

THE LOOK THAT SUSTAINS 2

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

We are back to *the Look that Sustains* which we started to discuss last time. And our text is still from Hebrews 12:1-3

¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking 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. ³For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

The Look that Sustains.

PRAYER:

Father, we have come; we have come that You may speak again to us. May the entrance of Your Word now give us the light that we need to see our pasts through this new year. Give us the strength that we need to live our lives through this new year so that we may glorify Your name, in Jesus Name we pray. Amen!

We saw last time that this race that is set before the believer; that is set before us, is a race that some had already gone through before us. And these are the witnesses that are in heaven now, but they are not witnesses in the sense of spectators cheering us along, as we said that God shields those who have gone ahead of us...who are in His presence. He shields them from the pain of this life. They are not in the balconies of heaven watching us, because if that is the case we would mess up their day everyday. But it is the life they have lived that is witnessing to us. And then of course, in another sense, what they saw in God is faithfulness and the power of God which they witnessed. In those two senses they are called 'witnesses'.

And then to sustain our faith, we need to pay attention to four things:

- a. Laying aside every weight.

We said that this weight may vary from person to person. The weight is anything that will impede your spiritual progress.

- b. Lay aside the sin that easily ensnares us.

This sin is definite. *The* sin. Definite article. But it is unnamed. It is only described. In the original, that is, in the Greek New Testament, it is described as the sin that is favorably positioned; the sin that is favorably situated. Literally, it is the sin that stands well. It is the sin that has everything in its favor: time, circumstance, opportunity, the object, the will or the desire. Do you know some people who claim to be holy are holy only because time, circumstance and opportunity have not favored them. On the other hand, do you notice that you do not commit a sin you have no desire for.

One brother said, if the devil puts a cigarette into my mouth in a dream I will be foolish to worry about it when I wake up in the morning. Why? He says, because the devil knows that he cannot try that with me when I'm awake. He was saying in effect, I will not worry about smoking cigarette when I am awake or in my dream, because I do not have the desire for it.

Some bible students say that the sin here is a definite sin; the sin of unbelief, which we are prone to. Remember the sin is not named. Notice that the race 'the Christian life' is set before us. Verse 1.

The race that is set before us. Once we give our lives to Christ we have no choice but to live the Christian life. Do not forget who has set the race. It is not the pastor, it is not the leaders of your church, it is not that brother or that sister – so don't run as though you are running for them. Sometimes people get angry with the pastor because according to them, he has not rewarded them when they have been serving the church as foundation members paying or not paying their tithe. Such people do not know that it is God who has set the race before them. The One who has set the race is the One who rewards all who serve Him faithfully to sustain or maintain the faith.

- c. The Christian must run with endurance or patience or perseverance.

In verse 1, it says: *let us run with endurance. Let us run with patience.* This word describes a man or a woman who is not swayed by even the greatest trials and sufferings, who is not swayed from his or her commitment no matter his or her circumstance, one who is committed to God unreservedly and no matter what happens, does not move from that commitment. It is used for trials induced for things and circumstances.

- d. To sustain this faith we must run looking unto Jesus.

Verse 2 of Hebrews 12 emphasizes this. Run looking unto Jesus. But in the original again, in the Greek New Testament (that is what I mean by original), it is, looking away unto Jesus. That is interesting. For you to run this Christian race successfully you must look away from circumstance; you must look away from the things that distract you; you must run, looking away from people; you must run looking away from the past victories what you have won; run looking away from the past accomplishments; and also run looking away from the past failures.

Friend, this will be an encouragement for you, for some of us are discouraged when we fail, and some do not recover from the failure. The Apostle Paul says in Philippians 3:13-14

¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Forgetting those things which are behind; looking away unto Jesus. Why do we need to look away from all these things? We look away from all these things because they will distract us from running the race. When you lose your focus in anything you do you will start failing because the absence of focus is confusion.

I have learnt not to lose focus no matter what is happening around me.

Peter did not do the impossible, did not finish doing the impossible: that is, walking on water like Jesus did. Why? Because He looked. Instead of looking unto Jesus he focused his attention on the waves. He should have looked away from the waves and fixed his gaze on Jesus, and he would have walked on water for as long as it would have taken, for as long as it was necessary.

We will conclude this message next time.

PRAYER:

Father, we again want to say thank You for the time we have spent together around Your Word. I'm praying, dear Lord, that You would do something special, something new in the lives of my friends this new year, as You work mightily in their lives granting them their heart desires, especially to run this race successfully, in Jesus Name. Amen!