

Looking unto Jesus (Quality: Very Good)

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[0 : 00] The Lord would be pleased to help this morning. We would direct your prayerful attention to the Hebrews chapter 12 and at verse 2.

This 12th chapter in the Hebrews and the second verse. 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.

We have been somewhat confirmed as we have been singing those verses and we noticed in the third and the fourth verses of the hymn we just sung something concerning looking unto Jesus.

Behold him now, the Father cries, your morning souls lift up your eyes and view the Saviour dear. And in the next verse we find it also, Ye tried, ye tempted sinners, look to my elect who undertook to ransom you with blood.

Looking unto Jesus. Oh, how can we? How can a person look unto Jesus? Only by faith.

[1 : 29] I remember many years ago, one of my nieces, I believe it was, he wasn't very old, I know at the time, I was showing her a book concerning Jesus.

And she looked up, as I was looking through that book with her, and she said, How do you see Jesus? I said, By the eye of faith. And I remember her reply was this, I have no eyes of faith.

But how it prompted me to pray for that child, that she might be given eyes of faith. And I believe the Lord's answered that prayer. And she does now have the eye of faith.

Well, do we have the eye of faith? Have you and I, friends, this great blessing of faith to look unto Jesus. This is the most important person to look to.

The only one that can save us from our sins. Well, in the previous verse, the first verse of this twelfth chapter, Paul looks back.

[2 : 35] The apostle looks back to this eleventh chapter and speaks of the great cloud of witnesses. And he seems to be bringing before us the natural running of a race and how that the witnesses look on and how that we are to lay aside every weight as we run the heavenly race toward heaven and the sin which does so easily beset us.

And he says, Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. And when we're running in a race, we're looking in front of us. We're looking to the prize.

You know, Paul brings this out very wonderfully in another place, how he himself was brought to forget those things which are behind.

As he says in the Philippians, this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Again, bringing before us this figure of a race and how he's pressing toward the mark, pressing toward that prize. Are we then running this race this morning looking unto Jesus?

- [3 : 57] Now, I believe if we look back into the chapter we've been reading, we should see those who were looking unto Jesus. I've noticed that there are fourteen men named in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and two women named.
- And I believe in each case they were enabled to look unto Jesus. Looking unto Jesus. Well, this is the important thing then to know that we have this faith that he writes so much of in the eleventh chapter.
- And he begins the chapter by saying what the faith is. He describes it. Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for.
- What are we hoping for, friends, this morning? What really do we hope for in the future? Do we hope to see Jesus with their literal eyes?
- I believe every child of God will. They will see him face to face. I've been thinking, you know, during the past week a lot about Job and how he could say what he did right back in his day.
- [5 : 18] He must have had faith to be able to say that. I know that my Redeemer liveth. And even at that time when he lived, Christ was living because he was the eternal Son of God.
- I know that my Redeemer liveth, said Job. And that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. What a faith Job had, really. And yet that faith was sorely tried.
- And so it will be if we have faith. It's bound to be tried, bound to be tested, like Abraham's was. But, it's the substance then of things hoped for.
- If we have faith, we can look forward to something. We look forward to that which we hope to see in heaven. We hope to see Christ with our mortal eyes presently.
- We hope to be with that ransomed people to all eternity. What a mercy for him to have this good hope beyond the grave. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
- [6 : 27] Yes, when we come into the sanctuary, we are concerned, really, about those things not seen by the natural eye. And Paul says in one place, the things which are seen are only temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- And we need this faith to look at those things not seen. We need faith to look to Jesus, as our text says, looking unto Jesus. That's the only way we should see him this day as we come into the sanctuary, by faith.
- And faith is a wonderful thing because it looks back as well as looks forward. Yes, one has said my faith looks back to see the burdens they would bear when hanging on the accursed tree and hopes or guilt was there.
- Surely that's looking unto Jesus as we look back and see what he endured for us on Calvary's cross. But in the third verse of the eleventh chapter, he goes further back than that.
- He goes right back to the beginning, the creation. And he says, through faith, we understand that the words were framed by the word of God. We believe if we have this God-given faith that God spoke and it was done.
- [7 : 55] That he said, let there be light and there was light. And he brought all things into existence by his word. He spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast.
- so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. But we want to come now to these characters that I believe looked unto Jesus.
- They all looked forward to Jesus. They all realised the necessity of it because there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved says Peter in the Acts.
- but the name of Jesus. Now let's look then at the first of these characters in chapter 11. His name is Abel.

He's one of those sons born to Adam and Eve in the beginning. But we read here concerning this Abel that he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

[9 : 06] Why was it? more excellent more excellent because it was God's way. God's way of salvation was seen in it. Let me just read the account of it and we shall get a clearer understanding of how Abel looked forward to the day of Christ.

there were those two sons Cain and Abel and we read concerning Cain that he was a tiller of the ground but Abel was a keeper of sheep and in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord.

Now in that offering of Cain there was no blood no blood and that's most essential in a true offering that there should be blood shed and so when Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering because it pointed to Christ he was looking unto Jesus as our text says now in the same way friends we look back to Jesus if we are taught by the Spirit we know that's the only way we shall ever reach heaven as we look to Jesus and look to his precious blood and realise there's only one sacrifice that can take away sin as we have it recorded in the Hebrews in another chapter so how wonderful that the apostle should write about Abel as he does in this 11th chapter and say by faith

Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice it was more excellent because it typified the Lord Jesus Christ it was God's way of salvation seen in it as he brought that firstling of his flock and by which he obtained witness that he was righteous yes you see in Christ there is a righteousness which we all need we need a covering we're naked in and of ourselves that's why top lady said in that well known hymn naked come to thee for dress black eye to the fountain fly wash me saviour or I die oh necessary friends these first few words are in the text before us looking unto Jesus and in this first sentence you have the fact that Jesus himself is the author and the finisher of that faith that he gives his people he gives it to them he's the author of it and he will be the finisher of it he will perfect it

I like to link up with this first sentence in the text that other word you know in the Philippians where the apostle writes in the first chapter to the Philippians and he says this being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ if the Lord has begun a work in us he will go on to perform it he will finish it as we have it here before us he is not only the author of that precious faith but he is the finisher of it and so he was in the case of all these recorded in the 11th chapter and that's why they looked unto Jesus they looked beyond Abel looked beyond the first thing of his flock and he looked to Jesus the

[13 : 20] Lamb of God looking unto Jesus oh what a wonderful thing it is friends to be able to look to this precious person this morning and see that he is our saviour and our redeemer that we have been brought to the same place where Abel was brought God testifying of his gifts and by it he being dead yet speaketh the first the first of these characters then set before us the one sacrifice the only sacrifice for sin and that is Jesus Christ himself and so we must look unto Jesus in that respect because there's only one who can take away our sins there's only one that can blot out our iniquities and that is the Lord Jesus Christ looking unto

Jesus the author and finisher of our faith when we come to the second of these characters mentioned we find in the case of Enoch that he is one who walked with God and friends this is the only way we can do that as we look unto Jesus as the only way we can really walk with God day by day we read in Genesis that Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him and as he walked with God I believe he was looking unto Jesus and if you and I want to walk with God day by day that's the only way we can do it by looking unto Jesus by seeing him who is invisible by seeing Jesus Christ by the eye of faith and we see this concerning he not that he pleased

God no the only way we can please God in our lives is as we have this faith in Jesus as we're looking unto Jesus that's the only way we can please God we cannot please him without faith as he goes on to say in the next verse without faith it is impossible all those around us today friends who are not in possession of faith it's impossible for them to please God they can't do it it's impossible but those who possess it and who are enabled by that faith to walk with God and to look unto Jesus they will please God without faith it is impossible to please him and those who walk with God you know they will often know what it is to come to him in prayer this is another sign of spiritual life isn't it he that cometh to God must believe that he is and so with every believer friends they will often be found coming to the throne of grace it was the first sign that

Paul who was then Saul of Tarsus was spiritually alive when he was brought to pray it was said to Ananias by the Lord behold he prayeth do we know something of this prayer we know that prayer in the closet friends this is what we feel to lack if one may speak for others that prayer in the closet how often we fail in that but the Lord grants us more of it secret prayer so that we may come to God and believe that he is and know something of this diligent searching of him oh how diligent people are around us friends for material things but how we feel there is a lack of this diligence in spiritual things God is a reward of them that diligently seek him all to seek him more diligently in secret and to pray to him and to know what this is to come to God by living faith pleading the name and the merits of the

Lord Jesus Christ so I believe Enoch as well as Abel looked to Jesus looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith and I'm quite sure the next character looked unto Jesus because the very art that he made was a type of Christ by faith now have been warned of God of things not seen as yet and you know when you think of it we have been warned of things not seen as yet in the scriptures we have been warned regarding eternity we have been warned concerning the second coming of Christ we have been warned concerning the judgment day things not seen as yet now are we in the same place as Noah was are we looking unto Jesus in other words you see it's all comprised in these two words really if we are looking unto him we are looking in the right direction if we are not looking to him we are in the wrong direction by faith

[19:07] Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet move with fear prepared an ark and that very ark that he made friends was a type of Jesus Christ it's been very sweet recently to think of another word that Jesus Christ uttered you remember once when he came near to Jerusalem and he looked down upon that city and he said these words he said oh Jerusalem Jerusalem thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee how often I would have gathered thee as a hen gathereth of chickens under her wings and he would not now that is a wonderful figure friends I feel I remember when I was a lad and I lived in Kent of course then I used to see the hen and the chicks and hear the hen clucking and then the chicks running toward the mother hen and friends what a wonderful type it is of

Christ what protection they found what security what comfort what warmth and you can see the same in the ark protection security salvation and it's all found in Christ's rent looking unto Jesus just as Noah looked to the ark for his salvation and for the salvation of his family now are we concerned about our families about our relations because we have the fact here concerning Noah not only himself was saved but the saving of his house and I believe we should be concerned about our loved ones those that do not yet give any evidence of eternal life we should want to see them being saved prepared and ark to the saving of his house by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith oh what a wonderful thing to be found in that secure place that place of safety in Christ you know the hymn writer brings it out in one of our hymns concerning that dove that

Noah put out of the ark and the hymn writer says in the ark the weary dove found a welcome resting place thus my spirit longs to find resting Christ the ark of grace oh what a resting place we have here in the words of the text looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith don't you think then Noah looked forward to the day of Christ as he was found in that secure place all around him was destruction and death and that's how it would be you know at the end of the world we read of the connection don't we in the connection of Noah's day and the day of Christ when he will come and how that whilst then it was water then it will be fire and how that all around will be destruction but if we're found in Christ we should be safe safe for time for eternity just as Noah was safe when the ark the Lord shut him in he was in a place of safety oh I believe

Noah was enabled to look beyond that ark to Christ looking unto Jesus and I'm quite confident too that Abraham that we read so much of here in the 11th of Hebrews was enabled to look unto Jesus because you know in the 8th of John the Lord Jesus said this Abraham rejoiced to see my day he saw it and was glad that's often an amazing thing to me for instance Abraham who lived so long before could see the day of Christ by faith he could look forward to Jesus yes we believe that he saw Christ looking unto Jesus surely he did and especially in that 22nd chapter of Genesis when he was instructed by the

Lord to take his son Isaac and offer him up as a sacrifice and when the question was asked by Isaac where is the lamb oh yes that was the question put to him but the Lord gave Abraham a wonderful answer to that question God will provide himself a lamb and I believe even when he uttered those words he was looking unto Jesus it's very significant how it's put God will provide himself a lamb and that was true wasn't it he himself was the lamb Jesus was the lamb looking unto Jesus oh Abraham looked down through the ages and saw that great provision of the lamb of God the Lord Jesus Christ God will provide himself a lamb he says for a burnt offering and when they came to the place then

[25 : 09] Isaac was bound upon the altar but we know how the Lord intervened and said lay not thy hand upon the land neither do they anything unto him and then again when Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked looking unto Jesus behold behind him a ram and there was another type of Jesus there he saw the day of Christ that ram had been caught in a thicket just as it was with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ caught in the thicket of our sins as it were caught and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of the Lord Jesus Christ was offered up in our room place and stead on Calvary's cross in the stead of his son no wonder he called the place

Jehovah Jireh the Lord will provide Abraham looked unto Jesus he saw the day of Christ he saw it and was glad he rejoiced in it oh do we look back just as he looked forward to Jesus are we looking unto Jesus this morning for our salvation if we are friends we are in a good place if we are looking by faith to this precious saviour looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith and not only Abraham but I believe Sarah who was mentioned here in the 11th chapter she was enabled to look unto Jesus they all looked down through the ages to the Lord Jesus Christ and so did

Isaac when Isaac asked that question you know it proves that he had been taught that God's way of salvation was through a lamb that's why he said where is the lamb the most important thing is missing he been brought to look unto Jesus he been brought to see as taught by his parents that there must be a lamb for a sacrifice he was enabled to look unto Jesus and so was Jacob oh Jacob when he wrestled with the angel wasn't he enabled there to look unto Jesus as he wrestled do we know what it is to wrestle and to say if bless me even here I will not let thee go except they bless me oh that's where Jacob was looking unto Jesus he was wrestling with the angel and then

Joseph surely he looked unto Jesus as he went down into Egypt he himself was a type of Jesus as he was sold for those pieces of silver and sold into Egypt and went into the prison house we read of him in psalm 105 whose feet they hurt with fetters he was laid in iron he was a type of Jesus he was looking unto Jesus and so was Moses unable to look unto Jesus that very word that we read about him esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt for he had respect the reward oh yes he was looking unto Jesus then and when he kept the Passover the very lamb of the Passover was pointing to Jesus Christ the spring in the blood reminded Moses and the people of

Jesus Christ the lamb the Passover lamb so we could go on speaking of these others even Rahab you know when she put the scarlet line in the window she was looking unto Jesus that reminds us of his blood that scarlet line that was the means of her salvation and the means of our salvation is Jesus precious blood looking unto Jesus oh what a wonderful thing it is then to be given this faith to look unto Jesus who is the author and the finisher of that faith now the text goes on like this who for the joy that was set before him Jesus himself had a joy what was that joy that was set before him the joy that he would have all his people with him one day he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied it was a joy to him that he would be with his people in eternity to come that was the joy set before him the salvation of his bride the lamb's wife as mentioned in the revelation who for the joy that was set before him and because that great joy was set before him he endured the cross what an enduring that was the cross of

[30 : 50] Calvary and all that means we don't know half what it means we name the cross we think of the cross sometimes we don't realise what it meant for him to endure that cross to endure that suffering to endure that pain when the nails were thrust into his sacred hands and feet when the crown of thorns was placed upon his sacred head when he was led out to Calvary as a lamb to the slaughter he endured the cross and he despised the shame there was shame in it all he was in a place of shame he was in the midst of those two thieves as if he were the chief transgressor suffering in the sinner's place despised the shame he despised it but now friends this same blessed

Jesus is set down at the right hand of the throne of God what a mercy that is he has been victorious over death hell and the grave he rose again the third day he ascended up into heaven he is set down at the right hand of the throne of God and what does he do there as he sits down at the right hand he intercedes he prays for his people he is their great high priest their great intercessor he ever liveth to make intercession for them what a wonderful word this is then may we be given this faith this God given faith to look unto Jesus looking unto Jesus the author and the 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 may the Lord add his blessing Amen Amen