

Cooperating with Christ in His Heavenly Ministry by Running with Endurance the Race Set before Us, Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

Christ in His heavenly ministry is the Author and Perfecter of our faith, and we can cooperate with Him by running with endurance the race set before us, **looking away unto Him**. Our Christ today in the heavens is so wonderful, doing so many things before God and for us. Christ is the chief **Shepherd**, the Great Shepherd of the sheep; He's our Leader and Savior to carry out the **propagation of the resurrected and ascended Christ**. He is the Merciful and Faithful **Great High Priest** to render an all-inclusive top tender care to us, particularly through **His intercession**. He is the **heavenly Minister** of the true tabernacle, ministering the heavenly Christ to us that we may have a church life that expresses Him and represents Him. He is the **Author and Perfecter of our faith**. When we see Him as such a One, **how can we not seek the things that are above**? When we see how busy Christ is and how many things He does in the heavens right now, we will realize that, whatever happens here on earth must be a result of what is happening in the heavens.

We need to be an echo, a reflection, of what the Lord is doing and ministering in the heavens. What He is doing right now is not insignificant or unrelated to us; rather, the Christ in the heavens is constantly transmitting and dispensing what He is and what He's doing into our spirit by His spirit. The heavenly Intercessor is interceding right now as the Spirit with our spirit, and we need to echo His prayer and respond to it. Our Christ is the Christ now, today, on the throne; He's our daily salvation and our moment-by-moment supply, so that **we may live a heavenly life on earth**.

We are all on a race, and our attitude should be one of **looking away unto Jesus**, the Author, Originator, and Perfecter of our faith. Heb. 12:1 is a very encouraging verse to every Christian, since it assures us that we have a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us and cheering us on to follow the Lord. The cloud in the Bible is for leading the people of God to follow the Lord (Num. 9:15-22), and the Lord is in the cloud to be with His people (Exo. 13:21-22). Wherever the cloud is, **there is God's presence, so calm and peaceful**. In the Old Testament the cloud filled the tabernacle when it was set up, and it resided over it. God led His people as a pillar of cloud by day to provide them with His leading. The cloud is for movement, for leading God's people to follow the Lord. The cloud gives us the Lord's presence, His peace, to lead us where we should go and what we should do.

The Best Way To Seek The Lord's Presence Is For Us To Come To The Church

Furthermore, the cloud of witnesses in Heb. 12:1 is **the saints in the church**, for we are the people of faith, God's household of faith. When we are with the saints, we have God's presence, His visitation, His speaking to us, and His anointing. We need to come together again and again to enjoy the Lord, His presence, and His leading; in this cloud we sense **joy, strength, and comfort**, for the Lord is here. We have to admit that, in many ways we still have shortcomings and imperfections, but nevertheless we are people of faith, and God is with us.

In spite of our imperfect state, it is by His mercy that God still has a people who desires and endeavors to be one with Him to continue the victory of Christ on the earth. Our Christian life is a race, and every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24). The Lord Jesus said in John 14:6 that **He is the way**; He is the way for us to come to God. We need to **"stay in the fast lane", not slowing down**, until we reach the goal and win the prize of God's calling. The prize is not our salvation in the common sense (Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 3:15) but a **reward** in a special sense (Heb. 10:35; 1 Cor. 3:14).

Putting Away Every Encumbrance

Just as the runners in a race put away everything that encumbers them, anything that would hold them back, and anything that is **unnecessary** or **too heavy**, so we need to put away all other things that would hinder us from gaining Christ and experiencing Him. We need to run the race with endurance, not giving up or shrinking back, and not allowing anything to delay us or stop us from running the race.

In running the race, we need to strip off any unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, so that nothing may impede us from winning the race. The runners in a race are very particular about what they wear and what weight they have, so that they would be in a streamlined condition, not being encumbered by anything. An encumbrance in our Christian life **may not** be something sinful but something that **slows us down**. Especially in today's day and age, with the digital devices and screens around us, it is so convenient to have the entire world at our fingertips, even in our pocket. Our smart phone may help us with our communication, news, emails, etc, but it also can be a great encumbrance, weighing us down from enjoying the Lord and taking away from our time in the Lord's presence. Furthermore, we may be encumbered and slowed down in running the race by our job, our working to provide the best education for our children, our caring for our family, etc; these are not sinful, but they may encumber us. We may do a lot of things and pay a high price for convenience. Can we take care of all these necessary things with a little less convenience and luxury? The more convenience we have, the more encumbrances we have, and our time and capacity are being wasted. We have to take care of our family, raise up our children, and take care of our profession, but let us not be encumbered, so that we may run the race freely.

Living a Life of Faith

The more we look away unto Jesus, the more we have Him as our faith; the result will be that **we live a life by faith**, and this faith is the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself up for us (Gal. 2:20). What is faith? According to Heb. 11:1, faith is **the substantiation of things hoped for**, the conviction of things not seen. This verse is in the context of **seeing Christ** in His heavenly ministry as the High Priest and the Heavenly Minister.

Faith is a substantiating ability, a sixth sense, the sense by which we can substantiate the things not seen and hoped for. We have five sense in our human body that substantiate different aspects of the world, making them real to us inwardly... Faith, believing into God, is **to stop ourselves** from doing anything and take God as **our source** and everything, for we are not – but He is. When we are about to do something, go somewhere, or buy something, we need to stop, check with the Lord, touch Him, and take Him as our source. In our family life, the husband needs to realize that he is not – **he's not the one living**, but Christ should be living in him, Christ should be the One loving his wife and caring for his family in him. When we go shopping, we may know what we need, and there may be things that we desire; we need to stop inwardly, take God as our source and everything and let Him shop in us. Faith is to stop us from doing anything and make God everything to us.

What does it mean to believe? What is faith? Faith is simply **to believe that God is**; faith makes us pleasing to God, faith makes God happy, and when we believe, we believe that God is – and we are not. To believe that God is means that we believe He is everything to us and that we are nothing. He is and we are not. Faith, the means by which we are brought into an organic union with God to enjoy all that God is, is that God is everything and we are nothing. John Nelson Darby also once testified that it was a joy for him to be nothing, have nothing, and see nothing but a living Christ in glory, and to be careful for nothing but His interest here on earth. Oh, may we **learn to look away unto Him** so that we may run the heavenly race, live a heavenly life on earth, and be led by Him into glory! *(Excerpt from the Ministry of the Word)*