



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Summer 2018 Midweek / Sermon Starter

Unit 3: Final Destinations
Sermon Series Title: Living with Eternity in Mind
Sermon 3 Title: Perspective of Eternity
Bible Passage: Hebrews 12:1-2

Background/Context

When we look at ourselves in light of the holiness of God, it becomes clear that at our best we're still no good. At our straightest we're still crooked. The prophet Isaiah declares that our righteous acts are as a polluted garment (Isa. 64:6). The apostle Paul says that there are none righteousness, nor good (Rom. 3:10-18). Due to our defilement with sin, it's crazy to try to live the Christian life without keeping our eyes on Jesus. That's the way we live with the perspective of eternity.

The author of the book of Hebrews writes to a group of new believers who are being pressured to return to living under the Law of Moses. The writer is saying to these new believers—who are tempted to return to the law and quit depending on the finished work of Christ for salvation—Jesus is better. He is better than the prophets (Heb. 1:1-3), and better than principalities and angels (Heb. 1:4-14). He is better than the prince of darkness (Heb. 2:9-15), and better than the patriarchs (Heb. 3:1-6). Jesus is better than the priesthood (Heb. 5:9), and better than the payments of the Old Testament sacrifices (Heb. 9:22-28). These are reasons why we must keep our eyes on Jesus.

**A. Look Behind You with Jesus in Mind
(Heb. 12:1a)**

The author turns the attention of his readers to all the believers mentioned in Hebrews Chapter 11. Sixteen Old Testament believers are mentioned by name (Joshua and the prophets are alluded to), which all lived their lives in a way that pleased God and changed the world “by faith.” That phrase “by faith” is used sixteen times in Chapter 11. Those heroic individuals pleased God and changed the world by looking forward in faith (Heb. 11:13-16).

We please God and help change the world by looking backwards in faith. As we see what God did in and through the lives of people in the Old Testament, our faith is expanded and reinforced to trust Him today. Just as the Lord used and blessed Able, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, He can (and will) use us today if we trust and obey Him.

Christians look back with Jesus in mind when we read the Word of God and trust the God of the Word. People, circumstances, times, and challenges change, but the Lord our God does not change (see Heb. 13:8).

Application Point: While all Scripture was not written *to* us, all Scripture was written *for* us (see Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16), to help us know and grow in Christ. How does the faith-walk and faith-work of the people mentioned in Hebrews Chapter 11 stimulate your faith and encourage you to keep following Christ?

B. Look Beneath You with Jesus in Mind (Heb. 12:1b)

The author now challenges his readers to look beneath the surface of their lives, and see what's keeping them from living a life of faith. He says, "let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us." Perhaps the people were doing some "good things" that were not "God things" that were hindrances to their walk with God. We allow hindrances like television, Internet, and various recreations to consume too much of our time, attention, and money. We must look beneath the surface of our lives for things that hinder our walk with and work for God, and lay those things aside.

Then there's the issue of sin. We must acknowledge and admit our sins, and then ask God to help us abandon our sins (see 1 John 1:9). Evangelist Dwight L. Moody said, "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible." The more we sin, the less we grow. On the other hand, the more we grow, the less we sin. As we keep our eyes on Jesus (through reading Scripture, prayer, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines), God conforms us into the image of His Son.

Application Point: No one drifts toward the word and the ways of God. We must be intentional about cultivating our faith. Name three things that you do on a regular basis that usurp your time, attention, and/or money, and how you will lay them aside going forward.

C. Look Before You with Jesus in Mind (Heb. 12:1c-2)

The author encouraged readers to look back at Old Testament believers, to look within at hindrances and sin in their own lives, and now he encourages them to look ahead at the race.

He exhorts them to run the race with endurance. The Christian life is compared to a race. It's more of a marathon than a sprint. We are to live for God with patience and persistence. Regardless of how much pressure we feel from outside forces, we are to continue pressing forward with and for the Lord.

The author speaks not only to endurance, but also to the example. Jesus Christ is our example of how to please God on earth by living with eternity in mind. We are to keep our eyes on Jesus, "...the source and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus received strength for the journey by focusing on the final destination. We cope with hope. We forge through hard times on earth by focusing on the high time we'll have in heaven. Focusing on our final destination gives us fortitude to endure our frustrating situations. Some glad morning we will be seated around the throne of God where Jesus is right now.

Application Point: Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of how to please our Heavenly Father and to live with an eternal perspective. How does Christ' example encourage you to live with an eternal focus today?