

# Distractions Are Dangerous

by Warren Wiersbe

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*Warren Wiersbe's sermon warns against distractions that divert our focus from Jesus, using Peter's experiences as key illustrations.*

**Duration:** 38:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 14:15-21, Luke 5:1-11, Hebrews 12:1-2

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Spiritual Distractions"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Jesus calling four fishermen, including Peter, to be his disciples. He highlights the significance of Jesus using fishing as a metaphor for soul winning. The preacher emphasizes that when our focus shifts away from Jesus, things in our lives can go wrong. He identifies three distractions that can take our eyes off of Jesus: fear, doubt, and self-reliance. The preacher encourages the audience to trust in Jesus and not be swayed by these distractions.

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## Transcript

Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1 and 2, and I'm going to extract from verse 2 three words and use that as the basis for our thinking tonight. Hebrews chapter 12, 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, 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. The book of Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians who were getting their eyes off of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was a danger that they would go back. There was a danger that they would abandon their confession of faith because the going was really tough. The writer compares your Christian life and mine to a race that is set before us, and when you're running a race, you can't look back.

If you do, you'll stumble and fall, and you'll make somebody else to fall. The phrase I'd like us to focus on is looking unto Jesus. The first three words of verse 2, looking unto Jesus.

Now, this is the way the Christian life begins. Back in Isaiah chapter 45 and verse 22, the Lord says through the prophet, look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth. It will be just 126 years ago, I believe, that Charles Haddon Spurgeon was saved, I think it was January the 6th, in a snowstorm, terrible snowstorm, and he couldn't get to his usual church that he attended as a young man, and so he stopped

in a little primitive Methodist chapel.

The preacher didn't even show up, the storm was so bad, and so a layman took the service, and he wasn't prepared, and he chose Isaiah 45, 22 as his text, and since he didn't have much of a message, he kept quoting the verse, look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth. And finally, after having repeated it a number of times, the speaker saw Spurgeon sitting back off by himself, and he looked and said, young man, you look miserable, look to Jesus Christ, and he'll save you. And Spurgeon said, I looked, and he saved me.

That's the way the Christian life begins, looking to Jesus, not to the baptistry, not to the Lord's Supper, not to church membership, not to the Ten Commandments, not to Moses, not to John the Baptist, but looking to Jesus. This makes you think of that experience of the Jews back in the Old Testament when they were dying because of the bites of the serpents, and they lifted up a serpent of brass on a pole, and Moses said, if you'll look at the serpent, you'll live. I'm glad Moses didn't say, if you see the serpent, you'll live.

He said, if you look to it, even a blind person could look to the serpent even though he couldn't see it, but looking brought living. That's how the Christian life begins, looking unto Jesus, and this is how the Christian life ends. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Nobody here has ever seen the Lord Jesus. I receive all sorts of strange mail.

It amazes me that with postage rates going up, people still continue to send strange things through the mail, but I received a special announcement from Canada the other day telling me that Jesus Christ had appeared once again to somebody, and here was a big announcement this person had seen the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't like to hurt his feelings, but he didn't. We're not going to see the Lord Jesus until we see him and he changes us, unless we should die and go to see him in that way.

The Christian life begins with looking unto Jesus. The Christian life ends with looking unto Jesus. We're going to see him, but it's the in-between that bothers me.

I don't know about you, but in between those two events, I have some problems, because I realize that in my everyday Christian life, I've got to keep looking to Jesus. You see, he's the one who started it. He's the author of my faith.

He's the one who's going to finish it. He's the finisher of my faith. And you know, if I keep my eyes upon him, the eyes of faith through the Word, if I keep my eyes upon him, he'll keep me where I ought to be, and he'll help me do what I ought to do, and he'll help me become what I ought to become, and he'll do this for you.

But I have a serious problem of being distracted. I wouldn't confess this to you, except I know you have the same problem. There are days when it's so easy to walk by faith.

There are other days when it seems like you have two left feet and they're going in opposite directions. We all have the same experience. Let's talk then tonight about some distractions that keep us from really trusting the Lord.

Now, I think the best way to illustrate these distractions is to take three events in the life of Peter. The Apostle Peter in the four Gospels is about as big a bungler as we can find. I don't criticize him for that.

The only people who don't make mistakes don't make anything. And Peter sometimes opened his mouth and put his foot in it. Sometimes he stepped out by faith and got into trouble.

That's all right. He at least tried. But there are three events in the life of Peter that illustrate to us the three distractions that will get your eyes off of Jesus Christ.

Now, can we for a few minutes be very honest with each other and admit that when we get our eyes off of Christ, things go wrong. Home is not what it ought to be. Heart is not what it ought to be.

Head is not what it ought to be. Hands are not what they ought to be. When we get our eyes off of Jesus Christ, things go wrong.

We can bluff for a while. We Christians are very adept at this. We can bluff for a while.

No one can tell the difference. We can masquerade, but we know the difference. And after a while it becomes a little bit shallow, a little bit hollow, and before long we collapse.

We don't want to do that. And so perhaps to be forewarned is to be forearmed. And let's notice now the three distractions that will take your eyes off of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Turn, if you will, please, to Luke chapter 5. Here's the first of these distractions. Luke chapter 5, beginning with verse 1. And it came to pass as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret and saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him that he would thrust out a little from the land.

And he sat down and taught the people out of the boat. Now when he had ceased speaking, he said unto Simon, launch out into the deep, let down your nets for a catch. And Simon answering said unto him, master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing.

Nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fish and their net broke. And they beckoned unto their partners who were in the other boat, that they should come and help them.

And they came and filled both the boats so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished in all that were with him at the catch of the fish, which they had taken.

And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed him.

The first distraction that will get your eyes off of the Lord Jesus Christ and trip you up on the race of life is yourself. In verse 8, instead of looking to Jesus, Peter looked at himself and said a very foolish thing. Now, let's not be too critical of Peter in this event.

I notice here, first of all, that Peter at least wasn't lazy. He'd been working all night and he'd caught nothing. Did you ever ask yourself the question, why did Jesus call four fishermen to be his disciples? Now, he had all sorts of men as his disciples.

He had a tax collector, and he even had one man who had been a member of an underground rebellious group, Simon the Zealot. But he had four fishermen. And the leader of the band of the disciples was Peter, who was a fisherman.

Did you ever ask yourself, why did Jesus call four fishermen? Why did he use, in verse 10, fishing as a picture of soul winning? Now, for most of us, if not for all of us, fishing is a vacation. But for these men, fishing was a vocation. It was a matter of life or death.

If you and I go out and go fishing and drown some worms or throw out some lures, and if we don't catch anything, well, we've lost a bit of money, but what difference does it make we had a good time? But with Peter and Andrew and James and John, it wasn't a matter of having a good time. It was a matter of having a good catch. You know why Jesus called fishermen? Because fishermen never give up.

Maybe you've experienced it yourself if you've not seen it, but men will go out early in the morning and they'll stay there all day, and they'll row from here to there, and they'll drown the worms, and they'll change the bait, and they'll be all day long. He called fishermen because fishermen don't give up. Too many of us give up too easily.

Peter didn't give up. He'd fished all night and caught nothing. Now let me be very clear in saying if I had fished all night and caught nothing, I think I would have brought my boat and my nets into shore and put up a sign and said, pier sail.

I would have sold the boats, and I would have sold the nets, and I would have gone into something else. Not Peter. Peter comes back, and he's mending his nets, and he's cleaning his nets.

You know why? He's going to go back and try again. Somebody you've been witnessing to and praying for, and they've slammed the door in your face, or they've gotten very cool toward you, you say, well no more, never again, I'm through. Not so with Peter.

Peter fished all night. He caught nothing. He wasn't discouraged.

I'd have gone home and gone to bed. He didn't even go to bed. He came back in and was washing his nets and preparing to go back out again.

I commend him for this. I notice the stages by which the Lord dealt with Peter here. First he says, thrust out a little from the land, verse 3. That meant Peter couldn't get out of the boat.

And so Peter's working away on his nets, and Jesus is teaching. You know why Jesus did this? He had a captive audience in the boat. Where does faith come from? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

And so there's Peter sitting in the boat, fixing his nets, listening to Jesus teach the Word, and the more Jesus taught the Word, the more Peter's faith increased. Because first he said thrust out, then he said launch out. Now most of us are good at thrusting out.

We don't get too far away from the shore. Jesus said, launch out into the deep. And of course Peter did what you and I would have done.

He argued. He said, look, you're a carpenter. I'm a fisherman.

You don't know much about fishing. But nevertheless, at thy word, I'll do it. You see, he'd been listening to the Word, and the Word of God produces faith.

And of course we read the result. Now the interesting thing is this. In the face of all of this marvelous blessing, in the midst of an impossible situation, Peter falls before the Lord Jesus and says, depart from me.

Get away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man. Let me clearly state to you, any of us when we have been a failure could say that.

There have been times when I have so failed the Lord, and I've had to fall down before Him and say, Lord, depart from me. I'm a sinful man. Peter didn't see his sins in the light of failure.

Anybody could do that. He saw his sins in the light of success. That's interesting.

But I think he prays the wrong prayer here, and Luke tells us why he did it. He was astonished. Whenever Peter didn't quite know what to say, he said something.

He did this on the Mount of Transfiguration when he finally woke up and saw Moses and Elijah and Jesus and all the glory. Oh, let's make three tabernacles. He didn't know what to say, so he said something.

Many people are this way, but he said the wrong thing. Suppose Jesus had answered that prayer. Now, I confess to you that in my short Christian life, I have prayed many foolish prayers.

Oh, I have prayed many foolish prayers. Jimmy Johnson told me one day about a teenager he knew who wrecked his father's car, and the boy stood by the car praying, oh God, may this accident not have happened. Now, that is a foolish prayer.

But I have prayed foolish prayers, and so have you. Oh, I've prayed for things not to happen. I was so sure that if they happened, that would be the end, and they happened, and it wasn't the end.

It was the beginning. I recall when I was going through high school, there were certain things they required of us, and I just wasn't happy doing them. I was sure the Lord wasn't happy with me doing them.

They weren't sinful, they were just uncomfortable, but the Lord didn't change anything. Now, this is kind of a foolish prayer. Lord, depart from me.

Suppose Jesus had done that. That would have been the end of Peter. Why, he would never have had the thrilling experiences he had with the Lord.

He would never have been able to write 1 and 2 Peter. He would never have been able to preach at Pentecost and see all these people saved. You see, Peter got his eyes off the Lord and got his eyes on himself.

Now, you have heard me say many times, and you will hear me say it again, don't spend your time looking at yourself. I'll tell you why. When you look at yourself, one of two sins will be committed.

Either you will be so pleased with yourself, you'll get proud, or you'll become so discouraged with yourself, you'll want to quit. And when Peter saw this great blessing and what Jesus had done, he says, depart from me, Lord. I'm a sinful man.

There are some Christians who get a great deal of glee out of spiritual autopsies. They spend much of their time looking in the mirror, then they look in the x-ray machine, and they just look at themselves and look at themselves. My friend, I'll guarantee if you look at yourself very long, you'll quit.

As I read my Bible, I find Paul saying, the great Apostle Paul, I know that in me dwelleth no good thing. He admitted it. He said he was less than the least of all the saints.

He said he was the chief of sinners. Nothing wrong with being honest about yourself. And there's nothing wrong with praying with David, search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts. See if there be some wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Nothing wrong with day by day looking into the mirror of the Word, letting the light of the Word shine in your heart.

Nothing wrong with that. Just don't overdo it. If you get your eyes on yourself, my friend, you'll get your eyes off the Lord, and you can't run the race that way.

Watch out for distraction number one, looking at yourself. Now distraction number two, Matthew chapter 14. It's a very familiar passage, and I think you probably anticipated me on this one.

Matthew chapter 14, in verses 15 through 21, Jesus and his apostles have fed over 5,000 people. Tremendous miracle. Next to the resurrection of Lazarus and the resurrection of Jesus, I suppose the greatest miracle he performed.

Taking a few loaves and fish and feeding 5,000 people plus. Now what does Jesus do? Matthew chapter 14 verse 22, and straightway, immediately, Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a boat and to go before him unto the other side while he sent the multitudes away. When you read the gospel of John, you find out why Luke uses such a strong word, constrained.

John tells us that after Jesus had fed the 5,000, they wanted to make him king, and of course the disciples were in favor of that. Judas said, I'll be the treasurer. Peter said, I'll be the prime minister.

Matthew said, I'll keep the records. Jesus said, no, I haven't come to become a king to a bunch of people who want their stomachs fed. And so he constrained the disciples.

He pushed them into the boat and said, I'll see you on the other side. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain privately to pray. And when the evening was come, he was there alone.

But the boat was now in the midst of the sea. That's as far as from the land as you can get. When you're in the midst of the sea, you're as far from land as you can get.

Tossed with the waves for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, that's as late as you can get. That's as dark as you can get.

In the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, it is a ghost. And they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke unto them, saying, be of good cheer. It is I be not afraid. Is it not interesting that the same waves that were causing the disciples to be afraid were stair steps for Jesus to come to

them? My friend, the very thing that is frightening you tonight, the very storm and waves that are frightening you tonight, are the stair steps by which Jesus will come to you.

Now here's Peter. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water. I like that.

Don't criticize Peter. The rest of the disciples were cowering in the boat, even the fishermen who should have known the water. They didn't have the faith to step out.

Have you ever noticed that whenever God calls somebody to do something courageous, people criticize him? He called Martin Luther to be courageous and walk on the water and restore the truth of justification by faith. He was criticized. His life was threatened.

Martin Luther. John Wesley. John Wesley saw the truth of salvation, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and he went up and down Britain preaching, and they threw him out of the churches.

They called D.L. Moody crazy. Whenever a person wants to get out of the boat and walk on the water, there's always somebody to criticize. Let's be careful about that.

And so Peter says, Lord, bid me come. And he said, come, one word, come. And when Peter was come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

This is the most perfect picture of the Christian life anywhere in the Bible, walking on the water, not walking on the ground. Unsaved people can do that. Not walking on calm water, walking on stormy water.

That is a picture of the Christian life. If you have the idea the Christian life is calm, better read it again. If you have the idea that it's easy, better read it again, because the Christian life means doing the impossible a step at a time.

And he walked on the water. Now, he really did it. He actually did it.

But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. You know, Peter knew every square inch of that lake. He sank in familiar waters, wasn't unfamiliar water, was familiar water.

You say, well, I'm a student at the Moody Bible Institute. This is my third year. I know what's going on.

You can sink in familiar water. I've been saved for 25 years, been going to Moody church. You can sink in familiar water.

Be careful. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand. Years later, Peter wrote in his letter, the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.

His ears are open unto their cry. He knew that. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him and said unto him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? That word doubt there means stand uncertainly at two waves, looking to Jesus, looking at the waves, looking at Jesus, looking at the wind, looking at Jesus, looking at... He began to sink.

And when they were coming into the boat, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the boat came and worshiped him, saying of a truth, thou art the son of God. You see here, Peter got his eyes off the Lord

and began to look at circumstances.

Circumstances are those nasty things that get in our way and keep us from seeing Christ. Now, why did Jesus send these disciples out into a storm? Did he know the storm was coming? Of course. Why did he send them out into that storm? Number one, because he loved them.

If they had stayed with that crowd, their heads would have gotten so big, they would have said, we just fed 5,000. We know what we're doing. And so Jesus said, I've got to balance that tremendous victory with a test.

Now, may I caution you to remember that whenever you've had a great victory, watch out. It'll always be followed by a great test. And so, because he loved them, he sent them out into the storm.

He knew the storm was coming. Some storms we cause ourselves. Jonah caused a storm by his disobedience.

They came into a storm by their obedience. Jesus sent them out into the storm to help them increase their faith. Now watch this.

The first lesson Jesus gave Peter was in a boat when Jesus was there and the sea was calm. That was the kindergarten course, Luke chapter 5. The next lesson he gave, we haven't read, but you remember it, Jesus was in the boat, in a storm, but he was asleep. That's the high school course.

This is the postgraduate course. They were in a storm, in the boat, and Jesus wasn't there. He'd promised to meet them.

He hadn't come. It got stormier and stormier. It got darker and darker, and he wasn't there.

Oh, may I say to you Christian friends tonight, there comes in your life a time of darkness and storm, and you wonder where Jesus is. And that's when the devil comes and says, ha ha, you can't trust him. Oh, he said, I'll see you on the other side.

Where is he? You know where he was? Where he is right now, up there praying for us. We're just like these disciples in the boat. We're on our way to the other side.

We haven't gotten there yet. We're going through a storm. He's not there with us.

He's up there on the mountain praying for us. He's up there interceding for us, and he's going to come and he's going to deliver us. But Peter got his eyes off the Lord and got his eyes on circumstances.

Now, the Lord never teaches us to ignore circumstances. What he does tell us to do is this. Don't look at Jesus through the circumstances.

Look at the circumstances through Jesus. When Peter saw the wind, what that means is he saw what the wind was doing. When he saw the wind and the waves and all the storm, he got his eyes off the Lord.

When he saw those things, he should have said to himself, well, he's still there. As long as he's there, I'm here and I'm safe. Somebody here tonight is looking at circumstances and they're whipping you.

I've done it. I've done it. I've awakened in the morning and immediately something has hit me.

Circumstances. And I've said, Lord, it can't be done. He says, now, look, don't look at the circumstances.

I know all about them. I know why you're there. I put you there.

I'm going to lead you. Just keep walking on the water, but keep your eyes upon me. There's a third distraction in Peter's life and we'll hurriedly look at it.

John chapter 21. John chapter 21. Now, you know this chapter.

It's another experience on the water. Peter was a fisherman and he learned his greatest experiences on the water. They were waiting for Jesus to come to see them after his resurrection and he didn't come.

And so Peter says in John 21 verse 3, I go fishing and six other men went with him. We go with thee. Now the Lord had told them not to go fishing.

He had said, look, you leave these things. Remember back in Luke five, thrust out a little. Give me the boat.

Launch out into the deep. Give me the nets. Follow me.

Give me the fishermen. And so he left his boats and his nets and followed the Lord. Now he goes back to them.

Whenever a Christian goes back to the old life, he always dragged somebody along with him. So they're out there fishing and they caught nothing. Jesus shows up on the shore.

I like this picture. And he says, lads, have you caught anything? Literally he's saying, lads, you haven't caught anything, have you? And they just called back and said, no. You see when a fisherman has caught something, he'll make a speech.

When he hasn't caught anything, all you're going to hear is no. So Jesus says, cast the net on the right side of the ship as opposite from the left side. And they did.

And they caught a great catch of fish. The difference between success and failure was the width of the ship. You see, you think you're so far from success.

Oh, you say, I'll never make it. I'll never, I'll never make it. When actually the only, the difference between failure and success was the width of the ship and the commandment of the Lord.

And so they obeyed and instantly John says, it's the Lord. And of course, Peter impulsively dives in the water and he lands on the shore in verse nine and he sees a fire of coals. Now the only other place in the New Testament where you'll find a fire of coals is when Peter denied the Lord.

And there's a fire of coals because Jesus is going to deal with Peter about his denial. But you know, the Lord is so gracious before he deals with Peter, he feeds him. And the Lord has bread and he has fish and he feeds them.

You know, he's so wonderful. Sometimes when I have made mistakes, people have come and they let you know you've made a mistake and they straighten you out, but they don't feed you. How nice it is for the Lord Jesus to say, come and dine.

Well, after he'd taken care of that, he says to Peter, do you love me more than these? You bragged that you did, though everybody else will forsake you. I won't. And Peter said, Lord, you know, I love you.

A second time he asked him, a third time he asked him. You see, Peter had denied the Lord three times. Now he had to affirm his love for the Lord three times.

And then Jesus reestablishes him as a disciple. You see, when Peter had ceased to follow the Lord and had denied him, he ceased being a disciple. That's why the angel said, go tell his disciples and Peter.

He singled Peter out for two reasons. One, he had sinned publicly. Two, he wanted to encourage him.

So the Lord reestablishes him in verse 19. And when he had spoken thus, he said to Peter, follow me. He'd said that to him three years before.

Follow me. Then Peter, oh, isn't this beautiful? Peter gets up and he starts following the Lord. Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, that's John, who also leaned on his breast at supper and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee? Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

You see, you can get your eyes off of Jesus and look at yourself. You can get your eyes off of Jesus and look at circumstances. But perhaps the worst distraction of all is to get your eyes off of Jesus and look at other Christians.

The chief indoor sport of many Christians is people watching. One of the houses we lived in at one of our churches, we had a lady right across the street from us, right across the street who sat on her front porch with binoculars, watching the neighborhood, the listening post. Peter says, Lord, what's this man going to do? Jesus says, Peter, don't get your eyes off of me and start looking at other Christians.

Whatever I have for him, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. People come to me and say, what about so and so doing this? What is that to thee? Follow thou me. God never called me to explain or endorse or defend what other people do.

Now, if it's sin, that's a different story. But God never called me to explain or endorse or defend what other people do. He says to me, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

A fellow came to D.L. Moody one day and said, Mr. Moody, I don't like your methods. And Mr. Moody replied, well, I'm not so crazy about them myself, but what are your methods? And the man said, I don't have any. And Moody said, I'll stick to mine.

What is that to thee? Follow thou me. And my friend, if you have become an expert on the life of some other Christian, watch out, you'll fall. Now, this doesn't mean that we can't help one another.

Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. We Christians like to get our eyes off of Jesus and look at other Christians. Let some other Christian fail and we start stumbling.

Let some other Christian get some blessing we don't have. We start complaining. I think one of the things we have to fight more than anything else is getting our eyes off the Lord and starting to look at other Christians.

You know, the disciples were gifted at that. They came running up to Jesus one day and they said, we saw a man casting out demons. He doesn't belong to us.

We told him to quit. He doesn't attend our conventions, doesn't even read our magazine. Jesus said, no man is going to do this in the power of my name and use my name lightly.

Stay away. Don't criticize him. People watching.

They came to a village of Samaria and they wouldn't receive the Lord Jesus. The Samaritans wouldn't receive him. And they said, the disciples said, let's call fire down from heaven.

Jesus said, I didn't come to destroy men's lives. People watching. I suppose every one of us here tonight at some time or another has been hurt by Christians and you keep watching Christians.

My friend don't do it. Let me just share a little secret with you. And we close when you're tempted to look at yourself, whatever you see, relate it to Jesus, immediately take what you see and relate it to Jesus.

It'll give you victory. When you're looking at circumstances and you're prone to get your eyes off the Lord, look at the circumstances through the Lord, not the other way around. And if you're looking at other Christians and you see either failure or success, relate it to Jesus.

If you see a Christian who has failed, relate it to Jesus, pray because the secret of running the race and finishing the course is looking unto Jesus. Now, how do you look unto Jesus? Through the word. I don't know of any other way beyond the sacred page.

I seek the Lord. And so, my friend, if you're spending time every day in the word, if the word is spending time in you, then you can look to Jesus. Peter says, whom having not seen ye love.

We see him through the word. He is the living word. This is the written word.

As we pray, based on the word, we see him. I have to fight these three distractions constantly. Constantly.

I confess to you there are times when what some Christians do just overwhelms me and I feel like quitting. I confess to you that there are times when I look at myself and say, who in the world are you to stand in that pulpit? But then I have to look to Jesus. And so do you.

Looking unto Jesus, the author, the finisher of your faith. He started it. He'll finish it.

He's the alpha. He's the omega. Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun the good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

My friend, don't be distracted because distractions lead to dangers and disappointments and defeats and disciplines. Looking unto Jesus leads to blessing and victory and joy. Now, Father, we confess to our shame how often the eyes of faith get off of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we measure him by our feelings. We measure him by our circumstances. Father, forgive us.

Help us this coming week to run the race with our eyes upon the Lord. Not ignoring self or circumstances or others, but relating all to him. Father, if one here tonight has never ever looked to Jesus for salvation, may that one do so.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

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