

Life Group Notes
Sunday 03 March 2019

Speaker: Andy McCullough
Title: Mount Invisible - City of the Living God
Passage: Hebrews 8:18-25

You have not come to Sinai (verse 18-21)

Mount Sinai is a remote, brooding, bleak, intimidating hunk of rock in the desert. God revealed himself in physical manifestation on this mountain: fire, darkness, earthquake, trumpet blast and a terrifying Voice. At Sinai, the Law was given, the 10 commandments on Stone. The overwhelming vibe of Sinai is a sense of fear. Believers are told in this verse, “*You have not come to Sinai.*” It was a signpost on the journey, not the destination. Church and Christianity are not grim, fearful, or law-centric.

o what have we come, then? (22-25)

You have come to Zion... Jerusalem (Mount Zion) was very different to Sinai. A busy, colourful city. At festival time, people from many different places would visit... This is closer to the reality of the church, says the author. But he wants the listeners to imagine that picture on a *heavenly* scale. The reality is a spiritual, invisible, heavenly mountain-city. Countless thousands of angels in a joyful (festal) gathering. *Instead of fear, the overwhelming vibe here is joy!* It is a city where believers are citizens. We come, not to Moses, but to God himself. It is centred on a New Covenant brought by Jesus. The Old Covenant was law, stone, inflexible. The New Covenant is life, grace, energy (II Corinthians 3:3). And the blood of Christ speaks forgiveness not judgement.

And then we have this warning; don’t refuse him! *We are now under grace, not law. We are motivated by joy, not fear. By delight, not duty.* For all these reasons, says the Author, the demand on us is even greater!

The Unshakeable Kingdom (26-29)

Earthquakes are a sign of de-creation and re-creation. The old landscape is removed and something new is introduced. *There was an earthquake at Sinai (Exodus 19:18).* The people went from slaves to sons, and their old world of slavery was removed. *There was an earthquake on Calvary (Matthew 27: 51).* The death of Jesus had cosmic significance. The old world was shaken and changed, and a new world was coming forth. *There will be an earthquake at the End (Revelation 6:12),* the completion of what started at the cross. Everything that we have done with our lives will be shaken, and only the unshakeable will remain. We are not scared of the presence of God, but we are afraid that we might have wasted our lives (I Corinthians 3:13-15).

Two challenges from this passage: **See the invisible:** “Fix your eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” II Corinthians 4:18. **Build the unshakeable.** Invest in the unshakeable kingdom of God.

Questions for application:

1. What does it mean that the Christian life is not dominated by fear, but by joy? How have you experienced this?
2. What is the difference between the Old Covenant at Sinai and the New Covenant given by Jesus Christ?
3. Joy is a better motivation than fear. Do you agree? How have you experienced this?
4. Read Matthew 27:45-54. What resonances of Mount Sinai do you see here on Mount Calvary?
5. What does it mean to invest in the unshakeable kingdom of God? What kinds of works do you think will stand in the final judgement?