

When I was struggling to come up with something to share with you this week, I ended up calling a few people for inspiration. My husband's nephew (who is a minister in Knoxville, IA) sent me some notes that I am going to share in a separate email; they offer a unique look at Jesus' life. When I opened the Bible site I normally use, this passage came up as the daily Bible verse, and I had my theme (hint: The Spirit is always at work). Thanks to Debbie Moles for her contributions. It feels like a very long time since I have seen you, even though it's only been a few weeks. I continue to lift you up in prayer and hope you do the same. God bless, Kay

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

Hebrews 12 ¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (NIV)

The Old Testament witnesses were inspiring to believers, but the writer (likely Barnabas or Apollos) of this letter is emphasizing that our chief encouragement should be in Jesus and his work. Jesus is the author (beginner, founder) of our faith and the ultimate example of what our faith should look like.

Jesus is also the perfecter (completer) of our faith. Because of what he did, Jesus has brought the faith of those who approach God through Him to its intended conclusion: grateful worship that is acceptable to God.

During the season of Lent, many believers use different ways to fix their eyes on Jesus. Some give up something, usually a favorite food item, to remind themselves of his sacrifice. Some add something, sometimes a Scripture or meditation, to remind themselves of what He has done for us. Personally, I try to find a new hymn or gospel song with meaningful lyrics, and listen to it every day. No matter what we give up or add, it is done so that we might turn our eyes (our minds) on Jesus.

Today is Palm Sunday, when the people celebrate His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He is heralded with palms and cloaks strewn before Him. They were praising Him and singing. Their joy was so great that "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

We know this is a stark contrast to what will happen in a few days, when those people cry, "Crucify him!". But Jesus knows His Father's plan and follows through in anticipation of the joy in the reward of being Savior to his people.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus with all its rewards is the key theme in the hymn 'Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus' written by Helen Lemmel.

'O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in his wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.'

Amen