

For the Joy Set Before Him

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart!”

- Hebrews 12:1-3

Introduction.

The sad news: We are here to commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, which happened at Calvary almost 2000 years ago.

The good news: He is alive and well today, and that is reason to rejoice even as we reflect on death!

1. Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

- Hebrews 12:2

2. (Who) Endured the Cross

*“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who for the joy set before Him **endured the cross**, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

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3. For the Joy Set Before Him

*“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, **who for the joy set before Him** endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

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4. Seated at the Right Hand of God

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The “A,B,Cs” of Salvation

Admit you are a sinner in need of forgiveness and be determined to turn from your sinfulness with God’s help.

Believe Jesus died for you and rose from the grave.

Call on Him to give you the gift of eternal life and make you a new creation in Him. The Bible says that “all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

“This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

- 1 John 5:11,12

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- Hebrews 12:1-3

Introduction.

Good morning! I have good news and bad news this morning. The sad news is that we are here to commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, which happened at Calvary almost 2000 years ago. The good news is that He is alive and well today, and that is reason to rejoice even as we reflect on death.

In fact, that is the point of my message today, and rather than ruin the ending, so to speak, I want to move into the Scripture passage that is our theme this morning.

Hebrews 12:2 says this:

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

My purpose during this brief time is to give you some hope when it looks like it's all over.

And in doing so I want to focus on a few phrases from this passage.

The first is...

1. Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

When you are running a race, you usually run to win, right? You don't fix your eyes on the spectators, the officials, or even the other runners. You fix your eyes on the prize. The finish line isn't the prize, the gold medal, or the first-place ribbon is the prize.

Well, if you want to win in life, you need to fix your eyes, not on your circumstances, not on your work, not even on other people. You need to fix your eyes on the prize. The prize is Jesus.

He is above your circumstances and problems. And He is beautiful beyond all riches.

Fix your eyes on Jesus. Focus on Him and what He's done for you.

The next phrase is...

2. (Who) Endured the Cross

This is a key phrase. And the key word here is “endure.”

Notice it doesn't say “lounged on” the cross. He didn't “relax” on the cross. He endured it. That means that it wasn't something He enjoyed, to say the least.

In fact, not only did He not enjoy it, crucifixion was designed by the Romans to be an excruciatingly painful, long, drawn-out death, eventually by asphyxiation. It was filled with much suffering.

I'm sure you didn't need to be reminded of that. But sometimes we forget that dying on the cross meant more than discomfort. It meant physical torture throughout a slow, lingering death.

But He did it. He willfully laid down His life; enduring the cross, and scorning it shame.

But why did He do that. Why did He endure the cross?

3. For the Joy Set Before Him

What eventual joy could possibly cause someone to willingly allow Himself to be nailed to a wooden cross and endure those hours of torture?

It was the joy of bringing you and me to God. That's the reason He did it.

Lynette and I are blessed to have 10 beautiful grandchildren. They weren't delivered by a stork. No, our daughters went through terrible pain and contractions to deliver those babies. Why? For the joy of seeing new life they endured the pain of childbirth.

And for the joy of forgiving your sins and giving you new life Jesus endured the torture of the cross and even His own death.

He looked at you and He said, “Yeah, he's worth it.” And He looked at you and said, “Yeah, she's worth it.” And He looked at me, and said, “Yeah, he's worth it.”

And if you are here today wondering if your life is worth anything, let me tell you, Jesus sees you and says, “Yeah, you're worth it...to Me.”

“And I love you so much that I would have gone to the cross if you were the only person on earth.”

Christ endured the cross for you and me. For the joy of seeing us forgiven and clean and welcomed into His family.

The last phrase I want to look at today is...

4. Seated at the Right Hand of God

When Jesus was brought down from that rugged cross, the religious leaders and Romans thought it was all over. He was buried in a new tomb near where He was crucified, by a Jewish leader named Nicodemus and a man named Joseph, from Arimathea. Some of Jesus' female followers watched it. Everyone ran and hid.

But thank God it wasn't over. Not by a long shot.

Jesus rose from that tomb three days later, and spent the next 40 days travelling around, teaching and preaching and eating with them and letting people touch His pierced hands and side to prove that He was resurrected and fully, bodily alive.

And today Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and that gives us hope for eternity and a reason to go on today!

1 Corinthians says that if Christ is not raised than those who believe in Jesus are to be pitied more than all people.

But we don't need to be pitied, because Christ is alive, and He is well, and He is victorious over death and the grave, amen?

“Hey, Preacher. It's Good Friday. You're supposed to be talking about the crucifixion, not the resurrection!”

I know. But without the resurrection, the crucifixion is nothing more than the martyrdom of a religious man.

The resurrection gives the crucifixion its greatest meaning and its greatest power.

Jesus rose, and He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hallelujah!

Conclusion

When Jesus died, the veil in the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, so that anyone could have access to God.

I mentioned a few moments ago that Jesus had each one of us in mind when He went to that cross. He died so that you and I could have access to God.

He made it possible for us to spend eternity in heaven with Him, rather than suffer the penalty our sins deserve.

He took the punishment for us, giving us the gift of eternal life.

But like any gift, it doesn't belong to you unless you receive it. A gift under the Christmas tree doesn't do any good until someone acknowledges it, gets it, and opens it, signifying ownership or possession of it.

If you want the gift of eternal life that Jesus secured for you with His blood, then you have to receive it. You have to take it.

How do you take the gift? It's as simple as ABC.

First, you **A**dmit you are a sinner in need of forgiveness. Forgiveness available only because of the sacrifice of Christ. And be determined to turn from your sinfulness with God's help.

Second, **B**elieve Jesus died for you and rose from the grave.

Then, **C**all on Him to give you the gift of eternal life and make you a new creation in Him. The Bible says that “all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

That's you and me.

1 John 5 says this: “This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Receive Jesus, the Son of God, won't you? Let Him live in you as surely as He lives in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

He wants to apply His sacrifice to you, giving you eternal life, the promise of heaven. Please give Him the opportunity.

Let's pray.