

Looking Unto Jesus

Sunday, February 15th, 1987

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.”

If you have your Bible, I would like for you to open it please, to the book of Hebrews. I am going to be speaking today from the 12th chapter of Hebrews verses 1 and 2. My subject is entitled: “LOOKING UNTO JESUS.”

The writer of Hebrews says, *“Wherefore seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that does so easy 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.”*

One of the dangers of emphasizing our experiences and sharing our experiences and telling others the way we were brought to faith in Christ is that all believers do not have the same experience. If you will read the 16th chapter of Acts you will find that three different people were genuinely brought to a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that these three people came to know the Redeemer.

There was Lydia; there was the demon-possessed woman and there was the Philippian jailer; all of them had a different experience. It is said of Lydia, *“She met with some people down by the river where prayer was made,”* where the teaching of the Word took place.

Paul came down and spoke to these people down by the riverside and the Scripture says; *“God opened Lydia’s heart to receive the Word of God; she attended unto the things that were spoken by the apostle Paul.”* God quietly opened her heart and she believed the Gospel.

A few hours or days later, the apostle Paul encountered a woman that was demon-possessed. She began to cry out all kinds of things as she followed Paul and Silas down the street. Paul, weary of her harassment, turned and commanded the demons to come out of her. The demons were cast out of her and she followed Paul. Now, Lydia’s experience and this young woman’s experience were totally different.

Some time later, Paul was in prison and God literally shook the prison with an earthquake and opened the doors of the prison. The jailer, thinking that the prisoners had escaped, took out his sword to kill himself. Paul called out to him and said; *“Do thyself no harm; we are all here.”* He came in trembling and fell before Paul and said, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* Paul went to his house and washed and dressed his wounds. He taught him the Gospel and he came to know Christ and was baptized that night.

Here, you have three different people with three different experiences but all came to Christ. I say this, God will deal with His own; He will deal with His people when He will and as He will. He will use the means that He is pleased to use.

However, notice this; we have a common salvation and we have a common faith and we have a common family. There are several things which are common to everyone whom the Lord saves. Every person who genuinely comes to know God in Christ may not have the same experiences. Every person may not be under the same amount of conviction or brought to the same degree of faith but they do have many things in common. I’m going to give you a few of those.

First of all: It doesn’t matter who God saves. It doesn’t matter if they are old or young, learned or ignorant, white or black, rich or poor. Every person whom God saves, the Spirit of God brings that individual to a genuine sense of sin. He is convicted of sin and he is convinced of sin by the Spirit of God.

As Paul said in Romans 3:23; *“All have sinned and have come short of the glory of God.”* Paul wrote again in 1 Timothy 1:15; *“This is a, a faithful saying (certain saying) and it is worthy of acceptance (by all men) that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”* Christ came to save sinners. *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.”*

So, one thing that every believer has in common is that God finds him when he is lost and saves him when he is a sinner. As the Scripture says; *“God commendeth (committed) His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Our Lord said this, *“I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”*

Paul wrote in Romans 5, *“Christ died for the ungodly.”* So, I can faithfully say, if you have never been lost, you have certainly never been found. If you have never been convinced of sin, you certainly haven’t been brought to rely on, depend upon and believe in a Saviour from sin, a Redeemer.

So, that is the first thing that every believer has in common. Every one of them has a tremendous burden and guilt because of sin. David said, *“My sins are ever before me.”* Isaiah said, *“I’m cut off; I am undone.”* Job said, *“I hate myself.”* Paul said, *“I am the chief of sinners; I am less than the least of all the saints; I’m not worthy to be called an apostle.”* Every believer has a deep sense of his own sin.

Second: Another thing that we have in common when we come to know Christ is that all believers are made aware of and convinced of their own inability to please God Almighty. They realize their inability to obey God Almighty or to know God or even to come to God by their own strength, their own merit or their own efforts.

It is like what David said in Psalm 130; *“Lord, if Thou shouldest mark iniquities O Lord, who shall stand, who among us shall stand?”* In Romans 3:20, Paul said; *“By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight. In the flesh no man can please God.”*

We are convinced of that. Paul says, *“In my flesh dwelleth no good thing”* (no commendable thing). David said, *“Man at his best state, (considered at his best time and his best state), is all together vanity.”*

The hymn writer said:

In my hands no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross of Christ I cling.
Could my tears forever flow?
Could my zeal and enthusiasm no languor know?
These for sin could never atone, (never, never, never)
Christ must save and Christ alone.

Every believer knows that. Are you with me? While we don’t have the same experiences, while we don’t have the same degree of conviction or even faith; I do know this for sure; every person for whom God saves is a sinner and he knows it and he confesses it. He knows that there is no possible way for God to accept him on the basis of his merit, righteousness and goodness, for he has none.

Third: All believers have this in common; they have a genuine desire to be saved. They want above all things to know God. They want desperately, sincerely and truthfully to be reconciled to God. They want to be *“accepted in the Beloved.”*

Our Lord said this in Jeremiah 29:13; *“Ye shall seek me and ye shall find Me.”* When will a man find God? Christ says that you will find Him when you *“Search for Me with all of your heart.”*

I’m not talking about half of a heart or in a half-hearted manner, *“but when you search for Me with all of your heart.”* That is what you should desperately want more than any thing else. Like Peter sinking beneath the waves, he said; *“Lord, save me or I perish.”*

Our Lord, in Matthew 6:33 said; *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.”* I’m not saying, secondly, thirdly or fourthly; I’m saying, *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you.”*

What I am saying is this, to the person whom God genuinely and truthfully saves, his religion, (I hate to use that word) but his relationship with God is not a game. His relationship is not a form or an insurance policy; his relationship with God is his life.

His relationship comes before all things, for it is all things. The apostle Paul lays everything on the line; he lays his heritage, his religion, his background, his family, his influence and his accomplishments, and says in Philippians 3; *“I count these things but dung, (garbage) that I may win Christ and be found in Him, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”* That is very simple isn’t it?

I have one more: One thing every believer has in common is that he is a sinner. One thing every believer has in common is that he has no power, no ability, and no merit or works in which to appease or satisfy a Holy God. If it is left up to him he will perish in eternal hell. He has nothing good about him.

Third: He wants to know God above all things. He wants to know God; he doesn’t want to know religion. He doesn’t want to have a form, play a game or be part of an organization; he wants to know the Living God.

Fourth: This is my topic. Every true believer, every person who is redeemed looks to Christ. I don’t care who they are, where they are, what religion they hold to or whatever. They look to Jesus Christ; they believe on Him, trust in Him, rest in Him and look to Christ for everything pertaining to God.

The writer of Hebrews says; *“Wherefore, we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.”* He is talking about Abel, Abraham, Enoch, Noah, Moses and David. These men were giants of the faith. *“Seeing we are compassed about with so great a*

cloud of witnesses; let us lay aside every weight and every sin that does so easily beset us and look unto Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our faith.”

What is it to look to Christ? Looking to Christ is looking away from me. Looking to Christ is looking away from my feelings, looking away from my experiences, looking away from my works, looking away from my deeds, looking away from my decisions, looking away from my thoughts and my ways and looking unto Jesus.

Looking is as the Scripture says, “*Unto Jesus*” who was appointed of the Father, who was sent of the Father to be our Prophet, Priest and King; to be our Surety, our sanctification, our sacrifice and our security; it is “*looking unto Jesus.*”

It is “*looking unto Jesus Christ who is the author of our faith.*” Yea; it is not even in us to believe, for faith is the gift of God. Faith is the work of His grace. Faith is a product of His mercy. Faith is not a flower that blooms in the garden of human depravity; it is the gift of God; Yea, even our faith, even Jesus who is “*the author of our faith.*”

“*He is the finisher of our faith.*” We not only have no power to believe; we have no power to continue. It is Christ that brings us to maturity. It is Christ that keeps us by His power. “*We are kept by the power of God.*” Paul says, “*I am persuaded; I am confident that He that hath begun a good work in you shall perform it, (shall perfect it, and shall complete it), in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

We are “*looking unto Jesus.*” That is just three words. Yet, I say unto you, in these three simple words; “*looking unto Jesus,*” in these three words you have the whole of faith. You could read a dozen books on faith. You could hear a thousand sermons on faith and it would still come down to one thing, “*Looking unto Jesus.*” That is where faith is and that is what faith is.

Christ is the only object of faith; it is totally, completely and fully relying on Christ. I am looking to Christ and depending on Christ; that is the whole of faith.

People make millions of dollars selling books on how to do this or how to do that and other things in regard to faith. Faith is in believing God and looking unto Christ. These three words, “*looking unto Jesus,*” you have the whole of acceptance with God. How can God love us? He can love us only in Christ.

How can God look with favor upon me? Only in Christ can He do that. How can God accept me a guilty sinner? He accepts me only in Christ.

So, if I am suppose to have acceptance with God, the love of God or the favor of God, I am going to have to look to Jesus. Looking unto Jesus is the whole of life. He said, *“I am the life; I am the way the truth and the life.”*

There is no life out of Christ; there is death. *“He that hath the Son of God hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* So, to whom shall I go to look for life, to the source of life, to the fountain of life and to the giver of life? I am to go to Jesus Christ. Spiritual life is only in Christ. That’s right!

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear then shall ye appear with Him in glory.” He said, *“I am come that they might have life.”* If you want life, look to Christ.

These three words are the whole of hope. What kind of hope do you have? There is no hope except in Christ. Everybody has some kind of hope but there has to be a reason for hope. Hope is not just a wish that is picked out of the air somewhere.

In order for us to have a good hope and a sound hope, there has to be a foundation. So, our hope is Christ; *“Christ in you, that’s the hope of glory.”* Our hope is a hope that is based on expectation and that expectation is based on His promise. *“He that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.”* Christ is our hope!

Looking to Jesus is the whole of heaven. Paul said, *“I have a desire to depart.”* Not just to depart. I don’t just have a desire to depart. That is what people feel that commit suicide; they have a desire to depart. Paul didn’t just have a desire to depart; he wanted to depart and be with Christ. That is what heaven is.

Heaven is His Kingdom. Heaven is His glory. A hope of heaven is in Christ and is looking to Jesus. This hope brings a man to God, brings a man to life, brings a man to hope and brings a man to heaven. Peter said in 1 Peter 3:18, *“For Christ at once suffered for sins the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.”*

Would you come to God? Would you know God? You are going to have to look to Jesus for *“He that hath the Son hath the Father.”*

Let me sound a clear warning. I want you to listen carefully. There are so many temptations to be drawn to look to something else or someone else. There are temptations to get you involved in something else. I want you to listen, *“Looking to Jesus.”* What does it mean to look to Jesus Christ?

First of all: To look to Christ with a full look and a full confidence you must rest, trust and have faith in Christ. Looking to Christ is not looking to my faith. Looking is not having faith in my faith. I am not looking to the look. It is actually looking to Christ.

I'm not talking about looking with physical eyes; I am talking about looking with eyes of faith. It is not faith that saves us; it is Christ that saves us. Faith is not the source of mercy; Christ is the source of mercy. It is not faith that atones; it is Christ that atones. I must not have faith in my faith or look to my faith or look to my look. I'm looking to Jesus. It is looking to Jesus and not to my faith.

The hymn writer said it this way:

Come Thou fount (fountain) of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy praise,
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

Looking to Christ is actually looking to Christ and not to my meditations, devotions, prayers or worship. Now listen to me and don't let me offend you, all of these things in themselves would be so much sin (our devotions, prayers, meditations and even our worship) without Christ making them holy by His intercession and by His blood, all of them.

That is what Isaiah says, he said; *"We all do fade as the leaf. Our righteousnesses are filthy rags in God's sight."* It is not looking to our meditations, our devotions and prayer; it is looking to Christ. That is where salvation is.

Looking to Christ is not looking to the name I bear. I know a lot of people who put a great deal of stock in the name. There is the Church of God, the Church of Christ, the Baptist Church, and the Catholic Church. It is not the name that I bear or the doctrine that I hold; it is the Saviour who intercedes for me, who redeems me; it is looking to Christ.

Many people claimed to do great things in His name at the Judgment. Do you remember when they said, *"Lord; we preached in your name? (We had the right name). We prophesied in your name. We cast out devils in your name. We did many wonderful works in your name."* We used the name, "Christ." Then He said, *"I never knew you."*

So, it is not looking to the name that I wear. Somebody will ask you "Are you a Christian?" Well, the definition of that word is something that my generation does not

know a whole lot about. Let's just say that I am looking to Christ. Wearing the name "Christian" is not much help if you don't know Him. Don't go looking for the name or even the doctrines; look to the Person. Salvation is not a profession; it is a Person.

Looking to Christ is not looking to the law. You know, the law commands but the law gives no strength to perform. The law condemns but the law never pardons. The law wounds but never heals. The law slays but it never gives life. Only Christ can give life.

So, salvation and this thing of redemption is not looking to the law. One fellow said, "It is looking to the big ten" No; it is looking to Christ for "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*"

It is not looking to your mother; it is looking to Christ. You don't look to Mary or to your mother; you look to Christ. They are not equal mediators or equal redeemers. She is a sinner saved by the grace of God through the blood of Christ.

It is not looking to any of His apostles such as Saint James, Saint Jude, Saint Mark, Saint Peter or Saint Paul. It is not looking to His people. The Scripture says, "*When He had by Himself purged our sins. He walked the wine press of God's wrath alone.*"

The Bible says, "*There is one Mediator between God and men. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*" There is no problem there and I don't know why we have a problem with it. We are not looking to Christ and someone or something but Christ and Him alone. We are looking to Christ.

It is looking to Christ and not looking to our brethren. It doesn't even matter if they are the best and the most beloved among us. You follow a man and you will always go wrong. If you follow a man when that man is gone, your religion is gone.

Christ must always be between us and every human being. "*For he that loveth father, mother, brother, sister, husband and wife more than Me is not worthy of Me,*" Christ said.

It is looking to Christ and not to my strength. If I have any strength it is by His grace. It is looking to Christ and not to my weakness for "*When I am weak then I am strong. Without Him I can do nothing. Through Christ I can do all things.*" So, it is not in me at all. It doesn't matter if it is strength or weakness; it is looking to Christ.

It is looking to Christ and not looking to my sins. It won't do me any good to look to my sins. It is not looking to the wounds that brought healing to the snake-bitten Israelites; it

was looking to the serpent on the pole. Moses didn't go out to them and say, "Look at your wounds." He said, "*Look to the serpent lifted up.*"

Even so, it is not looking to my sins but to Christ my sin-offering. It is looking to Christ and not looking to my work for Jesus. A man may have his hands full and his heart empty. If your heart is full of Christ, your hands will be busy in His service and in His ministry.

There is only one true motivation for any kind of service for the glory of God. It is not rules, threats, rules and regulations; it is love for Christ and looking to Christ.

What is this thing of salvation? It is looking to Christ and not to my success or to my failure. It is not required of a steward that he be successful; it is required of a steward that he is found faithful. It is my business to plant and He is the Lord of the harvest.

It is my business to be faithful to His Word. It is His business to gather the fruit even in my life time, either in my life time or the life time of another; it really doesn't matter. Folks don't see what I do but He does.

People say, "They don't appreciate what I give." He appreciates it. You might say, "People don't know my loneliness." He knows your loneliness. What about your needs? He knows your needs. People cannot supply your needs. People can't meet your needs and your loneliness.

People can't reward you. He does and He will reward you; it is looking to Jesus and not to the Holy Spirit or to His gifts. The Holy Spirit does not magnify Himself; He glorifies Christ and He reveals Christ. He came to reveal Christ. Christ said, "*He will take the things of Mine and show them you.*" He won't speak of Himself.

I'm not looking to the Holy Ghost; I am looking to Jesus. I am looking to the Christ of the Covenant. I'm looking to the Christ of the Scriptures. I'm looking to the Christ of incarnation and obedience. I am looking to the Christ of Calvary and the Christ of resurrection, the Christ of exaltation, the Christ of intercession and the Christ of glory.

When clouds of death around me roll,
When His angels come for my soul,
No need to tell me then to look to grace,
I will be looking at Jesus face to face.

Look to Him now and you will see Him then!