

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.

Pray

(Emphasize Prayer and Fasting for this week)

New Year's Resolution Prayer

Dear Lord, So far this year I've done well. I haven't gossiped, I haven't lost my temper, I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for that. But in a few minutes, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help. Amen

Another year has passed which means, we're inching closer to the coming back of our Lord Jesus Christ or us meeting him sooner.

The reason why I mentioned this is because this is what the writer of Hebrews was mentioning in our passage that we're going to study for today.

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.

They were looking forward to something that is much better here on earth.

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.

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Hebrews 11 talks about what you call the "Hall of Faith".

We've heard about the "Hall of Fame"

In basketball, Michael Jordan became a Hall of Famer in 2009. Last year, Vince Carter, became a Hall of Famer. In the Philippines, Jaworski and Atoy Co became part of PBA Hall of Fame in 2005. The likes of Caidic, Hector Calma and Samboy "Skywalker" Lim got inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2009.

To become part of the Hall of Fame means you were above the ordinary.

The Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11 featured men and women who exhibited faith that is above the ordinary. Part of the list mentioned by Paul were Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, a prostitute named Rahab and mentions the name of Gideon, Barak, Samson, David, Samuel and prophets and other nameless men and women. Some of them because of their faith were able to surmount huge challenges and some of them were persecuted, tortured or killed either by stoning, sawed in two.

QUOTE : HEBREWS CHAPTER 11 SHOWS THAT FAITH IS ALL ABOUT TRUSTING GOD IN TRIALS NO MATTER WHAT IT IS AND NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTCOME BECAUSE THEY KNOW THE BEST IS YET TO COME.

Illustration: I remember Janette Batangan when I visited her a week at their house before she went home to the Lord. She was still lucid then. In our conversation, she was telling a story about her nieces and nephews who called her and asked them to already tell their “eulogy” to her. She told about the plan to go to Muskoka to spend some vacation time with her family (It is in Muskoka where she went to heaven). In the middle of her telling these stories and plans, she suddenly talked to the Lord and said to Him, “Hindi ako bibitiw sa’yo kahit anong gawin mo sa akin.”

I remember Tatay Ding, in my conversations with him while he was on his sickbed saying to me, “Ang tiwala ko sa Kanya hindi mawawala.”

I’m sure Janette and Tatay Ding are part of God’s Hall of Faith based on what I witnessed.

Again, *we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses*

So how do we become part of God’s Hall of Faith? What is the blueprint?

The writer of Hebrews was very clear and simple on this that I don’t dare change the outline mentioned in the passage.

THROW. RUN.SET

I. THROW

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

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

Illustration: Last year, you heard, that during one of the storms, our basement flooded. Thank you to Oca, Jobert, Robert and Noel who helped in fixing the basement. But one of the things my wife and I learned is that we had so many things in the basement that can be thrown away. We threw a lot and it was a great feeling. Before, the basement got flooded, we had a lot of accumulated things that weren’t already needed that we had a hard time walking around the basement.

So what are the things in your life right now that prevents you from walking the Lord?

It's time to reflect to take an account on what are the things in in our life right now that's slowing our walk with the Lord or making it harder for us to walk with Him?

let us throw off everything that hinders

In *KJV let us lay aside every weight.*

It doesn't mean yung pabigat sa buhay mo.

This means what is it that prevents you from walking easily with the Lord? Or prevents you from deepening your relationship with Him?

Is it the need or love of money?

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

This is the reason why our Lord said :

Matthew 6: 24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

People forget and even Christians that the one who provides for us is not the job or our business...it is GOD HIMSELF. That's why in the same chapter, our Lord said.

Matthew 6: 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Or is it your time, you're too busy, that you don't have time for God? For prayer? For prayer meeting? For Bible study? For church?

Ephesians 5:15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Do you agree that prayer, Bible study and attending church is a WISE use of time?

This week is prayer and fasting week, join us every 8 p.m. for prayer in Facebook Live. That's a good **use of time.**

That's why the Bible says,

Psalm 90:12 So teach us to number our days, That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

In short, if it's important, schedule it. Spending time with God is very important.

Paul also says : and the sin that so easily entangles

Etymology : that so easily entangles – only one word in Greek - euperistatos

It's a very interesting word "eu" good "peri" about "statos (we get the word static) from histemi" to stand

It's the only time that is used in the Bible.

It means it's something good that makes you stand still.

In short, what is that sin that will one day prevent you from walking with the Lord.

Notice, it means “good”... because “sin” feels good, that’s why it’s desirable.

James 1:14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Do you see this verse? First, it’s desire, because it feels good, then when you give in to desire, that’s what you call sin... but look at sin when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. In short, there will come a time you won’t be able to hide it or control it...then that’s the time, tragedy happens.

We have seen this happen to Christians and even pastors – specially sexual sins. There’s no such thing as accidentally “sinned”. It’s been brewing in your thoughts, then you take action but hide it but then suddenly you’re into it that it becomes full grown and then tragedy.

Illustration: You know what happened to Ravi Zacharias, stalwart in apologetics, respected all over the world, he died but then that’s the time his sexual sins surfaced and unfortunately, his family is the one who had to carry the stigma of his sins and the people that believed in him.

Quote : The focus of Satan's efforts is always the same: to deceive us into believing that the passing pleasures of sin are more satisfying than obedience. – Sam Storms

So what do with these sins and hindrances that prevents us or will eventually stop us from walking with the Lord or being used by the Lord?

let us throw off

Again, what is that temptation or desire or sin that you are hiding right now?
... **THROW IT OFF.... APOTITHEMI.... SEPARATE FROM IT!**

But let me balance this, of course, the news will only feature pastors and Bible teachers that have fallen and that’s going to be top of mind.

Quote : After this influencer mentioned megachurch pastors A, B, C and D who are doing good deeds secretly for the Lord, he said this, “For every one public scandal you hear about, there’s a 100 secret successes. So now you may say, “Well then why don’t I ever hear about them?” Because planes that land safely don’t make the news.”

He’s right, we only hear about Christians who have failed but for every one Christian who got entangled with sin THERE ARE THOUSANDS MORE THAT ARE LIVING LIVES FAITHFULLY IN THE LORD that we don’t hear about.

These are the people who will be joining God’s Hall of Faith one of these days. Why?
Not only they throw off all hindrances BUT ALSO they are running with perseverance and fixing their eyes on our Lord.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

We'll talk about this next Sunday by God's grace.

But let me end this sermon by telling you one story about this person who threw away something **that hinders and the sin that entangles. It's a true story but I can't tell you the person's name.**

Story : This man always had struggle with pornography ever since he was a kid. He tried everything from getting an accountability partner and even putting preventative measures on his computer. But this man from his counselling saw that one of the reasons for his addiction to pornography is easy access on his phone. He also saw that his constant social media scrolling and his lust for pornography is hindering his walk with the Lord and can eventually affect his marriage too. What he did is he threw away his smart phone and changed it into an older model phone – a Nokia – that you can only use for calling and texting.

QUOTE : WHAT ARE THE THINGS OR RELATIONSHIPS THAT YOU NEED TO GIVE UP SO YOU WON'T GIVE IN TO TEMPTATION SO YOU CAN LIVE A LIFE THAT GIVES GLORY TO OUR LORD.

If you allow me to personal about this, the SIN I need to give up is my temper and my anger and my rage. It has caused a lot of pain in my family's life.

How am I throwing it away or setting it aside?

1. I acknowledge that it is sin and something that hurts God and hurts other people.

There is no reason for me to blow a fuse.

2. I resolve and I promise not to give in to my temper and rage again.

(We need to make a vow to God and others regarding this because that's when the power of God kicks in and takes over.)

3. I will seek outside and professional, godly help in order to find out the root cause.

It is good to seek outside help because it acknowledges your weakness.

Do you know that Alcoholics Anonymous which deals with alcoholics was started by a Christian whose name is Bill Wilson?

So to you my brothers and sisters? What are the things or relationships that you need to throw away that hinders and entangles your walk with the Lord.

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

BREAKING OF THE BREAD.

S.G.D.