

Fix your eyes on Jesus

If you've watched wildlife programmes, especially about predators, you would have noticed that when they are stalking their prey they fix their attention – their focus – on it and don't take their eyes off it until they have caught it or it has got away. When we become followers of Jesus we fix our eyes on Him and avoid all distractions so that we can have Him and all that He is and has for us.

Hebrews 11: 39 – 12: 3

1) We are a watched people

- Our lives come under scrutiny as soon as we start following Jesus.
- People watch us all the time and many are ready to pounce on any mistake that we make.
- However that's not the only reason that we are under scrutiny. There is a great cloud of witnesses that's watching us for a different reason
 - Those are believers who had gone on before us – all commended for their faith and who had been tortured and lost their lives because of the faith – and are waiting to receive their full inheritance in Christ along with us.
 - It is as if we're running a race and they're in the grandstand cheering us on.
 - They had persevered and run the race to the end. They had, by faith, fixed their eyes on Jesus and persevered, many until martyrdom – the same word translated as witnesses.
 - When we look at their lives they bear witness that such a life of intently following Jesus is possible and gives us courage and strength knowing that they were weak people like us, who put their faith in God.
- We are being watched all the time as people want to know if we're authentic as there are so many fakes around.
 - They were around in Jesus' time – Pharisees and teachers of the law – who Jesus constantly rebuked for their hypocrisy as nothing dishonours him more than hypocrisy.
 - Jesus wants us to be real and people are scrutinising us to see how real we are.
- We are the light of the world which cannot be hidden. We're on public display as followers of Jesus
- We're the fragrance of life for those who believe and the fragrance of death to those who don't believe.

2) We are a focussed people

- With so many eyes on us and so many lives that will be affected by the way we live as followers of Jesus let us throw off – cast away, put away and never touch it again – everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.
- It's not only sin that needs to be thrown off but everything that hinders – distracts us – from focussing our full attention on Jesus.
- Remember when Jesus called Peter to get out of the boat and Peter walked on the water until he took his eyes off Jesus and started looking at the wind and the waves and then started to sink until Jesus caught him and lifted him up again
 - When we take our eyes off Jesus and start looking at other things around us we start sinking. Our faith starts wavering. We want to give up because we're focussing on things that can't sustain us rather than on Him who can, and will and does.
- He is the initiator, author, pioneer of our faith and He's the one who walks with us throughout our lives until He brings us to complete perfection.
- All we have to do is fix our eyes on Him and we will get through life as He would have us get through it
- When we are called to follow Jesus it's also a call to refocus our attention completely on Him. He doesn't want us to have divided loyalties.
- As stated not everything is sinful but focusing on the wrong things and not on Jesus can make us unfruitful in our Christian lives.

3) We are a persevering people

- Following Jesus is for eternity and requires perseverance in this lifetime.
- Trials, temptations and hardships will come our way and we need to keep focused on Jesus to get through them.
- When we take our eyes off Him and focus our attention on those things we will lose sight of where we're going and will give up.
- Jesus always remained focused on the will of the Father – not my will but yours be done.
- His Father's will was that He go to the cross so that beyond it He might be glorified through it and to bring many sons and daughters to glory. There wasn't a shortcut around it.
- Many of our trials come from God Himself and we need to keep our eyes on Jesus and His will for our lives because that's the only way to our glory with Him.
- Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners so that we do not grow weary and lose heart.
- We started by gaining strength and encouragement from those who preceded us.
- We end off by gaining strength and encouragement from Jesus who walks has gone ahead of us but still walks with us.
- Don't take your eyes – your focus – off of Him and stay the course to the end.