

Being Conformed To The Image Of Christ

by Donny Coulter

This sermon emphasizes the importance of focusing on Jesus amidst life's challenges, using the analogy of running a race with endurance. It highlights the need to lay aside every weight and the sin of unbelief that easily ensnares us, leading to a tsunami of other sins. The message urges believers to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, to overcome obstacles and distractions in their spiritual journey.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1, Matthew 14:22, 2 Kings 17:13, Genesis 3:1, Matthew 14:30

Topics: "Endurance in Faith", "Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of focusing on Jesus amidst life's challenges, using the analogy of running a race with endurance. It highlights the need to lay aside every weight and the sin of unbelief that easily ensnares us, leading to a tsunami of other sins. The message urges believers to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, to overcome obstacles and distractions in their spiritual journey.

Transcript

Just a small glimpse, a small glimpse of eternity, eh? I don't know why I have to be a blubbering idiot and cry all the time. Thayne and I come from the same cloth there. I wish I could just say things and do things without having to worry about it.

That's the way that God made me. Um, but just a small glimpse into the beauty of eternity that you and I are going to get to enjoy because of the land that was slain that we get to do exactly what we just did. I like I wish you could hear it from up front like I do up front.

And I want to say if you're watching online and and you are, you are missing out. If you can be here, you need to be here to enjoy the fellowship of God's people. Um, to enjoy the sound of singing together.

There's just something about it. It gives me chills listening to you sing. Thank you for worshiping the Lord.

We have been talking now about Hebrews chapter 12 verses one and two for a couple of weeks. I am hoping that this will be the last week. Um, we're going to try to get through today.

Turn with me if you would to Hebrews chapter 12 verses one and two. I will remind you of the picture. Did we catch it yet? The picture of our life in Christ.

And we pictured our life as that yellow line. Of maturity. I constantly want to bring this picture before you so that you can see that we have a course, a race that is set out before us.

This is your course. This is your race. And we are to race that race every day that we live.

And so our desire, as we have said often, and I hope it is your desire that when it comes to the end of my yellow line, whether by death or by rapture, that I want there to be as little change in Donnie Coulter as there can possibly be into my new life forever. Don't you? That is the purpose of God for us as believers. I wish we could get that into our hearts and into our heads that that is the purpose of God.

Is to make us conform us to the image of Christ. He desires for us to look at and sound like his son. That's his desire.

Let's read together Hebrews chapter 12 verses one and two. Therefore we also You remember that therefore referred to those heroes of our faith, those witnesses, not people along the side of the road going. Yeah, you can do it.

You can do it. But those people that were on the side of the road and and surrounding us going. We did it.

He is faithful. He keeps his word. He is faithful.

And he will do it for you. He is worthy. That's what they say.

Those witnesses are saying he's worth it. He is worth it. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight.

Remember to lay aside means to put it away from its normal location. To take it out from where it is off of our back as we illustrated last week. Off of our back and away from our person and leave it there.

There is a separation in lay it aside. There is not I'm going to lay it down and hold on to it. There's not I'm going to lay it down and I'm going to go back and pick it up.

It is I am going to lay it down. You yourself. You remember that last week we talked about the way it was written in the original language.

You yourself lay it down and don't touch it. Lay it aside. And he says lay aside every weight.

We're reviewing as we're reading. Every weight lay aside every weight. There is no exception clause in every.

Do you see that? Do we understand that? There is no exception clause here. And when he says you lay aside every weight. That encumbers everything that encumbers you.

We talked about last week. That it's anything that hinders your ability. My ability to be diligent towards the course that's laid out for us.

Anything. These can be things that are even good. Even righteous.

And I want to I want to send him a statement last week. I'm going to remind you that is keep in mind that some of the things that you consider weights. May not be weights for someone else.

So be please be careful in your judgment of others. You understand that thought? That what may be a weight for me may not be a weight for you. So be careful that you don't look at your weights and say well they have those weights too.

They need to get right with God. Be careful. The question is not what's wrong with this.

We're not supposed to ask what's wrong with this weight. We are supposed to ask does it hinder a greater faith in Jesus? Now you were given a homework assignment last week. Did you do it? I did.

Because God revealed some weights. Because I asked him to. Remember we took some time of silent prayer last week.

And contemplation to go God what is my weight in my life? And then the encouragement was then to go home write them down and work on them. Work on laying them aside. And I had a couple of weights that I had to put aside this week.

Make some adjustments and changes. Did you? Look what he says. Lay aside every weight.

And so there is something secondary to weights. There are two parts of laying aside. Laying aside every weight and the sin.

Notice the definite article there. The sin which so easily ensnares us. And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

How in the world can we do such a thing? Verse 2. Looking unto Jesus the author and the 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.

Let's pray together. Father I pray that you bless the reading of your word. And may your Holy Spirit come.

Teach us. I pray that your Holy Spirit would teach us deeply this morning. Way beyond the ability of my words.

I pray that he would teach us and draw us into a place. Where we are led by him. God to attack the sin.

To remove it. To get rid of it. That hinders our journey.

Hinders our way. That trips us up and ensnares us. I pray that you would help us to rid ourselves of it.

As we see the end of time that fastly approaching. I pray. God I pray.

That you would help us to be. Desirous. Of holiness.

Make us those kind of people. I pray for. The one who is struggling this morning.

And they are not looking unto Jesus. I pray that you would help them to see you some for the very first time. God for them may you reveal yourself as the savior of the world.

The author and finisher of faith. For those who. Lord who have taken their eyes off Jesus and placed it everywhere else.

I pray that you would set them straight. God I pray that. May you make an eternal impact.

In our lives and in our hearts this morning by your word we pray in Jesus name. Amen. It is a crying morning I guess.

The sin. Now we are going to. We are going to jump into this hard and fast.

Because I have got a lot of room to cover. Ground to cover here. In a very short time.

And so I want us to. But I want us to get there as best we can. Look what he says.

Not only is it laying aside every weight as we seen last week. Those encumbrances. That when we have them on our back going up and down the steps with 40 or 60 pounds in a year.

In a young teenager's life. Going up and down the steps and how it gets weary on the legs. We need to lay aside every weight that hinders our journey.

But not only do we lay aside every weight. Those things that may or may not be bad for us. They could be good.

But now he is saying not only that but you lay aside the sin. Which so easily ensnares us. Now I want you to remember that we are talking within context.

We are speaking within context here. And so what is the context? When we say the sin. There is a definite article there.

Now I have looked at this in the past. And went through and tried to name a bunch of sins according to this. And we are to lay aside.

And I believe ultimately it works out into that. But I also believe that if we look at this within context. I believe that the sin to which he speaks.

Is the sin of unbelief. Because we remember our context is about faith. Right? Our context is about those heroes of faith.

And so we are talking within the context of faith. And so I believe when he says. He is referring to the sin of unbelief.

So the sin of unbelief. To me is the source of all sin. Now follow me as we think through this.

Look at chapter 11 and verse 6. Chapter 11 verse 6. But without faith it is. What is the word? Without faith it is impossible to please him. Impossible.

Without faith it is impossible to please him. For he who comes to God. We are not going to teach this.

Although this is really deep and rich and wonderful. For he who comes to God must believe that he is. We must believe that God is.

And that he is. As he is. He is the rewarder of those.

Who diligently seek him. In other words you have to believe that he is. And that when you come to him.

He is going to reward you. With exactly what he needs to reward you with. Whether that is what you ask for or not.

So the sin of unbelief. I believe is the source of all sin. Why in the world would I say something like that? Look at 2 Kings chapter 17.

2 Kings 17. Yet the Lord testified against Israel. And against Judah by all of his prophets.

And every seer saying. Turn from your evil ways. And keep my commandments and my statutes.

According to all the law which I commanded your fathers. And which I sent to you. By my servants the prophets.

Nevertheless. They would not hear. But stiffened their necks.

Like the necks of their fathers who did not. What? Believe. Who did not believe.

In the Lord their God. Now look what happens. When they do not believe.

And they rejected his statutes. And his covenant. That he made with their fathers.

And his testimonies which he had testified against them. They followed idols. Became idolaters.

And went after the nations who were all around them. Concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not. Do like them.

You see what happens. When there is a lack of belief. When there is unbelief.

Unbelief leads to. A trail of sin. When unbelief rules the heart.

Sin comes in like a tsunami. When we no longer believe God and his word. Or believe God's word.

When we no longer give it the position that it is supposed to have. Or give him the position that he is supposed to have. When we no longer believe that he is.

God of Gods. Lord of Lords. And King of Kings.

When we no longer believe that what he says. Is good, is good. And what he says is wrong, is wrong.

When we no longer believe that. Then sin comes in like a tsunami. How do we know that? Well it only takes one look back.

To Genesis. Go in your Bible back to Genesis chapter 3. Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field. Which the Lord God had made.

And he said to the woman. Has God indeed said. You shall not eat of every tree of the garden.

And the woman said to the serpent. We may eat. Of the fruit of the trees of the garden.

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden. God said. You shall not eat it.

Nor shall you touch it. Lest you die. Then the serpent said to the woman.

You shall not surely die. Now what did God say? Think about it, think it through with me. What did God say? For on the day that you eat thereof.

You shall. Surely. Die.

And Satan comes in and says. You will not surely die. Now you notice he did not say.

God said. God did not say you will surely die. He just said.

He threw a cast a doubt on what God had said. You will not surely die. He's cunning.

For God knows that in the day that you eat of it. Your eyes will be opened. And you will be like God.

Knowing good and evil. God. You won't surely die.

He's just trying to scare you from eating it. Because he knows that on the day that you eat. You're going to be like him.

And by the way. Don't you want to be like him? Because I do. And unbelief entered.

So. When the woman saw that the tree was good for food. How can the tree.

Be good for food. If God has said. Do not eat.

How can it be good for food? Unless she has stopped believing what God has said. And so. When she seen that it was.

Good for food. And that it was pleasant to the eyes. And a tree desirable to make one wise.

She took of its fruit. And ate. She also gave her husband with her.

And he ate. And the tsunami. Entered.

And it did not enter just. For Adam and Eve. But for you and me.

And because of the tsunami. There had to be a cross. Endured.

By Jesus. Do you see how. Unbelief.

The sin. Of unbelief. Can lead to a tsunami.

Of other sins. So now take a look at. Your life.

And the sins. Not the sin. But the sins.

Which now so easily ensnare. Or trip you up. That word ensnares there.

Is a word that explains. This idea of surrounding. It's based on the same word.

There by the cloud of witnesses. You are now surrounded. Everywhere you go you are entrapped.

By the sin. It gives the picture of a runner. Trying to run with a long robe on.

And as he tries to run with a long robe. It gets tangled up in his feet. And in between his legs.

And he falls and stumbles. And so the sin. Of unbelief.

Turns into the tsunami. Of sin. Of action and attitude.

And words in our lives. And. We are tripped up.

In the race that we are commanded to run. I believe that we have developed such a. Insensitivity. To sin in our lives.

That we have put sin in categories. Of big. And little.

Oh that's horribly offensive to God. Homosexuality. Adultery.

Bad. Lying. Gossiping.

That's okay. God will look over that. Jealousy.

Malice. But don't you dare cheat on your wife or your husband. Because that's offensive.

Now. When he says lay aside the sin. The sin of unbelief.

That brings in the tsunami of all the other things. Don't you think. That we are to lay aside those things too.

There is no room. Here. To hold on to.

Throw away the big things. Keep the little things. Because it's okay.

I recently had a conversation. With someone who said. Well you know what.

I spent so much time focusing on the big things. The hard things. That I just kind of let the little things.

Slide by. Is that the intention? Of this walk of maturity? Is that the intention? To focus on the big things. And let the other little things slide.

Until I get the big things. Well there are so many big things in my life. I never get to the little things.

That was the conversation. So. I believe.

Man time. I should not have looked at that clock. Wow.

Think of the children of Israel. They did not believe God. And they wandered for 40 years in the desert.

And as they wandered in the desert. Time again. They turned their back on God.

So. Here's what I believe. That I want to say to you.

And that I hope that the writer of Hebrews. Is saying to you. And that is this.

That we are to lay aside the sin of unbelief. We are to believe that God is. And that He is the rewarder of those.

Who seek Him. Just like those witnesses found out. Those heroes of the faith.

They found out. No matter their circumstance. Whether it was a positive outcome.

Or a bad outcome. Of being sewn in half. They realized that God.

Is worth it. And what He says He means. They believed.

You see it? And so He's saying to us. Lay aside. The sin of unbelief.

And move back again. That when God speaks. We believe.

We believe. And that He is going to reward us. For our belief.

So. We're running a race. We're laying aside the encumbrances.

And we're laying aside the sin. Which entangles us. And we are to run this race.

Look what He says. Back in Hebrews 12. I'm sorry.

Hebrews 12 1 and 2. I forgot to put it back in there. Every weight in the sin. Which so easily ensnares us.

And let us run. With endurance. The race that is set before us.

You are in this race. To run. How in the world do we do it? You say okay.

I got these things that hold me down. And I live in a world that's all about weights. And I don't know what to do with all the stuff that's around me.

And causing me this confusion. And making me slow down in my race with Jesus. And I've got this farm.

And I've got this place. And I've got this home. And I've got this family.

And I've got these kids. And I've got these friends. And I've got these neighbors.

And I've got all of these things. And I've got this. I've got this sin in my life.

And it's a big sin. And I've got all these little sins in my life. And here it says to run the race.

How am I going to do that? How do I do that? Do you feel that desperation? Looking unto Jesus. The author and the finisher of our faith. That's how we do it.

Let me read to you a quote. And I'm sorry. I don't remember who wrote it.

And I didn't write it down in my notes. And my brain doesn't work like it used to. But let me read to you what they wrote.

The race which is set before us most clearly reveals our helplessness. And our hopelessness. Apart from divine grace.

The race of holiness. And patience. While it demands our vigor displays our weakness.

We are compelled. Even before we take a step in the running. To bow the knee.

And to cry unto the strong for strength. We dare not retreat from the contest. But how can we begin a struggle for which we are so unfitted? Who will help us? To whom shall we look? And the scripture tells us clearly that we are to look unto Jesus.

The author and finisher of our faith. Now let me tell you this word look. Be careful.

You don't misunderstand it. I think there are some translations that translate it really well. It says to look unto Jesus.

It is in the present tense. Meaning that it is something that we are always doing. We are constantly looking.

It is not a single act that you do. It is something that you are always doing. And this looking is a turning away from.

That is the word. The way the word is built in the Greek language. It is a turning away from.

It is turning my eyes away from everything else. So it is a two part word. Turning away from and looking to and focusing on an object.

In other words it is like the horses with their blinders. Or their blinkers. I think they call them blinkers.

Blinkers? Blinders. I think I read blinkers. Alright.

So you get the picture? That we are to look unto Jesus. It means to stop looking around here. And focus on Christ.

That is the command. Funny. Here.

I remember I rode bulls. I had a bull riding career of five bulls. And I rode bulls and I remember getting on the one bull down in Colorado.

And Cowboy says look man. When you get on there it is going to be crazy. When it is bucking it is just going to be everywhere.

And he says the way that you stay in the center. Is that you look at his neck. The base of his neck.

And you concentrate right there. Don't look at his head. Don't look outside.

You concentrate right there. And you can ride it. If you concentrate right there.

When we are plowing. I don't have any of this GPS fancy stuff. You know where you just sit in the tractor.

And it drives itself in a very straight line. And all that stuff. And all you got to do is turn it around.

And then push a button and there it goes. I don't have any of that stuff. You know what I have to do when I am plowing.

Or when I am cutting hay or whatever. I have to look to the horizon. The distance where I want to be.

And I find a spot. And I place my eyes on that post. Or on that tree.

And I stay there. I don't look. I don't do any of this stuff.

Because as soon as you do that. What happens? So if you go and find where I cut hay this summer. And it goes like this.

You will know that I am not looking. In the right spot. But if you look.

That's the idea. That we are looking unto Jesus. And he is the author.

The starter. The beginner of your faith. He endured.

Listen. He endured the cross. So that you could approach a holy God.

He did that for you. He is the author of your faith. And let me ask you.

Have you looked at him? Have you looked at him? Religious person. Either here in this place this morning. Or at home.

Have you looked at him? Exercising the things of faith. The things of faith. Does not make a person of faith.

Necessarily. Do you hear that? Doing the things of faith. Will not necessarily make you a person.

Of faith. You have looked your whole life. To a faith.

To be a baptist. You have looked your whole life. At somewhere else.

Other than Jesus. And you are convinced. You are convinced.

That you have looked at Jesus. May the Holy Spirit speak. How about to those of you.

Who have been running your race. And who have looked away. You have been distracted by.

By all this stuff out here. And you are looking away from Jesus. And your course.

Has been hindered. Your yellow line. Is pointing downward.

Or backwards. People that have. Have looked at the church.

And the abuse. Yes the church. Has abused people.

God forgive us. People in the church. Have abused people.

But God is not the source of the abuse. Jesus is not the source. Take your eyes.

Off the people. That are doing the abusing. And put them on Jesus.

And run the race. If we could find ourselves there. Then we could leave all of that stuff behind.

Like Paul says. And we could run a race. Stop looking at the abusers.

And look at Jesus. Let me say to you. Those of you that are struggling.

Because of physical abuse. Sexual. Physical abuse.

Stop looking. At the abuser. And I know that's hard.

I know it's hard. Because of all of the emotional things. That are attached.

I know it's difficult. But focus on Jesus. The author.

Of your faith. The author of your faith. For those of us that are not struggling.

In those kind of ways. We got to take our eyes off everything else. Off the witnesses.

Off the weights. Off the sin. Off the race course.

Off the competitors. We got to take our eyes off those things. And put them where they belong.

And they belong on Christ himself. That's where it belongs. He is our example.

On how to win this race. And there is a danger when you stop looking. There is a tremendous danger when you stop looking.

Turn to Matthew 14. I told you we had a long way to go. Matthew 14.

Immediately Jesus made his disciples. Verse 22. Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat.

And go before him to the other side. While he sent the multitudes away. Verse 23.

He stayed and he prayed. Verse 24. But the boat was not.

Or was now in the middle of the sea. Tossed by the waves. For the wind was contrary.

Stop for just a second. Have you ever thought about it this way? The disciples are exactly where Jesus. Told them to be.

In the middle of a storm. Please don't forget. Please keep in mind.

That sometimes your storm is happening. Because you are doing exactly what you are supposed to do. Exactly what you have been instructed to do.

By the Savior. Now verse 25. Now in the fourth watch of the night.

Jesus went to them. They had been struggling for quite a while. Jesus went walking to them.

Or went to them. Walking on the sea. Let that blow your mind.

As much as it can. I can't even understand. What that looked like.

And I can totally completely understand. The reaction of the disciples. Verse 26.

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea. They were troubled. Would you not be troubled? Yes we would.

Saying it is a ghost. And they cried out for fear. Jesus save us.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them. Saying be of good cheer it is I. Do not be afraid. And Peter answered him and said.

Lord if it is you. Here is good old Peter. Foot in the mouth Peter.

Love him. So much like him. Lord if it is you.

Command me to come to you on the water. And so he said. Come.

And when Peter had come down out of the boat. He walked on the water to go to Jesus. What? Amazement.

Amazing thought to think of. If we were blown away by Jesus walking on the water. Now we are looking at one of us walking on the water.

And he was walking. Why was he walking on the water? That's right. Because his eyes were where they belonged.

But when he saw what has happened. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous. And he was afraid.

You see what happens when you take your eyes off Christ. And put them on your abuser. Put them on the church.

Put them on the denomination. Put them on a preacher. When you take your eyes off there.

Look what he says. What happens? But when he saw that the wind was boisterous. He was afraid.

And beginning to sink he cried out saying. Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand.

And caught him. And said to him. Oh you of little faith.

In context. Context. Oh you of little faith.

Why did you doubt? And when they got into the boat the wind ceased. And then those who were in the boat. Came and worshipped him saying.

Truly you are the son of God. Do you see how dangerous. Looking somewhere else can be.

You see it? So. Jesus is our example. On how to run the race.

Even when it hurts. Keep your eyes focused. We do not run.

Because of the witnesses. Listen to this. We do not run because of the witnesses.

And how they have run and won. We do not run because of that. We run because of our vision.

Of Jesus. I see him. And I want to be like him.

Do you get me? When my focus is there. I see him. And I want to be like him.

Not like all this other stuff. I am going to stop here. Would you sing with me this song.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Dana can you. I know this is off the cuff.

Sorry. You know that song by heart. What is that? You did.

Sing with me before she plays. Let's just sing it together as our prayer. Turn your eyes upon Jesus.

Look full in his wonderful face. And the things of earth. Will grow strength in the light.

Can you make that your prayer this morning? Looking unto Jesus. Where. Are your eyes? I'm glad they're on Jesus Quinn.

Where are your eyes? Are your eyes on your sickness? Are your eyes on your pain? Are your eyes. On your living situation. Are your eyes on your finances? Where are your eyes? Where is your focus? You who have never come to Jesus before.

You have never. Come to Christ and said. I see you.

Thank you for what you've done for me. Something I could never do for myself. Remember he endured the cross.

We were supposed to get there. He endured the cross. And he endured the cross so that you.

Could appreciate. How to approach a holy God. Have you committed.

Your life. To that Jesus. Have you looked to that Jesus? I want to say to you that.

Stop waiting. Hear your name. I don't care if you're a young person.

A child or an old person. Or somewhere in between. Hear your name called.

And respond. Come with a heart of repentance. And a heart of faith.

You know what repentance is. We've been talking about it. It's a turning away from the sin.

And turning to Christ. Look unto Jesus. And nothing else.

I can't save you. This church can't save you. Hearing these words can't save you.

Only by faith. Turning to Jesus. Who Jesus alone can you be saved.

Would you do that? Look to him. Let me pray. And then we'll sing it again.

Father. I pray may your Holy Spirit do his work in the lives of those that are here. I pray Father for.

The one who has never turned. Turned away from their sin. And turned to you.

One who is. Struggling with life. No answers.

I pray Father may you. By your Holy Spirit. Clearly reveal yourself to them.

I pray that you remove the blinders that have blinded them for their entire life. And set them free. For the religious person.

Lord you know. You know who they are. Who've been faithful to do all the things.

All the things that are. Called on. For faith.

But they have never. Had truth saving faith. I pray.

God may you set them free from that prison. May they turn to you. In true faith.

In repentance this morning. For those of us that are struggling God. We're looking so many other places.

I pray that you would pinpoint our vision on you. That you would put the blinders on us. Help us to see in the distance.

The one thing to focus on. So that we can finish our course. Thank you for your word this morning.

And the way your Holy Spirit leads. And I pray Father may you. Fulfill.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/U-WaI7ZTIsE.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/donny-coulter/being-conformed-to-the-image-of-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net