

Hebrews 12:1-11 Looking to Jesus

Vv. 1-4 Therefore, see chapter 11. The community of faith, who have witnessed to the victorious life of faith. **The life of faith, in Jesus Christ**, is likened to a race. All impediments that hinder believers running the race are to be discarded. The author is not specific but sin, especially as unbelief (2, 3:12, 18ff), can lead to discouragement and undermine the pursuit of the goal of completing the race – staying faithful to the end. The Apostle Paul (Rm. 7:21-25) **affirms that believers will continue to battle with sin** (Heb. 12:4) but thanks be to God they can receive forgiveness and enabling from Jesus Christ. Those facing possible persecution or being tempted to fall into unbelief need to **fix their eyes on Jesus**, away from themselves and the world. **Jesus is the pioneer**, (or author – 2:10; Gal.3:23-26) the one who establishes our faith (Eph. 2: 1-5). **As perfecter Jesus** will also bring our (all) faith to its intended goal, life with God forever. While there are examples of those who had faith in God prior to Jesus there is an important sense in which Jesus as the **'author'** of faith is the one who has enabled those in the past to trust in God. Jesus is central to the **promise** of faith, Jesus makes life with God possible, and to the **fulfillment** of faith, eternal life with God. Jesus is also the **example** of faith in God for believers. **Jesus faced death on the cross with joy** rejecting any shame attached to this horrific form of death. **Jesus trusted in God** confident that his pain would bring joy to God and humankind.

Vv. 5 -11. Suffering and hardships are a part of God's means of making us holy (Rm. 5:1-5). God allows and uses suffering and hardship to discipline His children so that they achieve the goal of righteousness = right with God. The author reminds us that we are God's children therefore under His care as well as His discipline.

Reflection/Response. Why can we confidently and without fear come and worship God who is judge of all (see 12:7, 10:10-12)? How do we fix our eyes on Jesus when we face suffering and hardship? What does trust in Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith look like?