

Refocus

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the necessity of refocusing our lives on Jesus to effectively run the race of faith.

Duration: 20:01

Scripture: Psalm 121:1, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of refocusing our attention on Jesus. He references Hebrews 12:1-2, which encourages believers to throw off anything that hinders and to run with perseverance the race marked out for them. The speaker emphasizes the need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and not be distracted by the circumstances or challenges of life. He warns against allowing our minds to be consumed by worries and fears, reminding listeners that looking at Jesus brings peace, joy, and calm to our souls.

Transcript

So I want to focus on something with you today that I know will help you. It helped me today when I felt the Lord opened my heart this morning and then talked to the prayer meeting at 12 o'clock. The name of this message is Refocus.

Let's look at this passage in Hebrews 12. This won't be long and then we're going to have a time of just nice quiet prayer. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off anything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

I want to stop there just for a second. Let us throw everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. So notice there's two things being mentioned here.

We're running in a race. We got to finish the race. The race is to keep believing and serving and trusting Jesus to the very end.

He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. How many have made up your mind by God's grace you're going to run the race all the way to the end. But while you're running, the writer to Hebrews, we don't know who that is, is encouraging the people.

There are two things. Now you can't run with weights. Nobody in the Olympics runs carrying weights or a suitcase.

No, right after the finish line I want to get on a plane so I'm going to run with this suitcase. No, you get everything away from you. Why? So you can be the lightest and ready to run.

So let us throw off everything that hinders us, the weights that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. So there's things that hinder us and then there's sin that entangles us. We got to get rid of sin.

We got to confess sin. We got to give it to Jesus. Get victory over it through Christ because sin entangles us and trips us up.

The devil is trying to trip all of us up here today. Am I correct? And you have to be afraid of that S word, sin. He tries to entangle.

This was written to Christians. Sin can entangle Christians. But not only sins, by the way, sin is what the Bible says is wrong, not what you and I think is wrong.

What God says is wrong is wrong. Are we all together on that? You can't pick what you think sin should be. Sin is sin.

And the weights are the things that weigh us down. And some of those things are legitimate things. They're not sinful, but they're not good to run.

They don't help us run. Someone has said this, you got to analyze what's going on in your life. Is it a weight or is it a wing? If it's a weight, get rid of it.

If it's a wing that helps you to fly and run, hold on to it. But there are weights. There are habits, pleasures, the way we spend our time, how much TV we watch.

I'm not saying that something is sinful, but what I'm saying, is it a weight that holds us back from running the race? Does it separate us from Christ? Texting the universe, spending all time talking to everybody on the phone and just wasting hours. Those habits, nobody can condemn and say that act is sinful, but it becomes a weight to us. Do you understand what I'm talking about here? And that's different strokes for different folks.

So all of us have to look at that, say, are there weights in my life that are holding me back from running the way God wants me to run? And are there sins that easily beset me and tangle me? Because maybe of my previous life, before I knew Christ, that's what I go back to. I get angry and blow up and then tell people bad things, talk bad to my spouse or to friends or whatever. And then the enemy comes and discourages me.

So get rid of the sins and get rid of the weights. God has to show us about those weights. Somebody says to me, no, you can't be judgmental.

I'm not judgmental on anybody here, anything except for the Word of God. But for all of us, it's not being judgmental. God has to show you, are there weights in your life? You got to throw them off.

They're weights. They're not helping you. They're not helping you.

When you're running in a race, someone says right before the race, you want a nice piece of lemon meringue pie. Is lemon meringue pie a sin? No, there's no verse. Is it a weight? Oh yeah, it'll be a weight real quick.

It'll be a weight real quick. So lay aside those weights. It's not that it's wrong.

It's just that it's a weight. It doesn't help me. Let us run with perseverance, the race marked out for us.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning the shame, and he sat down at the right hand of God. Now that's so good because I think that's the new updated NIV, not the old NIV.

And it has an interesting correction there that is going to help us tonight. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, focused on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter, not of our faith. Translations have our faith, but our is not in the Greek sentence I learned today.

It's Jesus is the pioneer and the perfecter of faith because he is our example. Not only do we have faith in him, he lived a life of perfect faith. Hebrews 11 gives us all this stuff about Moses and David and Abraham and all those heroes of faith, but our absolute hero of faith is Jesus.

He was the one who lived a perfect life of faith. If you want to copy faith, you don't copy some man, you copy Jesus. And it's not of our faith, like he is also the source of our faith, the object of our faith, but he is the pioneer.

He's the one who goes ahead of all of us and the one who perfects faith, gives us that example. So we're running this race by fixing our eyes on Jesus. That's all I want to say to you tonight.

You can't run the race without fixing your eyes on Jesus. Fixing what eyes? These eyes? No, you can't see him with those eyes. The eyes of your heart, the posture of your soul.

Look at me, everyone. Someone has defined faith. Faith is a very hard term to define in one way because it means different things.

It's having faith, then it's a noun. Keep the faith. But here the writer says, fixing our eyes on Jesus, and someone as well said, that's what faith is.

The person who lives a life of faith always has their eyes on Jesus. Faith has to have an object, and many people try to have faith in faith. That's what the positive confession, prosperity people, they're teaching you at times.

Having faith in faith. Faith doesn't have power. Jesus has power.

What makes faith powerful is the object you put your faith in. Otherwise, that's mental positivism. That's Christian science.

That's by conjuring up certain positive thoughts in your mind, you create a new reality that is nowhere found in the Bible. Fixing your eyes on Jesus, and keeping them always, every day as God helps us, on him. That not only is a posture of faith, that produces even more faith because as I gaze at Jesus, as I meditate on him from his word, as my eyes are occupied with Jesus, oh, when I think how great he is, how awesome he is, it builds up even greater faith.

Why? Because I'm looking at Jesus. Looking to Jesus. Keeping focused on Jesus.

So what does the enemy try to use to get us not to live by faith? He wants us to look at our circumstances. If you look at your circumstances, you can't be looking at Jesus. You can't look at two things at the same time.

If you're focused and meditating on what you're going through, and what someone said, and how mean they are, and what's happening on the job, and what is North Korea going to do, they might have now a hydrogen bomb, and what is ISIS up to, and what's going to happen with the economy, and what's going on with the financial systems of the world, if you keep your mind on that, you're going to be a very depressed and nervous person most of the time. How many agree with me say amen? Why? Because none of those bring peace. None of those bring joy.

None of those bring calm to your soul. It's only looking at Jesus. The greatest men and women of God who are most like Christ were always gazing at Jesus.

That was their secret. Yeah, you could say they walk by faith, but what is faith here? Faith is always looking at Jesus. Always refocusing.

Look, you have a job. You have to do something. You have to work on a computer.

You have to teach students. You have to do whatever. Drive a bus.

So you're doing things, but the gaze of your soul always has to keep readjusting itself back to Jesus. Jesus, you are my life. You are my savior.

You are my strength today. Your promises keep me strong. You are my power.

You are my patience. You are my everything. Jesus, and then when things come up to ruffle us, oh, if we look at it too long, how many know we get all sideways, so we got to go, yeah, that's happening.

Oh, Jesus, I look to you now, Jesus. My eyes are on you. Come on, let's put our hands together.

My eyes are on you, Jesus. I'm looking at you, Jesus. It's the steady gaze of the soul on Jesus that is what walking by faith really means.

Now, from that will come resting on his promises, remembering his greatness, praising him, because you can't look at him too long without saying hallelujah. How many say amen, right? It avoids discouragement. It gives you victory over a whole lot of other things.

You can't look at circumstances and keep your eyes focused on Jesus. So if you're here today, as I bring this to a close, I want to just tell you now, stop thinking about what's going on in your life, because if you keep focusing on that, you won't be looking at Jesus. How are you going to run the race if you're looking at all the crazy things happening around you? I know, but you don't know what my cousin did 11 years ago.

I know. Is that what you want to think about, or do you want to keep your eyes on Jesus? How many want to keep their eyes on Jesus? Say, I want to keep my eye. I need, look at me, look at me.

I need, forget you, I need my eyes on Jesus all the time, or I'll be overwhelmed. Now, you can also have your eyes distracted by looking at your own shortcomings. This is a real trick of Satan, and he'll try to hide

it like you are humble, that it's an act of humility to look at all the wrong things you've done and how weak you are.

So take one good look inside and go, yuck, and then get your eyes focused on Jesus, because the Bible doesn't say looking unto your sins and your weakness. It says looking unto Jesus, looking at Jesus. You only can run the race when you keep your eyes on Jesus, and Satan will use that, yeah, but you're not what you should be.

Yeah, well, what else is new? But I'm not what I used to be. How many can say that? We're not what we used to be, right? Yeah, all right, I'm not what I should be, but I'm not going to change my thinking about that. I'm going to, just read the letters when we read now, of course, all the way through the fall, but every, just read these epistles in the New Testament.

Paul, what is he writing about? He's not writing about go to church on Sunday. He's writing about Jesus. Jesus is this.

Jesus is that. Jesus is Savior. Jesus is Lord.

Jesus is our righteousness. Jesus is our wisdom. Jesus is full of compassion.

Jesus is meek and tender and mild and full of mercy. Just Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Just Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Whatever text is, you got to get to Jesus. Otherwise, you take your eyes off of our strength.

One last thing, and I've gone through battles with this. One of the other things the enemy will do when you want to live a life of faith by looking at Jesus is he will have you looking at your faith. Like, Jesus, I trust you.

Let me see how much faith I have. I don't think my faith is strong. You know what I'm saying? I meet other people and they have strong faith and my faith is weak.

What's going to happen looking in there? The Bible doesn't say looking unto your faith. It says looking at Jesus. Do you want your faith to grow? Stop looking at your faith.

Stop digging up your faith to examine it. It's like someone said, that's what people do who like they put a seed in the ground and they're there and now the seed has power and it's going to work. No, I'm not sure it's working.

Let me dig up the ground here and let me check this seed. It's been in there three days. Let me dig it up and look.

Where are you seed? Are you growing or not growing? What's with you seed? I thought you'd be bigger by now. Is that the way you get a good crop? No, you put the seed and you look to the sun and you look to the rain that God is going to send. And that's how it might be with you today.

Stop looking at your faith, your spirituality. I should have grown more. Okay, fine.

Now look at Jesus. He'll help you grow. He'll help your faith to be strong.

Faith never grows by looking at your faith. Faith grows by looking to Jesus and his word and his goodness. One last one comes.

Don't look at your blessings because your blessings will throw you off. I read somewhere where Spurgeon said, I was looking at Jesus and the peace of God came on me like a dove and rested on me. And I started to look at the dove and examine it and it flew away.

But isn't that the way some of us do it? We examine our blessings. Oh, how deep is my peace? Get your mind off of your peace. Don't look at your peace.

Look at Jesus who gives you peace, who is the prince of peace. Even the blessings of God can throw us off because it takes our eyes off of Jesus. I want to refocus all of you tonight by the grace of God.

I want us all to walk out of this building, focus only on Jesus. Come on. Can we say amen to that on Jesus? Even blessings in the past, thank God for them, but don't live consumed by that or any new revelation you have or anything like that.

Jesus, looking at Jesus. Oh, then your faith will grow. You'll have so much peace, you won't even know what to do with it.

I found that true. How many have found that true? That just being taken up with Jesus, there's so much peace. There's so much joy.

Don't analyze it. You're not a scientist. Just let it be.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. Be simple like a child and let Jesus do his work, but he does his work when our eyes are on him. Let's stop the enemy distracting us.

There's so many things I could say. You're looking at your neighbor, looking at another person in the church. What do you think that will do for you? The Bible doesn't say look at your neighbor.

It says looking at Jesus. Oh, but my father. All right, it happened already.

Stop looking at your father. Look at your heavenly father. Look at Jesus.

Amen. Keep your eyes on him. Think about him.

Meditate. Worship him. Let's close our eyes.

Everybody who needs a refocus job, you need to get your eyes of your heart, a little eye surgery. We're going to do laser surgery tonight. I'm going to get everybody's eyes on Jesus, starting with me.

Jesus, for real, I need to always be looking at you. I need to have my eyes on you, Jesus. Not people who praise me, not people who criticize me, not even your blessings, not how much faith I have, not on whether the sermon was good, no, it says looking to Jesus, looking to Jesus, looking to Jesus, consumed by Jesus.

Lord, help us that when we have so much Jesus in us that when people squeeze, Jesus comes out, praise for him, a word about him. So if you're discouraged or depressed tonight or been distracted, that's it. If the enemy has distracted you by whatever, some of the things I said, but maybe other things too, right? So what I want you to do is just get out of your seat now and come up here and I'll stand with you for a

season.

Others will pray in their seat, but I'd like to stand and pray with people who say, Pastor, that was for me. That was for me. Now I see why I lose the blessing so quickly.

I get my eyes off of Jesus. I start thinking of every kind of thing. Just get out of your seat and come here and stand.

Oh, you don't know how many bills I have. Don't look at your bills. Look at Jesus.

He's Jehovah Jireh. He's your provider. Somebody here, your spouse is just breaking your heart every day, breaking your heart.

Fix your eyes on Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus. The way to have victory over the pain and over the situation is not to be analyzing, complaining, just focused on the problem.

Focus on the answer. Jesus is the answer. However, he's going to work it out.

Get your eyes on him. If you're involved in a legal situation, a legal suit of some kind, and it's brought tension in your life, what's going to happen? And now you're examining it, wondering about it. How's it going to go left or right? What's going to happen? What will the judge say? How am I going to pay the lawyer? All of that.

Just get your eyes off of that. Get your eyes on Jesus. Commit the thing to him.

Say, Jesus, take care of it. It's too big for me. We praise you, Jesus.

Everybody standing here in the front, just lay your hand gently on someone's shoulder around you there and just begin to pray out loud that they'll keep their eyes on Jesus today. Those of you sitting, just grab the hand of the person next to you. Start praying for the one on your right.

Come on, everyone up in the balcony, downstairs. Pray right now. Lord, keep our eyes are on you, Lord.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus. Don't let my every day be here, there, and everywhere. Let it be on Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

Oh, Jesus. Jesus. Fill Jim's symbol, Lord, with Jesus.

We love you. Did you have a good night? Let's give God one hand more, hand clap of praise. Hug one another.

Love one another. Come on, shake hands with one another. Come up to the front here.

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