

12.31.23 / Eyes on Jesus / Hebrews 12:1-3

Prayer / Intro

Hebrews 12:1-3 / Workshop feel - Soak for a bit in the practical counsel of this passage & **notice** some things.

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, 2 **fixing** 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. 3 **Consider** him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

1. Witnesses –

- “Eye witness”
- Bear witness – Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jericho

Their eye witness experience now bears witness to us.

Birdy on a perch, roller coaster – crowd of witnesses

Notice: How have you been encouraged or challenged by the example of followers of Jesus? My experience at Covenant.

Think relay race and teammates who have finished are cheering for and encouraging those still running.

2. Sin that entangles: Great image – runner tangled. What hinders and entangles you? Tempted to point to things outside of us... but examine your heart.

Notice: What is one sin that entangles you? What keeps you from setting it down? food, comfort, selfishness, pride. Throwing off gets easier as we begin to run. For now just name it and own it.

3. Run – James 4:8, Ephesians 2:8-9 / Your role? God’s role? (Noah, Abraham, Moses)

Six expressions of a life that’s running the race (*Experiments of Trust*)

- Worship God Daily and Weekly
- Study Scripture
- Pursue Christ Centered Relationships
- Use our gifts to serve the church family
- Love our literal neighbors (and those on our route)
- Make a difference in the world

John 15:9-11, 10:10 – Not check marks on a merit system **but the way** to **live life** to the full. God delights to take these experiments and turn them into something incredible. **Personal examples...**

Challenge: Pick one way that you will run towards God this month.

4. Race... marked out for us – Shaping us (Jer 18:6, Is 64:8) & directing us (Jer 29:11; Psalm 119:105) –

- He marked it: General vs specific – don't get lost: *What do you have for me God in this moment? How do you want me to respond? How are you shaping or directing me right now?*
- Through pain, not around it
- Common trajectory, different journeys/paths.

Notice: What's difficult about your path? What's good about your path? (name it and own it).

5. Fixing eyes – Usually, we see the **Good/bad** directly in front of us. Own what you see/own what your eyes are fixed on.

Peter and the water (Mt 14:28-31). Eyes fixed didn't make the storm go away, but it didn't sink him. In fact, one might say it grew his faith. What happen next? He fell. Was there grace or judgement waiting for him? **What's the storm that's taking your eyes off Jesus?**

What is one thing in your life that is difficult to see around (or through) in order to fix your eyes on Jesus?

6. Endured the cross... Redemption (author and perfecter of your faith). **You're encountering the isolated (albeit frequent) events of good and bad... while living in the field of redemption.**

Isaiah 43:1-3, Romans 8:38-39

There are some moments/seasons in life that are miserable. Jesus is very acquainted with walking through miserable to achieve redemption... for us. **While the promise of redemption does not make pain disappear, it does bring crucial hope and comforting company along the way.**

Never let Jesus enduring the cross leave your view. This leaves us on the cutting edge: **ready to mourn, rejoice, act**

7. Consider HIM: Jesus who is God who is **Glory!**

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

This is why... Psalm 23:1-4

Regardless of the circumstances, **followers of Jesus... we are walking in the field of redemption in the shadow of glory!** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.

Follow with more scripture about holiness and greatness of God

Psalm 103:2-5, 11-13, 63:3-5

Psalm 86:5, 15

Rev 4:8b, 11, 5:12, 13b, 19:6b

Psalm 95:6-7 (maybe sing it acapella) and then move into the final song

Pray. Invite others to call out a phrase of praise.

Fix your eyes on Jesus. God, help us this year never take our eyes off of you!

Closing song: *Battle belongs to you*