

Message Eight

Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of Our Faith

Scripture Reading: Heb. 1:3; 12:1b-2a; 1 Cor. 9:24; 2 Thes. 3:5

I. “Looking away unto Jesus”—Heb. 12:2a:

- A. The Greek word translated “looking away unto” denotes looking with undivided attention by turning away from every other object—v. 2a.
- B. The Hebrew believers had to look away from all the things in their environment, away from their old religion, Judaism, and its persecution, and away from all earthly things, that they might look unto Jesus, who is now seated on the right hand of the throne of God in the heavens—1:3.
- C. If we would enjoy the heavenly Christ (v. 3), we need to look away from all things on earth unto Him.
- D. The wonderful Jesus, who is enthroned in heaven and crowned with glory and honor (2:9), is the greatest attraction in the universe.
- E. It is by being attracted by His charming beauty that we look away from all things other than Him so that we may run with endurance the race which is set before us—12:1b.

II. The Christian life is a race; every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize—1 Cor. 9:24:

- A. The prize is not salvation in a common sense but a reward in a special sense—v. 24; Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 3:14-15.
- B. The apostle Paul ran the race and won the prize—9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8:
 - 1. An encumbrance is a weight, burden, or impediment; the runners of the race strip off every unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, that nothing may impede them from winning the race.
 - 2. The unique entangling sin in Hebrews 12 was the willful sin of forsaking the assembling together with the saints, of giving up the new covenant way in God’s economy, and of going back to Judaism—10:25-26.
 - 3. Both the encumbering weight and the entangling sin would have frustrated the Hebrew believers and restrained them from running the heavenly race in the new covenant way of following Jesus.
 - 4. We need to run with endurance, asking the Lord to direct our hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ—2 Thes. 3:5:
 - a. The love is our love toward God, issuing from the love of God that has been poured out in our hearts—1 John 4:19; Rom. 5:5.
 - b. This endurance is to endure with the endurance of Christ that we have enjoyed and experienced—cf. Rev. 1:9.

III. Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith—Heb. 12:2a:

- A. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16:
 - 1. Our believing is our appreciation of Christ as a reaction to His attraction—Rom. 10:17.
 - 2. In the natural man we have no believing ability; we do not have faith by ourselves.
 - 3. The faith by which we are saved is the precious faith that we have received from the Lord, the God-allotted faith—2 Pet. 1:1; Col. 1:12.

4. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element.
5. This faith is not of ourselves but of Him who imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us.
- B. Faith is a substantiating ability, a “sixth sense,” the sense by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things unseen or hoped for—Heb. 11:1:
 1. Substantiating is the ability that enables us to realize a substance.
 2. The function of our five senses is to substantiate the things of the outside world, transferring all the objective items into us to become our subjective experience.
 3. As the eye is to seeing, the ear is to hearing, and the nose is to smelling, so faith, our spirit of faith, is the organ whereby we substantiate everything in the unseen spiritual world to us—2 Cor. 4:13:
 - a. We must exercise our spirit of faith, our mingled spirit, to believe and to speak the things that we have experienced of the Lord.
 - b. Faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit, not in our mind; doubts are in our mind.
 4. We do not regard, look at, the things which are seen and temporary but the things which are not seen and eternal—v. 18:
 - a. The Christian life is a life of things unseen—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
 - b. The degradation of the church is the degradation from unseen things to seen things.
 - c. The Lord’s recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen.
 5. Faith is to believe that God is.
 6. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to make God happy—Heb. 11:6a.
 7. “He who comes forward to God must believe that He is”—v. 6b:
 - a. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is everything to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.
 - b. To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Heb. 11:5.
 - c. To believe that God is, is to deny our self; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.
 - d. The Lord was saying, “I am the great I am. I am the One who is. You must believe that I am and you are not”—cf. John 8:24, 28, 58.
 - e. This is faith—“O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here”—J. N. Darby.

IV. Jesus is the Perfecter, the Finisher, the Completer, of our faith—Heb. 12:2a:

- A. As we look away unto Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need for the running of the heavenly race—vv. 1b-2a.
- B. When we look away unto Him, He ministers heaven, life, and strength to us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is, that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth—2 Cor. 3:18.
- C. We all have the same faith in quality, but the quantity of faith we have depends upon how much we contact the living God so that we may have Him increased in us—Rom. 12:3:
 1. Faith in the progressing stage comes through our contacting the Triune God, who is faith in us—1 Thes. 5:17.

2. The way to receive such a faith is to contact its source, the Lord, the processed and consummated God, by calling on Him, praying to Him, and pray-reading His Word—Heb. 4:2, 16; Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18.
 3. When we contact Him, He is overflowing within us, and there is a mutuality of faith among us; we are encouraged through the faith which is in one another—Rom. 1:12; Philem. 6.
- D. Our regenerated spirit, our spirit of faith, is the victory that overcomes the Satan-organized-and-usurped world—1 John 5:4.
- E. The great irrepressible and unlimited power of faith motivates thousands to suffer for the Lord, risk their lives, and become overcoming saints and martyrs for the carrying out of God's eternal economy, which is in faith—Luke 18:8; Phil. 2:30; Rom. 16:3-4; Acts 20:24; 1 Tim. 1:4.