

THE LOOK THAT SUSTAINS 1

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.

Welcome, friends. Good to be with you again. Today we want to look at the 'Look that Sustains'. And we will take our text from Hebrews 12:1-3.

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.

PRAYER:

Father, we have come again. We have come to search the scriptures. We have come that You may speak to us. And we are trusting that You will speak to our hearts, speak to our inner man, and that Your Word will give us life and strength for the journey ahead of us, In Jesus' Name we have prayed. Amen!

In Numbers 21, we find the account of what I call: *the look that saves*. Because looking at the Bronze Serpent on a pole saved the lives of those beaten by the serpent. By the same token, looking at the crucified Savior saves the sinner from his or her sin and his or her sins.

You know, there is a difference between. When you find sin in the scripture singular it refers to the sin nature; and sins the product of the sin nature.

The look at the crucified Savior saves from sin and from sins. And that look means faith or believing in the Savior. The poison of the serpent Satan in the human system is sin.

Jesus says in:

John 3:14-15

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

That 'believing' is the look that saves. Whereas the look on the crucified Savior saves, the look on the risen and glorified savior sustains. It is one thing to have life; it is another thing to sustain it. It is one thing to have a new paved highway, a new car, or a new home or house; it is another thing to maintain it.

In this country of ours, we have poor maintenance culture. And as a result we enjoy things only when they are new. Look at our roads.

Let us examine the look that sustains. Hebrews 12:1-3! The writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 11 showcased some of those who gained God's approval through faith. We call them heroes of faith. But he concluded with this important observation in Hebrews 11:39:

³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

All these (that is, these heroes of faith), having obtained the good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise. He was saying in effect that faith does not give you all you hope for. Faith does not give you all you pray for. Faith does not give you all you are promised by God when you expect them. These heroes of faith did not receive the key promise they looked forward to. And that key promise was the anointed of God, the Messiah. Why? The timing of the fulfillment of the promise was within God's power and will always remain within His power. The promises of God, the fulfillment of the Promises of God, the timing of the fulfillment of the promises of God do not depend on You. No matter how great your faith is it is still in the hand of God. They will be made complete, these heroes of faith, when God completes His work of salvation with us: those in the church age.

Hebrews 11:40

⁴⁰ *God having provided something better for us [those in the church age], that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

The writer starts chapter 12 with an exaltation that includes himself. He said:

Hebrews 12:

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us...

So he includes himself in that exaltation. He shows his recipients the way to sustain the life of faith. Verse 1 of Hebrews 12 encourages these people to run, and to run well by reminding them of the cloud of witnesses that surrounds them. Cloud is a way the Greeks and the Romans express a large mass of persons or things. The term witnesses has two senses:

- i. People who had witnessed to God's faithfulness and power. Hebrews 11:39. They have witnessed to the power of God. They have witnessed to the faithfulness of God
- ii. People cheering them on (those who are now running the race), but not as spectators or by the lives they live.

Some people think that they were spectators cheering on those who are running the race now. Our loved ones are not on the other side, on the balconies of heaven, watching what we are doing on this side. If that were so we would spoil their joy by what they would be seeing. God has set them free from the pains of these evil world. The lives they lived is what would encourage those of us running the race of faith today. That is how they cheer us on.

To sustain their faith, they need to pay attention to four things, according to our text in Hebrews 12:

- a. Lay aside every weight.

The athlete who wants to win a race sheds excess weight, wears very light clothes and very light shoes. He will do away with anything that slows or weighs him down. You can't find somebody running an important race who wants to win wearing trepid suits, wearing high heeled shoes or putting stones in his pocket. He will never win. To run the race of faith successfully,

to sustain or maintain one's spiritual life, a Christian must lay aside every weight.

And what is this weight? Anything that slows him down in his spiritual progress; anything that impedes his spiritual progress. This weight could be harmless or even relatively useful, like the garment that the Blind Bartimaeus threw aside to run to meet Jesus as seen in Mark 10:46-50. The weight there is from person to person. What may be slowing you down spiritually may not be a problem for me and vice versa. It varies from one person to the other.

To sustain or maintain their faith they need:

- b. To lay aside the sin that easily ensnares or entangles them.

We will continue from this point next time.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father and our God, You have set before us an important race, the race that will take us into eternity. It is so important, dear Lord, that none can miss this eternities forever and ever. Help all who have heard my voice today and those who have heard Your Word from other quarters to submit themselves to Jesus Christ, and to run this race staying close to Him, looking unto Him. Grant this, dear Father, we pray in Jesus Name. Amen!