

The Joy Set Before Him: What Did Jesus See?

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[0:00] Hebrews 12, verse 1. Familiar words, but very deep, meaningful words.! Believer, notice these verses tell of a race, your race, a race set before us, and of a look that we are to have.

We read here of endurance in a couple of ways. We are to run with patience. For us, it says, endure the race.

Of him, it says, he endured the cross. Same word. The patience, the race that we run, the enduring, the cross that he carried and was slain upon, the cross, that symbol of shame, of our shame, that became his shame, a symbol of a curse, our curse that he bore for us, the curse of sin, the very curse of it, he took upon himself.

And it tells us here that there's so great a cloud of witnesses. And that's talking about, obviously, the chapter before Hebrews 11, this chapter of the heroes of the faith, this motley crew that have gone before us, really, they've already crossed their finishing line.

And in Hebrews 11, we can look back and we can see what an assortment of a bunch of people, these heroes of the faith they were. They all had their human weaknesses and failings.

[1:59] You have reluctant leaders like Moses, who felt inadequate and fearful. Then you've got flawed heroes like Samson. Though he knew great strength and great victories, yet he had significant personal flaws.

He was human. You've got Rahab listed as well. Rahab living in a city destined for destruction. Yet she took that courageous stand, that step of faith, to stand with the people of God and the God of the people of God.

And she shows us too how even those with a past can be redeemed. Think of that. Rahab. That's a testimony to us that no one's beyond the scope of redemption if they can but trust.

And these imperfect people, these champions of the faith of Hebrews 11, despite all of their trials, their lives bear testimony to God's faithfulness. And we stand following on the race they've run.

We tread in their tread. We're running that same race. And they are witnesses of our race too. 2 Peter 1 verse 1 tells of like precious faith. Think of it, these Hebrews 11 heroes.

[3:15] We've got like precious faith, the same faith they had. It tells of sin as well. To throw off everything that hinders us. And we are to look.

Look to who? To Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. To look unto him. Really and truly, that is all it takes to be saved. It's one look.

It's one look unto him. As an old-time preacher that, as a boy, he entered the church building and the lay preacher just gave a simple message with this very text.

Look unto me and be ye saved. All the ends of the earth. For I am God. And there is none else. And the preacher urged the man, the young man, or the audience, the congregation, to have that simple look.

That look of faith. Look unto me. Look unto the Lord. And he made that look. He took that look to Jesus and he was saved that moment. Look with that look of faith and you can be saved.

[4:18] Look upon him. Look up with the eyes of faith and see your Lord there slain for you, bearing your sin and shame. Look unto him, the saviour today, and find his grace is all sufficient.

Look and trust upon him. And we look to Jesus, our Lord. And look at our Lord. What did our Lord look at? It says our Lord Jesus looked and it says of him that he saw something.

He saw the joy that was set before him. He looked ahead to joy. And that's the paradox, really, isn't it, of the cross, that in such pain and agony, yet there was joy there.

And we'll get to that a little more after. The pathway of our Lord, the pathway that he took was the pathway of the cross. It was the pathway of shame. And it led to the throne, the very throne of God,

where now he is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He bore our shame. Now he is in glory. So these verses that tell us of a race set before us and of a joy set before him.

[5:30] So consider this joy for a moment. The joy set before him. What was that? What was that joy? This joy? Our Lord looked ahead. And it says he looked ahead for the joy that was set before him.

There was something that he knew was happening that this moment would change everything and bring joy. What joy?

What was the joy that was set before him that he looked ahead to? In the midst of the suffering of the cross, the joy set before him. What a contradiction it seems. The cross and the joy.

What was the joy? We could think about the joy set before him as picturing the redemption of creation.

It tells us in Romans 8.22, the whole of creation is groaning. There's a travailing, it says. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

[6:33] The whole of creation is under this weight of sin, of man's fallen estate, of this decay, this despair, this pain. That is our human lot for the meantime.

And yet, because of the cross, our Lord knew that this whole system would be changed. In all of his agony, yet Jesus found joy in the cross.

The joy ahead of him sustained him in his pain. Our Lord knew the shame and the pain and ugliness of the cross was that pivotal moment. That all creation was waiting for this moment.

That here was the turning point in all of human history, in all of time. This was the ultimate moment.

Creation's history would be forever changed for the joy that was set before him.

This was the turning point in that grand cosmic drama. This was that moment when our Lord would restore harmony between God and man. God in creation, he would bring peace, bring salvation.

[7:38] Think of it. He endured the cross, despising the shame, the suffering of it. How could he know joy? It was here in this moment, if you could contemplate it, that our Lord gave the Father the greatest of glory.

He fulfilled God's master plan. He drank of the bitter cup of the death for every man. And it tells of the joy, the joy set before him.

He saw you get saved. He saw you. That was joy. He saw you. While he was at the cross, he saw that you could be saved, that you would be saved. He knew the joy of bringing souls into his so great salvation.

It was the joy set before him. He made it possible that we can know God. Our reconciliation can be realised. That was the joy. Our peace could be made possible.

Our debt could be cancelled. Our freedom could be made. Our debt could be cancelled. The joy set before him. And he knew in those moments to come that the very veil of the temple would be torn wide open.

[8:47] And that you and I can have access to the very presence of the Almighty. And now we can enter in the joy set before him.

We can enter into a relationship with our Lord. The joy set before him was that sure hope of a restored creation. No longer subject to that groaning and travailing.

Without hope. There is still some elements of that for the meantime. But the whole creation has now got that wonderful prospect of a new heaven and a new earth.

And we can know that the greatest enemy, death, would be defeated forever. The joy set before him. He knew that we could have that sure hope of eternal life.

That we can have heaven's access for any that are saved. He knew that he could conquer death and sin. And he knew that your name would be written down. Your name would be written down in that register in heaven.

[9:59] He knew that now and forevermore there would be no more condemnation for you. The joy set before him. He knew at that moment that he has secured a place for you, the saved.

Where all tears will be wiped away. There will be no more crying, no more death, no more sorrow. The joy set before him. And he knew that he was about to go and prepare a mansion.

Prepare a place for you. That you can be with him in glory. God will dwell among his people. The joy set before him to think that we could be ransomed.

That we can be the blood-washed throng that are going to say, Worthy is the lamb that was slain for me. And he knew that he rescued you from eternal hell that have trusted him.

He knew that in three days he would rise again from the dead. He knew that he would be seated at the right hand of the throne of God. The joy set before him. It's the joy of our redemption.

[10:56] It's the joy of your redemption this morning. That's why we love to dwell upon it. To know the joy that we can have. The joy of our salvation. As David tells, we can know the joy. We can joy in our God.

That abiding joy that is our salvation. That joy set before him. We can know. We can know that joy too. We can share it. And the believer can find a joy in the Lord that's beyond circumstances.

It's regardless of that. It's a joy that's eternal. An everlasting joy. Gladness and joy. That we can know. We can rejoice in that. And the joy set before him, when you think of it, is our joy.

It's that we can be a safe people this morning. By the grace of God. Our present suffering. Our present discomforts and difficulties are temporary. His promise, his presence is sure.

It's our source of strength and hope. And this joy, his joy is our joy. The joy of our salvation. Even though our lot in life might include some pain and heartache.

[11:57] Our earthly time may be one of many tests and sorrows at times. Yet, this joy is a joy unspeakable and full of glory. It's a joy eternal.

It's a joy that earthly sorrows and difficulties will just be an eye blink in the comparison with it. And though our lot may be some pain here below.

Yet, the promise is joy comes in the morning. Joy comes in the morning. In that eternal morning that is forever with him. Joy comes in the morning.

And even though we bear hurt and loss like Habakkuk, we can say, Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord.

The joy set before him was that sweet communion that we can know now with him.

That fullness of joy. And it tells itself the fullness of joy is his presence. His very presence. And David says, Think about the joy of your salvation.

[13:06] The joy of fellowship with God. It's that joy that was set before him. And we can rejoice in that. And praise him for it. He says, Look unto me. Look unto me, he says.

And be ye saved. All the ends of the earth. All the ends of the earth. In that look of faith you can be saved for time and for eternity.