Devotional February 26, 2020

### Scripture

Hebrews 12:1-14

*1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children—"My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished by him; 6 for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts." 7 Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? 8 If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children. 9 Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share his holiness. 11 Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

### Devotional

#### **The Rev. Dr. Darrell W. Yeaney '56, Specialized Ministry (2005)**

The writer of the Book of Hebrews is unknown, but his intention is clear. Writing to Jewish Christians in the first century CE, he was keenly aware of the struggles faced by people of faith who lived in the pagan and polytheistic empire of Rome. That is why his writing is as explicit and clear as it is helpful to us today.

Our world may be scientifically and technologically far advanced over the writer's known world—the pagan world of the Roman Empire—but it is no less brimming with false gods. We have grown up in a secular culture where our idols are fame, power, wealth, and pleasure—all modern symbols of success.

Yet as Christians we know, and are reminded especially during this period of Lent, of the lures that lead folks—including ourselves—into what the Scriptures call "sin," a life forgetful of God's presence and call to unselfish, compassionate living. The writer of Hebrews reminds us followers of Jesus that the remedy to keep us from these modern, powerful, social distractions of success is the same as that in the first century: "keep your eyes on Jesus."

### Prayer

Dear Lord of the universe, of time, and of our lives, give us the wisdom and courage to heed the insights of the writer of the Book of Hebrews as we face the attractions of today's false gods. Give us the wisdom to be aware of the misleading lures of our popular culture. And give us the courage to turn away and set the eyes of our hearts on Jesus. Amen.