

Looking Unto Jesus

by Anton Bosch

We need to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and follow Him one step at a time, trusting Him to lead us to victory.

Duration: 50:14

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-4, Genesis 25:29-34, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 12:1-2, Hebrews 12:5-6, Hebrews 12:8, Hebrews 12:11

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of discipline and endurance in the Christian life. He compares the dedication and perseverance of Olympic athletes to the race that believers are running for an enduring crown. The speaker also highlights the need to keep our focus on the goal and not become discouraged or overwhelmed by the challenges we face. He shares a personal story of hiking in the mountains, where they had to rely on one flashlight and a rope to navigate safely, illustrating the importance of following the leader. Overall, the message encourages believers to stay disciplined, keep their eyes on Jesus, and remember the joy and reward that awaits them in the end.

Transcript

to the book of Hebrews chapter 12. And we dealt in the first two sessions on, spoke about the high priest and this morning we spoke about some of the practical applications and this evening I want to speak a little bit more about the practical application of this wonderful privilege that we have, of having such a faithful and such a great and wonderful high priest. And so in chapter 12 and I'm going to read verses 1 through 11, Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1 through 11.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For considering him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin, and you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons.

My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loves, he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure chastening,

God deals with you as with sons.

For what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Therefore we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we pay them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as it seemed best to them, but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful. Nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. He begins then in chapter 12 and he says, Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, and he's clearly referring to the people in chapter 11.

Now two things I need to say about that firstly. The first thing is that I do not believe that these witnesses are witnesses in the sense that they are watching us run. There are so many Christians who seem to have this impression and seem to believe that somehow as I run the race, my grandfather and my great grandfather who were preachers before me are up there in heaven and they're watching how I run the race.

I just don't find that in the scriptures. The fact that they are witnesses and of course the way that people get to that conclusion simply by saying well we have this race and so you have grandstands and so you must have these witnesses on the grandstands watching the race. But that's a conclusion which is not there.

They are simply witnesses to us. They are witnesses to us and they are witnesses against us. And so he's saying they ran the race and some of them ran the race under very hard conditions and yet they overcame.

And when we run the race and we succumb to the pressures of the race and we give up, they are going to witness against us. And they're going to say we didn't have what you have. We did not have the cross, we did not have the resurrection, we did not have the New Testament, we did not have the Holy Spirit, we did not have the gift ministries, we did not have the church, we didn't have any of the things that you have and yet we overcame.

How come you did not overcome? That would be a terrible witness against us. But at the same time they are witnessing to us and they are reminding us of the fact that they were able to overcome and so we ought also to be able to overcome. And it's interesting when you look, the second thing I want to mention is that when you look at these men in chapter 11 and women, we often hear, in fact today I heard someone refer to them as the hall of faith, the heroes of faith.

And I've in fact even heard Christians say, well if you want to know who got saved in the Old Testament you go to Hebrews chapter 11. But Hebrews chapter 11 does not contain a definitive list of everyone who was saved in the Old Testament. And in fact it's very interesting the people that he chooses to name.

And of course he begins by speaking about some of these major figures of the faith, Abraham and Sarah and Moses. But then he begins to name a few names in chapter 11 of course and verse 32. What more shall I say? For the time will fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets.

And I wondered why he mentions those names. And you'll notice that as you go through this list that there are some very important names that are not in the list. What about Elijah? What about Elisha? What about Joshua? What about Caleb? What about David's valiant men? There are many, many other great heroes of faith in fact in these people.

So why does he choose these names? And look at the first one he begins with. The harlot Rahab. That's an interesting choice of words.

Now we know that was what she was. But that was not what she became. She became the ancestor of David the king.

She became the ancestor of Jesus. And it's interesting that he doesn't say Rahab the ancestor of David. Or Rahab from whom Jesus came.

But Rahab the harlot. And then the next guy that he mentions is Gideon. Sorry.

Yes, verse 31. Rahab. Verse 32 and then he says Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah.

Who was Gideon? He was one of the judges. He was a man of tremendous courage. That's why he was hiding in the wine press to thresh out the barley.

And then there was Barak. We heard about Barak this morning. What was his claim to fame? He wouldn't go to war unless the woman held his hand.

And Samson. Wow, there's a hero of faith. The compromising Samson.

Why does he mention these names? Because he's reminding us that these men and women were nothing special. They were just like us. I think one of the wrong traditions we received of Hebrews 11 because of wrong teaching from Hebrews 11 is that these were these heroes of faith, these men who were in the hall of fame of faith.

And that they were superheroes. No, they were just like us. Rahab was a harlot.

Gideon was a coward hiding away, threshing his little bit of wheat there in the wine press. And God in fact had to give him sign after sign after sign before he eventually got the courage to trust God. But in the end they all won.

In the end they all became victors and victorious. In the end they all believed and trusted God. And even Samson who messed up over and over and over and over again, in the end he got a glorious victory.

So why is he reminding us these people are just like you and me? All we need to do is to trust God. And if we trust Him, He can turn our lives around. He can turn the harlot into the great grandmother, I think it was, of David the king.

The ancestor of Jesus. He can turn Gideon into a man who with 300 men defeated 100,000 of the enemy. And God can take your life and my life and turn it around.

It will only but trust in Him. And so we are surrounded by this cloud of witnesses. And so he says, let us, remember this morning we looked at three things that he says that we need to do, let us.

And here are two more, let us. Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us. Now the sin part that we understand, I'm not going to preach about that because you know what that is.

But what is the weight? The weight is simply those things that are legitimate. They are permissible, they are not sinful. But they hinder us in the running of the race.

There are no rules against running the 100 yard dash or the 100 meter dash with a backpack and army boots and a couple of weights strapped to your arms. There's no rules against that. You can do it if you like.

But you'd be very stupid and foolish to do it because you're never going to win that way. And yet as Christians we encumber ourselves with so many things that may be quite legitimate and they are not sinful but they're holding us back all the time. And he says let's put those things aside.

Sometimes we're so concerned with as long as it's not sin. And so we want to define what is sin. Is having a television sin? Is going to the movies sin? Is this thing sin? Is having this hobby sin? Is playing that sport a sin? No, none of these things are sin.

Oh well then I can indulge in them. Yeah you can indulge in them but they're going to hold you back. I'm not telling you don't do any of these things.

But when these things become the things that hold us back and prevent us from running that race. In fact there are so many things. Our jobs, our careers, our possessions.

There are so many Christians who just can't serve God because you know I bought myself a yoke of oxen and I need to go and try them. I bought myself a field, I need to go and look at it. There's nothing in the Bible against buying a field or buying a yoke of oxen or marrying a wife.

But they become the things that hold us back. And I think it's important for us from time to time to look at our lives and say what are these things that are preventing me from running the race? What are the things that are preventing me from becoming the kind of man and woman that God wants me to be? What is it that prevents me from becoming a Deborah or a Barak or a Samson or a Jephthah? Let me lay those things aside. You know when I look at Jesus and he's telling us and we're coming to that.

Let's consider Jesus. Let me look at Jesus how he lived his life. You know Jesus was a minimalist.

He just had what he needed. In possessions and in relationships and even in his relationships. The moment those relationships began to impede his ministry.

Women, he says to his mother, what have I got to do with you? Now he was not disrespectful with his mother. But he also understood that his relationship to her could prevent him from hearing the voice of his father and from doing what his father wanted him to do. And so he sets that relationship aside for that moment.

So let's lay aside that weight. Let's lay aside those things that consume our time and consume our energy, that consume our thoughts, that we worry about, that we really don't need to be worrying about. Let's lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us and let us run with endurance, that race that is set before us.

Endurance. That word appears so many times in the New Testament. The old King James uses the word patience which is not really, it had a different meaning those days to today.

Endurance. Stickability. So many times we begin things that we never finish.

And I think that as Christians, one of the qualities that we do need to learn, and he's going to speak about how we learn some of these things. One of the qualities we need to learn and we need to develop is the ability to endure. I hear Christians so many times make commitments.

They say, brother, you know I have decided I'm going to serve God with all my heart. Brother, I've decided that I'm going to, I'm going to do this. And because I know some people, I turn to my wife and I say, it'll last three days.

Now, excuse me for being cynical. But I've just learned as I grow older that some people easily make those kinds of commitments. Every day we get, not every day, but every week we get phone calls at the church.

I wonder if you hear what time the services are, what kind of services we have and so on. They say, we'll see you. We'll be there.

We have a saying in our country, ya ya. Okay. Folks, let's show some endurance.

The commitments that we have made today, those who have made some commitment to the Lord this morning, let's show some endurance in fulfilling those commitments. You see, because it's not those who begin well, but it's those who endure to the end that will be saved. And folks, we need to run with endurance that race.

It's not the speed with which we run, it's the endurance with which we run. You know the story about the tortoise and the hare or the tortoise and the rabbit. And the Christian life is exactly the same.

And I suppose that that fable could have been part of the Bible. As far as I'm concerned, it's as good as scripture. Because there are so many Christians who begin by running the race and they peter out.

And yet there are those who just faithfully plod along. And as a shepherd, I would rather have tortoises, a whole congregation of tortoises, than five rabbits who quick out of the spouting blocks and then they fizzle out. So let's run with endurance that race, the race that is set before us.

There is a race that is set before you. You have your own race to run and I have my own race to run. Husbands cannot run their wives' race and parents cannot run the race for their children.

And the race that is set before you may be a different course than that which is set before the person next to you. And so often we want to live somebody else's life, don't we? We want to run somebody else's race. But you need to run your race, in your situation, wherever you find yourself, in the circumstances in which you find yourself.

And the problem is that so many times we find our own course where God has put us at that time and the situation that we've... We say, well, you know, this is really a tough course. I think what I'll do is I'll jump over there and I'll run that one. And many Christians do that.

Yeah, they're running a race, but they're not running the race that God gave them. They're not running the course that God has set for them. They're running some other course.

Now, it doesn't matter how well you run that course. There's no prizes for winning that race because that's not the one God called you to run. And so let me run the race that He has set before me.

Let me run that with endurance. And then He says, looking to Jesus, the author and the finisher, the beginner, the originator, the alpha, and the completer, the perfecter of our faith. Now, remember, He's just spoken about endurance.

What He has begun, He will also complete in us. I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day. He is the author and the finisher of our faith.

And so we're able to look to Him because He's going to be there all the way. He's not going to set us on the course and say, well, I want you to run this race and then leave us and then expect us to finish it on our own. No, He's there.

And not only is He there, but He is running ahead of us. And so I'm able to look at Him. Notice He doesn't say we must look to these witnesses in the Old Testament.

We can look at them, we can be reminded of them. But, you know, they're not the ones who set the pace for us. Maybe you know in long-distance races they often have a person called a pace setter.

If you're going to try and win a change, beat the record for the mile or whatever the 1,500 meters, whatever the equivalent is these days, the guy will have people who will set that pace for him. And they'll run ahead of him until a certain distance from the end when eventually he'll run on his own. And he needs to watch that pace.

He needs to watch the man who is setting the speed for him. And we have someone who is running ahead of us. And all I need to do is keep my eyes on him.

He's not going to go faster than I can handle. And he's not going to lose the track because he's been there before. He knows the way.

And so if I can just keep my eyes on him and just follow him, that's all that matters. I remember one time when I was in the military we were hiking in the mountains and the mist had come down and it became dark and we were a long way from our destination. We had one flashlight.

I like to tell the story because it's so real. We had one flashlight. And so the man at the front had the flashlight and had the compass and the map.

And we had a rope. And we were walking in very dangerous areas high up in the mountains and there were cliffs, sheer cliffs on either side. And so we had to hold on to that rope and just follow the man in front of us.

And so we walked just following the man. You didn't have a clue where you were going. And I remember I was so tired I fell asleep a few times while I was walking holding that rope.

But my job was simply to follow the man ahead of me. I didn't have to think about where I was going. I didn't have to think about anything.

I didn't have to make any decisions. All I had to do was follow that man. And he followed the one ahead of him.

And you know that's the wonderful thing about our walk of faith and the race that we're running. We really don't have to make any decisions. Christians get so hung up about how do I make good decisions.

But you know if you're following Jesus the decisions become obvious because he is leading. And so all I have to do is follow him. The problem is that we want to see the whole way mapped out ahead of us.

And he says no I'm not going to show you the whole way. Why? Because you'll become discouraged. So all I'm telling you is just follow me one step at a time.

And so as I watch my Saviour lead me I just follow him one step at a time. Just trusting him. And so we need to be looking to Jesus.

Don't look at other people. You'll become discouraged. Because maybe they're doing better than you are.

I don't like to look at other preachers very much because I get discouraged. I say Lord how can they have so many people? How can they have so many blessings? And I'm trying to faithfully serve you and all I have is a handful of people. But he's never called me to look at them.

Maybe I'll be led astray if I'm looking at them. But I need to be looking at Jesus. That's all.

It's so simple. And yet we have our eyes on everything around us. We're looking at all of the conditions and the circumstances and the problems.

And we're looking at what everybody else is doing. And we wonder why we get lost. We wonder why we get sidetracked.

We wonder why we become discouraged. We wonder why we get tired. And why we somehow get overextended.

And why everything just falls apart. Instead of just watching him. And as I look to Jesus.

He's the beginning and the end. And he will complete that which is begin in our lives. The author and the finisher of our faith.

Who for the joy that was set before him. Endured the cross. Now last night we spoke about Gethsemane.

One aspect about Gethsemane that I have often wondered about. It says that when Jesus prayed towards the end of his time. It says that an angel came and strengthened him.

An angel came and strengthened him. And I think that that had a very important part. A role to play in the victory that he gained over the next 12 hours.

And I often wondered what did the angel do to strengthen him. And we spoke I think it was Friday night about. Sometimes we want God to give us a shot of courage.

Or a shot of this or a pull of that. So did the angel come and somehow infuse into him courage? Did the angel somehow give him a transfusion of strength? What did the angel do for him? What did the angel do to him? Well it doesn't tell us. But understanding the way that God works.

I think the only thing the angel could do to him was to speak to him. Just speak to him. And what would the angel say to him? Oh don't worry it's not so bad you know.

Isn't that what we say to one another? In South Africa we have a saying you know the war was worse people died. In other words your problems really doesn't matter. It's insignificant.

You think that's what the angel would have told him? No. I believe that this is what the angel told him. He reminded him of the joy that was set before him.

Because there was one thing that caused him according to this text caused him to endure. The contradiction or the hostility of sinners against himself to endure the suffering of the cross. And it says it was the joy that was set before him.

The joy that was set before him. And what was that joy? The church. You and I. Don't believe those people who tell you that Jesus got something after the resurrection that he didn't have before.

He was God to begin with. Who is God? God is supreme. He is the highest.

So how could Jesus get a position that is higher than the highest? Jesus gained nothing out of the cross that he did not have before. Except the church. Sometimes I wonder Lord you must be very disappointed.

I know he's not disappointed. And so that is what he came for. He came to buy for himself a bride.

And the angel I believe reminded him of the end. The purpose. The joy that was set before him.

You know when you look at people and he's still talking about the race. When you look at the athletes who prepare for the Olympic games. Four years, eight years, some of them fifteen and twenty years in preparation to run one race.

What is it that keeps them through that whole long painful experience? Day in and day out in the gymnasium. Hour after hour on the track. Day after day on the road.

Eating a strict diet. Living this incredibly spartan life. What keeps them going for all of those years of preparation? The gold medal.

The prize. That's what it's all about. That's what it's all about.

And so I wonder sometimes when I look at the discipline of these athletes. Who will dedicate their whole lives. And in Australia particularly they pick these kids when they're five and six years old.

And they put them in special schools. Where they are trained and they are disciplined day in and day out for the rest of their lives. Until they become twenty or twenty-four or whatever age.

And they are ready to take on the race. What makes them endure? Just standing on that podium on that rostrum and receiving that gold medal. That's all.

One moment of glory. When they play the national anthem of that particular country. And then it's all gone.

And so we have a joy that was set before us. We have a goal. And folks it's when we lose sight of the goal that we become discouraged.

It's when we lose sight of the bigger picture that we become overwhelmed. Because the rigor and the stress and the pressure. And all of the discipline and all of the stuff that he's going to speak about in a minute.

All of these things just become too much. And they crush us. Because we've lost perspective.

But you know every mile that that runner runs. And they run thousands and thousands of miles in preparation. He just has one thing in his mind.

That gold, that gold, that gold. And Paul says they do that for a corruptible crown. And we're running for an incorruptible crown.

You know what? We should be more disciplined. We should exhibit more endurance. Than all of the athletes that run and that play in the Olympic games.

Because they're doing it for one fading moment of glory. For one gold medal that will melt with fervent heat when Jesus comes. And yet we're running for an enduring crown.

So Jesus for the joy that was set before him. We spoke this morning about laying hold of that hope that is there. That enters in beyond the veil.

Many years ago when I was in secular work I was tent making. One of the techniques that they taught us in management at that time. Was when things go bad in the business.

Or things go bad in your life what you need to say is. In ten years time will this really matter? Will this really matter? It's amazing how much perspective that brings. So you get up Monday morning and you have a flat.

And you're running late and you have to fix the flat. And the whole world just caves in. In ten years time is this really going to matter? No it's nothing.

It's nothing. And folks that may be a worldly management technique. But we have eternity.

And I think that the question we need to ask. As we become overwhelmed by our problems and by our difficulties. And by the pressures of life.

I need to say is this going to matter in eternity? Is it going to matter in eternity? And even when we come to the question as to the weight that so easily besets us. I believe we can ask the same question. Does this count for eternity? This thing that is absorbing my time.

That is taking my energy. Is it going to count in eternity? Is it going to matter in eternity? And so I believe that we need to have more clearly fixed in our hearts and our minds. That joy that is set before us.

We need to as we stir up one another. As we provoke one another to love and to good works. As we spoke from chapter ten.

In that process we need to be constantly reminding one another. Jesus is coming soon. You know the church in these last days in general has been robbed.

Of the purpose of its existence. By those who say that we are building God's kingdom in this world. And by others who are saying that Jesus is not really coming.

And by those who say well we first have to go through the tribulation before we get to the rapture. No folk I believe that the thing that we need to fix our eyes on. Is to say Jesus is coming soon.

Maybe today. Let me have my eyes fixed on that goal. Let me have my eyes fixed upon that reason for which he has called me.

On that joy that is set before me. We have that song. I don't know if you sing that song.

We used to sing it in South Africa. It will be worth it all. When we see Jesus.

One glimpse of his dear face. All trials will repay. It will be worth it all.

When we see Jesus. And folk I believe that what we need. More than anything.

And you know I hear about people speaking about the fact we need to have a vision for the church. And I hear teachers or pastors speaking about casting a vision for the church. And I hear evangelists saying we need a vision of hell so that we can have a passion for souls.

Folk I believe there is one vision that we need. And that is a vision of Jesus' return. There is one thing that needs to be our goal.

And I'm sorry I just don't buy into having a one year and a five year and a ten year plan for the church. I have one plan for my church. And that is that Jesus is coming soon.

And I want to get every one of the people that God has entrusted into my care ready for that day when Jesus comes. That's all that matters. And so as we fix our eyes on Him.

Who for the joy that is set before Him. Endured the cross, despised the shame. And has sat down at the right hand.

The word sat down obviously referring in the context of the book of Hebrews. To the priests in the Old Testament who could never sit down because there were no seats or chairs in the tabernacle. Because their work was ongoing all the time.

But Jesus having made one sacrifice has sat down. Because the work is finished. And so He's reminding us that the time is coming when the work will be done.

That we will be able to rest. That we will be able to cease our struggles. The time of rest is coming.

My great grandfather was a great missionary. And he worked incessantly. Seven days a week.

Never took vacations. And when people told him he needs to take a break. He said I will rest when Jesus comes.

There will be plenty of rest in heaven. And folks that's the reality. There will be plenty of rest.

Unfortunately as Christians we've been. One of the things that we've been fooled into. And I'm way off track of my message now.

But one of the things that we've been deceived into believing is that Christianity is a cruise. Christianity is a vacation. Christianity is none of those things.

Christianity is a race. Christianity is a battle. Christianity is work.

Not that I'm earning my salvation but I'm entering into his labors. And the day is coming that we will rest. And folks 70 years of labor or 80 years or 90 years of labor.

Is nothing in comparison to an eternity of joy with Jesus. And isn't it in these chapters. In chapter 12 that he reminds us of Esau.

Yes chapter 12 of Esau. Who did what? For one morsel of meat sold his birthright. He lost sight of the big picture.

He lost sight of the joy and the prize that was set before him. And he fixed his eyes on that instant gratification. And he sold his birthright.

Doesn't chapter 11 remind us about the men like Moses. Who saw Jesus afar off. Abraham who looked thousands of years into the future and saw that new Jerusalem.

Looked 2000 years into the future and saw Jesus. Jesus says Abraham saw my day and he rejoiced. What was it that made Abraham live as a nomad and as a stranger and as a pilgrim.

And never own a single piece of land for 70 years of his life. The last 70 years of his life. The hope that was set before him.

The joy that was set before him. And he says I'm not going to settle for anything less. I want that promise that God has made me.

And folks I wish that we could just fix our eyes upon Jesus. That we could just fix our eyes upon that joy that is set before us. And as we do so that we would be encouraged to say let me endure.

Let me go through these hard things that I have to go through. Let me deal with the chastisement that and I'm not going to speak about that. But you see the next quite a section here from verse 5 right through verse 11.

Speaks about the chastening that the Lord brings upon everyone whom he receives. And upon every son. And notice that he says that those in verse 8 if you are without chastening.

Now let me just stop I need to get back on track here. The chastening that he is speaking about here is not punishment. We get this wrong.

It's not punishment. It is discipline. It is training.

And you see that he speaks about those who have been trained. And verse 11 at the end of verse 11 of chapter 12. The peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

God is disciplining us. He is training us. And he disciplines every son whom he receives.

Now if you say you are without discipline. Like many Christians are saying right now. They are saying we are God's king's kids and God just puts his blessing on us.

And God just helps prospers us and gives us health and does all of these things. And God never allows anything bad into our lives. You know what they are confessing? They are confessing that they are

illegitimate.

Or as the old King James says bastards. Illegitimate sons. Because if we are true sons.

God is going to discipline us. He is going to put us through hard times. He is going to put us through tough experiences.

Not because he doesn't love us but exactly because he does love us. Because during those experiences what is he doing? He is cleansing us. He is purifying us.

He is strengthening us. He is strengthening our faith. He is removing the dross and the stuff that is encumbering us and holding us back.

And he is bringing us to a place where our trust and our confidence is in one place only. And that is in him. And it is only when I have gone through those experiences and I have found that I cannot trust in my health.

I cannot trust in my riches. I cannot trust in my friends. I cannot trust in my family.

I cannot trust in the bank manager. I cannot trust in the property market. There is only one I can trust.

That I develop real faith. In the same way as the athlete exercises his muscles. And yet when you look at these athletes and you see those bulging muscles.

How did they get that way? By lying on the sofa and drinking root beer and by pushing themselves to the limit every day. Doing the hard things. And so Christians are exactly the same.

Our faith is exactly the same. You do not develop faith by taking the easy way out. But we develop faith and God develops faith in our lives as he pushes us a little bit further and a little bit further and a little bit further.

And you know he is wonderfully gracious. He is not asking us to walk on water. If I haven't even learned to walk on dry ground.

So he teaches me the simple things first. But he is disciplining, he is training, he is working with us. He is preparing us.

Because he has a far greater plan. And you know those preachers who are selling people on a good life here and now. Are cheats and frauds because they are selling people a lifetime of pseudo happiness in exchange for an eternity.

Now I don't know about your math. But in my understanding of mathematics a lifetime does not compare with an eternity. There is just no comparison.

And looking over the congregation most of us don't even have a lifetime anymore. We have a few years. So if you have 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, 40 years.

Can we not say Lord I am going to give you these remaining years of my life. Because these next 30 years are nothing in comparison to eternity. Let me fix my eyes on Jesus.

Yes the attacks will come, the discouragement will come, the hard times will come. But you know if I have my eyes fixed on him. When I have my eyes fixed on that goal.

I will be able to endure those things. When I was a few years ago I had a friend and we learned to hang glide. Tremendous lessons in faith.

But one of the things that I had to learn was to never look down. Because you are going to go where you look. You have to look where you are going.

You have to look at the horizon and say that is where I am going. In fact too many Christians are looking down. And they wonder why they are in a nosedive.

Let me fix my eyes on that goal. I don't know if I have shared this with you before. And I trust that I don't bore you with it if you have heard it before.

But it is so important. This is probably one of the most important moments in my life. That has changed my whole life.

I was 17 years old. I had just become a Christian. Having grown up in a Christian home.

I had just become a Christian. And I had gone to a conference of pastors in South Africa in the Assemblies of God. And I was obviously not a pastor but my pastor took me along.

I sat there and I didn't understand half of what these guys were talking about. And I don't remember many of the things that were said I have forgotten. But one of the things that I remember and that is indelibly etched upon my soul.

Was on the Friday evening a missionary lady got up. I don't know who she is. I have never discovered her name.

And she sang a song. Just before the ministry of the word she had a few thing what you call specials. And she sang the song.

I have never found the words of the song again. I have looked for them many, many times. I have not found them.

But the song said something like this. And this changed my life. And this has become the thing that drives me every day of my life.

The song basically said that when I see Jesus for the first time. I will really understand the price that he paid for me. We only have a glance of what it cost him to endure the cross.

We don't really know. But that day we will know all things even as we are known. And that day I will have a full understanding of what price he paid for me.

And then the chorus of that song said. And then I will wish I had done more. More.

So much more. When we stand before Jesus on that day. Will we long to say Lord I wish I had just endured a little bit more.

Will we hear those words well done good and faithful servant. It will be worth it all. When we see Jesus.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25235.mp3>
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