

Overview: In the Heavenly ministry of Christ, the way to cooperate with Him is i) to run the race with endurance, ii) to look away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith. If we do not run the race or do not look away unto Jesus, we cannot partake of the Heavenly Ministry of Christ so that we cannot live a heavenly life on the earth.

I. “Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us”—Heb. 12:1::

A. The cloud is for leading people to follow the Lord, and the Lord is in the cloud to be with the people; in Greek witnesses implies the sense of martyrs:

1. With the people of faith, we can have the Lord's presence and His leading; all the people of faith, the church people, are the cloud; the best way to seek the Lord's presence is to come to the church.
2. If anyone is seeking the Lord's leading, he must follow the cloud, the church; the Lord is in the cloud, meaning that He is with the people of faith.
3. Since we are the people of faith, we are today's cloud, and people can follow the Lord by following us; those who seek Him can find His presence with us

B. The Christian life is a race; every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize, not salvation in the common sense but a reward in a special sense; the apostle Paul ran the race and won the prize:

1. An encumbrance is a weight, burden, or impediment; the runners of the race strip off every unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, that nothing may impede them from winning the race.
2. The unique entangling sin in this context was the willful sin of forsaking the assembling together with the saints, of giving up the new covenant way in God's economy, and of going back to Judaism; both the encumbering weight and the entangling sin would have frustrated the Hebrew believers and restrained them from running the heavenly race in the new covenant way of following Jesus.

C. We need to run with endurance, asking the Lord to direct our hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ:

1. This is our love toward God, issuing from the love of God, which has been poured out in our hearts
2. This is to endure with the endurance of Christ that we have enjoyed and experienced

II. “Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God”:

A. We need to look away unto Jesus with undivided attention by turning away from every other object; Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith::

2. He is like an immense magnet drawing all His seekers to Him:

B. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith:

2. In our natural man we have no believing ability; we do not have faith by ourselves.

4. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit transfuses us with Himself, His believing element.

5. This faith is not of ourselves but of Him who imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us.

6. Hence, Christ Himself is our faith; we live by Him as our faith, that is, by His faith, not our own.

C. Faith is a substantiating ability, a sixth sense, the sense by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things unseen or hoped for:

2. The function of our five senses is to substantiate the things of the outside world, transferring all the objective items into us to become our subjective experience.

3. As the eye is to seeing, the ear to hearing, and the nose to smelling, so faith, our spirit of faith, is the organ whereby we substantiate everything in the unseen spiritual world into us: (a) We must exercise our spirit of faith, our mingled spirit, to believe and to speak the things we have experienced of the Lord. (b) Faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit, not in our mind; doubts are in our mind.

4. We do not regard, look at, the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal: (a) The Christian life is a life of things unseen (b) The degradation of the church is the degradation from unseen things to seen things. (c) The Lord's recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen.

D. Faith is to believe that God is:

1. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to make God happy

2. “He who comes forward to God must believe that He is” (11:6): (b) To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything (d) I should not be anything; I should not exist; only He should exist—“It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ” (e) At his conversion the Lord told Saul of Tarsus, “I am Jesus” (f) This is faith—“O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here”

E. Jesus is the Perfector, the Finisher, the Completer, of our faith:

1. As we look away unto Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need for the running of the heavenly race

2. We all have the same faith in quality, but the quantity of faith we have depends upon how much we contact the living God so that we may have Him increased in us:

3. Our regenerated spirit, our spirit of faith, is the victory that overcomes the Satan-organized-and-usurped world

4. The great irrepressible and unlimited power of faith motivates thousands to suffer for the Lord, risk their lives, and become overcoming sent ones and martyrs for the carrying out of God's eternal economy, which is in Faith

F. According to Hebrews 12:2, for the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God:

3. If we look away unto Him as such a wonderful and all-inclusive One, He will minister heaven, life, and strength to us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is, that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth; in this way He will carry us through all the lifelong pathway and lead and bring us into glory.

Experience①: Looking away unto Jesus to run the Christian race

The Christian life is a race. Every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize. ...The apostle Paul, who has run the race and won the prize, was nearly the only one who likened the Christian life to a race. In the book of Hebrews he charged the Hebrew believers to run the race, saying, “run with endurance the race which is set before us” (12:1).

There is much opposition to this race. Thus, we must run it with endurance. This means that in order to run the race of Christ, we must suffer the opposition with endurance, never growing weary or fainting in our souls.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:5 Paul concludes, “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.” The Lord directs our hearts by the leading of the Spirit, through whom the love of God has been poured out into our hearts. The love of God in 2 Thessalonians 3:5 is our love toward God that issues from the love of God that has been poured out into our hearts. On the positive side, we need to enjoy the love of God so that we may love Him in order to live for Him. On the negative side, we need to participate in the endurance of Christ so that we may endure the sufferings as He did to stand against Satan, the enemy of God.

The Greek word translated “looking away unto” means to look with undivided attention by turning away from every other object. The runners in a race, such as the hundred yard dash, turn away from everything else and look at the goal with undivided attention. In this verse Paul seemed to be saying, “Hebrew brothers, do not stand there considering and looking around. You must turn away from everything other than Christ and look to Him with undivided attention. This is the way to run the race.”

For Middle/High School Students

In the current age, young ones should try his/her best to graduate a college (otherwise, he/she needs to go to a two-year college or a professional training college after graduating high school). So the school life for a middle/high school student can be considered as the race for college entrance. When you are going to prepare for college entrance, you need to choose colleges to apply with consideration of your future job. It's because, some academic field is only useful for knowledge but not for your job finding. Some field may even not relate to the job you wish for future. You should choose a college and a major, taking into account what kind of job you want.

As running the race for college entrance, you need to realize your Christian life itself is a race. You should not think that because you don't want a race or a fight, you wish to walk an easy and joyful student life. After passing through the entrance exam, there will be another race in your business life. The life of Christian is a race.

In your college entrance race, you should run the Christian race. In your study, you need to look away unto Jesus, and experience Him as wisdom, understanding, memory, endurance and so on. And treasure the church life by redeeming time for the morning revival and drip irrigation prayer, gospel and shepherding even when you are busy, and join the Lord's table meeting. If you can't practice the church life in busy environment, you'll never be able to practice the church life. You need to take the Lord's grace not to spoil yourself. Let us encourage each other to run the Christian race! Amen!

Experience②: Faith is to believe that God is the only One who is, and that we are not

He who comes forward to God must believe that God is. This is very simple. God requires you only to believe that He is. The verb to be is actually the divine title of our Triune God. In Exodus 3 Moses asked God what His name was. God answered that His name is I AM WHO I AM. Our God's name is the verb to be. He is “I AM WHO I AM.” He is the only One.

What is faith? Faith is to stop yourself from doing anything. You are nothing. Faith joins you with God to make God the only One who is. I am not, so I should not be the one who loves my wife. It should be Christ loving my wife. He is; I am not. I should not be the one to go shopping. He should be the One.

He will finish what He originated; He will complete what He inaugurated. If we look to Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need for the running of the heavenly race. Once Christ has originated this faith within us, He will never let it go....As the Completer of faith, He is continually infused into us as the believing element and ability when we pray to the Lord, fellowship with Him, pray over the Bible, attend church meetings, listen to spiritual messages, and read spiritual books....Such faith brings us into an organic union with Christ; it also continually increases this organic union. The increase of our organic union with Him is the increase, the growth, of Christ within us....This is our faith being perfected by the Lord.

For Young Working Saints

You as a business person need to be watchful not to be proud by falling into the snare of Satan. Once you become proud, you also become a follower of Satan.

Being proud can destroy the good deposits for running your Christian race. Let's say you have been promoted to higher position in your company faster than other colleagues. Both you and your colleague made a good effort, but only you could succeed to be promoted. The difference between you and them are only whether or not there is the Lord's blessing and prayer of brothers and sisters. Therefore, you should never feel proud in your heart saying, “My competence is really something.” You should not consider that it is ok to murmur with proud in your heart just a little bit because no one is listening. But Satan is listening to this murmuring with pride and he will make you the follower of Satan. You should never think you can fight against Satan. To be watchful to the pride is to deal with thoroughly such a proud murmuring in your heart.

Believe and proclaim by faith, that Only God is who “is” in the universe, and I am who “am not”. God is love, wisdom, power, and everything. But you are not love, not wisdom, not power and nothing. If you believe in this way, you will be blessed and become a source of blessing to others around. Hallelujah!

O the joy of having nothing, being nothing, seeing nothing
But the living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing.
O the joy of having nothing, being nothing, seeing nothing
But the living Christ in glory, and His interest down on earth.

Scriptures:

I “Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us”—Heb. 12:1:

Num.9:15 And on the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the Tent of the Testimony; and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle until morning.16 So it was always; the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.17 And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tent, then after that the children of Israel set out; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel encamped.18 At the commandment of Jehovah the children of Israel set out, and at the commandment of Jehovah they encamped; as long as the cloud settled upon the tabernacle, they remained encamped. 19 Even when the cloud extended its time over the tabernacle for many days, the children of Israel kept the charge of Jehovah and did not set out.20 If sometimes the cloud was upon the tabernacle a few days, according to the commandment of Jehovah they remained encamped; then at the commandment of Jehovah they set out. 21 If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was taken up in the morning, they set out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, when the cloud was taken up, they set out. 22 Whether it was two days or a month or a longer time that the cloud extended its time over the tabernacle and settled above it, the children of Israel remained encamped and did not set out; but when it was taken up, they set out.

Rom.8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

1 Cor.9:24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.

2 Tim.4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

2 Thes.3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.

II. “Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God”—Heb. 12:2:

S.S.1:4 Draw me; we will run after you—The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

Hos.11:4 I drew them with cords of a man, With bands of love; And I was to them like those Who lift off the yoke on their jaws; And I gently caused them to eat.

Jer.31:3 Jehovah appeared to me from afar, saying, Indeed I have loved you with an eternal love, Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

P.s.27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; That do I seek: To dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple.

Rom.3:21 But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, witness being borne to it by the Law and the Prophets;3:22 Even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ to all those who believe, for there is no distinction;

Gal.1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

Heb.11:1 Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 Cor.4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore we also speak,18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Rom.8:24 For we were saved in hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees?25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await it through endurance.

1 Pet.1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

Gal.6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.

Heb.11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

John8:58 Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came into being, I am.

Eccl.1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

Heb.11:5 By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.

Gal.2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Heb.2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

2 Cor.3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

1Pet.5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

2Tim.4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

The milestone of John 14: The Dispensing of the Triune God - For the Producing of His Abode:

a. Jesus Going through Death and Christ Coming in Resurrection to Bring the Believers into the Father:

John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be. 5 Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going; how can we know the way? 6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

b. The Triune God Dispensing Himself into the Believers:

(1) The Father Embodied in the Son Seen among the Believers:

8 Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father and it is sufficient for us. 9 Jesus said to him, Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

(2) The Son Realized as the Spirit to Abide in the Believers:

16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever, 17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

c. The Triune God Making an Abode with the Believers:

23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

d. The Comforter's Reminding and Life's Peace:

26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 You have heard that I said to you, I am going away and I am coming to you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.

The Lord's intention in this chapter was to bring man into God for the building of His dwelling place. But between man and God there were many obstacles, such as sin, sins, death, the world, the flesh, the self the old man, and Satan. For the Lord to bring man into God, He had to solve all these problems. Therefore, He had to go to the cross to accomplish redemption that He might

open the way and make a standing for man that man might enter into God. This standing in God, being enlarged, becomes the standing in the Body of Christ. Anyone who does not have a standing, a place, in God does not have a place in the Body of Christ, which is God's dwelling place. Hence, the Lord's going in order to accomplish redemption was to prepare a place in His Body for the disciples.

Thank be unto the Lord. The sin that exists in between us and God is an enormous problem we cannot deal with, but the Lord solved it by going to the cross. That opens a path for us to go to God, to gain a position in God, to become family members of God, and members of the body of Christ. We should thank the Lord for His redemption work, proceed boldly before God and enjoy God. The important point here is that "You must not cease from absolving your sin, it is not a purpose but a process for the members of God's family to build the body of Christ."

This chapter unveils the way God dispenses Himself into man. In the dispensing of Himself into us, God is triune. He is one, yet He is three – the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Son is the embodiment and expression of the Father and the Spirit is the reality and realization of the Son. The Son came as the Spirit, to realize the abundance of the Son.

The building of God's family, God's house, and the body of Christ can only be accomplished by God's dispensation of Himself into man. God the Father cannot be seen, but God the Son tangibly expressed the Father among men. The Son went through death and resurrection, became the life-giving Spirit, the realizing Spirit, and transmitted all the abundance of the Son to men. The Triune God, Father, Son, and the Spirit are for the holy dispensation, and we are able to enjoy the dispensation. The life-giving spirit, the realizing spirit dispenses the life of God with sacred abundance into you, when you turn your heart to the Lord, utilize your spirit and call upon the name of the Lord. The more dispensation you receive, the more your inner life will grow gradually. The house of God and the body of Christ will be built this way.

The Holy Spirit comes not only from the Father but also from the Son, and He is the reality not only of the Father but also of the Son. Hence, when we call on the name of the Son, we get the Spirit.

In summary, because of the divine dispensation, the Son tangibly expresses the Father among men; the Spirit enters into men and realizes the abundance of the Father and the Son. This dispensation is for the building of the house of God.

To become familiar with the Bible from a young age while in the university and graduate school will greatly benefit your future life. When you first read a certain part of the Word, you may not be able to understand or accept it. But the realizing spirit will reveal to you and take you back to the meaning of the Bible that you read before. That is because you enjoy the life dispensing in you for the building of the body of Christ. May the Lord's grace be with the spirit of the participants who attend the BSG gathering. Amen!