

## Looking Unto Jesus

A lesson prepared for the Fairview Memorial Winter Bible study on January 27, 2020

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Lesson text: **Hebrews 12:1-3**

There is a trendy bumper sticker which reads, “*All who wander are not lost*”. I disagree with that premise. Wander means to go about aimlessly, without a plan or fixed destination; to go astray. The Scriptures teach that to each person born into the world, there is a day appointed for their death and then an impending judgment of soul and works (**Hebrews 9:27**). Sadly, many men seemingly spend their lives wandering both naturally and spiritually, going from day to day without purpose. The end of their lives manifest their wanderings and lack of direction, often to their eternal destruction (**Romans 6:23**). While all of Adam’s race are born lost in sin and depravity (**Romans 3:11; Romans 3:23, Psalm 51:5**), not all wander because our Creator has graciously and mercifully told us where to look for salvation, for direction, and for purpose.

The most successful people have always had a goal or purpose; something to look at to guide or motivate them in a difficult or unproven path. Escaped slaves, often illiterate, used the North Star to guide their travel to an unknown land which promised them life as free people. Sailors have, from ancient times, used the stars to create their navigational charts. Painters and sculptors spend significant portions of time looking at models and images as their work progresses. Human models are imperfect and a GPS can mislead, but anyone who heeds the song’s exhortation to “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” will never go astray.

**Psalm 24:5** “They looked unto him, and were lightened (radiant); and their faces were not ashamed.”

### **I. An Old Testament picture**

Moses and the brazen serpent (Nehushtan)

**Numbers 21:6-9** (KJV)

“<sup>6</sup>And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup>Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. <sup>9</sup>And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

After the people’s sin of rebellion, Moses (at God’s instruction) provided a means of deliverance to those who trusted and believed in the life saving means provided by their offended God. Belief and obedience meant redemption and a lack thereof resulted in certain death. That pole and its brazen serpent became ALL that mattered to a person bitten by a serpent. That is EXACTLY what God wanted us to understand when He sent His Son to be The Lamb of God who would take away the sins of all who believed (**John 1:29**).

## II. The New Testament application

Jesus illustrated and verbalized this concept to the Jews in a very familiar piece of Scripture:

**John 3:14-17** <sup>14</sup>“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: <sup>15</sup>That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup>For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

The words “even so” mean “in like manner” and refer back to the account in **Numbers 21** which his Jewish audience would have known very well. His message was for them, His people, to look to Him as the Messiah who was sent of God to deliver them from their sins. This message remains today: **Isaiah 45:22** <sup>22</sup>“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” (The text which convicted Charles Spurgeon of sin and led to his conversion)

### a. Jesus ONLY qualified to be looked to for salvation

He was and is the ONLY man who has ever lived a sinless life, completely fulfilling the Law (“It is finished” utterance upon the cross prior to giving up the ghost)- making Him alone qualified to be The Lamb of God and suitable sacrifice for our sins, our propitiation and substitute.

**John 14:6** “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

**Acts 4:12** “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

**I Timothy 2:5** “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

**John 3:36** “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

### b. Jesus ONLY is qualified to be looked to as a guide through this life

Briefly, without getting ahead of ourselves, Christ lived the ONLY perfect life this world will ever see. He had no evil words, thoughts or deeds. His actions and reactions were perfect continually both internally and overtly. He taught us how to think, feel and act in a sinful world without sinning. Although we all fall short of these teachings, we have His perfect example to look to in all situations.

### **Hebrews 4:14-15**

<sup>14</sup>“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. <sup>15</sup>For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

### III. Looking Unto Jesus

#### a. Where is He?

**Hebrews 1:1-3** (italic comments added by author)

“ God, who at sundry (*many / different*) times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets (*Old Testament*),

<sup>2</sup>Hath in these last days (New Testament age) spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things (***Romans 8:17***), by whom also he made the worlds (***John 1:3***);

<sup>3</sup>Who being the brightness (*radiance*) of his glory, and the express (*imprinted, not a picture but a stamp / seal*) image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

#### b. Why is Jesus sitting at the right hand of His Father’s throne?

1. Right hand is the position of favor and inheritance.

2. The seated position signifies the completed work.

Christ ascended to His Father (the second time) and sat down because His work of sacrifice and redemption was complete.

**Hebrews 10:11-14**

“<sup>10</sup>By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. <sup>11</sup>And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

<sup>12</sup>But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; <sup>13</sup>From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. <sup>14</sup>For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

#### c. What Does He Expect of Us?

**Hebrews 12:1-3**

“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, <sup>2</sup>**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. <sup>3</sup>For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

These three verses immediately follow the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter (Faith chapter) of Hebrews. Remember, the translators divided the Scriptures into verses and chapters for readability. It was not the Holy Spirit led writers of the Word. So, as a continuation of that thought, our chapter 12 begins with “wherefore”. Meaning, as a result of all of these marvelous people and lives mentioned and in light of the great faithfulness of our God, listen to this.... and then he says:

#### 1. Lay aside every weight

weight (*greek*): an encumbrance, burden

Weights are unnecessary things which would be limiting to a runner (the analogy to come).

Would you run a race with a loaded backpack and a dumbbell in each hand?

## 2. Also lay aside the sin which so easily besets us

**beset** (*greek*): means “standing well around” or to be on all sides, surrounding. The picture is a competitor in this race attempting on all sides to thwart our efforts at running well.

## 3. Looking unto Jesus

**Looking** (*greek*): to look away from one thing so as to see another; to concentrate the gaze upon; to consider attentively.

This is the ONLY place this greek word is used in the Scripture!

## 4. The author and finisher of our faith

“Our” is added by the translators and should be omitted as it changes the meaning somewhat.

“Author” – means captain or prince (in addition to creator)

“Finisher” – completer or, more accurately, perfecter (to make mature); thus, Jesus creates, captains and matures faith at and following conversion.

## d. Why look to Jesus after salvation?

As the Scriptures plainly and strongly teach the security of the believer, why should Christians be concerned (at all) with continuing grace and the doctrine of (external) sanctification?

The short answer is because we may have a saved soul and still suffer a lost life. Meaning, the Lord claims us, ALL of our being, after we are saved and the process of sanctification is willfully giving the Lord our lives in entirety every day (see the Great Commandments in **Matthew 22**).

God DOES save our souls securely at the MOMENT of salvation and also establishes our manner of life with His word and Holy Spirit....but we must choose to continue in His prescribed and tried paths by walking after the footsteps (example) of Jesus.

### **Psalm 40: 1-4**

“I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. <sup>2</sup>He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. <sup>3</sup>And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. <sup>4</sup>Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.”

A salvation from the pit and clay and THEN, a solid foothold and an established path with a new song of praise....but also a warning. Blessed (happy) is the saved man who continues to trust the Lord (**Proverbs 3:5-7**) and resists turning aside to lies OR taking his eyes off of Jesus!

Undoubtedly, the most easily visualized example of this is the apostle Peter’s experience in walking upon the Sea of Galilee in **Matthew 14:21-33**. Peter did the “impossible” of walking on water at the invitation of Jesus until he took his eyes / attention off the Savior and began to consider the danger and violence around him. His faith was changed to fear and he began to sink, prompting him to cry out to Jesus for deliverance. Jesus, of course, rescued Peter and a

very valuable lesson was taught to all of us as Christ's followers. Turn your eyes upon Jesus and all is well. Avert your gaze and attention and difficulty will very soon follow.

d. What are we meant to see as we look to Jesus?

**1. We are intended to see God**

The angel told Joseph in a dream, quoting the prophet Isaiah, in **Matthew 1:23** "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Jesus later answered Philip's request to be shown the Father: **John 14:8-10**

"<sup>8</sup> Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. <sup>9</sup> Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? <sup>10</sup> Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

Peter saw Jesus as the Messiah (God) **Matthew 16:15-17**

"<sup>15</sup> He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? <sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

**2. We are to see His humanity**

**John 1:14** "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

**I Timothy 2:5** "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

**Galatians 4:4** "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

**Hebrews 4:15** "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Jesus never surrendered His divinity and remained fully God at all times (**Colossians 2:9**), but also took upon himself the form of flesh in order to dwell among us (**John 1:14**). We are meant to see Jesus in all the realities of his humanity, without sin, but suffering the common experiences of this life. He knew profound thirst (**John 19:28**), rejection (**Matthew 23:37**), sorrow (**John 11:35**), hunger (**Matthew 4:1-2**), temptation (**Matthew 4:3**), physical pain (**John 19:1**) and spiritual pain / abandonment (**Matthew 27:46**).

**3. We are to see His mercy (NOT receiving what we deserve)**

**John 8:10-11** (The woman caught in adultery)

"<sup>10</sup> When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? <sup>11</sup> She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

He taught and exemplified mercy perfectly.

**Matthew 5:7** "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

**Matthew 25:25-40, 45**

## **Hebrews 2:16-17**

“<sup>16</sup> For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

## **4. We are meant to see His grace (Receiving what we don't deserve)**

### **John 1:14**

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

### **Ephesians 2:4-8**

“<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, <sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) <sup>6</sup> And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: <sup>7</sup> That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

### **Romans 3:23-24**

“<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

## **5. We are to see His compassion**

**Mark 6:34** “ And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.”

**Matthew 14:14** “And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.”

**Mark 1:41** “ And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.”

Jesus expects us to be compassionate because we have experienced His grace, mercy and compassion: **Luke 6:35-37**

“<sup>35</sup> But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. <sup>36</sup> Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. <sup>37</sup> Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

## **6. We are to see His love**

### **John 3:16-17**

“<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

### **Colossians 3:12-14**

<sup>12</sup>Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup>Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. <sup>14</sup>And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

**Romans 5:8** "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

**John 15:9-13** <sup>9</sup>"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. <sup>10</sup>If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. <sup>12</sup>This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

## **IV. Faith is the Victory**

I was gifted a book by this title in 2006 by Brother Colin Dyer (Buell H Kazee, author) and it fundamentally changed my understanding of how Jesus wanted me to live my life for Him. Mr. Kazee states on page 177, "*Faith is not trusting God to get something; faith is trusting God when there seems to be nothing left. When everything is gone, with no hope of restoration; when there is nothing on which to base one's faith; then, can you still trust God.*"

The Scriptures are written to let us see Jesus, the Christ/Messiah: The Old Testament lets us see Him as the coming Messiah, the hope of the world; the New Testament lets us see Him as God incarnate, the savior of the world. He is revealed as not simply our best option, but as the ONLY option worthy of our faith and affection. Above all, we are to look unto Jesus continually with FAITH. In fact, faith is the only means by which we may look unto Christ in this life.

**Hebrews 11:1-2** "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>For by it the elders obtained a good report."

### a. Faith indispensable for our service to the Lord

**Hebrews 11:6** "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

### b. Faith is a gift from God which we experience initially at the moment of salvation

**Ephesians 2:8-9** <sup>8</sup>"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup>Not of works, lest any man should boast."

### c. The Christian life is all about faith and allowing Christ to mature our faith in Him by experience

**Galatians 3:11** "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

**Romans 1:16-17** <sup>16</sup>"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

**1 Thessalonians 2:3** “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.”

d. Jesus is the Captain and Perfector of our faith

**Hebrews 12:2** “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...”

Without Him, there is NO hope of growth, spiritual prosperity, joy or success as a Christian. THIS is why it is essential that we look to Him continually...not just when facing adversity or uncertainty, but at ALL TIMES! The more we look to Him, the more we will love Him and desire Him.

1. *Privately and individually*: I have a need to look to Jesus, to see Him and KNOW Him as Paul expressed in **2 Timothy 2:12**. I’m bound to grow and progress privately before any outward fruit will be manifested for the benefit of others.

2. *Corporately and in community*: Each church which Christ recognizes as His and blesses with the Holy Spirit has an obligation to look to Jesus as its head and sole authority in faith and practice. This means to resist the temptation to look to other churches of like faith and order (MYOB), modern religious entrapments and fads, and certainly the worldly things of our society which surround and assault us daily. Give me Jesus and Him alone.

3. *Nationally*: Our nation has historically observed a day of Thanksgiving and well as days of Prayer. In the modern day of inclusiveness and political correctness, God’s people are being compromised (especially our young people / members) into an ungodly and carnal worldview / mindset. Our nation desperately needs to return to looking unto Jesus vs the current trend of looking at other nations / leaders and their thoughts / practices. The God of the Bible is the God of Today.

**Psalms 33:11-13**

“<sup>11</sup>The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. <sup>12</sup>Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. <sup>13</sup>The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.”

**Matthew 12:25**

“And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.”

e. Faith is the victory because...it ends in sight!

**2 Corinthians 2:5-8**

“<sup>6</sup>Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: <sup>7</sup>(For we walk by faith, not by sight:) <sup>8</sup>We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

**Revelation 1:7**

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

**Revelation 7:9-17** Read and Rejoice! We shall see Him just as He is!