DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

Our text, <u>Hebrews 12:18-24</u>, is an extended contrast between Mt. Sinai (where the covenant was delivered to Moses) and "Mt. Zion," where the covenant instituted in Christ is celebrated.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

- Right after Moses repeated the Ten Commandments in Deut 5, he reminded the people of the terrifying physical phenomena they had observed at Mt. Sinai, where the Law was first given. He then reminded them of how they reacted to what they had seen and heard. How did they react? (See Deut 5:22-26.)
- 2. After detailing the experiences of the people at Sinai, the writer turns to the marvelous experiences of Mt. Zion. The verbal phrase "you have come to..." has several objects. What are the delights that God's people have "come to" in Christ and the New Covenant?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

Each of the objects completing the verbal phrase ("you have come to..." v. 22-26) is a glimpse into the glories and delights of the Gospel. What good news about Jesus do these phrases refer to?

- "the heavenly Jerusalem" How is it different from the earthly Jerusalem?
- "innumerable angels in festal gathering" What are the angels celebrating? (See Luke 15.)
- "the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" How does the blood of Jesus "speak a better word" than the blood of Abel? (See also Heb 11:4.)

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SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

Our text highlights the difference between the terror God's people experienced at Mt. Sinai and the delight we will know in "Mt. Zion," where we will celebrate the gracious goodness of God.

- 1. Mt. Sinai, where God gave the Law, bellowed smoke and fire, and only Moses was permitted to ascend, to receive the Law on behalf of the people of God.
 - There are two main errors with regards to God's Law. One is legalism, assuming that keeping the Law makes us right with God. Legalism is appealing to human vanity because it gives us a sense of control. Have you ever been tempted by the error of legalism? How have you dealt with that temptation?
 - Another error with regards to the Law is to reject God's authority altogether. That error is endemic in our highly individualized society, where sincerity is the highest test of truth and personal autonomy is treated as sacrosanct. Have you been tempted by that error? How have you dealt with it?
- 2. On the other hand, Mt. Zion, where we will enjoy the goodness of God, will be teeming with life and joy. Everyone in God's Kingdom will be amazed that he or she could be included in the family of God. What is most amazing to you about the goodness of God in your life?