

**Date:** August 4, 2019

## LOOKING UNTO JESUS (30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration)

Please turn to **Hebrews 12**.

Allow me to say a big “**Thank you**” to every one of you for being here to **celebrate** with us and to **thank God** for all He has done for us... (**especially** those of you who have traveled a long distance to be here)

**AND ...**

a big “Thank You” as well for the part that each one of you **has** played, **are** playing, or **will** play in the future in continuing the **preaching of the gospel** of grace here and abroad (which brings people to saving faith in C) as well as the **preaching and teaching of the Word of God** (which causes us to grow spiritually and to worship and serve God as we should).

Every single one of you here today have **a vital role** in the strengthening of **your brothers and sisters** in Christ and the hastening of the return of Christ...

and I trust that this day of celebration has played—at least a small part—in encouraging you to say anew and afresh:

“**Lord Jesus, my life** is Yours. You have saved me, and I want to serve You with **all I’ve got** till the day I see You!”

If our service today has helped you to say something like that deep down in your heart, then we are elated—our joy is full! So thank you so much everybody!

Now earlier in our service, all of us watched the slide show of the many, many servants of Christ who played a part here at RPF, and are now in the very presence of God. **In Hebrews chapter 11**, the author of Hebrews painted a fascinating picture of the unique ways those who lived before Christ was born served God, many times in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances. In Heb 11, after sharing how these Old Testament saints served God with great faith in God, the writer continues his thought in Heb 12 with the words:

**Hebrews 12:1–2**-----<sup>1</sup> **Therefore we also**, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,

i.e., since we have **these amazing examples** (in Heb 11) of Old Testament saints living a life of faith in God—trusting in His Word—there are two ways we as New Testament saints must emulate these people of faith—

first...

**let us lay aside** every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and

second...

**let us run with endurance** the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> **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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

God has brought all of us this far in His service, but the question He has for all of us today from this text is this:

“**Will you continue to run** the race for Christ till the end? Will you throw aside the junk and the sin that so easily keeps you from running and run with endurance **looking unto Jesus**? The One who set the greatest example of all ran the race even when it involved crucifixion?

Will **you** do that for Him? Or will you give up and throw in the towel?

As society becomes more and more godless all around you, will you run God’s race with endurance, or will you one day **collapse** in disloyalty and unbelief?

Now we should definitely **learn** from the tremendous examples of the OT saints in Heb 11, **BUT** ... we should preeminently **focus** on the example Jesus set for us.

(After “**Passion of the Christ**”—“Lord, You died for me ... I promise that I will die for You if you so desire. I want You to know that, Lord...”)

How was Jesus able to run the race with endurance right up to the very last breath He breathed on earth? Look at v. 2:

**“who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...”**

The reason He was able to run till the very end is because He focused on the joy of pleasing His father and dying so that billions of people could live forever with Him through His death and resurrection.

As a human being, Jesus served God with all He had until His final breath. And because He did that, He...

**“has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

Eternal rewards. Quote: “Should I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease?”

**Closing question:** “When the time comes for you to take your last breath, will you be able to say: **“I have fought a good fight**, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith...”? (Story about Olympic coach Bela **Karoly and Kari** Strugg) (Invitation)