

The Remedy for Weariness in the Christian Life (Part 1)

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We're back in Hebrews this morning, Hebrews chapter 12. I've entitled my sermon, "The Remedy for Weariness in the Christian Life." This has to be part one. I simply can't cover everything I want to cover out of these first 4 verses but let's read them.

Hebrews 12:1-4, I'm reading from the English Standard Version (ESV), "Therefore, ('therefore' - that plugs us in to chapter 11, the chapter of faith.) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (all those witnesses from the preceding chapter,) let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted in your struggle against sin. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. (or, In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.)"

Now I started thinking back to when I was first saved, when I was first reading Scripture, the parts of Scripture that I was really drawn to. And I'll admit that as a young believer, Hebrews was probably not one of the more attractive books in the Bible to which I tended to gravitate. And some of you might be able to say the same thing. I think there are several reasons why that was true, but one reason I think being this: This book was written for some people that were enduring some hardships, a hard struggle. And you know what? Until you get to the point in your Christian life where you have to endure a certain intensity level of pain, or stress; I mean, when you're living this Christian life and you once get to the point where you are shaken, or distracted; you get to the point in your Christian life where you wake up one day, and you recognize you lost your first love, you've strayed away; or you get hit by a trial of such intensity, it shakes your very foundations; or you suddenly enter a phase in your life where Satan comes to God and says, "I want to sift him," and just like with Peter, God says, "Okay. Sift him." I think until you get to the point in your Christian life where the winds of hell blow against you, and the temptation to drift, the temptation to lay down is real, the book of Hebrews probably...

And you know, I've said this before, brother Don Johnson was just preaching the other night here in San Antonio. He said that when he first got saved, he thought the Christian life was going to be one baptism of the Spirit after another. But then something happened. And you know, a lot of times when we start the Christian life...

If the Christian life has been pretty easy for you so far, you probably have not come to the place yet where you appreciate the kind of arguing that you find in Hebrews. Those to whom this letter was written originally, I mean the original audience, (of course it's been written to us as well,) but that original audience, they had gotten to this point. They were there. Life was not easy. I mean, read verse 3, look at it, "Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that - watch these words - you may not grow weary or fainthearted." And that verse may sound like our author is addressing those who are not already weary or fainthearted. He tells them

to consider Christ. Why? So that they won't grow weary or fainthearted, as though they are not yet weary. And so as to not grow weary, they need to be thinking on Christ. That's how it sounds, right?

But if you just look down a little ways in verse 12, what do you find? This author full well knows that even though he talked that way, he knows these people are very much in the midst of some really hard things. He sees their condition - drooping hands, weak knees. Listen to verse 13, "So that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed." They've got something in their life that needs to be healed. They've got something in their life that is lame. They've got something there that's not right. And what he's afraid of is it's just going to be wrecked altogether. He's afraid that their health is bad but it's going to get worse to the place it's going to come out of joint altogether. And that, of course, is the air, the feel of the book of Hebrews. The danger is that they have been so put to it and their foundations are shaking, and drift is setting in, and immaturity at the same time, and the foundations are looking like they might give way. That's the situation that you have here. Falling out altogether.

And you know what? This is not uncommon. Because what you have there with the Hebrews, where you had people that the danger was that they were going to abandon Christ and go back to maybe some kind of formal, dead religion. That's always a danger. But look, if you look at the Corinthians, what was their danger? An antinomian lifestyle. Right? Just license to live it up. They were in danger. You continue down that road, it's destruction too. How about the Galatians? Their problem may have been more akin. The Colossians, maybe a little bit more akin to what you find in Hebrews.

I mean, to the Galatians, he was not mincing words: "Separated from Christ, fallen from grace." You stay on that road, that's destruction as well. It's not like it's uncommon for Christians to come up against something, some kind of distraction, some kind of difficulty, some kind of trial, some kind of pleasure, some kind of temptation that shakes us. It shakes us from those moorings in Christ. This is not uncommon. And I guarantee you this: God will see to it that before you finish this race, you will need Hebrews. And I have it on His authority that you will.

I mean, have you ever really thought about this verse? Don't turn to it but listen to it. The last verse in Philipians chapter 1 reads this way, "It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake." It's been appointed to you. You're not getting away from it. You remember what the apostles said there in Acts 14:22? "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." And here's the thing: You don't go through the Christian life long before you get discouraged over the situation. Discouragement sets in about something. What? God's providence not working out just the way you want to. People that you want to see saved in your life, not getting saved. You wish you were further along in the Christian race than you actually are. You get these different things that come into your life. You wish your health could be better; or you wish that this could happen or that could happen; or we get weary. You just get weary from putting so much effort.

You remember Pilgrim's Progress? There was a Hill of Difficulty. You feel like you've been on a certain hill of difficulty for so long, and you're just getting to the point where you're about out of gas. It's like, "Where is the Lord? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" You've been calling out, "How long, Lord, how long? I've been going up this thing for so long. I've never been on a hill of such difficulty for so long before." And you notice that when we get into these kind of situations, when our circumstances are like this, when we've endured lots of - whatever it is - resistance in your life, fightings in your life, when you're disappointed over where you're at

spiritually, or you feel overwhelmed by the iron grip of sin in your life. You've been exposed to whatever powerful temptations to coast, or to drift, or to give up.

I mean, have you ever been there? I know some of you have. You feel like you get knocked down. The righteous man falls seven times, but what happens? He gets up every time. But you feel like that guy. You feel like you get knocked down, and you get up, and you get knocked back down again, and you get up, and you get knocked back down again. I remember in my lost days, I had an accident on a motorcycle and my knee was raw. I was in high school at the time, and I can remember I was in Drafting class. And I stood up, and this thing, I mean, it had hurt. It was on my knee, and my pants were always rubbing on the thing and blowing this thing open again. And there I was, and I turned, and the handle on that desk drawer caught it. Wam! The teacher could tell, my face must have just turned white. I could feel blood just pouring down my leg. Sometimes we feel like that. We feel like a sore that it just doesn't heal. Something in our life, it's like, this thing is raw and it just keeps opening up again and again and again. You have to think that's where these people were at. They were in this great struggle.

And the thing about it is, when we're in that kind of situation, if we are experiencing such circumstances in our life where this is true, we're discouraged, we're weak-kneed, we're drooping, we feel lame; if the circumstances don't change - now catch that - of course it's easy to feel better when the circumstances change. Sometimes that's where we're at, where it's just, "I'm not going to get out of this, I'm not going to quit being discouraged, I'm not going to quit..." Why? Because the circumstances are just the same. The same circumstances that caused me to be discouraged, caused me to be weary, caused me to be faint-hearted, caused me to want to give up hope, caused me to want to drift, they're still there.

And you find that when you come across people that are in that state, it's not real easy to get them out of that state. Why? Well, precisely because they are disappointed, frustrated, discouraged, struggling, weary, weak, suffering, tired, uncomfortable and all the rest, with their present circumstances. And those circumstances aren't changing. And here's the thing we need to realize: Hebrews never once in the 13 chapters here, not once does it say that the remedy to our drooping hands and weak knees is to be found in eliminating our present circumstances. I mean, never. You hear what I'm saying? We need to get this. This is key.

When you climb that hill of difficulty, you're struggling, it's difficult, you're being staggered, you're looking lame, you're tempted to drift and coast and slow down, lay down, Hebrews does not come along and put its arm around you, and say, "Well, the way out of all this is just to get off the hill." It doesn't say that to us. I mean, think with me. Our author says this to these folks, you remember back in chapter 10 verse 32. He says this, "I recognize that you have endured some really hard suffering. I recognize that." They had their stuff pillaged. They went through difficulty. There were circumstances in these peoples' lives that were tough. And it was like that sore. Just like the guy that just gets knocked down over and over. They are trying to weather this, and they're tired. It's easier to go back to Judaism. It's easy to not own Christ like this. It's almost like their face is against the grinding stone, and it's because of decisions they've made in their life that they are experiencing the pain. It's really easy to want to back off so that the circumstances change. Real easy to do that.

But you know, the author does not come along and say, "Well, the solution to what you suffer as a Christian is to get the thing that's making you suffer and to get it out of your life." He doesn't say that. In fact, do you know what he says to them? He says, "I know you have endured a really tough struggle." But then, look at chapter 12 verse

4. He doesn't promise that the road is going to get easier. He says, "In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." He is saying you haven't even suffered as much as you might suffer. You may not even be experiencing the worst of it yet. I have no promise for you that it's going to get easier, it may get harder. A lot harder. You may lose your own life.

Do you remember just prior to this in Hebrews 11:35-37, "Some were tortured, refusing to accept release so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking, flogging, even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword." Brethren, this is so important to our comfortable, ease-loving, American, middle-class society. It really is, because we don't suffer well. We (I included myself in there). I mean, if the air conditioning cut out right now, it would only be 15 minutes before you'd be thinking, "Argh. When is he gonna quit?" If you were over there with Trevor Johnson, sitting in a 100-degree temperature and a 100% humidity, where if a grasshopper flies in, the kid will grab it off your shirt and eat it, you would be really happy to just not have 100% humidity.

We, typically, are of a mindset that the way out of our problems is to take the problem away. The way out of feeling uncomfortable when the air conditioning is broken is to get the air conditioning fixed. That's how we think. That's not how the author of Hebrews thinks. Now look, there's a place when you're being persecuted in one place to flee to another place. There's a possibility that we may be able to change the circumstances, and Scripture doesn't forbid that. But there are a lot of circumstances that you don't have any control over. And in fact, we're going to get to a place in the not too distant future where we're going to find out that God actually disciplines His people. You don't get away from that when God takes the rod to you. It may get a lot harder. You have not, I mean, we haven't even suffered what they suffered. They're like way up there from where we are. And even if you're where they are, he is saying there have been people that have been way up beyond you. You haven't even got to where they are yet. And, by the way, the supreme example in all of this, which we're not going to get too in-depth today, but it's Christ. Christ is the great example here and He did get that far. He did shed His blood. And so have others that have gone before.

You see, this isn't the remedy. Why focus on this? Because some of you have situations where, okay, loneliness in singleness. You think that the way out is marriage. Or, you are married but it's tough. You think the way out is a different wife, a different husband. You think the way out, "My husband needs to get saved." We have these trials, we have these difficulties. And we tend to think the way to run the Christian race undistracted is to get the circumstances taken away. But I want you to know that that is not God's lot for most of our lives. Now look, difficulties come and go. They ebb and flow. They rise and fall. I know that. But the solution to running the Christian life is not found in having your circumstances changed. That's not what this is all about. Not at all. The key to running the Christian race is not found there.

Remember Paul? "Lord, I have a thorn in my flesh. The way I figure it, the best way for me to run from here is to get that thorn gone. Would you please take it away?"

"No."

"Okay."

That's where at different times, like I say, you are going to need Hebrews. Because there's going to come a time when you're going to be made to suffer and God's not going to take it away. In fact, right over the next horizon,

your suffering may intensify ten-fold from what you're enduring now. And when you ask God to take it away, He's going to say, "No. You have not yet resisted to the shedding of your blood. There's still a lot further that you could go."

The remedy to running the Christian life does not have to do with finding an easier course. It has to do with where your eyes are, not with where your feet are. Where your feet are has to do with your circumstances, where you find yourself in the course. But the remedy here is not concerning the feet, it's concerning the eyes. This is heart and soul, the most important matter concerning the Christian life. There is nothing more important. Although it's said different ways, this is the heart, this is the thrust of all of the Bible. This is the thrust of every one of the epistles. In one way or another, it emphasizes this same thing. The heart of how to run the Christian race, the remedy is fixing our eyes on Christ. It's found in beholding Christ. And you can see it said two different ways here, it's said with two different verbs.

We're only going to look at the first verb right now. But you can see it right there at the end of chapter 1. "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus." And did you get that? "With endurance the race that is set before us." You know what that sounds like to me? The course gets set before you. You don't determine it. It gets set there. And your course may be really difficult and may be really hard. And the whole thing is not to abandon the course. It's set before you. You have one responsibility with that course. Run! with your eyes set on Christ no matter what the course looks like. God has designed it. And for some, it's torture. Some, it's getting sawn in two. That's where we're at. We don't know what God is going to bring tomorrow. But know this: Through much tribulation we enter.

The thing to do is not to lay down. The thing to do is to get our eyes in the right place. Looking to Jesus. Hebrews 12:3, "Consider Him - different verb, but again the focus is on 'Him' - who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted." Did you get that? How do I not grow weary or faint-hearted no matter what course is set before me? Consider Him.

Now, we're going to look at what it is in His life that we need to consider far more next time, Lordwilling. But nothing is said here about changing your circumstances. The race we're running will inevitably get harder, the temperature is going to rise, the hill is going to get steeper, the thorn in the flesh possibly sharper. The way to make it to the end victoriously has everything to do with where your spiritual eyeballs are aimed, not on your circumstances. Now let's look at this first verb: Looking on Jesus. You can see that at the end of verse 1, "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus." Now, 'looking' is a verb participle, which means it's not the primary verb. It modifies 'run'. Run! We need to run! Always run, we dealt with that before, with our eyes on Christ.

We are to run, looking to Christ. This verb participle 'looking' is very interesting because the author of Hebrews had a number of words that he could have chosen. But he chose a word that is very unique. Listen to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, defining the word 'looking', 'looking to Christ': "To turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something." The Friberg Lexicon says this, "Strictly to look away or to look from; hence, as giving attention to one thing to the exclusion of all else." It's almost like 'looking at one thing' comes out of this word only by implication. This is a word that has to do with turning our eyes away from everything else implied, to behold one thing. The Vocabulary of Greek New Testament says this word is defined as, "Look away from, to." I mean, the

negative in this word is just as critical as the positive.

My point is just this: The author, by using this specific word instead of the others that he could have chosen, he's not only interested to show us where our eyes need to be, but to get them off of everything else. He's showing us our eyes need to get off the other things if you're going to look at Christ right. Sight. We're not like spiritual chameleons. Have you ever seen those guys? They got one eye up here and one eye down here. We can't do that. God didn't make us that way. You try to look at two things at once, it doesn't work. And our spiritual eyes are our mind. And the same thing, it does not allow challengers. We get absorbed with one thing. I mean, that's not to say we can't think about several things, but we get absorbed with one thing. We're wired that way.

Our spiritual eyeballs are our minds. And what happens? I mean, you can mark it. The reason why our spiritual life decays, why does it decay? Why does it wither? Why does it weaken? It's because we fill our mind full of other things. When the mind is filled with Christ's beauty, I mean, when we're taken up with Him, He's in our thoughts, it necessarily requires you to look away from the other things. For you to get consumed with work, consumed with money, consumed with circumstances, consumed with all these other things, you're not going to be able to be consumed with Christ at the same time. You've got to look away.

Now look, I know that there are responsibilities that we have in life. I know there are things we have to do. I know God calls us to work. I know that there are things that are there. But those can't be the ruling passions. Those can't be the love. What we love, we think on. And this idea is that Christ needs to be filling the spiritual eyeballs. We need to be looking there. This is how our spiritual life gets revived. And how does it work? I mean, think with me about how it works. It's a mystery. Mystery means there are things about it we don't get, we don't see. But this we do know. And you need to recognize, I mean, if you could just see this. See Christ there. You're running this race, there He is. You're looking away from the things that are near at hand. You're looking to Him.

If you try to run a 100-meter sprint, try to do it looking at your feet. But you see, that's what happens. You're looking at your feet, you're looking at your circumstances. We can get really absorbed with these things. But imagine this, Christ is out there, your spiritual eyeballs, and follow the sight line. I mean, see that sight line as a conduit because that's what it is. Your sight line from your eyeball, your point of perception to Christ, that sight line is a channel. And how does it work? Do you recognize that God designed Christianity so that all of our treasure is found in Christ. All that we need. All the supply. I mean, have you ever read verses like this, Colossians 2:2, "Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures." In Christ is all. He is all in all to the Christian. He is the source of all the treasure.

John says it there in John chapter 1:16, "From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace." It is the fullness of Christ. He is the one and the only treasure house for the church and for the Christian. There is none else. God has designed it that way. When he talks about "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," you got to remember the two words in there: "in Christ." In Christ - that's where they're all found. And you're not going to find them anywhere else. Nowhere else. And here is what happens, and this is the mystery, but when my eyes lock on Him, I gaze upon Him in admiration, in trust, in faith; when my eyes connect there, that sight line is a conduit to every single thing I need to successfully run this race. Everything!

Christ is the source of everything. He's the great Springhead. He's the Fountain. And from Him comes everything. And what happens? My eyes lock on Him. And I can't see it, I don't know how to figure it, it's mystical to

me how that grace comes from Him in to me, but it does. And Scripture everywhere asserts this reality. It is with my eyes focused on Christ. And what happens the moment I take my eyes off Him? Conduit is broken immediately. Now I may not sense it. Oftentimes, we don't have any physical sensation that this takes place. In fact, very often, because of the last grace received, we can ride on it for a few days. But the new is not coming. That sight line has been broken, the channel's been broken.

Brethren, if you just go through Scripture and you start really paying attention to this, I mean, we find that in Him is all the fullness. In Him is the fullness of the Godhead. In Him is reconciliation. In Him is adoption. In Him is redemption. In Him. , "Through Whom are all things." We have to be absolutely convinced of this reality that it's in Him, in Him. God has designed it so that the supply that I need, and you need, and our church needs to run this thing, the grace that we need to send out these missionaries, the grace we need to walk day by day, to strive in holiness, to live this life in love, to do what we are called to do, to uphold this Book, to be obedient to God, to walk in truth; all of it, all of the supply flows from Him. I mean, I was reading there in Revelation 22 and it talks about this river that flows out of the throne of God and the Lamb. And I was just thinking, that is it. And here in this life, it's like God has designed it so that that sight line is the channel by which that river flows.

My eyes locked in upon Him, and here it comes, unsearchable riches. Unsearchable. I mean, can you see Him? It's like all this gloious, unsearchable riches. Just imagine. Sometimes you've seen maybe these pictures of treasure, or like a dragon's lair, full of treasure. You can just imagine all the sparkling millions and millions of sparkling dazzling diamonds, and rubys, and jewels, and pearls, and gems just coming forth, all manner of the most beautiful fragrances and the most beautiful treasure that you've ever imagined. And that's just all the supply and the graces and the beauties. Christ beautifying us with His own image. That's what happens. We connect eyeballs with Him, and such things flow from Him when we look to Him in faith, in love, in hope. Such things flow from Him. Such glory flows in that river that turns us into Him. I mean, into His likeness.

I mean, such things flow to us that His image becomes more and more burned upon us. Gazing upon Christ by faith, that fountain flows. The very beauty of Christ, the very preciousness of His Person, the beauties of His attributes, they flow from Him to us. This storehouse of treasure is unleashed and it imprints His image upon us. And you see, what happens is, it's not where our feet are. Our eyes outpace our feet. Our eyes are looking upon Christ. And in that way, such grace flows to us that it gives strength to our feet. Whatever mud we're sloshing through or hill we're climbing, it gives strength to our feet to run, and to run well, and to keep going, and to not become weary. Consider Him so that you don't become weary and lose heart, brethren, in this fight. And what is it that we're not to look at? I mean, this looking to Christ has everything to do with the negative as well as the positive. Turning my eyes away.

Turning my eyes away from what? I mean, what are some of the things that are common distractions? Self. Oh, if there's ever anything that stands between my eyeballs and Christ, self is a notorious distraction. I mean, and I know it, I watch some of you. Some of us in this place, suddenly, you're flopping all over the place. You're running the race like a drunken sailor. And you go up and you start asking them, and spiritually speaking, they've been in the bathroom gazing at themselves in the mirror. They've been looking at their performance, and they've been looking at how well they've done, and they've looked at recent falls, and they've looked at this and they've looked at that, and they're examining themselves. And see what they've done? They've taken their eyes off of Christ and

what they need to run this race in hope, in love, in joy. The thrill, the excitement, the adoration of Christ, it's dried up. Why? Because their eyes are not where they ought to be. And you got to get them off that. You gotta turn them away.

So often you've got the people that, you know, "Well, I'm looking at my faith and I'm lookin at..." Look to Jesus. "I'm looking at my repentance." Look to Jesus. The devil is a master at coming alongside, and saying, "Look at yourself! Look at what you just did. Do you think Christ wants anything to do with you?" And if you keep your eyes on yourself, you're going to start agreeing with the devil. But if you get your eyes on Christ, you say, "Wait a second." He's here telling you, "Look what you've done. You think Christ wants anything to do with you?" And you look at Christ and you say, "Well, when Peter fell, He seemed like He wanted a lot to do with Him. And John says that when we fall, we have an Advocate with the Father. And I don't see that any of the Christians in there were perfect yet; and yet, Jesus was faithful to never leave them nor forsake them. That's what I see when I look at Christ." But when you look at yourself, you know what you're going to find? You're going to find failure. You're going to find fault. You're going to find reason to doubt. But that's not where your eyes should be. Your eyes should be on Christ.

It's Christ who saves. It's Christ who saves. And even though I can tell you about eyeballs and sight lines going to Him, remember this: It's Him that saves. It's not how well you look; it's not how well you've got that sight line established; but you just look at Him. You've got to look at Him. But it can be ever so weak, it can be ever so miserable and pitiful, and it can be just this slightest glance of your eyes over there in desperate need and help, don't trust in that. Don't look at yourself. Don't look at your eyeballs. Don't look at the sight line. You have to look at Christ. It is Christ who saves. It is Christ who is the Savior. It is Christ who is all. Don't look at your faith, your faith does not save you. Your merit is not found there. That only attaches you to Him who saves. The merit is in Christ. It's all in Christ. The storehouse is in Christ. And that's how we must run, not looking at self. The devil will tell you that you're running pitifully. He's going to say you're not running it as well as others. And you're going to start looking at your prayer life, and you start looking at where your own heart is at. You start looking at your feelings.

Brethren, it's all about what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives us the power and the vigour and the revival to run this race. And I'll tell you this, the devil wants your eyeballs anywhere and everywhere except on Christ. I mean, morality - oh yeah; spirituality - better believe it; even reading good books - be sure of it; even doing good things in the Christian life, and being involved with works, and being involved with ministry - you better believe it. Anything to distract you from Christ. He can't take a Christian out. Not the true ones. And I don't know if he actually knows the true ones. I don't know that he knows that. In fact, I rather suspect he knows, like we know, the indications of true Christianity. But I really think he's bent on their total destruction. But if he sees that the signs are very... He's seen this for 6,000 years or more. He knows the signs of God's people. And when he sees them, if he can't destroy you, I'll tell you this, he wants your eyes off of Christ because he wants to weaken you and make you as ineffective as possible. Lost or saved, he wants your eyes off Christ because there's life there, and there's power, and there's hope, and there's salvation.

Get your eyes off other men. You know, you're running along the race, and you look over at so and so, "Oh, they're running faster than me. I must not be saved." What do they have to do with you? That's like Peter and John.

Here's Peter running along looking at John. And it's like Jesus had to wallop him upside the head, "You follow Me. Get your eyes on Me." Because what happens when you look at other men? Well, you look over at them, they're not running as well. Pride. Because you just got your eyes off of Christ. And now, you're giving opportunity to the flesh. You're making provision for the flesh. You got your eyes on brother so and so, and if you're outrunning him, now you're all puffed up. If you're not running as well as he is, now you're all discouraged. "If I can't run as well as them, then I don't want to run at all." Get your eyes on Christ.

And we've already talked about circumstances, but oh how often people look at their circumstances. They look at their circumstances. Again, let's use Peter. I mean, Peter, what's going on? You're walking on water. I mean, your eyes are glued on Christ and something is flowing from Him to you that makes you walk on water. But then he got to looking at his circumstances, got his eyes off Christ. And immediately - I mean, if there is ever a picture of the channel being broken. Immediately. You see, your problem is not eliminating the storm. The problem is keeping your eyes focused where they need to be. And brethren, just think about it. Here God designs Christianity, and He says, "Okay. The way that you're going to succeed in this race is to set your eyes on the most beautiful Object that there is. I want you to set your eyes on Him who is perfect excellence; on Him that is unparalleled beauty." I mean, think, that's what God did. He said, "I want you to behold Him who is altogether lovely." I mean, does that sound tortuous that God would say, "And this is how you'll find strength and energy and help to run this race. I want you to behold Him who is altogether glorious to behold"?

And you need to remember that the author of Hebrews, when he starts the Hebrew letter, he gives us one of the richest chapters in all Scripture portraying the glories of Christ. There was rhyme and reason to why he did that. That's how the weak knees get strengthened, the drooping hands rise up, that which is lame gets healed. That's where it is. That's where it's found. And let's be honest. I mean, let's admit it. Other ways and other means have failed us again and again and again. You've not run better when you suddenly decided that, "I'm going to get my eyes off Christ and I'm going to take up a hobby. I'm going to take my eyes off Christ and I'm going to indulge in sports. I'm going to take my eyes off of Christ and I'm going to take up golfing. I'm going to take my eyes off Christ, and I'm... whatever." Common, it's failed us every single time. Every single time we've occupied our minds with something else, you have not done better. It's only set you in the mode to coast. That's all.

And so, here as I'm wrapping this up, I just think this: We need to all consciously, consciously, because remember, the eyeballs we're talking about here are our heads, our minds, our thoughts. This is where we look. And what we need to do is we need to get to where, with our spiritual eyeballs, we're tapping this treasure house, we're beholding the glories of Christ, we're contemplating the beauties of Christ. And that takes a conscientious effort. It's not something that's going to happen spontaneously without your effort. It's not something that's going to happen if you don't apply yourself. It's not something that's going to happen unless you prioritize your life. It just simply isn't going to. If you think, "Well, I'll get to that if there's opportunity, if there's extra time in my day," it's not going to happen.

So what do we do? I mean, if everybody in this church stepped up our efforts to take more time to behold Christ, it would be to the benefit of all of us. So what can we do? I mean, that's what I was thinking about as I got through this. Well, what we can do is, next time we can look at Christ all the more, because His example, His going to the cross is what the author wants to put before us. So next time we'll go there. What can you do? Well, you can

see that the thing that the author of Hebrews wants set before our eyes is the cross. Have you ever thought about the Lord's Supper, the only ongoing ordinance? It's exactly that. Why? Because that's where our life is. That's where our health is.

You can determine this. I just recently, when I was trying to deal with things down in Laredo, I sat down and I met with a family that has not attended the Lord's Supper service the entire time they've been there. That's not taking the race seriously. And I would say that to you folks here. When we have the Lord's Supper, you should come desiring this very thing. It is an opportunity for me, along with the other brethren in a corporate way, to behold Christ. You should come with your hearts ready to sing. Have you ever noticed that our songs have a lot of Christ, a lot of glory? You come here on a Wednesday, "Lord, help me to see Christ in those songs." You come here on a Sunday.

How about this: Maybe some of you would consider memorizing like Colossians 1:15-19. That's not many verses. But what that does is, it fills your looking. It fills your sight when you are memorizing verses that just portray all this magnificent light of Christ. How about this, maybe some of you are more aggressive than that: the first 18 verses of John chapter 1. Maybe you're more aggressive: The first chapter of Hebrews. Psalm 22. Isaiah 53. And I'm serious. You should think seriously at least memorizing Colossians 1:15-19. At least. How about this: I mean, I just glanced through my library. You might think about reading one of these. "Love to the Unseen Christ" by Vincent. "Christ's Glorious Achievements" by Spurgeon. "The Heart of Christ" by the puritan, Goodwin. "The Love of Christ" by another puritan, Sibbs. "The Glory of Christ" by Owen. "The Sympathy of Christ" by Winslow. "The Saints' Knowledge of Christ's Love" by Bunyan. "The Temptation of Christ" by Manton. "The Lord Our Shepherd" by MacMillan. "The Prayer Life of Our Lord" by McIntyre. "The Person of Christ" by Schaff. "Abide in Christ" by Murray. "The Cross" by Lloyd Jones. "Jesus Christ is Our Advocate" by Bunyan. And these are just some I had looked at in my library.

In fact, I was thinking, this book by Phillip Schaff, The Person of Christ, maybe those who are desirous, maybe we could get a discount rate. I know that Granted Ministries put that out. Maybe we could buy a case and we could seek to read one chapter a week. And every Wednesday, for maybe ten minutes in the prayer meeting, we can just share among ourselves about what we found there in that book. But you see, if we all make a conscientious effort to turn our eyes off some other things; you don't have to give yourself to prayer and fasting just when we do it as a church corporately. You could set aside a time where you're going to have a date with Christ. You do that with a wife or a husband if you want to encourage love and intimacy there. Have a date with Christ where you're going to sit down and you're just going to meditate on Hebrews 1. You're just going to set aside an hour out of the week where you do that. Conscientious effort to behold Christ.

And again, it's not going to be that you're going to feel something like taking your keys and sticking them in an outlet. But you guarantee it, God will see to it you will tap riches. And if you build that into your life consistently, over against those who don't, the day will come you will be miles ahead in this race for life. You will run firm. Hind's feet. Isn't that what we read about David? Psalm 18, He gives us feet that are stable in the rocky places. God does that. He so delights in His Son. When you lock your eyeballs on Him, that just so pleases Him; pleases the Spirit who came into this world to glorify Christ. God will flood you with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. They're found in Christ.

Let's pray. Lord, I pray, I could pray and I desire, Lord, may You persuade us of this. I'm sure the way Peter throughout his life, I'm sure he didn't walk on water and forget that soon. He remembered it. He remembered a lesson. He remembered that when his eyes beheld the Treasure of his life, Him who he loved, such help, such power, such grace was given to him that he could do the impossible. But his eyes turned away. What a lesson that was to him. And I pray that You would convince us and teach us just as soundly, just as stark ways about that reality. Oh, may we feel that reality. May you convince us overwhelmingly that other means and methods and modes have never worked. They have never worked. When we've given ourselves to anything, any new way, any new plan, it's just like what happened there in the Galatian church, the church at Colosse, anything that turned them away from Christ, Paul was so convinced it just would lead to their weakness and to their downfall, their destruction. Oh, may we be convinced just as the apostle Paul was, as Peter was. Lord, may you convince us that this is the heart and soul of Christianity. Lord, help us. Give us grace, please, to step it up. Lord, teach us this truth that it's not circumstances that we need to change to run well. It's just having our eyes looking to Jesus. Oh, we pray it in His name. Amen.