

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

HEBREWS 12:1-2 • TV100A

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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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 want to speak to you today on the subject: **“LOOKING UNTO JESUS.”** I want you to turn in your **Bible** to the book of **Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1 and 2.**

Now, if you would, open your **Bible** to the book of **Hebrews** and let’s read together **verses 1 and 2 of chapter 12** and ask the Spirit of God to speak to us from this Scripture and reveal unto us the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **“LOOKING UNTO JESUS.”**

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that does 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

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was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Now, in **chapter 11** of the book of **Hebrews** the verses which just precede the ones that I read to you a moment ago; (I believe Paul was the writer of **Hebrews**), Paul takes us by the hand and leads us through the hall of spiritual examples of the Old Testament.

He takes us to a picture, a word-picture of Abel; *“By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain”*

And we stand and observe this man Abel. Abel was the first Christian martyr; that’s right, the first Christian martyr. Abel believed God. He believed that, *“it’s the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”*

And Abel died at the hands of his self-righteous brother who tried to approach God, without the blood. And this blood sacrifice of Abel represented the cross and represented Christ. This is the first conflict between grace and works.

This is the first conflict between a man who believed that Christ is the Redeemer; that blood cleanseth the soul, and that God accepts a man not on the basis of his works but on the merits of Jesus Christ and on the substitutionary work of the Son of God.

And Abel died at the hands of his self-righteous brother who wanted to approach God on the basis of his righteousness rather than the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And it was faith that led Abel to offer a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

And then Paul takes on us down the hall here, the spiritual hall of fame, and we stop by the word-picture of a man called Enoch. It is said of him: *“By faith Enoch walked with God.”*

Enoch was a family man; Enoch had a family. Enoch was a public man; he was an influence in his community. He was a man that served others. But, he was a man who walked with God. A family man can walk with God.

A public man, contrary to most people’s opinion; a public man can walk with God, a man who is a leader in his community, a man who is a leader in his neighborhood can walk with God. Enoch walked with God by faith.

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And he walked with God so devotedly and in such a consecrated manner that he just walked right on into heaven. *“Enoch walked with God.”* He walked so devotedly with God that he walked into heaven without dying.

Then, we go on down the line and in this **11th chapter**, preceding the verses that I read as our text; (and we’re coming to our text in just a moment, but we have to look at this first) we come to the picture, a word-picture, of a man called Noah.

And it’s said of him: *“By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen (of a flood that was coming, of judgment that God would send upon the earth), prepared an ark.”* Noah dared to stand alone. That’s what I see in Noah. By faith he dared to stand alone.

I see in Abel a man who by faith believed in the blood atonement and gave his life for what he believed. I see in Enoch a man who dared by faith to walk with God, walk with God in a devoted manner, in a consecrated manner, walk with the living God.

I see in Noah a man who in the face of criticism and mocking, ridicule, persecution, and being called a fanatic and a fool, and yet, Noah believed God and he was willing to stand alone.

Noah was certainly justified in his faith wasn’t he? For finally, that old ark floated upon the waters of God’s judgment, and as that ark floated, all the way it said this; Noah was right, he believed God and he certainly was right wasn’t he? But, he was right when the others thought he was wrong and he dared to believe God.

And then, we stop by a picture of a man called Abraham. *“By faith Abraham, called of God, went out not knowing where he was going.”* Abraham left his home, his friends, his family, his country, and walked with God though he knew not where the Lord was taking him. But he believed God.

He went out from his home and his family and his friends and his country. And he was a man about my age; he was up 50, 60, years of age and he went out not knowing where he was going.

And then Abraham believed God. God told him that he would have an heir. He had never had a child. He and Sarah had been married some time and they had never had a child.

And Sarah was past the age of bearing children and yet God said to Abraham: *“You will have a son. And from that son your seed will be like the stars of the heaven and the sands of the seashore.”* Abraham believed God and he didn’t know how, but he believed God.

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And then, when he was an old, old, man, (110, 112, 114 years of age), when that son was about 12, 13, or 14 years old; God came to him and told him to take that son upon Mount Moriah and sacrifice him as a sin-offering to God.

And Abraham started to the mountain, three days journey, and willing to do what God told him to do, simply because he believed God. He believed God would raise Isaac from the dead because he knew that God said, *“In Isaac shalt thy seed be called,”* and God can’t lie and God can’t change; he’s immutable.

And Abraham believed God. He counted Isaac as being dead. He had given him to God. And this man by faith believed God. He didn’t know where, he didn’t know how, and he didn’t know why, but he believed God.

And then we stop by a picture of Moses. *“By faith, Moses esteemed; Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.”*

He turned his back; Moses turned his back on fame and fortune. He turned his back on power. He turned his back on influence, prestige, to be identified with God and God’s people. He esteemed the reproach of Christ.

To be reproached for Christ’s sake is better and greater riches than all the treasures that this world and Egypt has to offer. *“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”* This here is all temporary; everything here will pass away.

“The fashion of this earth fadeth and passeth away” but Moses by faith, esteemed the reproach of Christ, even the sufferings of walking with the Lord, the trials and the disappointments on this earth as being greater treasure or greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

And then with a wave of his hand; we don’t have time to go all the way down this hall, (we don’t have but 30 minutes) but then, with the wave of his hand, the apostle indicates all the thousands of others.

There was Isaac, a man of faith and Jacob too. There was Joseph and Sarah and Rahab. There was David, Samuel, Joshua, of whom the world was not worthy, of whom this world was not worthy, men and women who knew God, men and women who believed God, men and women who walked with God, men and women whose one objective was to obtain a better resurrection.

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There's something better than the relationships of this life. There's something better than the riches of this world. There's something better than all that this earth has to offer, "*for if only in this life we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.*"

And my friend, this brings me to **chapter 12**. That's the **11th chapter** but then in **chapter 12** the Scripture which I read a moment ago; he says to you and to me:

"Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about, (surrounded), with such a great cloud of witnesses (and examples, such a great cloud of men of God, men of faith, men and women of faith who knew God and walked with God)." What are we to do?

First of all: We are to lay aside every weight, and everything that would hinder us from walking with God!

Let's lay aside every weight that would hinder our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. You know what it is. Let's lay aside every ambition; tear up your blueprints and throw them away and ask God to reveal His will. Let us lay aside every association, every companion, and every associate that hinders your spiritual growth and hinders your relationship with God. Just put them aside.

Love them, forgive them, pray for them, desire their salvation, and witness to them. But you can't be partners with unbelievers. "*Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. Come out from among them and be ye separate.*"

What fellowship does light have with darkness? What fellowship does Baal have with God or Christ have with demons? None at all! So, let's lay aside all these weights that are pulling you down.

It's like a man running a race. When a fellow runs a race, you see; he just wears a pair of shorts and a brief shirt and he doesn't even wear any socks. He just wears a pair of track shoes. He doesn't wear an overcoat and a hat and carry an umbrella to run a race. Those are weights that weigh him down and hold him back and he will certainly lose the race.

But he lays aside all of this. We'll lay aside every alliance, every associate, every ambition, every attitude, and every occupation. You know what they are. I don't need to spell them out to you.

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With you it may be something different than me or with someone else who is listening to this program, or whatever it is, whatever the weight is that hinders your spiritual growth and your relationship with Christ and you are running with patience the race that's set before you.

Lay it aside. *"Seeing we are compassed about so great a cloud of witnesses (with men like Moses, David, Samuel, Joshua, Abel, Enoch, and Abraham) let us lay aside the weight and every sin which does so easily beset us."* Lay aside every sin, that sin which does so easily entangle us, and hinder us in our spiritual growth.

Not only should we lay aside the care and concern for this flesh but we need to lay aside those inward attitudes of sin. Now, that's usually the sin that does so easily beset us. I'm talking about the sin of pride; how proud we are.

Lay it aside. It hinders you. It's a sin that doth entangle you, that hinders you, and besets you in spiritual growth. Just be done with it. *"If a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing; he's deceived. Let not a man think more highly of themselves than he ought to think."* If we think we know anything, we don't know anything that we ought to know.

We need to lay aside pride. There are so many directions that pride takes. I know people who are proud of their race. They are always downgrading people of other races or other countries or other sections of the country. Lay aside the pride and bigotry of race.

Lay aside the pride of face, proud of your beauty and your strength and these things. *"Let not the strong man glory in his strength or the rich man glory in his riches or the wise man glory in his wisdom. If any man glory, let him glory in this that he knows me, saith the Lord."*

And lay aside that pride of place. We are proud because we make a little more money than somebody else or we live in a bigger home or we drive a finer car or we've got a better job.

And we are nothing. You know, when folks go to taking pride in the things they have; that's just one worm bragging on another worm. You can dress a worm up in diamonds but he's still a worm or you can put him in rags and he's still a worm and that's all we are. And there's no place for this pride of place.

And then I guess the worst pride of all is that pride of grace, proud, religious people, arrogant, religious people, holier than thou religious people, self-righteous religious people who criticize and condemn and judge people of the world because they are not as good as they are, as righteous as they are, as religious as they are.

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Let's put aside these sins of pride and lust and envy. Envy is a terrible sin. Jealousy is a terrible sin. Greed, self-righteousness, covetousness; these sins and sinful attitudes do not promote godliness and do not promote a relationship with God.

Paul is saying; "Seeing we are compassed about with men who knew God and who believed God and who walked with God and who were used of God; now let us lay aside all of this junk, all of this flesh, all of this rubbish, all of this self-righteousness, and all of these things that hinder and entangle us and let's run with patience the race that is set before us."

Now you know; Paul often refers to the Christian life as being a race or a warfare. It's not over in a moment. It's not something that starts today and it's settled tomorrow; it's a lifetime relationship with God.

And the pace; the pace may be slow or fast, but let's run it with patience. Does the way seem long? Well our God says: "*Wait upon the Lord; wait I say on the Lord.*"

Does the way seem mysterious? "*Well, now we see through a glass dimly. We know in part and we prophesy in part. But that which is perfect is come than that which is in part shall be done away.*"

Does the way seem hard? God said, "*My grace is sufficient.*" Does the way seem lonely? He said, "*I will never leave you.*" David said, "*My mother and father may forsake me but the Lord will never forsake me.*"

Does the way seem filled with trial? Well, "*all things work together for good to them that love him, to those who are called according to his purpose.*"

Do you seem unimportant? Do you feel unimportant? Don't forget; "*God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty and the things which are wise that no flesh should glory in his presence.*"

And that brings me to these three words, "*looking unto Jesus.*" Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with men like we just talked about; let's lay aside every weight that doth hinder us and lay aside these petty, God-dishonoring, Christ-dishonoring attitudes and sins that hinder us and entangle us and let's run with patience, waiting upon God, the race that is set before us.

Now, here are the three key words to this whole Book and to this whole Chapter, "*looking unto Jesus.*" Here are the most important words of all, "*looking unto Jesus.*" Here's the whole secret of life, of happiness, of salvation and of eternal glory, "*looking unto Jesus.*"

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And I want to ask four questions: Looking unto Jesus, **where**; looking unto Jesus **why**; looking unto Jesus **how** and looking unto Jesus **when**? Let's think about that with the time we've got left.

First of all: Looking unto Jesus **where**?

Now not with these eyes; you are not going to see Christ in the flesh because He has already been here and He's gone back to glory. He's on the right hand of the heavenly Father. We are not going to see him with these eyes but with eyes of faith, with eyes of faith given by the Holy Spirit.

And we are not going to see him in dreams and visions. Don't look for Christ in dreams or visions. That's not the way he's appearing to his people. It's not necessary; I am going to show you why.

And don't look for Christ in the artist's pictures. Where are we to look for Christ? Look for Christ in the Scriptures, in the Scriptures!

It says, *"Ye search the Scriptures; in them you think you have life; they are they which testify of me."* And the Scripture tells us, *"To him give all the prophets witness. These things are written that you might believe on the Son of God and believing you might have life through his name."*

"This is the record; God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son." Look for Christ. Look unto Christ in the Scriptures.

Then look unto Christ in God's everlasting covenant of grace and mercy. We were chosen in Christ. We were loved in Christ. We were redeemed in Christ. *"We were accepted in the beloved."* All of it's in Christ. Look unto Jesus the representative, the federal-head, the ordained one, the chosen one, our representative in the everlasting covenant of God's grace.

And then look unto Christ incarnate? *"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: In the fullness of time God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law."*

I look back yonder to Bethlehem's manger and I see a baby born to a virgin and I see Jesus Christ the Messiah, the one of whom it was written: *"The Lord himself shall give you a sign; a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a child and thou shalt call his name Immanuel, (God with*

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us).” That’s my God, my Lord, my Saviour, my Redeemer, and my Representative, Christ incarnate.

Look to Christ on the cross, our Substitute: *“Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid upon him and we are healed by his stripes.”* Look to Christ on the cross, *“who was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”*

Look to Jesus Christ on God’s right hand. He’s the only Mediator, that’s right; the Scripture says, *“one God and one mediator between God and men and that’s the man Christ Jesus.”* There’s no other Mediator. God has used other people and God has used means but God only honors Christ’s intercession.

Christ; everything’s been vested in Christ. Everything’s been turned over to Christ. He’s the only representative for the sinner to God almighty. He’s the only one who can reconcile us to God.

He’s the place where God meets men and men meet God. He’s the tabernacle: *“He tabernacled in human flesh.”* And now, on God’s right hand; He’s our Mediator. So, look to Christ in the Scriptures, in the covenant of grace, incarnate, on the cross, and on the right hand of God and coming again.

Second: And now; look unto Jesus Christ, **why?** Because it says: *“He’s the author and finisher of our faith.”* That’s why I am to look to Christ. You talk about Abel’s faith, and Moses’ faith, and Abraham’s faith and Enoch’s faith and all of these; *“Christ is the author and finisher of our faith (and their faith).”*

There’s only one way God has ever saved men and that’s through Christ. There’s never been any other Saviour. All who are in glory shall sing, *“unto him who loved us and gave himself for us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”*

So, we look to Christ as the author and finisher of our faith. Now, let me explain that to you:

First of all: By His eternal purpose and counsel He’s the author of salvation. Salvation by grace through faith; Christ is the author of it. He planned it. He’s the author of it. It all started with Him. Salvation didn’t start on this earth; it started in heaven.

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It didn't start with men. It started with God. It started back yonder before the world began. *"He was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world."* God had a Saviour before He ever met a sinner.

Secondly: And then by His willingness and determination to come to earth in human flesh and die for our sins; He's the author of all that faith gives.

He's the author of our salvation in that He planned it. And He's the author of salvation by grace through faith in that He executed it; He bought it. He's the author of it. He not only planned it but He perfected it. He bought it; He purchased it.

Thirdly: Then by His Spirit He calls us to Himself; **Matt. 11:28** says, *"Come unto me and rest."*

Fourthly: And by His goodness and grace He enables us to repent and believe.

Therefore, He's the author of our faith in that He enabled us to believe; He gave us faith: *"Faith's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."*

Fifthly: And then by His enabling grace, His restraining grace, and His keeping grace; He sustains that faith.

He's the author of that faith in that He planned it, He purchased it, He applied it, and He sustains it. He keeps me in the faith. I don't keep myself. *"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before his throne with exceeding joy."* Who keeps us? Christ keeps us. He's the author of our faith in that he keeps it alive.

Sixthly: Then He will present us faultless before the Father's throne. He will glorify us, He will complete the work which He hath begun and He's the finisher of our faith; He's going to make it all perfect and conform us to His image. So, He's the author and the finisher of our faith.

Looking unto Jesus, **how?** How should I look to Christ, partly? No sir, totally; so totally and so completely that my eyes of faith and my heart of love sees and feels and pants after and seeks no other.

**"Christ is all I need, all I need
Wisdom, righteousness and power
Holiness for ever more
Jesus Christ is made to me
All I need."**

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There is none other. We are complete in Him. *“There’s none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

It’s looking to Jesus, looking to Jesus Christ, not to myself, not ever to myself, having no confidence in this flesh, not depending upon or looking to my strength, my wisdom, my failure or success, or my ups or my downs, just looking unto Jesus.

It’s looking to Jesus and not to our brethren, not to the best of them or the worst of them. It’s looking to Christ and not to the law; it can offer no hope. It’s looking to Christ and not to the ordinances, no matter how beautiful they are, not to baptism, the Lord’s Table, or any other ordinance.

It’s looking to Christ and not to our faith, no sir, not even to our faith. Faith has as its one object the Lord Jesus Christ. We never have faith in our faith, in ourselves, or anything else, looking to Christ.

All right, last of all: Looking to Christ **when?**

I look to Christ in the beginning. That’s how I start the Christian race, or journey, or warfare, or whatever you wish to call it. He says, *“Look unto me and be ye saved for I am God and there is none else.”* Look to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It says in **John 3:14**: *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

Look to Christ; don’t look to your preacher. Don’t look to mother and daddy; look to Christ. In the very beginning; that’s how you start the Christian race or warfare, walk, life, or whatever; you look only to Christ. Your faith reaches out to Christ.

And then we look to Christ at all times, always coming to Christ, never ceasing to come to Christ. You see, this thing of salvation is an eternal thing; we have been saved, we’re being saved, we shall be saved, and we continue to come to Christ to seek the Lord.

And we look to Christ in the day of death, only to Christ. The apostle Paul said: *“The time of my departure is at hand; I’ve fought a good fight. I finished my course and I’ve kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give to me in that day and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.”*

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We look only to Christ at all times!