

Sermon #1888 — Miscellaneous Sermons

Title: **“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”**

Text: Hebrews 12:1-2

Subject: *The Life of Faith*

Date: Sunday Evening — January 16, 2011

Tape # AA-03

Readings: *Merle Hart and Frank Hall*

Introduction:

After supper Monday night, my grandson Will called to ask me about the meaning of Hebrews 12:2. He was specifically interested in the meaning of those words by which the Holy Spirit here describes our Savior, “*the Author and Finisher of our faith.*” I don’t know about you, but I find it much more difficult to answer the questions of a nine year old boy than I do the questions of an old man with a string of degrees behind his name, especially questions about the Scriptures and the things of God. Anyway, I gave Will the best clear, brief answer I could, an answer that I was certain is correct. But I wasn’t satisfied. So I started studying. Tuesday morning I wrote to him and gave him a fuller, more complete answer to his question. When By the time I finished answering my grandson’s question, I knew I had my message for you tor tonight. So turn with me to Hebrews 12.

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

(Hebrews 12:1-2 AV) “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Here the Holy Spirit is urging us to go on in faith, to persevere to the end, running with patience the race that is set before us, enduring hardships, overcoming difficulties, resisting temptations, laying aside every weight of care that would hinder us and the sin that so easily besets us. In a word, the Lord God here calls for every believing sinner to make whatever sacrifice is necessary, and do whatever it takes, no matter what the cost may be, and follow Christ.

You see, the claims of grace are universal. The Lord God claims dominion over our whole life. If we would follow Christ, nothing can be held in

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

reserve. Either He is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. Upon what grounds can such sacrifice, such commitment, such consecration and devotion be expected? How can reasonable, responsible men and women be expected to live such a life? What will inspire such devotion? What will effectually motivate a person to such wholehearted consecration? You will find the answer right here, in Hebrews 12:2.

(Hebrews 12:1-2) “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before *us*, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The title of my message is — **LOOKING UNTO JESUS.**” Oh, may the Lord our God give us grace ever to be found looking unto Jesus!

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

Proposition: The only way we can run the race set before us, the only way we can live in this world by faith, the only way we can enter into the glory and bliss of eternal life with Christ is by “*looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.*”

ONE POINT

I have but one point I want to make in this message. I want to declare just one thing. I want to inspire just one thing. I pray that God the Holy Spirit would drive this one thing home to our hearts and give us grace to heed his word to us in this text. All right, here’s my message...

Divisions: Salvation is “*looking unto Jesus.*” **If we would persevere in faith, if we would continue in the grace of God, if we would keep our hearts in the love of God, we must ever be found “looking unto Jesus” as...**

1. The Object of Our Faith.
2. The Author of Our Faith.
3. The Pioneer of our Faith.
4. The Finisher of Our Faith.

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

5. The Goal of Our Faith.

Hold your Bible open at Hebrews 12:2. I want to try, to show you at least a little of that which God the Holy Spirit has set before us in this verse.

THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH

“*Looking unto Jesus*” — **The Lord Jesus Christ is the Object of our faith.** These three words are much, much fuller than our English translation suggests. They are immense. — “*Looking unto Jesus!*” The words would actually be more accurately translated — “Looking away unto and into Jesus.” — **Salvation is “looking unto Jesus.”**

- **Salvation begins, in the experience of it, with looking to Christ.** — “*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else*” (Isaiah 45:22).
- Salvation is here described **in its continuance** as “*looking unto Jesus.*”
- **Salvation ends in exactly the same way,** “*looking unto Jesus.*” — It is written, “*And they shall see his face!*”

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

(1 John 3:2) “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

The Holy Spirit calls for us to turn our eyes away from everything else and fix them upon the Lord Jesus Christ alone. If we would be saved, we must look to Christ alone. If we would continue in the grace of God, we must look to Christ alone. Let him have no rival!

Look to Jesus! Look to Jesus!
Look away to Christ our God!
None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good!

- **Look away from that great cloud of witnesses** to Christ. They will be a hindrance to faith if they keep you, in any way from looking to Christ.
- **Look away from yourself** to Christ. Looking to yourself will keep you from looking to Christ. Look away to Christ for eternal life. —

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

Redemption — Justification — Faith —
Repentance — Mortification — Sanctification —
Preservation!

- **Look away from the course** you must run unto Christ. If you spend you soul’s energy looking at the course, you will soon be overwhelmed.
- **Look away from other runners** in the race to Christ. Anything, anyone to whom you look, to any degree, takes your eyes off Christ. Look to Him alone and always!

These words, “*looking unto Jesus,*” suggest that as we run our race looking to Christ alone, **we must ever be looking into Him.** We must look away to Christ, with the eye of faith, ever gazing into His infinitely glorious Person. Faith begins with but a glimmering revelation of the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The more we look unto Christ the more fully we see Him; and the more fully we see Him the more we see into Him and perceive who and what He is.

- A Willing Savior!
- A Suitable Savior!
- An Able Savior!

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

- An All-sufficient Savior!
- A Complete Savior!
- An Effectual Savior!

THE AUTHOR OF OUR FAITH

Read on — “Looking unto Jesus the Author of our faith.” The word translated “*Author*” is another word that is full of meaning. It is one of those Greek words that has no exact equivalent in English. This is the word that is used in Hebrews 2:10 when Paul calls the Lord Jesus Christ, “the Captain of our Salvation.” It comes from a root word that means “commence.” Here, Paul holds the Lord Jesus Christ before us as that One who is the Author of faith. He is the One who commences faith. We would have no faith, if He did not give it to us.

- All men are, by nature, without faith.
- Man does not possess the power to give himself faith.
- We believe by the exceeding greatness of God’s power working in us by His Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:19).

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

- Faith in Christ is the gift and operation of God in us (Ephesians 2:8; Colossians 2:12; Philippians 1:29).

THE PIONEER OF OUR FAITH

But there is more here than that. Notice that the word **“our”** is in italics, indicating that it was added by our translators. Without question, the Scriptures universally teach that Christ is the One by whom we have that faith that looks to Him alone as its Object. But the intent of the Holy Spirit here is to teach us that Christ is the One who is the great pioneer and example of faith. **He is telling us that we must look away to Christ as the Pioneer of our faith.**

That is to say, if we would know what it is to live and walk in this world by faith, we must look to Christ as **the Pioneer who struck out the path and blazed the trail** before us. Multitudes lived by faith in the Old Testament. Multitudes have lived by faith since. Multitudes live by faith today. But, if we would find a man who truly and perfectly lived by faith, if we would find an example to follow, we must look away

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

from all others, “*looking unto Jesus the Pioneer of our faith.*”

Yes, our blessed Savior lived in this world as a man by faith, ever trusting God. Let us follow His perfect example. He said, concerning the Lord our God and his God, “*I will put my trust in him*” (Hebrews 2:13). God the Father put His trust in His Son as our Surety, in the covenant of grace (Ephesians 1:13). And God the Son put His trust in the Father as a Man, while He lived in this world. What an example He is! What a pioneer trail He blazed for us to follow!

- He walked with God, looking always unto the Father, speaking and acting in childlike dependence upon the Father
- By faith He looked away from all discouragements, difficulties, and oppositions, committing His life and His cause to the Lord His God, who had sent Him, to the Father whose will He had come to fulfil.
- By faith He resisted and overcame all Satan’s temptations.

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

- By faith He endured all the trials brought upon him by His Father’s wise providence. — From Kinsmen — From Friends — From Enemies — From His Disciples — From Judas!
- By faith He performed all those signs and wonders in which the power and love and salvation of God were symbolized. — Before He raised Lazarus from the grave He thanked God, who heard His prayer.
- By our Savior’s example we are taught what it is to believe God, what it is to live by faith. Let us ever be “*looking unto Jesus the Pioneer of our faith.*” — He trusted in God. He gave us the command, “*Have faith in God,*” out of the fulness of His own experience.

(Proverbs 3:5-6) “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

THE FINISHER OF OUR FAITH

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

Look at our text again. — “*Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.*” — **Let us ever look away to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Finisher of our faith.** This word, “*Finisher*,” seems to have been coined by Paul himself. It is found nowhere else. Christ is the Object of faith. Christ gives faith. Christ sustains faith. And Christ consummates, completes, and finishes faith. But this word, “*Finisher*,” or Consummator, cannot be fully understood unless we read it in the context of this entire sentence.

(Hebrews 12:2) “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The Lord Jesus has finished faith. That is to say He has finished that whole work that makes Him the Object of faith. He has finished that for which faith looks to Him. And He has finished His own life and example of faith, because He is that One “*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,*

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

“FOR”

“INSTEAD OF” AND “BECAUSE OF”

With those words, the Holy Spirit here tells us how Christ finished faith. Again, **the word “for” could be properly translated in two ways.** Both translations are accurate. The word could be translated **“instead of.”** And it could be translated **“because of.”** An accurate explanation of this text requires that we interpret the word both ways. This is how the Lord Jesus Christ finished that great work of redemption by which He has become both the Object of our faith and the Example of it.

Instead of the joy set before Him, our blessed Savior endured the cross.

(2 Corinthians 8:9) “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

Now, read it the other way. — **Because of the joy set before Him, the Lord Jesus Christ endured the cross.** — “*The joy set before Him,*” the joy that sustained Him in all His soul’s trouble, sorrow, and agony was the joy of...

- Saving His People.
- Magnifying God’s Law and Making it Honorable.
- Glorifying God his Father.
- His Own Glory as our Mediator — The Glory He had with The Father before the Worlds Were Made — The Glory Promised Him as the Reward of His Obedience — The Glory He Now Enjoys Upon the Throne of God!

(Psalms 21:1-6) “The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! 2 Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah. 3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. 4 He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days for ever and ever. 5 His glory *is* great in thy

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. 6 For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.”

In order to save us the Son of God, the Lord of Glory, the Darling of Heaven, voluntarily “endured the cross, despising the shame.”

“O what shall I do my Savior to praise,
So faithful and true, so plenteous in grace;
So strong to deliver, so good to redeem,
The weakest believer that hangs upon Him?”

With what words can such a Savior be praised? He who endured the ignominy of the cross, despising the shame, because of His heart’s love and His soul’s determination to ransom my soul deserves infinitely greater praise than we can give Him to all eternity!

Because of His great love for us, the Lord Jesus Christ endured the cross. — He would not go back. He would not give up. He would not quit until He

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

had poured out His life’s blood unto death for us!
Yes, He endured all and endured to the end...

- The Wrath and Justice of God!
- The Torments of His Body!
- The Agony of His Soul!
- The Crushing of His Heart!

Because He loved us, the Lord Jesus despised the shame of the cross. What can be more difficult for a man to bear than shame? Yet, as Moses despised the riches of Egypt, counting them nothing, so the Lord Jesus despised the shame of the cross, that He might have us freed from sin and glorified forever with Him.

- The Shame Men Heaped Upon Him!
- The Shame of Being Made A Curse!
- The Shame of His Companions in Death!
- The Shame of His Our Sin and Guilt — Our Shame!
- The Shame of His Abandonment!

Now, watch this: — The shame is all gone! He who endured the cross, despising the shame for us, even

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

unto the end, now, *“is set down at the right hand of the throne of God!”*

- His work is finished.
- He has entered into His rest.
- His glory is full.
- His soul is satisfied.

THE GOAL OF OUR FAITH

Let us therefore encourage our hearts, ever looking away to Christ as **the Goal of our faith**. As he overcame and has been seated in his Father’s throne, so too, as we follow Him, persevering to the end, enduring whatever trial He sends us, despising whatever shame He has ordained, we shall soon be seated with Christ in His throne.

- Soon our work will be finished.
- Our rest will begin.
- Our glory will be full.
- Our souls will be satisfied!

(Hebrews 12:1-2) “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

He who is the Author of our Faith shall be the Finisher of our faith. He who began His work of grace in us will finish it in the end. The Lord who gave us grace will give us glory too. Look away to Christ, always to Christ, only to Christ, the Author and the Finisher of our faith, the Alpha and the Omega of our faith, the Beginning and the End of our Faith. Oh, may God give you grace to look to Him!

Amen.