

J.J.

FAITH FORWARD

Hebrews 12:1-2

Hebrews 12: 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Pray

(James and Jett Bday; Alas Anniv)

For the past 2 Sundays, we've talked about how we can become part of the Hall of Faith.

Hebrews 12: 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses

As we all know, when we see the word, "therefore", it means, "there's something before"
It was talking about Hebrews chapter 11.

Paul said *since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses*

The clouds "nephos" is obviously a metaphor. It means, if you look into the heavens, there are many people who has gone before you based on Chapter 11 that has shown their faith in God EVEN IN THE MIDST OF PERSECUTION, CHALLENGES, SUFFERINGS, UNCERTAINTIES OR CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND THEY CONTINUED TO TRUST AND OBEY HIM.

**We talked about that last Friday in our Bible study,
THE PROOF OF FAITH IS OBEDIENCE.**

Illustration : I always love telling this story. The house was on fire and on the second floor there was a boy that was trapped. He climbed out of the window and was hanging on the window sill because the house was already full of smoke. He can't see anything because of the smoke. But then he heard his father's voice saying, "Let go and I will catch you." The son said, "I'm scared." The dad said, "Don't be scared, I will catch you." The son replied again, "But I can't see you." And the father replied, "Trust me, let go." And the son replied again, "But Dad, I can't see you." And the dad said, "Don't worry, I can see YOU."

Which brings us to how we can be part of the Hall of Faith.

THROW. RUN.SET

I. THROW

let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

What are the things that God is asking you to let go or you need to let go in your life?

Etymology : throw “apotithemi” apo “separate” tithemi “put”... This means “throw it away”...separate from it... hiwalayan mo nay an.

In KJV : “lay aside every weight”

It’s anything that hinders your relationship with God or anything that doesn’t please God.

Let’s not make any excuses about it. The sooner we let go and throw it away, the better for us.

Then we talked about

II. RUN

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

Obviously, this talks about a long distance race.

- **Run with power.**

Etymology : *run* trecho (trekrho) it means run but it also means giving all your effort. Giving your very best to God. Your best time, your best effort.

- **Run with perseverance**

with perseverance the race

Etymology: perseverance (patience in KJV); hupomone ; - to endure is the root word but the actual meaning is to be steadfast.

Continue to trust, follow and obey the Lord even if the going gets tough.

Etymology : race “agon” where we get the word “agony” “agonizing” ...there will be struggles in the Christian life.

- **Run with purpose**

the race marked out for us,

Etymology : marked out (set before) “prokeimai” pro “before” keimai “ something that is laid down”

So this is something that is appointed to you.

Find out what God’s purpose for you why you are here on earth?

I’m sure it’s not just about to get up in the morning, work, or make money and that’s it. That’s a waste of life.

Our Lord said,

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

ILLUSTRATION (show video) : There's this woman in a world walk-a-thon championship. The finish line was close and she thought she's going to get a medal, she started celebrating already until she was 6 feet away, another walk-a-thoner blew by her.

What happened there is she was running the race but in the end, she forgot to focus.

We have discussed this before, the prize is Jesus Christ!

THAT'S WHY?

III. SET

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Now let me show you something in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11 : 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

You see this? In the Old Testament, Moses gave up his title as Prince of Egypt because he wanted to have Prince of Peace in his life.

Illustration : My siblings and I have a chat group. Our youngest just came from a trip in New York. The company he was working for sent him there. He showed us photos of him inside business class section on Emirates Airline. He was showing his nice hotel room. He was showing us the huge steak that he was eating which I believe was Peter Luger steakhouse. That's reputed as one of the best, if not the best steakhouse in the world. He was showing photos of him watching the New York Knicks game, (he's a huge basketball fan). He also had a brief stay in Dubai. He was showing us videos of Dubai, a nice city and he showed us his nice hotel room there. But in the end, this is the photo he sent us – a photo with his wife and son with the caption, "Iba pa rin ang Pinas. Home."

Remember as Christians, this is not our home as the writer of Hebrews always mentions in Chapter 11.

Hebrews 11: 13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

So that even if we are suffering here, we continue to persevere because we know we are not yet home.

As Christians, we need to FIX OUR EYES, FOCUS OUR EYES ON JESUS in order to finish strong in our faith TO BE PART OF THAT HALL OF FAITH.

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Etymology : fixing, looking “aphorao” apo (separate), horao (to see with the eyes)... literally, to separate your eyes... it means to turn your eyes away from other things and fix them on something.

Illustration : If you go into a restaurant, you will immediately know if a couple has just started dating. Their eyes are just locked on each other even if they’re not talking.

Who should we fix our eyes on?
fixing our eyes on Jesus

Remember, the purpose of the writer of Hebrews is to encourage the Christian Jews who was being persecuted at that time.

Application : If we fix our eyes on Jesus, we will be able to weather any storm.

Biblical Illustration: The story is in Matthew 14, Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat and go ahead without him. It was night time and the winds were strong and the waves were huge and then they saw Jesus walking on the water. Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid. It is I.” Then Peter said... let the Word of God tell us directly.

*Matthew 14 : 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”
29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”
31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”*

Why did Peter sink? It’s because he took his eyes of Jesus.

Application : Faith has to do with always looking at Jesus.
If we take our eyes of Him, we will lose faith.

Quote : “If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest.” - Corrie Ten Boom

I heard another one something like this : If you want to be discouraged, look behind you. If you want to be depressed, look around you. If you want to be distressed, look in front of you. But if you want to be delighted, look up to Jesus.

A lot of people, the reason why they either lose their faith or get discouraged even in church is because they are looking at situation, people and problems instead of looking at Jesus.

Why fix our eyes on Jesus? He is the pioneer, perfecter and pattern

- **He is the pioneer of our faith.**

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer

KJV, version says, “author”

Application : This means, faith comes from Him. We will never have faith in the Father without Jesus Christ.

That’s why it’s very important that we study His Word, listen to His Word. Look at what the Bible says.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

When we look at the Greek word

Etymology : arkhegas “author” where we get the word “arch”, the leader, and ago “to lead”
The leader who leads.

The other verses in the Bible it was used as “Prince” or “captain”. The prince or the captain is the one who leads the army.

This means, He is the one in charge.

Faith means just continue to trust Him, follow Him and obey Him and surely YOU WILL BE VICTORIOUS IN THE END BECAUSE HE’S THE ONE LEADING YOU.

Illustration : Remember, He leads us through His Word. We need to trust and obey His Word.

I love action movies. One of my favourite movies is the Jason Bourne series. In the movie, titled Bourne Ultimatum, Jason Bourne who was a highly trained spy was trying to protect a journalist in a crowded train station. He was leading him by giving him instructions on the phone with an earpiece. When Jason says to the journalist, go right, he goes right or when he needs to pretend his tying his shoe, he needs to do that so that the cameras won’t see him. The problem is the journalist who was now hiding behind the door became scared. There was a sniper who was just waiting for the journalist to come out of the door. Jason Bourne said, do not move, be still, don’t go out of the door. But the journalist became so afraid that he panicked, that he opened the door to run for his life. But once he opened the door, the sniper got him in the head.

It’s the same with our faith. When our Lord Jesus says, “Do not worry.” DO NOT WORRY! When the Lord says, “Be still.” BE STILL. When the Lord said, “Pray.” PRAY! The problem is when we don’t listen to our captain who sees and knows everything and TRUST our own way...that’s the time we PANIC and that’s the time we lose our faith and that’s the time, like Peter, we SINK and FEEL OVERWHELMED.

That’s why Proverbs says :

*Proverbs 3: 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;*

*⁶in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

You know why we can trust in the Lord? It's because He sees everything. He knows everything and He's in control of everything.

And next week, by God's grace, we'll talk about that even if there are times we become de-focused, we make a mistake or we sin, He is the one who will make sure we finish well IF WE KEEP OUR EYES ON HIM.

That's why we fix our eyes on Him. (Instead of my closing prayer, let's sing this.)

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of this world
Shall go strangely dim
In the light of His glory and
grace

S.G.D.

**He can make the worst thing the best thing - finisher of our faith
Apart from me...abide in me**