

**HWMR: EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (3) (Week 8)**

**Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith**

Scripture Reading: *Heb. 1:3; 12:1b-2a; 1 Cor. 9:24; 2 Thes. 3:5*

- Heb 1:3 Who, being the **effulgence of His glory** and the **impress of His substance** and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
- Heb 12:1b ... put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and **run with endurance** the race which is set before us,
- Heb 12:2a Looking away **unto Jesus**, the **Author** and **Perfecter** of our faith, ...
- 1 Cor 9:24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but **one receives the prize**? Run in this way, that **you may lay hold**.
- 2 Thes 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the **love of God** and into the **endurance of Christ**.

**Day 1**

*Heb. 12:2 - Looking away **unto Jesus**, the **Author** and **Perfecter** of our faith, who...has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Heb. 1:3 - Who, being the **effulgence of His glory** and the **impress of His substance** and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

**I. “Looking away **unto Jesus**”—Heb. 12:2a:**

- A. The Greek word translated “looking away unto” denotes **looking with undivided attention** by turning away from every other object—v. 2a.
- B. The Hebrew believers had to look away from all the things in their environment, away from their old religion, Judaism, and its persecution, and away from all earthly things, that they might look unto **Jesus**, who is now **seated on the right hand of the throne of God in the heavens**—1:3.
- C. If we would enjoy the heavenly Christ (v. 3), we need to look away from all things on earth unto Him.
- D. The **wonderful Jesus**, who is enthroned in heaven and crowned with glory and honor (2:9), is the **greatest attraction in the universe**.
- E. It is by being **attracted by His charming beauty** that **we look away from all things** other than Him so that we may **run with endurance the race** which is set before us—12:1b.

... May we have a looking-away life. We need to **look away from so many things** that trouble us both outwardly and inwardly **unto Jesus**, who is like an immense magnet, the most attractive One in the universe. However, we often become occupied with and distracted by many things that hinder us from looking away unto Jesus. One of the things that **troubles** us the most is our **self**. We spend much time looking at ourselves, which can become a real problem. Both Brother Lee and Brother Nee addressed this problem, which they describe as introspection. Introspection is a very real problem among us.

Introspection is to **look at ourselves**, including our own spiritual condition and progress. The saints are a serious group of people. For example, we have traveled here from other states and even other countries to spend a whole week in God's word. In these messages we touch many lofty matters, such as turning the age and aspiring to be overcomers. It is easy to hear these things and then turn inward to **measure ourselves and our progress** in these matters. One aspect of our response to such matters is to confess our shortcomings as we deal with our condition before the Lord and to open to His shining. However, we can go too far. Both Brother Lee and Brother Nee warn us about the **danger of introspection** and show us that the **solution is to look away unto Jesus**.

Are we anxious over our spiritual progress? Are we concerned about whether or not we are buying the oil, growing in life unto maturity, and becoming ready for the Lord's coming? Many saints are anxious over these things. **Philippians 4:6** says, "*In nothing be anxious.*" This is possible by our **looking away unto Jesus**. When we are looking away unto Jesus, we are not looking at ourselves. Surely, we want to be delivered from looking at ourselves. We should not look at ourselves; it is not a pretty picture. When we get up in the morning, we should avoid the mirror. We first should **call on the Lord** and **read His Word**. We do not want to look at ourselves but unto Jesus, who is the Author and Perfecter of our faith. (*The Ministry of the Word, chapter 32*)

## Day 2

- Heb. 12:1* - Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, ...**run with endurance** the race which is set before us.
- 1 Cor. 9:24* - Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but **one receives the prize**? Run in this way, that **you may lay hold**.
- 2 Thes. 3:5* - And the Lord direct your hearts into the **love of God** and into the **endurance of Christ**.

## II. The Christian life is a race; every saved Christian must **run the race to win the prize**—**1 Cor. 9:24**:

- A. The prize is not salvation in a common sense but a reward in a **special sense**—v. 24; Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 3:14-15.
- B. The apostle Paul **ran the race** and **won the prize**—9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8:
  1. An encumbrance is a weight, burden, or impediment; the runners of the race strip off every unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, that nothing may impede them from winning the race.
  2. The unique entangling sin in Hebrews 12 was the willful sin of forsaking the assembling together with the saints, of giving up the new covenant way in God's economy, and of going back to Judaism—10:25-26.
  3. Both **the encumbering weight** and **the entangling sin** would have **frustrated** the Hebrew believers and **restrained** them from running the heavenly race in the new covenant way of following Jesus.
  4. We need to **run with endurance**, asking the Lord to direct our hearts into the **love of God** and into the endurance of Christ—2 Thes. 3:5:
    - a. The love is our love toward God, **issuing from the love of God** that has been poured out in our hearts—1 John 4:19; Rom. 5:5.
    - b. This endurance is to endure with the **endurance of Christ** that we have enjoyed and experienced—cf. Rev. 1:9.

Now we must ask a very puzzling question: what is this race? We should not say that the race is perfection or glorification, for that is the goal of the race. Neither is the race the inward working of the law of life, for that is the process of the race. The race is not even the losing of the soul, because that is the way to run the race; it is not the race itself. In order to answer this question, we need to consider the Lord's word in **John 14:6** : "I am the way." A race is a way, a course. **Because Christ is the way, He is also the race.** The race we are running is Christ. Our way is our race. These are not two things, one the way and the other the race. No, the way we are walking is the race we are running. Therefore, Christ, who is the way, is the race. Although I have been ministering on this matter of running the race for over forty years, I have never been so clear as I am now that the race is Christ Himself.

I am burdened that we all might be clear about God's way. In the universe God has prepared the **unique way** which we must take. **This way has no beginning or ending; it is endless, reaching from eternity to eternity.** From Genesis 1 through Revelation 22 there is only one way—Christ. Before Christ was manifested, God used types to signify this matter of Christ as God's way, the most striking of which was the tabernacle. As we have seen, the tabernacle has three parts: the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. In these three parts of the tabernacle there is a way, starting from the altar; passing through the laver, the showbread table, the lampstand, and the incense altar; and ushering us into the ark, the place where the law of life is. The way in the tabernacle is a picture of **Christ as our unique way.** As we shall see, there is a reason why this way is called a race. (*Life-Study of Hebrews, chapter 50*)

### Day 3

**2 Pet. 1:1** - Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been **allotted faith** equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Rom. 10:17** - So **faith** comes out of **hearing**, and hearing through the **word of Christ**.

### III. Jesus is the **Author of faith**, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith—**Heb. 12:2a**:

- A. The **faith of the believers** is actually not their own faith but **Christ entering into them to be their faith**—Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16:
1. Our believing is our **appreciation of Christ** as a reaction to His attraction—Rom. 10:17.
  2. In the **natural man** we have **no believing ability**; we do not have faith **by ourselves**.
  3. The faith by which we are saved is the precious **faith that we have received** from the Lord, the God-allotted faith—2 Pet. 1:1; Col. 1:12.
  4. When we **look away unto Jesus**, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) **transfuses** us with Himself, with His believing element.
  5. This faith is not of ourselves but of **Him who imparts Himself as the believing element** into us that He may believe for us.

### Day 4

**Heb. 11:1** - Now **faith** is the **substantiation of things hoped for**, the conviction of **things not seen**.

**2 Cor. 4:13** - And having the same **spirit of faith** according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak.

- B. Faith is a substantiating ability, a “sixth sense,” the sense by which **we substantiate, give substance to, the things unseen or hoped for**—Heb. 11:1:
1. Substantiating is the **ability that enables us to** realize a substance.
  2. The function of our five senses is to substantiate the things of the outside world, transferring all the objective items into us to become our subjective experience.
  3. As the eye is to seeing, the ear is to hearing, and the nose is to smelling, so **faith**, our spirit of faith, is the organ whereby we **substantiate everything in the unseen spiritual world** to us—2 Cor. 4:13:
    - a. We must exercise our spirit of faith, our mingled spirit, **to believe and to speak** the things that we have experienced of the Lord.
    - b. **Faith is in our spirit**, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit, not in our mind; doubts are in our mind.
  4. We do not regard, look at, the things which are seen and temporary but the things which are **not seen and eternal**—v. 18:
    - a. The Christian life is a **life of things unseen**—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
    - b. The degradation of the church is the degradation from unseen things to seen things.
    - c. The Lord’s recovery is to **recover His church from things seen to things unseen**.

When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit **transfuses us with Himself**, with His believing element. Jesus is called the Author, or Originator, of faith. Without Him there is no faith. He lived a life of faith. When we open to Him and turn to Him, the faith that is His is imparted into us. It is for this reason that we should never underestimate our testimony of the Lord to others. Whenever we speak Christ, whenever we speak well concerning the Lord, **our speaking injects the listener with an element of faith** that was not there before.

I can testify to this from my own experience. One day, many years ago and before I became a believer, a friend and I were sitting on a bench in a park having a discussion about whether or not God exists. We thought that God probably exists, but then we asked, “How does one get to know Him?” We thought that there were many ways to get to God and that it was up to each individual to find their way. Of course, we were in darkness, but as we were having this kind of conversation, a young man and his sister came over to speak to us. We found out that they were born-again Christians, and through them, I heard the gospel for the first time. I had learned about Christ but had never heard the gospel of Christ. What I had heard about Christ prepared me to some degree to then receive this young brother’s testimony of knowing the Lord, turning his heart to the Lord, and receiving Christ. His speaking injected faith into my heart. As far as he knew, we were a couple of argumentative New Yorkers visiting Florida, because we argued with him for two to three hours. We never saw him again, but that conversation changed my life, because as he was speaking to us, his face told me that the Lord was real and that he had something of the Lord that I did not have. That imparted the element of faith into my heart. It was not until about a year later that I actually received Christ, but faith had been injected into me during that conversation. Therefore, my word to you is to **not be ashamed of the gospel** in your jobs, classrooms, and neighborhoods. You can simply testify, “I am a Christian, and I love Christ.” Even such a simple word can inject faith into the listener. As far as we know, the person may say, “Good for you. See you later.” Although we may feel disappointed, we must forget about our disappointment and instead realize that whenever we speak well of the Lord to other human beings, **faith is imparted into them**. (*The Ministry of the Word, chapter 32*)

## Day 5

*Heb. 11:5-6* - By **faith** Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God. But **without** faith it is **impossible** to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that **He is** and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

5. Faith is to believe that **God is**.
6. **Without** faith it is **impossible** to please God, to make God happy—Heb. 11:6a.
7. “He who comes forward to God must believe that **He is**”—v. 6b:
  - a. To believe that God is, is to believe that **He is everything** to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.
  - b. To believe that God is implies that we are not; **He must be the only One**, the **unique One**, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Heb. 11:5.
  - c. To believe that God is, is to **deny our self**; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.
  - d. The Lord was saying, “**I am the great I am**. I am the **One who is**. You must believe that **I am** and you are not”—cf. John 8:24, 28, 58.
  - e. This is faith—“O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a **living Christ in glory**, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here”—J. N. Darby.

## Day 6

*Heb. 4:2* - For indeed we have had the good news announced to us, even as they also; but the word heard did not profit them, not being mixed together with **faith** in those who heard.

*2 Tim. 2:22* - But flee youthful lusts, and **pursue** righteousness, **faith**, love, peace with those who **call** on the Lord out of a pure heart.

### IV. Jesus is **the Perfecter, the Finisher, the Completer, of our faith**—Heb. 12:2a:

- A. As we look away unto Him continually, He will **finish and complete the faith** that we need for the running of the heavenly race—vv. 1b-2a.
- B. When we look away unto Him, He **ministers** heaven, life, and strength **to us, transfusing and infusing** us with all that He is, that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth—2 Cor. 3:18.
- C. **We all have the same faith in quality, but the quantity of faith** we have depends upon how much we contact the living God so that we may have Him **increased in us**—Rom. 12:3:
  1. Faith in the progressing stage comes through our **contacting the Triune God**, who is faith in us—1 Thes. 5:17.
  2. The way to receive such a faith is to contact its source, the Lord, the processed and consummated God, by **calling on Him, praying to Him, and pray-reading His Word**— Heb. 4:2, 16; Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18.
  3. When we contact Him, He is overflowing within us, and there is a **mutuality of faith** among us; we are encouraged through the faith which is in one another—Rom. 1:12; Philem. 6.

- D. Our **regenerated spirit**, our spirit of faith, is the **victory** that overcomes the Satan- organized-and- usurped world—1 John 5:4.
- E. The great irrepressible and unlimited power of faith **motivates** thousands to suffer for the Lord, risk their lives, and become overcoming sent ones and martyrs for the carrying out of God’s eternal economy, which is **in faith**—Luke 18:8; Phil. 2:30; Rom. 16:3-4; Acts 20:24; 1 Tim. 1:4.

The **Lord tries the faith** of those who serve Him. In the future we will be placed into periods of longer and more difficult trials. In the days to come there will be many such trials.

There will be many aspects to these trials. Some trials will affect our feelings. They will cause us to **lose** our interest in serving the Lord, to **lose** our sense of the sweetness in taking this way, and to even **lose** our sense of encouragement from the Lord. Some trials will be problems in our family or problems related to our health. Some trials may be related to material things and financial matters. We may experience poverty and hardships. Some trials may be related to our work for the Lord. We may lack power and light, be unclear, and lack the Lord’s leading. Our present situation will change, and we will **not be able** to touch the Lord’s heart or know what to do. Many of us may become **unclear** and **uncertain** about the Lord’s way and the Lord’s heart. Some trials may be related to the result of our work. We may labor and work **without seeing** any results. Some trials may be related to our co-workers. They may neither understand us, sympathize with us, nor open to us. These are all trials.

The Lord’s trials in me have not decreased; rather, they have increased in number and in depth. The desire in the **Lord’s heart is for us to mature, to do His work, and to gain spiritual weight**. To this end He is determined to bring us into trials. We will be unable to follow the Lord as we did in the past, when we followed the Lord according to our feelings of excitement, prosperity, and blessings and according to the evident results of our work. If we consider the past ten years, we will see that the Lord has been **gradually bringing us** into trials and decreasing our excitement and the sense of sweetness that we once experienced. The **Lord is bringing us into a situation in which we cannot follow our feelings**.

It may not be possible for us to give up this way; however, if we continue, we will not see the results of the past, and we will be unable to sense any sweetness. When this happens, we can be assured that the Lord has brought us into trials. When the Lord brings us into trials, **He will place us on the pathway of faith**. In the initial stages of the work we were excited and had results; however, we were not on the pathway of faith. It is not until we enter into trials that we will walk on the pathway of faith. (*Christ Making His Home in Our Heart and the Building Up of the Church, chapter 11*)

The point here is that we must **walk by faith and not by sight**. He is “the Author and Perfecter of our faith”, and He uses these kinds of human experiences and difficulties, even in the church life, to try our faith. On the one hand, we are being tested through our trials; on the other hand, we need to realize that **it is a time for us to look away unto Jesus**. Because He is the Author and Perfecter of our faith, He infuses us with the faith that we need at any particular moment. Recently, a brother shared with me his cancer diagnosis. For many, such news would be devastating, but he realized that this may be a trial from the Lord to revive him. We all pass through situations of suffering. Psychologically, these trials may be traumatic, but we need to **learn to exercise our spirit of faith to look away to Jesus**. When we look away to Him, **He meets us where we are**. He has no expectation that we would do better by trying to improve ourselves. He just wants to meet our need by infusing us with the element of faith that we need to endure. The real question is **whether or not we would open to Him and look away unto Him**. Although we do face trials, we can be encouraged by this faith, and we can encourage one another with this faith. (*The Ministry of the Word, chapter 32*)