

Look and Live

Sunday, October 18th, 1992

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, 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.

I'm going to speak to you today from the 12th Chapter of the Book of Hebrews. If you would like, get your Bible and follow as I read a couple of verses of Scripture from Hebrews Chapter 12. The title of the message is: "Look and Live, or "The Look That Saves."

Our text will be taken from Hebrews 12, but in Chapter 11 of the Book of Hebrews, the apostle takes us through what one old preacher called, "God's hall of faith." It's not the hall of fame, but the hall of faith. All the way through the 11th Chapter of Hebrews, the apostle calls to our attention, the great believers of the Old Testament Days. There was Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Joseph and Jacob. They were all great people of faith. He declares this about all of them; "*These all died in faith.*" All of these men and women that I mentioned died in faith.

This is the word that describes their entire lives. The word is faith; they believed God. Faith is what distinguishes these people from other people; they believed God. They lived on earth like other men, but they lived by faith and they walked with God. The word that gave them a good hope of eternal life is faith. They believed God. The word that reveals the difference between them and other people was that they believed God. The word that sums up their entire life was belief and faith.

They not only lived as other men lived, but they also died as other men died. The thing that made their death different was faith. "*These all died in faith.*" They are examples to you and me. They are examples that we need to study.

Someone said one time, "Don't follow a man." I will tell you this; you can follow a man who is following the Lord. The apostle Paul said, "*You follow me as I follow Christ.*" These men are examples to us and they are an example of faith.

When you go into Chapter 12 the apostle Paul begins with these words, and I believe the apostle Paul is the writer of Hebrews, "*Wherefore seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,*" (Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Jacob

and Moses), he's talking about these people. *"Wherefore seeing that we, (you and I) were compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses."*

Are you saying they are watching us? No, they are not watching us; they are in the presence of the Lord. They wouldn't watch us if they were in the presence of the Lord. Do you mean that they are interested in what is going on down here? Well, they are not interested in what is going on down here, (in that they are watching us and observing us). What he is saying is that they are witnesses to us. These great clouds of witnesses are witnesses to us. Christ said to His disciples, *"You will be My witnesses."* They are the witnesses of the sufferings of Christ. They are witnesses of the gospel. They are those who declare the gospel. These men and these women are witnesses to us of the faithfulness of our Lord. They are witnesses to us of the riches of His grace and His promises. We are encircled, *"We are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses."*

These were men and women who walked upon the same earth in which we walk. They encountered the same difficulties, tests, trials, and troubles, sorrowing and suffering. These people lived by faith. They believed God and they died in faith. They died with a good hope. That is what distinguished them from other people about them; they believed God.

Now, *"Seeing, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,"* let us in our lives and in our walk, in our citizenship, and conversation, *"let us lay aside every weight"* or every hindrance to our running the race of faith and living the life of faith and follow the example of these men and women. Anything that hinders us or obstructs us from running a good race, the race of faith and the life of faith; lay it aside.

The apostle here is referring to an athletic event, an actual race. Paul does that frequently in his writings. He talks about some athletic events, a race or a person who runs to gain a prize. When people are running a race, they don't wear heavy clothing. They don't carry a sack of equipment; they take off everything that would hinder them from running a good race. Every weight is put aside and they don't look around at the stands and at the people running with them. They are dedicated to one thing and that is running a good race.

This is what he is telling us. These examples of ones that have gone before us, (the men and women who have lived on this earth and walked with God and believed God and lived and died in faith) let's follow their example. If there is anything that hinders you from walking with Christ and living for the glory of God, lay it aside. It doesn't matter what it is. It may be a person or a job or an association or even a partnership. If anything

hinders you or holds you back or keeps you from living for Christ like you ought to, lay it aside. You are carrying a weight. You are carrying something that is keeping you from being what you ought to be and what you ought to be doing for the glory of God. Lay aside those weights!

In the next line, it says, *“Let us lay aside that sin which does so easily beset us.”* What is that sin? A lot of people say that it is different things. I believe it is a sin of unbelief. I believe the very foundation of all sin is not believing God or trusting Christ. If you’re not looking to God to supply your every need, it is a sin of unbelief. You will find that unbelief is the very foundation of every sin. You just do not believe God. We need to say with the Centurion of old, *“Lord I do believe, help thou my unbelief.”* Help me Lord, to lay aside this sin, which does so easily beset us.

Look at verse 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.”* Looking unto Jesus is the look that saves. That is the sight that saves, looking unto Jesus.

It is the same as the command of Moses in the wilderness when he had lifted up the brazen serpent. Here were the people bitten, smitten and dying. Moses lifted up that brazen serpent and he gave one command, look! *“Look and live!”* It’s not doing and live, it’s look and live, it’s not give and live, it is look and live. It is not pray and live, it is look and live. It’s not work and live, it is look and live. That is the look that saves. It is looking unto Christ; it is looking unto Jesus.

Let’s lay aside all the weight, and hindrances, and barriers of sin and unbelief and let’s turn our eyes on Christ and *“Run with patience the race that is set before us.”* Look unto Jesus, keeping our eyes on Him and only Him. *“He’s the author and finisher of our faith.”* Believe Him! That is what it says about Abraham, *“He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.”* He just looked and believed God.

You can read a dozen books on faith and there is no end to the end of the writings of faith. There are so many of them out there. You can read a dozen books on faith, you can listen to a hundred sermons on faith and you can study all the definitions of faith, but it will all come down to one thing and that is given right here, *“Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”*

That is what John the Baptist said to his disciples. He said, *“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”* That is what our Lord Jesus Christ said in John

Chapter 5: *“He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is past from death unto life.”* It is looking to Christ.

When we are enabled of God to look to Christ and take our eyes off of everything else and look only to Christ, then we see and we have some sort of understanding of the redemptive will and the glory of God. It is to be seen nowhere else. The glory of God is to be seen in Christ. The redemptive will of God is only seen in Jesus Christ. The redemptive glory is only seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what Paul said in Second Corinthians 4: *“God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give us the knowledge of the glory of God, of the will of God in the face of Christ Jesus.”* It is looking to Jesus. Look at Him; that is where it is!

John wrote in First John 5: *“We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and that we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ and this is the true God and this is eternal life.”* The answer is looking to Christ and Christ alone.

Do you want to talk about Abraham? He looked to Christ. *“Abraham saw My day.”* When you talk about Moses; he looked to Christ. When you talk about Abel; Abel offered a blood sacrifice. He was looking to Calvary and the Blood of the Lamb. David said, *“The Lord said unto My Lord; sit thou on thy right hand.”* These men all died in faith and were looking to Christ. They were looking for the coming of Christ and for all the fulfillments of all these promises in Christ. They were looking for the fulfillment of the prophecies in Christ.

“We are circled about and encompassed with so great a crowd of witnesses;” let us put aside all the traditions, religion, legalism, formalism and ceremonialism and lay aside these ways, these things and these people. Lay aside anything that hinders us from walking with Christ. *“The sin that so easily besets us;”* can you believe? Can you see Him? Can you believe on Him? *“This is the record; God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God, (whatever he has, whatever he knows, and whatever he does), hath not life.”* It is looking to Christ.

He’s *“the author and the finisher of our faith.”* It is the author that starts something. The author is the one who conceives a purpose or a plan. The author is the originator. The author is the one who purposes it. The finisher is the one who winds it up and completes it.

Paul says, *“look to Christ;”* He’s the author, the originator, and the creator of faith, He’s the finisher of our faith. *“He’s the Alpha and the Omega.”* Alpha is the first word in the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last word. He’s the Alpha and the Omega. It is all in Christ. He hath given us that understanding. The answer is looking to Christ.

Note these things; I want to show you something here that is very important. *“Let’s run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith.”*

First of all, when we look to Christ, we see God. That is right! *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* Jesus Christ is God. God is incarnate and God is manifested in the flesh. *“This is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifested in the flesh.”* The disciples said, *“Show us the Father.”* He said, *“You have seen Me; you have seen the Father.”* If you are looking to Christ, you are looking to God.

Secondly, if you look to Christ, you see in Him the covenant of grace. It is the everlasting covenant. My friends, anybody who knows anything about the scriptures knows that God is a covenant God. The word covenant occurs in the Bible, over 300 times. He made a covenant with Adam; He made a covenant with Noah; He made a covenant with Abraham; He made a covenant with David; He made a covenant with Moses. The Bible talks about an everlasting covenant. It is *“From everlasting to everlasting.”* It is a covenant of mercy, a covenant of grace, a covenant in which all the other covenants are but types. This is an everlasting covenant and *“Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of that everlasting covenant.”* If you can look to Christ, you can enter into the riches and the mysteries, and treasures of that everlasting covenant that David talked about as he lay dying. *“God made with me a covenant, ordered in all things and sure and this is my salvation and all my desire.”*

When we look to Christ, we see the first promise and all the promises of the Old Testament fulfilled in Christ. What is the first promise? In Genesis 3:15, God came down after the fall and said to Satan, *“I’ll put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed, the woman’s seed shall crush your power, crush your head, and crush your authority.”* Who is the woman’s seed?

Well, when Cain was born, Eve rejoiced, she said, *“I’ve gotten the man.”* No, no! That was Adam’s seed and Adam begat Cain. Eve gave him birth, but Adam actually begat him. One day in Bethlehem in a little town, 2000 years ago, there was a child born, there was a Son given, and that is the woman’s seed. Man didn’t have anything to do with that.

The Holy Ghost conceived him in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Spirit and there is that promised seed. You see that first promise fulfilled in the seed of woman.

You come on down through the Old Testament and every promise God backs up. He said, "I'll send a prophet, I'll send a King like David." God said, "I will send a Priest like Melchisedec." God Almighty said, "I'll send a rock, smitten rock, a brazen serpent, a priest, a mercy seat, an atonement" and it is all fulfilled in looking to Christ. You look to Him and you will see all these promises, types, patterns and pictures fulfilled.

Then, when you look to Christ you will see what these Old Testament believers saw by faith. They saw the same thing that you see. "*Abraham saw My day.*" I believe that when Abraham saw the day of Christ was when he was on Mount Mariah with Isaac and he was about to slay his son. God said, "*Touch not the lad.*" He looked over in the bush and there was a ram and God said, "*Put the ram on the altar in the place of, in the stead of, your son.*" The ram was the substitute for Isaac and Abraham saw (the gospel of Christ). He told Isaac, "*The Lord will provide. The Lord will provide Himself a Lamb.*" Jesus Christ is the Lamb God provided for His justice and righteousness.

Job saw the Lord. He said, "*I know my redeemer liveth. I know He will stand on this earth. After my skin, worms will destroy this body; I am going to see the Lord.*"

Looking to Christ in the flesh, we see a real man (the God-man) honoring the law of God. Here is a man "*Born of a woman, born under the law,*" who walked this earth perfectly. He knew no sin, He had no sin, He thought no sin and He did no sin. The Heavenly Father spoke from heaven and said, "*I am well pleased.*" Here is a perfect man. There has never been one since, on this earth. There's never been one except this one and that is Christ Jesus.

So doing perfectly, as a perfect and sinless man, He fulfilled the law. If you will look to Christ, you will see the law fulfilled. You see it honored. He honored God's law. He fulfilled God's law. He satisfied God's law on behalf of His people. You look to Christ and you will see that. You won't see that anywhere else.

If you look to Christ on the cross, you see the justice of God honored and fulfilled. If you will look to Christ you will see the very character of God. You see His love, "*For God so loved He gave His Son.*" You see His Holiness, "*Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree.*" His Father turned His back on Him. That is the Holiness of God. You see the justice of God. He punished Christ though He had no sin of His own; He had our sins. God would not let Him go! The justice of God took hold of Him and exacted from Him

the due penalty of all our sins. You see the wisdom of God. You see how that God can be just and justify us. That is wisdom!

I would have never thought of that. You wouldn't have either. God purposed that great plan of redemption; He loved sinners in Christ. He chose them in Christ; He gave them to Christ. He sent Christ down here to fulfill everything that He required of those sinners because Christ was the only one who could do it.

You say; how could one man suffer for so many? It is because of who He is. How could His blood atone for so many sins? It's because of whose blood it is. *"It is Christ that died."* You can see how God can be just and justifier if you look to Christ. Look at Him lying in the tomb and then arising from the grave. You can see how we can rise in Him. He said, *"Because I live; you live."* If one man can go to the grave and come out, two can or even three, four, or five can. It doesn't matter how many you name after that; if one can do it; they all can do it.

If one of us can rise from the grave, we all can, especially if it is that one that God sent. That's right! He said, *"Because I live, you shall live."* Look at Christ, rising from the tomb and you can see your own resurrection, if you can look to Him. Look to Christ as He ascends to heaven. If He can ascend, I can too! He's a man, the man Christ Jesus. That's right! The scripture says *"There is one God, there's one mediator between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus."* If a man can die and live another man can. If a man can go into a grave and come out, another man can. If a man can rise to heaven, ascend to the throne of God and stand in His presence accepted and be seated at God's right hand, another and another man can.

That is what you have to figure out. That is what preachers are doing, they are not thinking. They don't want people to think. They want people to whoop-de-do and wave their hands and carry on their programs, and march in sequence and in line and nobody is thinking. God is Holy and we are sinners. *"Who can ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Who can stand in His Holy presence? He that hath a pure heart, clean hands, who has never lifted His soul to vanity."* There is not a man listening to my voice or woman qualified. There is only one, who is qualified, that one is the Son of God. He's our Representative and our Substitute we are blessed only in Him.

He represented us in the covenant of grace and we look to Him. We have to look to the one that did it. We have to look to the one who has the power to save. Do you see what I am saying? If you can look to Christ at the right hand of God seated, then we can be seated in Him. That is what Paul said in Romans 8: *"Who can condemn me? It is Christ*

that died, yea rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who makes intercession for me.”

I will tell you something else, also. If you can look to Christ; He’s returning; He’s coming back. He said, *“You, let not your heart be troubled.”* As you know, we have heart trouble. That’s our big trouble, heart trouble. *“Let not your heart be troubled; you do believe in God.”* Yes you do!

Well, who is God? He’s the Holy, Almighty, Sovereign, Righteous and Just God. He will not clear the guilty. *“You believe God; believe in Me.”* Christ said to believe in Me and look to Me. Trust me and put all your eggs in one basket, (Christ). You look to Me and believe in Me because, *“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so I would not have told you and I’m going to prepare a place for you.”*

Do you know how He went? He went to that cross outside the city of Jerusalem. That is where He went to prepare the place. He prepared the place for you and you for the place, right there on that cross. He shed His blood and died for your sins. He went to the grave. That is where you have to go some day. He defeated sin on the cross and death in the grave and came out and then He went to the right hand of God and sat down as your Mediator. He said, *“I go and prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare that place, I am going to come back and receive you.”*

I’m telling you, the look that saves, if you want to live; you better look to Him. You look to Him; you look for Him. You are waiting for Him to come back. Don’t look to your faith. We don’t come to faith; we come to Christ by faith. Somebody said, “Well, I came to faith in Christ.” No, that is not it. I came to Christ in faith.

Don’t look to your works. Don’t look to the name you wear. *“He’s not a Jew which is one outwardly.”* Don’t look to your brethren. Don’t look to your experience; look to Christ. Can you? We’re looking to Jesus.

We are encircled and compassed about with a cloud of folks that have already looked to Him. You are going to join them. You are going to look to Him too! He’s the author, the originator, the planter, the creator, accomplisher and finisher of our faith. Keep looking to Jesus. That is the look that saves!