

# Assurance of the Father

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**Bible Text:** Hebrews 12:1-11  
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And this will not be a typical sermon for me; I typically go verse by verse, phrase by phrase, word by word through a text of scripture, we just came through three weeks of Romans 12:1-2 at St. Andrews Chapel and preaching Exodus in the evenings now over the course of the past couple of years, but today we're going to look at Romans 12:1-11 and we're going to first consider verses 4 through 11, 3 through 11, then come back and look in more depth at verses 1 and 2. So if you would, please stand for the reading of God's word from Hebrews 12:1-11. This is the word of God.

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Well, the grass withers, the flower fades and our life is a vapor, the word of our Lord stands forever.

You may be seated.

Let's pray together.

*Our sovereign and gracious, our holy and loving Father, we thank you, we thank you for your love for us and we thank you, O Lord, that you have called us to Christ, that you have called us to worship. Lord, we ask this day that by the power of your Spirit that you would help us, that you would illumine your word to us because we need it in our lives, we need your help, O Lord, we need the Spirit's aid to understand what it is you're teaching us and how it is you are speaking to us through your word. So Lord, come to our aid and help us not only to understand your word today but to love your word, and to apply your word, to be doers of your word and not just hearers, and help us, Lord, to love you more with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and help us even to love our neighbor as ourselves and do this we pray, Lord, for your name's sake, not our name, for your glory and not our own glory, and do it, we pray, in the name of Christ and for his kingdom. Amen.*

Life is hard. It has so many challenges. It has so many perplexities. It has so many trials. And if you haven't noticed, what we are facing as Christians in this world and what we will continue to face likely in coming years and decades, what our children will face, what our grandchildren and great grandchildren will face, and the persecution that true Christians, those who really believe the Bible, those who really trust Jesus Christ, those who worship the Lord week in and week out with God's people publicly, those who observe the Lord's day and Sabbath, that we who are true Christians, who are truly striving to follow the word of God, we will, dearly beloved, begin to suffer persecution likely unlike those in these United States have ever experienced in our history. Persecution is coming. Trials are coming. Even in churches today we find it is very difficult to rebuke or to challenge, to exhort without offending, and so the persecution comes not only from the world and the trials that we'll experience in preaching the truth and preaching against things and preaching for things, that we will find that persecution will come also from within the church itself. Today it seems that some of the greatest persecution, some of the greatest trials that the church is experiencing is from within the church, it's from those within the church who would wish to destroy the church. Some of them creep in unnoticed but all by the powerful and demonic work of Satan sending his minions throughout the churches which he would wish to bring down and to divide and separate, so the church begins to persecute itself, first, by failing to preach the gospel, by failing to preach the word of God in season and out of season, by failing to preach the truth of God unvarnished.

So persecution from without, persecution comes from within, and the trials that the Christians and, in many ways, those Jews that were converted to Christ in the first century, that persecution was significant. It was no light persecution. Understand that they had trouble finding jobs. They were largely excommunicated or disfellowshipped from their families. They had trouble finding places to live where they would not be persecuted. And those who had converted to Christ were weary, they were weary of what all this meant for their lives and what this meant for their families, and what it might have meant for their future. So many of these newly converted Christians were considering

going back to the law, going back to the practices of the law and the traditions of the law; many of them were considering leaving the known visible body of Christ and sort of slipping back ever so quietly, if they could, back into Judaism so that they would not continue to suffer such persecution. This was not just spiritual battle for them, this was physical, familial battle for them. This affected every part of their lives and it was hard.

We can begin to talk to one another about our own faith and perhaps those of you who've converted from another religion, from a so-called Christian cult, those of you who left the worldliness of your family, of your father and mother, grandmother, grandfather, and have converted to Christ and have begun to live a life of holiness and godliness and separation from the world, they despise you, they look down upon you and most of those in the world consider us fools as we drove past neighbors and drove past people in our cars this morning, many of us seeming likely dressed for worship. I was talking with a brother who was surfing this morning, well done, but as we drove past, many of them looked at us and said, "Those foolish Christians. What are they doing? They're going to worship, they're going to sing and confess things. They're going to give of their time to this nonsense. They're giving even their hard-earned monies to this mission and to this church. How silly. How foolish. How ridiculous." The persecution is coming and we're beginning to see it through every church as so many Christians fail to even come to church. They just stopped coming altogether or they come only when it's absolutely convenient for them.

Now the Hebrews to whom the author is writing here, were suffering all sorts of persecution and they were questioning what they should do, and so the writer here gives to the Hebrews, to these newly converted Christians, a word of hope. After he gives to us this great litany, this beautiful list of heroes of the Christian faith that were sinful men and women that God used and that God in his sovereignty worked in and through them to accomplish his great purposes, sinful men and women that the Bible and that God himself extols because of their faith, and the good works in keeping with their faith, and throughout chapter 11 we read about this beautiful list of all these men and women that God used mightily for his purposes and for his glory. And in chapter 12, working towards the end of this letter to the Hebrews, this author gives to them words of challenge and words of hope and ultimately words of assurance, that they should know that during this testing and during this trial, during this race that has been set before them they should not grow weary of heart, they should not lose hope, they should not faint at the end of the race but they should persevere and keep going and remain steadfast, and as the great J. Gresham Machen said to his students once, stay the course for we have hope and we have assurance even when we feel like God is far away from us.

Look at what the writer says in verses 3 and following, "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." What's the purpose in considering Christ, in considering Jesus and what he's done, and who he is, and what he's doing, and what he will do? It's so that you would not grow weary, that you would not grow fainthearted. "In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." Christ shed his blood. "And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?" Notice what the author here is

doing, he's taking them back to scripture. You've forgotten. Have you forgotten?. Have you forgotten the exhortation, the admonition that comes from scripture? You know, so often in our lives when we doubt God's goodness and we doubt God's promises, when we doubt our own salvation, when we doubt our own faith, and we doubt, why? We doubt not only because of persecution, not only because of things that come at us from the outside and the fiery darts of the devil, we often doubt because of our own sin, not only our sins of commission, the sins that we do that are wrong and offend the Lord but the things that we leave undone, and one of our sins sometimes is forgetting what God has said, it's turning a blind eye to what he has promised, and sort of wallowing in the depths of doubt.

So we wallow and sometimes through self-pity and sometimes through heartache we don't go back to the word of God and we don't go back to the promises of God, we don't go back and say, "Lord, what have you said? What have you told me? What have you exhorted me?" And notice that the author here says this is an exhortation, this is an admonition. Now it's interesting because when we speak about church discipline, we should understand that every one of us, in one sense, is under the discipline of a church. When we come into the church, we promise to submit ourselves to the discipline of the church. In the Orthodox Presbyterian Church book of Church Order and Question and Answer 4, you have vowed to come under the discipline of the church in the Lord. Well, we're all under the discipline, under the training of the church. When you come to worship, you are coming to sit under the ministry of the word, you're coming to be trained by the word and to be disciplined by the word. And so we're all under the discipline and the training of the word of God and the first step of discipline when there's sin involved, a particular sin that has been known or discovered or confessed, what's the first step? It's exhortation. It's admonition. We need to go sometimes and plead with someone to repent or to fully repent and to apologize and ask forgiveness of those he has offended and sinned again. So here the author reminds them of the word of God and says, "This is an exhortation."

Now notice that when we read this exhortation, it is a beautiful word of encouragement, because even in exhortation and admonition there is encouragement, there is words of comfort and words of hope. Listen to what he says in verses 5 and following taking us to Proverbs 3:11 and 12 and Job 5:17, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, do not take it flippantly, do not disregard it. You know, our tendency when the loving and disciplining hand of the Lord comes upon us, for some of us is to sort of run away from it, try to hide from it like a child who knows he's going to get a spanking, he doesn't want it, he wants to run away from it, and some of us when that loving disciplining hand of the Lord comes upon us, we want to get away from it. Or some children, they don't run away from it but they make like it's nothing, they make like a spanking is nothing and they take it flippantly and they disregard it, they take it lightly and they say, "Eh, what's the big deal?" in disrespect and dishonor. The word of God is exhorting us, the word of God is exhorting these early Christians who are in the midst of trial, listen to this context, they're in the midst of trial, in the midst of persecution, some

of them considering going back to the law and to the ways and the traditions of Judaism and this is the word of encouragement by way of exhortation, "Do not disregard, do not take lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him." It's easy for us to become tired and weary in persecution, it's easy for us to grow fainthearted, to grow tired and weary when we are under the chastisement of the Lord and want to give up.

Listen to what else the author says, quoting from Job 5:17, one of my favorite passages in all of scripture, and I'm going to just turn there briefly to Job 5 to read the entire section. Job 5:17 and 18, "Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he binds up; he shatters, but his hands heal." Behold, see, consider this. Don't just pass this up. Don't take it lightly. Consider this. Behold and see blessed is the one whom God reproves. The one whom God reproves, the one whom God chastens, the one whom God disciplines is blessed by God therefore do not despise the discipline of the Almighty, the Almighty one, the one who is powerful over all, the one who's sovereign over all. Don't despise it. Don't take it lightly for, here's the reason, "For he wounds, but he binds up; he shatters, but his hands heal." The sovereignty of God is bound up so beautifully in those few words. The Lord is ultimately the one who is responsible for wounding but he is also the one who binds. He is the one who shatters, he is the one who breaks our knees and gets us down on our faces thanking him and worshiping him and repenting to him and trusting him so that he can heal. And if we're Christians, he's done that to each and every one of us by breaking our hearts, by breaking our legs and getting us down on our faces so that he might come to us and take our faces and say, "Look up and look up to the cross of Christ."

The author of Hebrews is giving this word of encouragement through an exhortation and saying don't take this lightly. At this time when you are hurting, when you are being persecuted, when you are suffering, when you're going through all these trials don't give up and don't take the Lord's discipline lightly because his discipline shows you and demonstrates to you that he cares about you and he loves you, and you are blessed by him and that you are his sons and his daughters, that you are his adopted children.

Now look at verse 7, for "It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons." Do you get the point? It's very simple: those whom God loves he disciplines. If you are without discipline, you are not a child of God. If you don't have discipline in your life, if you have not been reproved by God, if he has not broken your hearts and taken your dead, stony, cold, rebellious hearts and given you new hearts by the Holy Spirit that are hearts of flesh, that are pliable, moldable, if your heart is still hard, if your heart has not yet been made alive, if you are still walking in the flesh and walking by yourself and by your own guidance, the reality of it is that you are not yet a child, you are not yet a son. If you've not received this discipline and responded with love and thanksgiving to the Lord, then you don't know him yet. You're illegitimate.

So what the author here is doing to the visible church, to those gathered together by profession of faith in the visible covenant community, he's, in some ways, helping to

challenge people within the congregation just as any faithful pastor will do from the pulpit, challenge the visible church to say do you really know Jesus? Do you really know the Father? Have you really been made alive and born again by the Spirit? The author of Hebrews is doing something very similar here and besides this, he says in verse 9, "Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

As I look back upon my life, my upbringing, considering that my father who was born in 1924, World War II veteran, a man who had his first son who was killed accidentally by a friend when he was 18 in a hunting accident in 1969, that was my father's first son. I was his second born many years later, and as a son of my father, the first son with a new wife in his life, he hated to spank me, though he did, he hated to do it. He hated to bring pain upon his now second son considering the death of his first but he did it, and as I look back upon my life, I wish that he had spanked me more. I wish that he had disciplined me more. I wish that he had corrected me more. I can remember the times when he would sometimes take me by the ear and walk me away and tell me not to disrespect him again but I wish that my father had disciplined me more. No mature man or woman, no godly man or woman will ever look back upon his life and say, "I had too much discipline." That's one of the signs of a growing mature Christian who has being humbled by God and growing in the Lord Jesus Christ in the grace and knowledge of Christ, and sharing this holiness that he'll finally ultimately have in glory. So he looks back upon his weeks and years and life, as painful as they may have been, and admits, "All the discipline that I have received from the Lord, from the church, and from my father in my home have been good. Painful at present but good and right and pleasant ultimately."

My father died when I was 16. I could ask about many of you who have had mothers and fathers who have died, for those very close to you who have died, and if they died in Christ there's a sense in which you almost feel that they're looking down upon you from heaven. Now we have no real biblical warrant to think that's true, that those Christians who have died and have gone to be with the Lord and are present with the Lord, that they are somehow looking down upon us and seeing everything that we do, but there's a sense in which those who have had loved ones who pass on, it's as if you feel that they're looking down upon you and cheering you on and praying for you. Well, the author of Hebrews here at the beginning of chapter 12 speaks of a cloud of witnesses. Now it doesn't speak of clouds of witnesses but one cloud, a unified body of those who have died in Christ, died trusting the Lord, died trusting the Messiah, and have gone to be with the Lord and are in heaven as this cloud of witnesses who have gone before us. It's interesting language and the author of Hebrews doesn't tell us to look to them but to consider them and to remember that there are many who have gone before us.

There was a coach at Georgetown University back in the '20s, Lou Little, football coach and he was there for several years and he had a student or a player that was there that didn't ever play in any game, he wasn't that great of a player, but he was used mainly in

practice and every time before the games would begin, their football games over the course of four years, that football player would go to the side gate, meet his father and take his father by the hand and lead him into the stands, and then that football player would go and sit on the sidelines never playing a second in any game. Well, during his fourth year that player's father died and over the course of the following weeks, that player in practice showed amazing skill and talent, gave it all he had until finally it came down to one of the games last in the season, and as the coach, Lou Little, had seen that player do his best and give it his all and really perform well, the coach said, "You know, his father died, he's given it all he has over the last few weeks, I'm going to put him in the game." And he puts that player in the game and that player plays better than he ever had, did a beautiful job, and as he came out, coach said, "What got into you today? What came over you? Why have you played so well after your father died?" And the young man, he said to Coach Little, he said, "You know, my father was blind and now he can see."

It's as if there is this cloud of witnesses that are in heaven looking down upon us cheering us on and saying you can finish the course. Don't give up. Don't loose hope. It's as if they've died and they've gone to be with the Lord and they're all looking down upon us as Christians in the church and saying, "Stay the course. Don't fall back into the law. Don't fall back into the traditions of men. Don't fall back from the gospel. Don't leave the church. Stay the course."

So the author of Hebrews says, "since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses," in verse 1 of chapter 12, "let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely." You know, in older translations, the King James Version mainly, Authorized Version, many of you perhaps still use it, it says that we are to lay aside our besetting sin or that sin which so easily besets us, remember that? And so for years people would ask, and still ask perhaps, "What is your besetting sin," as if everyone has one particular besetting sin, but the reality of it is that all sins are besetting and that every one of our sins whether they are habitual or not are besetting sins. Every sin besets us. Every sin is a weight that we're called to take off.

Now the word "weight" here is interesting and I want us just to consider it for a minute, "let us also lay aside every weight." Well, that word was used in classical literature to mean a whole host of things but the idea of anything that you don't need for your journey or for your race, anything that you can take off, anything that it's not absolutely necessary for what you're about to do on your journey, or on your struggle, or in your walk, or in your hike, or in your race. It can also mean a burdensome load. What is the greatest burden in your life? Our minds might immediately go and ask that question to things that are outside of us, to people, a job, a burden at home, a financial crisis and anxiety that you face and you wake up nights worried about. We all have different burdens that come upon us from outside even from other people, even from those that we love, but really the greatest burden of our lives is our own sin. I can't wait to be in heaven to be free from sin. Do you hate your sin that much? Do you despise your sin and do you pray that God would help you to hate your sin as much as he hates your sin? Or do you think he turns a blind eye to it and so you turn a blind eye to it? Do you think you've conditioned God to sort of get used to your sin, to be okay with it, and so you think I'll condition those

around me with my sin so that they're okay with it? Or do you hate your sin, despise your sin, and pray to grow in holiness and not just sort of live that gray, moderate, Christian life?

We're called to hate our sin and to lay it aside and to take it off because sin so easily entangles us, it so easily besets us. The language there, the language of besetting and the language of entangling is like weeds and vines coming out of the ground and wrapping themselves around our ankles so that we might trip up and fall. "Let us also lay aside every sin, every weight, the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." How? How are we called to run this race? Notice the language here that the author is using, the cloud of witnesses, it's setting up for us this imagery of likely an athletic event where there are crowds of people in a coliseum-like amphitheater structure and they're all there looking down upon us to see what we're going to do, but they're not just watching as sort of bystanders, they're cheering us on, they're all wanting us to win and to finish the course. And so how do we go about running this race that's set before us? How do we go about this struggle of life? How do we go about getting to the end of our journey? As I look out upon this congregation, there's a sense in which every one of us who is younger ought to be jealous of those who are older, a holy and righteous-honoring jealousy that says, "I hope I make it to your age in the Lord. I hope I persevere as you've persevered. I hope that when I reach 60 and 70 and 80 and 90, that I will know the Lord and trust the Lord and I will follow the Lord, and that I will be the holy and godly and humble man or woman that you are." There should be a holy jealousy for those men and women whose lives have exemplified Christ.

The author of Hebrews says don't look at the crowd of witnesses, don't even look at those runners that are around you. Our tendency as Christians is not to look ahead of us, our tendency is to look around us. What do we do? We sort of compare ourselves with each other, don't we? So as long as we're doing a little bit better than those that we're closest to or those that we know the best, we feel like we're okay. So as long as we're sort of running in pace or maybe just a little bit outpacing, or it's okay if we're just a little bit behind the pace in our race of those Christians walking beside us, and so what we do is we compare ourselves to one another. Or we look to the witnesses and to the crowds for their approval, for their applause, for their accolades, we look to them and say, "Am I doing all right? Am I doing okay?" And so we compare ourselves to those who are sinners but the author of Hebrews here says don't look to the crowd, don't look at the other runners, don't get distracted by everything that's around you but look to Jesus.

Look to Jesus. Where we're looking is beautiful because it sort of connotes that there are other rival distractions around us, that there are other things wanting our attention, wanting us to draw our gaze away from the finish line, from the prize, from looking to Jesus. Many things in our life want to distract us, don't they? You know, that's the problem for many of us. It's not that we don't love Jesus, it's not that we don't want to follow, it's that we get so easily distracted by everything else that we want and everything else we want to do, everything else we want to see and hear. Our issue so often, dearly beloved, is our priorities and our distractions. What's distracting you? What is competing as a rival attraction in your life, in your heart, in your family?



The author of Hebrews says looking to Jesus, this is the way, this is how we go, this is how we run the race with endurance, that is how we run steadfastly to the very end the race that has been set before us. Notice it's a race that's set before us. What does that imply? It implies sovereignty. It implies that someone or something has set this race before us. And who is that someone? It's God Almighty himself. The race that you're on hasn't been set by any human being, the race that you're on has been orchestrated sovereignly and foreordained by God and it's your race and no one else has the same race. He is the one who has set it before you and the way you go about running it is by looking to Jesus who is the founder and perfecter of our faith.

Now we could spend weeks in verse 2, we could spend weeks and weeks in this entire section. This word is one of the most fascinating words to me in this entire section where the author says that Jesus is the founder. Now earlier in Hebrews this same word is used and in other translations it's translated "captain" or "pioneer." The word is made up of two Greek words and I won't go into all of that but essentially they come together to make up this one word in English or really compound phrase, it's one who leads from the beginning; one who leads from the first; one who leads from the outset. Let me give to you a little image here that helps some of us perhaps. We've all seen movies, perhaps we've read books about commanders and generals who in leading their troops into battle will lead their regiments to the front line and those generals and those commanders will stand at the back or sit upon their horses at the rear and by the raising and lowering of their hands or by vocal commands they will send their armies and their regiments into battle while they remain at the back. That's not the image here. The image here is one who goes from the beginning, one who is not seated at the back on his horse sending his regiments and his armies into battle and onto the battlefield to put their lives on the line, the image here is of a pioneer, a captain, the one who goes from beginning leading his troops into battle, being the first one to give himself for his troops.

It's the same language that Jesus gives us in John 10. Remember Jesus said, "I am the great shepherd," and what does the great shepherd do? He calls his own sheep by name and they know his voice, and what does he do then? He leads them out. He leads them out. He doesn't go behind them driving them with a whip but he leads them out and he leads them out into the race and into the struggle and into all of life that he might also lead them to green pastures and beside still waters, that he might lead them through the suffering and the trials of the valley of the shadow of death. But they fear no evil because we see the shepherd, we see his club and his crook, we see his rod and his staff. We know that he's there to protect us and to keep us from hurting ourselves from fighting and from dying. We see him in our midst always and he leads us, we know that he will lead us to righteous paths and that goodness and mercy will be with us to the end.

We have assurance from the Father in Christ because Christ is the one who leads us. We have assurance from the Father because, dearly beloved, we have his promises and we can't forget his word, we can't forget his exhortation, we can't forget what he has spoken to us, and ultimately what we can't forget which we are so prone to do, no one would want to admit it but how many times throughout the day or week do you live or think as

if Christ isn't even in your life? It's almost as if God brings you back to himself through conviction, brings you back to himself and says, "Remember what I've done for you. Remember who I am in your life." It's easy for men in all sorts of spheres, for women in various spheres to go about their lives, to go about their childrearing, to go about their businesses as if God is not active and present and living and almighty and looking and seeing and encouraging and comforting and saying, "Are you living your life every day on the narrow road following Jesus or are you living your life your own way, for your own self, your own kingdom, for your own name, however you want with whomever you want disregarding the Lord altogether?"

The Lord grants us assurance by disciplining us and through that discipline so that we would not grow weary, so that we would not grow fainthearted, that we would look to Jesus and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. You know, most of us, what do we do? When struggles come, when trials come, when temptations come, when sin comes, what do we dwell on? We dwell on the trial. We dwell on the suffering. We dwell on the discipline? And many of us who are doubting and despair, many who are just struggling through the Christian life with their own sin too often their gaze is upon their sin, it's upon the weeds that have sort of entangled themselves and besetted themselves around their ankles, and so they're looking down, they're looking at their own sin, they're just sort of wallowing in the despair of that sin rather than looking ahead, rather than looking to Jesus Christ.

Friends, it is so easy for us to look at the crowds, it's so easy for us to look at those who are beside us, it's so easy for us to look down at our feet and look at the sin in our lives but even as we're fighting against sin and striving against sin, striving through the suffering and even to the discipline that God brings in our life, we're called to look to Jesus who is the founder, the one who goes from the beginning, and the perfecter, from beginning to end he who has begun a good work in us is faithful to complete it. He started you. He's going to finish you. He's the one who found you. You didn't find him and those whom the Lord finds he keeps. Those whom the Lord has accepted into his beloved are those sons that he will preserve to glory. So look to him. He is the founder and perfecter of your faith.

Then finally we read Jesus did all this, he lived his life perfectly without sin though he was tempted in every way as we are, without sin, he suffered, he struggled, as Isaiah 53 says, the chastisement was upon him, he was despised and rejected, he took the wrath of God, he lived a perfect sinless life, fulfilled all the righteous demands of God's law so that when he went to the cross, so when he went to the cross he did it with the joy in his mind that was set before him. He endured the cross despising the shame of what it was to be nailed to a cross and killed on a cross as any common criminal. He despised the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

So consider him. As we strive and as we struggle, as we doubt, as we fall into despair, as we sometimes wallow in self-pity and in doubt, as we struggle with our sin, don't look down, don't look around, don't look beside you, look to Jesus. Consider him. Think and meditate on what Jesus did for you and look to him, that is, rely upon him. He is your

support. He is your friend. He is your Redeemer and he is the one who loves you to the very end.

Let's pray.