Hebrews 11

- Faith = trusting the Lord
- V1-3: conceptual description of faith
  - Faith is confidence in what we hope for, assurance of what we do not see.
  - Trust in the Lord is the foundation for our confidence about a better future and the reason/evidence we believe things to be true that we can't verify with our five senses
- V.4-39: anecdotal description of faith
  - Testimony of OT saints who took God at His word, lived as if what God said was true

Three Exhortations

- Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles
  - **Throw off** - word used for taking off clothes; athletes ran almost completely naked
  - **Everything that hinders –** anything that weighs us down, impedes our ability to run
  - **And every sin that so easily entangles** - lit. sin that controls tightly; picture of something that wraps around the body and trips us up after a step or two

Three Exhortations

- **Let us run with perseverance that race marked out for us** fixing our eyes on Jesus the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God.
  - **Perseverance -** to bear up well under difficult circumstances
  - **Race marked out for us** – remain faithful to Jesus; He said 'follow Me' and race marked out for us is to do so

Three Exhortations

- Let us run with perseverance that race marked out for us **fixing our eyes on Jesus the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith.** For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God.
  - **Fixing our eyes –** to direct attention without distraction; focus attention on Jesus by *not* looking at anything else; Peter on water
  - **Pioneer of our faith –** one who goes 1st and makes/marks way for others; Pathfinder, Trailblazer
  - **Perfector of our faith –** brings our faith to the desired end which is:
    - Relationship with Father
    - Faithfulness (obedience)

Three Exhortations

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  - **For the joy set before Him –** state of great delight
    - **Joy of obedience**
    - **Joy of victory –** through Cross the plan of redemption that began in Gen 3 is completed
  - **Scorning** – thinking little of
  - **Shame of cross**
    - Romans - cross most degrading form of death
    - Jews - cross was considered judgment by God
  - **Sat down at the right hand of the throne of God –** place of highest honor

Three Exhortations

- **Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**
  - **Consider –** a process of serious thinking where a matter is weighed with the utmost care through comparison, reflection, and conclusion
    - think deeply about Jesus' life –
      - Reflect on the opposition/persecution He suffered and how He remained faithful to God
      - then compare that to what you are currently experiencing as you follow Him;
    - **So that you will not grow weary and lose heart –** become spiritually exhausted and discouraged

What hinders us from running our race w/perseverance?

What weighs us down?

- Disappointment, sadness/grief – talk about having a 'heavy heart;'
- How do we throw these things off?
  - Lam 3.21-26: Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions (word describes the tender care of a mother) never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness (trustworthiness, reliability, constancy.) I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him; it is good to wait quietly .for the salvation of the Lord

What sins specifically can entangle us?

- Sins of the heart – envy, greed, pride
- Sins of the body/flesh – gossip, stealing, lying
- We throw these off by repenting of our sins

What distracts us from fixing our eyes on Jesus?

- Worries of this life, deceitfulness of wealth, and desires for other things
- Shift focus to Jesus/keep eyes on Him – redirecting our attention to Him; constant
- Spiritual disciplines can help
  - **Worries of this life –** Cast your cares on Him; throw your worries onto the Father through prayer
  - **Deceitfulness of wealth** – giving; when we give we say to Money, 'You aren't the most important thing to me'
  - **Desire for other things –** practicing contentment – boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places