

Jesus Christ - The Author and Finisher of Our Faith

in the Book of Hebrews

(Part 3 - Chapters 11-13)

Meeting 4

The Book of Hebrews is a very important and unique book. In Hebrews 11, we see how important this living faith is. Remember that faith is not just believing. We must write this definition in our hearts: faith is the substance and the substantiation of the things hoped for. Imagine hoping for something, yet nothing happens! That is not good. But we have faith, not just hope. Whenever you hear the word of God speaking to you, whether through the Holy Spirit in you or in reading the word of God, Hebrews says you must substantiate His word. This is especially the case when you read God's word. So, I hope the young people will love to read the word of God. You may read so many things, but the best book to read is the Book, the Bible, the word of God. When you read it, you are not reading a novel, but you are reading God's promises, what God intends to give you. And what God is giving us is the best! That is why all these witnesses in Hebrews 11 who believed in the word of God did not just believe in it but experienced the reality! In every case, you can see the history in the Bible. The Bible is so wonderful because it is not written like a novel or a book of theology; but it is a book of history of God's dealing with His people, His promises, and leading His people beginning with Abel. Abel is a wonderful brother who brought a more excellent offering to God. This is worthy for us to learn because we are learning to bring offerings to the living God. God gave us His best! What about us – do we bring the best to God? Learn to bring the best to Him.

God gave us the best. He is God, but He sent His only begotten Son, who left His glory to become a Man like you and me to go through all kinds of sufferings. He went to the cross to be our sacrifice for sin and rose

again to be the life-giving Spirit to dwell in us. Then He went up to be the great heavenly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, King of righteousness, King of peace, interceding for us non-stop, every day, saving us to the uttermost, and helping us in every situation. Isn't that wonderful? He is very busy helping us so that we can reach the goal just like Him. He reached the wonderful goal as a Man, sitting at the right hand of the majesty on High today for our sake, because that is our destiny!

Now we come to Hebrews 12. *“Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a **cloud of witnesses...**”* (Heb. 12:1a). Where do you find the clouds? You cannot find them on the earth. The clouds are in the heavens! That means that these witnesses really know the heavenly riches. They are heavenly witnesses. They are called witnesses because they went through the real experience. They did not just believe in doctrines. The witnesses mentioned in Chapter 11 are just a few of the great cloud of witnesses. This cloud is even greater than what Paul listed because he did not have the time to write about every witness. However, you can read about them in the Scripture and learn a lot from them – not just about their experience, but about this wonderful God who promised them so many things and helped them and supplied their every need for them to make it. It is written that God has prepared better things for you (Heb. 11:40). So, if they could make it, do you have the faith that you will make it? Jump up and say, “Yes! I will make it!” Have you ever seen an Olympian win a race and say flatly, without energy, “Yeah, I made it.” No, they would be rejoicing and going crazy when they get the gold! But you are running a much better race if you see the goal – to be crowned with honor and glory like our Lord Jesus Christ! You will inherit the universe! Isn't that wonderful? Olympic winners just get medals. But the Lord made it to the goal. He is sitting on the throne at the right hand of the Majesty on high. God appointed Him to be heir over all things (Heb. 1:2), to be ruler over the kings of the earth, crowned with honor and glory (Heb. 1:2, 2:8-9). This is our destiny!

Hebrews 2:1 says, *“What is man...?”* Man is created in the image of God, in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26a). That is why you are so intelligent. God made man to rule, to have dominion over all things (Gen. 1:26b).

Man has dominion over a dog. You would never exchange places with the dog. Without man, who would rule the earth? No animals can rule this earth. Unfortunately, man fell because Satan deceived man and sin entered. Look at how man has ruled the world! The history of man is a history of world war killing each other. That is why every empire disappeared because it was corrupted and destroyed. Today they are repeating history again because of sin.

That is why the Lord came to save us and redeem us. We don't see man ruling properly today, but we see Jesus! Jesus overcame Satan, all the principalities and powers, and all the opposition against Him, including Judaism whose leaders wanted to kill and get rid of Him. But the Lord overcame all of them. He was willing to die, not because of Himself, but because of all of us. He paid the price for us so that we can reach our wonderful destiny and goal that God created us for – to rule! God told Adam to rule over all of His creation (Gen. 1:28).

“But now we do not yet see all things put under him [man]. But we see Jesus, who was...crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:8b-9a). Jesus Christ ascended to the throne. Now He is ruling! He is *“the ruler over the kings of the earth”* (Rev. 1:5). It is not the world leaders that are ruling. It is the Lord who is ruling, until He makes all the enemies His footstool (Heb. 1:13). They are all under His feet (Eph. 1:22). He ascended *“far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come”* (Eph. 1:21). That is your destiny. The goal of God sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins is to make you a king and a priest today to serve God (Rev. 1:5-6; Rev. 5:10). He saved you to make you a king! Don't you want that? Or would you rather be a slave of sin? That is why you were baptized – to be free from the dominion of sin and death (Rom. 6:1-14). *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8:2). This is a wonderful salvation! Now we have freedom – not to live according to our flesh, but freedom to serve God, so that we will be perfected by faith to reach the goal. All the men of faith in the past, beginning with Abel to the prophets had so many wonderful experiences in many different situations, even including being martyrs. Our life on this earth and what

we are seeing today is temporary. When the Lord comes back, it will be judgment time – the great day of God’s wrath. Don’t think God will not judge. It is all written in the word of God. When the 6th seal is opened, the whole world, from the least ones to the kings of the earth, will know that God’s wrath has come and there will be no place to hide (Rev. 5:15-17).

Now coming back to the great cloud of witnesses – don’t think that this cloud of witnesses is not important. In this world, if you make a goal playing soccer and no one cheers for you – that would be boring. But if you are in a stadium filled with people, and you make a goal, everybody jumps up and down and cheers, regardless of which sport it is. Even though they are cheering and going crazy for just putting a little ball in the basket - that’s nothing! Now look at this great crowd of witnesses hoping that you will reach the goal – they are watching and waiting for you. Even the angels are watching. The Lord said that the angels in heaven greatly rejoice to see one person saved (Luke 15:10). They will cheer, “GOAL! Hallelujah!” Do you rejoice, jump and dance if you see one person saved? This is a great work of Christ to save just one person.

We have a wonderful goal, which is to reach what Christ has attained. ***“Therefore...let us lay aside every weight”*** (Heb. 12:1b). We need to be like athletes, who when they enter the field, forget about everything except winning! Do you want to be a loser or a winner when the Lord comes? That is the most important thing in our human life! When you win a game with your team, how do you feel the next day? Empty! Your joy might last for two hours, but afterwards you are so tired and fall on your bed and are glad that it is over. And after one or two days, you have already forgotten what happened. That joy does not last. But our Lord Jesus Christ is sitting on the throne ruling and reigning, full of glory. He did not sigh and say, “I’m glad it’s over! I’ll stay in the tomb for a few more days.” No, He rose again within 28 hours – He did not see corruption. Then He ascended after 40 days. Now He is ruling and reigning as a Man, not as God, because this is your destiny. That is why He Himself became a Man – to recover humanity! You should appreciate being a man today – not just to have a good life on this earth

right now. This life is temporary. We should see the real goal. If you were to run a race without a goal, you would be running in any direction not knowing where you are going and how far you have to go! When you run a race, you need a goal! Paul said when he's fighting the fight, he is not beating the air (1 Cor. 9:26). He knows where to fight and where the enemy is. You cannot run a race without a goal! What is your goal? Your goal is the same goal that the Lord Jesus Christ has attained: to be a co-king with Christ, to rule with Him over the nations and all of God's creation.

Don't think this goal is a small thing. If you miss that, then you miss everything! And not only that, but you will also have to pay something; you will suffer loss. You will still be saved, but as through fire (1 Cor. 3:15). Don't think, "I'm a Christian; I'm saved. I will go to heaven." Read the Bible again, carefully! Then you will know what your goal is. That is why when you are running the race, look unto Jesus (Heb. 12:2) because He is our forerunner, the anchor of our soul; He already has entered the Holy of Holies, the heavenly tabernacle, as a Man (Heb. 6:19-20)! He is your example! In Hebrews 11, there are many examples, but they did not reach the goal yet. But now we have a wonderful example who went through all the sufferings and trials and reached the goal: Jesus!

The Lord Jesus knows God – He is one with God and did everything that was well-pleasing to the Father. He was able to say, "*I and My Father are one*" (John 10:30). What a Man! Even Pontius Pilate had to confess that when he looked at Jesus (John 19:5)! Today you need to look unto Him! Read the four gospels carefully to see how He lived on this earth. He was pure, holy, righteous, and sin was not in Him. Hebrews 5:8 says, "*though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*" Obedience needs to be learned! What a Christ! You have to learn to see Jesus! Look away from all things unto Jesus. Often there is just a little test and suffering, and we already murmur, get angry and run away. But with every problem it is better to look away from the problem unto Jesus, because He went through more problems and sufferings than us, and He is the author and the finisher of our faith. He is the finisher because He finished the race and reached the goal; but He is also the perfecter of our faith. That means our faith needs to be

perfected. Sometimes you say, “I believe, I believe.” But do you really? When the test comes, you fail. And then you repeat the cycle. So, look away from everything unto Jesus if you want to make it to the goal. If you don’t care to reach the goal, it is up to you; it is your choice. The Lord came voluntarily to save you; but He will never force you to do anything. Just like He did not force Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of life. You might force people to eat it, but God will not. God let Adam and Eve choose. The free will that God created in man is a wonderful thing! You have to appreciate that. Nobody can force you.

*“Let us **lay aside every weight.**”* Praise the Lord! You cannot win a race if you are carrying a backpack with a sandbag and a water bottle. No, you must lay aside every weight! Even if you can shed one ounce of weight, it is necessary. If you are racing to compete, every bit makes a difference. Lay aside every weight. Learn this! Don’t think it doesn’t matter – it does! Especially lay aside *“**the sin which so easily ensnares us**”* (Heb. 12:1c). Notice that the verse did not say which sin it is. Which sin easily ensnares you? I don’t know which sin ensnares you, but I know which sin easily ensnares me. You know what sin ensnares you. Take care of yourself first – don’t worry about others. Nobody else can take care of you in such a way. We are running a race. Every aspect of your life is important: your diet, your rest. If you are not an athlete and weigh 250 pounds, it is ok. But not if you are an athlete running a race. As an athlete you must shed a lot of weight and train yourself. No one who is running a race does not train himself. And nobody can train for you, no matter how much they love you. That training won’t help you but ruin you. Learn to lay aside whatever ensnares you and say, “No, I won’t be ensnared by that because I have a race to run. I want to reach the goal. I don’t want to be here on this earth in the last 3.5 years during the great day of God’s wrath. I want to be taken up!” There is no place for you to hide on this earth when the great day of God’s wrath comes.

*“Let us **run with endurance the race that is set before us**”* (Heb. 12:1d). Endurance is another important word. All athletes who are aiming for something endure. If you just want to be a garbage collector – you don’t need much endurance though it pays well. You just have to be trained to drive that truck. But if you want to be a doctor, you need a lot of

training and endurance. There is so much to learn. To reach spiritual maturity and to become a co-king with Christ do you think that you do not need training? You do! The Lord went through a lot of training! So, lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance!

Then you must **focus!** “...*looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith...*” (Heb. 12:2a). He finished, but now He is perfecting us to finish!

“...*who for the joy that was set before Him*” (Heb. 12:2b) – that is the goal. What do you see before you? What is most important for you? To be a good architect? To earn more money? What is your goal? Our goal should be to sit on the throne with Christ. The Lord said, “*To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne*” (Rev. 3:21). Our goal is to rule over all the nations with an iron rod (Rev. 2:26-27) and to inherit the universe (Rev. 21:7), to have dominion over everything that was created by God. This is the joy that was set before Him! If you don’t see the goal, you will not endure suffering. If you want the goal bad enough, you will. I switched my goal because there is something better, more glorious and eternal. I don’t want to spend eternity somewhere else. You must have that goal – and that must be your joy! If you think about it, don’t you have the joy? Do you think about it – that you will inherit all things? Or do you prefer to have 60 million or 1 billion dollars. They printed 3 trillion. At the end of the day, that money is just paper, and the toilet paper in your bathroom is worth more. We treasure 3 trillion dollars today, but everything is going to be burned up, and then what? Praise the Lord, focus on the real joy, the real satisfaction, the eternal glory that will never end. That must be your joy!

We all need to see the joy set before us. Then all the other things will be blurry and none of the things surrounding you will be of any importance to you; they may mean something, but not much. You need a good job, which is fine. The job is temporary, and we thank God for it, but it cannot compare to the joy set before us. I do not mean that you should quit the job – no, but in the job, you should gain Christ. The goal for

having a job is to gain Christ. We now have this wonderful, exclusive example that reached the goal: Jesus Christ. The great cloud of witnesses did not receive the promise yet; but this wonderful Jesus reached the goal! He gained the prize and sat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He's the only One. Now we are running this race and are close to the goal. The witnesses in Hebrews 11 ran the race but ran in the beginning; now they have passed the baton to you. You are running the last leg of the race. What is the principle of running the last leg, the anchor of a relay? You have to run the fastest to reach the goal, looking unto Jesus!

He ***“endured the cross, despising the shame...”*** (Heb. 12:2c). You have to learn to endure the cross to reach the goal. Your colleagues may laugh at you and think you are strange because you don't do the same things they do. If you don't want to be strange, and do what they do and go where they go, will you reach the glorious goal like that? Are you willing to despise the shame? ***“...and [He] has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”*** (Heb. 12:2d). This is what we want! No shame is too great to stop us because the joy before us is much greater.

“For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself” (Heb. 12:3a). People do not just laugh at you but might beat you up and want to crucify you and get rid of you. It was not only the bad guys, but seemingly the good guys also who persecuted the Lord: the chief priests, the elders, the scribes, the Pharisees and Sadducees. They were watching Him every day and tried to catch Him, like a pack of wolves out to get Him. Do you want to endure all kinds of false accusations? You have to see Jesus, to know all of the sufferings He went through. Don't just be thankful that He went through them but learn from Him! Peter said that ***“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps”*** (1 Pet. 2:21). He did that for us because that is the way for us to reach the throne! He accomplished all that because of the sin that is in us. That sin is replacing the real enjoyment in eternity with the pleasures of Egypt; it deceives you. You are so excited to watch and enjoy a movie for two hours, but when you go home, you forget about it, because it is nothing. Are you built up after you see the movie? Does that movie become your reality? No! But if you see Jesus, if you with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord,

you will be transformed into the same image from glory into glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

Consider Him and all the sufferings He went through, His humility, His absolute obedience toward God, despising the shame, His wisdom when He was on this earth, His holiness, faithfulness, and righteousness. Follow His footsteps because that is the way to glory! Don't just preach and not follow His footsteps. That does not work. *"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls"* (Heb. 12:3). This is an important point. This is the way. But it is up to you if you want to go that way or not; the choice is yours, just as the choice in the Garden of Eden. Don't be fooled by the serpent! God's word is true and faithful. Praise the Lord!

Note: The above content has not been reviewed by the speaker.