

Looking Unto Jesus

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Study by W.D. Frazee—February 8, 1963

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” Hebrews 12:1-2.

What is it we are to do while we are running? Look. Where? To Jesus. We are to run with patience and look unto Jesus.

One night this week I was wakened in the night, and I was meditating on this verse. The Lord impressed my mind with three experiences that are to come to us as we look to Jesus. They became very precious to me.

The first is how weak and unworthy we are. That is a very natural reaction when we look to Jesus. And that isn't just people who are down in the gutter. Notice what happened to Isaiah:

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts” Isaiah 6:1-5.

I think Isaiah knew something about the Lord before the Lord gave him that wonderful vision. But as he saw the Lord as he had never seen Him before, he saw himself as he had never seen himself before. And it didn't look good. The reason it didn't look good was because he wasn't good.

Neither are you and I. If we have any idea that we are, we need to look at Jesus. A long, clear look. Looking unto Jesus we will see how weak and unworthy and undone we are. Notice the prophet Daniel:

“Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength”
Daniel 10:8.

Do you see the picture? As he caught a view of the glory of the Son of God he felt himself weak and undone. His comeliness was turned into corruption and he retained no strength. So Daniel agrees with Isaiah that a view of Jesus brings a view of self that is not flattering at all.

“One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ” *Steps to Christ*, page 29.

Did you ever feel like that? Well, I put it simply, that is the way we ought to feel because that's the way it is. And we don't achieve any merit by being humble and finding out how poor and weak we are. We just get a proper view of what the facts are. We are poor and wretched and miserable and blind and naked. That's our condition. The only way to find that out is not by studying ourselves. It is by looking unto Jesus, because He is the measuring rod. God expects us to be righteous as He is righteous, obedient as He is obedient, perfect as He is perfect. And He has a right to expect that. That is what the law of God requires.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” Matthew 5:48.

So I repeat, the first and vital thing that comes to us as we look to Jesus is a view of our own sinful, weak, undone, unworthy condition. That is true and must be true not only at the beginning of the Christian life. That wasn't the beginning of Isaiah's experience with God. It certainly wasn't the beginning of Daniel's experience with God. He was an old man and had back of him decades of a deep experience. Yet see how he expresses himself. So you and I will have a similar experience.

“The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature” *Steps to Christ*, page 64.

So if somewhere in our thinking there has been a conscious thought that after five or ten years of Christian experience we ought to get to the place where we don't see ourselves so full of failures and weaknesses, just accept the fact that it is the

other way around. The closer we get to Jesus the more faulty we will appear in our own eyes. If we do not see our own moral deformity it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ.

Somebody says, "Do you think we ought to be falling and sinning again and again?"

The worse thing about us is not what we do. It is what we are. That's the problem. Sometimes people feel offended because somebody finds out some bad thing they have done. Well, we can all be sympathetic about that. Sometimes people really get offended because somebody tells something about them that isn't true. Somebody may say they have done something when they haven't. But whether the reports about us are true or false, they fall far short of the depth of sin that is in the soul of all of us. Within the heart of man is a whole list of things. And if at anytime you get offended because somebody has misunderstood you, remember that you would feel worse if they did understand you.

Thank the Lord that He has arranged for much of that revelation of our degradation to be done in secret alone with Him, if we will be willing to go in for some interview. And the psychoanalyst that we need is kneeling down alone with the great Physician. He will probe deep down into the hidden recesses of our minds. And as we look to Him, we will see things about ourselves, under the influence of God, that will make us loath ourselves and despise ourselves. And instead of feeling hurt at the way others think about us, we will say, Lord, if they only knew half of it, they wouldn't want me around.

You say that's not very encouraging. Whether it is encouraging or not, it is the truth. And if what I have is a cancer that is eating away, the physician who tells me it is just a little sore, and puts some salve on it, isn't my good friend. But Jesus is my good friend, and He is a good physician.

So looking unto Jesus I see how weak and wretched and full of failures I am. But there is something else I find in looking unto Jesus.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" 1 John 3:2.

Looking to Jesus the precious revelation dawns upon my soul that it is the way I am going to be.

Me like Him?

Yes.

I am going to be like Jesus? How could that be?

He said, "Never mind. It doth not yet appear."

I can agree on that. It certainly doesn't appear. But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him.

That's the part of looking unto Jesus that I like. I need the first in order to appreciate the second. But if I stop at the first, all I will get out of it is gloom and discouragement. And I will go around with a long face, and won't make a very good witness for Jesus. But if I will go into that second experience, and take the promises that tell me that Jesus has the character that is to be mine, oh, what a world of cheer and encouragement I can get from that.

This sound almost too good to be true, but it is too good not to be true:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;
that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”
2 Corinthians 5:21.

He took my place so I could take His place. He took my sin so I could have His righteousness. Isn't that wonderful. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

My life made righteous like His?

Yes. That's the blessed hope.

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion,
and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having
His Father's name written in their foreheads” Revelation
14:1.

Another translation says, “Having His name and His Father's name written in their foreheads.” It means the same. The character of the Son and the Father is the same. But glory be to God, here are thousands and tens of thousands of precious souls that so reflect the image of Jesus that it is said that His very name is written in their foreheads.

And looking unto Jesus, every lovely thing I see about Him makes me rejoice because that's the way I am going to be. If He is pure, then I will be pure. If He is loving I will be loving. If He is kind, that's the way I will be. If He is courteous, I will be courteous. Every divine attribute revealed in the life of Jesus is to be revealed in me. And if you will come around and see me a hundred years from now, you will agree with me.

I am so glad God gives my brothers and sisters grace to put up with me while I am on that road. But catch the blessed reality that we shall be like Him one of these days. Without one defect, one failure, one stain. How is it put?

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved
the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might
sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the
word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious

church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” Ephesians 5:25-27.

It is going to happen. When I look to Jesus, and the more wonderful I see He is, the more wonderful I know it is going to be to be like Him. That is a cheering thought. It is a thrilling thought.

The advantage of faith is that it operates in the unseen realm. I can't see the future. It is only by faith that I can know that anytime will I ever become fully like Jesus. But I believe it. As dear Elder Haskell used to say, “It is so because God says so.” Isn't that reason enough?

We have read these texts, and we can revel in the assurance and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Do any of you have any trouble that looking to Jesus helps us to see how weak and unworthy and full of failures we are? Do you agree with me on this second thought? Does looking to Jesus bring to your heart the assurance that is the way your are going to be?

Somebody says, Brother Frazee, I don't know. I just wish I could be as sure of that as I am the first.

Well, how will you ever be sure? Wait until you get there and say, I guess it is so?

No. If you do you will never experience it. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Before we ever look like Jesus in the eyes of others, by faith we are going to grasp the divine reality that it is the way we are going to be because God has promised it.

It is like the birth of Isaac. God promised Abraham and Sarah a son. Their faith didn't catch the reality of that for awhile. After a long series of experiences they finally came around to faith in its fullness. Then Isaac was born. But both Abraham and Sarah had to come to the point of believing it because God said so before anything was apparent. That is set forth as an example of righteousness by faith.

Before you and I ever experience a character like Jesus, we must, by faith, grasp the promise that we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him.

Now you don't need to get into some discussion or argument as to where it is that divine perfection is to be fulfilled. It is all right to study it and gather together the references. But if some brother thinks it is a little sooner or a little later than you do, don't let that worry you. The important thing is that He which has begun a good work in you will finish it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).

It wouldn't make any difference if we knew the exact day we were supposed to reach that point. We wouldn't know how to get there. Who is going to get us there? Jesus. And be fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able to perform, we press toward the mark like Paul and say, I haven't attained. I haven't yet reached that perfection. But oh, I keep pressing toward that mark.

Thank God, friends, I know who I believe, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Looking unto Jesus we see how weak and undone we are, and we grasp the blessed reality that the Gospel is the means by which we are to become like Him in every way, and our faith grasps that assurance. We say, Thank God, that's the way I am going to be through the grace of God.

The third point I want to give on what comes to us as we look unto Jesus is in some ways the most wonderful of all. I say it simply, in between the beginning of the Christian life as we see ourselves weak and undone, and all along the way as we journey toward that blessed experience of becoming like Jesus, as we look to Jesus He accounts us as if we had already reached that place of being like Him. Isn't that good news?

If that is so, that means that while I look at Jesus I see that beautiful life not only as something that someday shall be mine, but by faith I see that the Father looks at me and counts me that way now. He loves me just as if I had already reached that point. He accepts me just as if I were already like Jesus.

Does the Father love any of you that much? Does He accept any of you that way? Ah, friends. Everyone, if you just meet the conditions.

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” Romans 4:3-7.

Oh friends, this is wonderful. There is a man who David says is blessed. Who is it? The man whose sins are forgiven and covered with the blood of Jesus. What does the blood stand for? The life. When my sins are covered by the blood of Jesus, that means they are covered by the life of Jesus. Can you get anything better than that? Oh, no you can't.

Here is a book. Suppose this book has the record of my sins. Here are my sins. You can look at them and see them in all their ugliness. But I give myself to Jesus, and He tells me He is going to cover all that up with His life. Tell me, can you

see any of my sins now? No, you can't see a one. They are all covered with the precious blood.

That's what happens at the beginning of the Christian life. Day by day as we keep looking to Jesus and see how weak we naturally are, then follow on to grasp the precious thought that someday we shall be like Him in all His fullness, and with that we take hold of the present reality that God, for Christ's sake, counts us that way right now, for His name's sake.

What more could love do for us than that? Isn't that wonderful love?

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” Romans 5:1-2.

Somebody says, Brother Frazee, aren't you afraid you are going to make it so easy for people that they will not make any difference whether they sin or not?

Paul answers that question:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein” Romans 6:1-2.

That's what I say. God forbid.

If the thing that causes you and me to try to do right is the fear that God won't accept us if we fail once more, we have just about used up any grace there is. God has forgiven us so many times that if we failed just once more it will probably end things. I say that if that is the thing that keeps us moving then we don't understand God and the Gospel.

God wants us to see what an ocean of grace there is for us. If we really look to Jesus, we will have no desire to impose upon that grace. Not at all. If we see how undone we are, and if by faith we grasp the blessed reality that what He has begun He is going to finish and make us like Him, and with that we grasp by faith the blessed fact that He accepts us right now as if we were already like Him, do you think it doesn't make any difference whether we fail or don't?

If any such thought has any weight with us, it proves that we have not really seen any of these things we have studied.

“He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned” *Steps to Christ*, 62.

Suppose you had not sinned in 25 years, would you be accepted? Yes. But when you accept Jesus you are accepted by the Father just as if you had never sinned. Isn't that wonderful? No wonder the Lord's messenger says:

“We may enjoy the favor of God. We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute. Ye are accepted in the Beloved” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 32.

Let's look to Jesus then. As we look to Him we see how weak and unworthy and full of faults we are. But if we have been living with Jesus for fifty years, and we look to Jesus and get a new view of Him, we are going to get a new view of how weak and undone we are. So don't let it discourage you. As we look to Jesus, we believe by faith that God is going to take this poor weak man and so change him and transform him by His wonderful love that one of these days he is going to have the nature of Christ revealed in him fully. All the universe will see that. And even Satan, as he comes probing about, cannot find one thing that is not like Jesus. It is going to happen right here in this world. Thank God, those who receive the seal of the living God will reflect the image of Jesus fully (*Early Writings*, page 71).

I believe it. How do you believe it? By faith, because God says so. But along the way how are we counted? We are counted righteous by faith.

Some of us would like to get some courage out of looking at our chart and seeing that we are making progress. I say to you that if your courage, your cheer, your assurance in the Lord comes from looking at your chart and saying, Well, I guess I have made some progress this week, I say to you, you are on dangerous ground.

Somebody says, Well, shouldn't we be making progress?

Certainly we should. But only the Lord knows how much progress we are making. That isn't the point. That is not to be the ground of our hope and assurance. It isn't that we are to look back on the last week and say, Well, I can see I am gaining. And if I can gain the next week as much as I have gained the last week, and the next two weeks as much as the last two weeks, I think I will be well on my way. No, folks. That is not righteousness by faith. And it will lead to either pride or utter discouragement.

Quit keeping a chart on yourself. Quit taking your TPR, and moaning and moping because the symptoms are not just what you would like.

“Many make a serious mistake in their religious life by keeping the attention fixed upon their feelings and thus judging of their advancement or decline. Feelings are not a safe criterion. We are not to look within for evidence of our acceptance with God. We shall find there nothing but that which will discourage us. Our only hope is in

'looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.'
There is everything in Him to inspire with hope, with faith,
and with courage. He is our righteousness, our
consolation and rejoicing.

“Those who look within for comfort will become weary
and disappointed. A sense of our weakness and
unworthiness should lead us with humility of heart to
plead the atoning sacrifice of Christ. As we rely upon His
merits we shall find rest and peace and joy. He saves to
the uttermost all who come unto God by Him”
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pages 199-200.

Those are wonderful words. What is my assurance? The promise of God.
Every day I have the same assurance the thief had. Today you will be with Me in
paradise.

That's where my hope is pressed. I am happy because of that. Let's believe
it. And if it seems too good to be true, it is too good not to be true. Beloved, now are
we the sons of God. Not after we have proved and demonstrated it by ten years or
ten days of obedience. Right now, if we accept Jesus, He accepts us. If we choose
Him, He chooses us. As we do it, all our sins are thrown back upon the great
enemy, and the life of Jesus covers us completely.

Dear Lord, we thank Thee with all our hearts for this fresh revelation of Thy
exceeding riches of Thy grace. What more could a loving God do? We thank Thee
that the precious life of Jesus, while it shows how weak and undone we are, it
inspires us with the assurance that we shall be like Him, and that we are accounted
like Him this very hour. So while we plod along the way, strengthened by Thy Spirit,
sometimes failing, oh, we thank Thee that our hope is not in what we are or what we
have done, but that it is in Jesus and what He has done, and what He has promised
to do for us to the praise of the glory of His grace who has made us accepted in the
Beloved. In His sweet name we return thanks, Amen.

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