

READING: Psalm 145:1-21

SUBJ: The testimony of witnesses to the faith of God's elect as a motivation to us to believe their testimony and above that to receive the witness of Christ in obtaining our salvation.

AIM: That we review, reflect and imitate the witness of these witnesses whose lives manifest their faith and that we reflect the desired work of Christ in us.

INTR: The witnesses that the writer references in this passage are those from chapter 11 and others in the long history of the Lord's dealings with His people.

1. The testimony of a witness is of great importance in the evaluation of many situations in life and it carries great weight in the economy of the grace of God.
2. Of particular importance to us is the testimony of the many as well as the lives they manifested as a result of their faith in the Lord.
3. Of even greater importance is that we are bidden to "look unto Jesus" in particular who not only created our faith but modeled it and became its substance.

THESIS: While the witnesses to faith and "the faith" appeared in different times and situations, they had this in common that their message and their confidence was fully vested in Christ alone.

I. Witnesses (v. 1)

1. It is to be noted that the idea of a witness in this context could be of dual meaning.
 - 1) It certainly confirms what they saw in the Lord in that their lives answered to their faith.
 - 2) But, it is interesting to note that the word translated "witness" is the word from which we get the word "martyr." That is their lives were surrendered to the Lord fully in the world as they would claim that which is to come.
2. While all of these included and even those that are not named are worthy of special notice, some are more familiar:
 - 1) We immediately think of Noah and the monumental work done in the face of unbelief and trial.
 - 2) And, of course, it is Abraham that is called the father of the faithful and of whom we are called children by faith: *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. Galatians 3:7.*
 - 3) Joseph and the testimony concerning his bones and
 - 4) Moses and the things to which faith drove him: *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. Hebrews 11:26.*
3. Their character and devotion to the Lord and His service is exemplified:
 - 1) Laying aside every weight – that is anything that would hinder in serving the Lord and following Him.
 - 2) The sin that easily besets us:
 - i. There seems to be sense of sin here that is treated lightly and perhaps even justified and
 - ii. It is that which entangles us (besets) and does not leave us unaffected.
4. They were aware that a race was to be run and that it would culminate in the unhindered and glorious presence of the Lord.

II. The Witness (Christ) (v. 2)

1. It is to Him that we are bidden to look as the object of our faith and as the ultimate witness!
2. So it is that we would imitate Him in all our approach:

- 1) He had an objective ever before Him and it took Him to the cross – it was the joy that was set before Him:
 - i. Remember that He left transcendent glory and fellowship to come among us and to dwell.
 - ii. This was the joy of having the objects of His and His Father’s love rescued and appearing eternally with Him.
 - 2) His objective carried Him to and through the pain of the cross and that was not merely the wooden one on which He hung – it was all that was associated with it.
 - 3) His love for us enabled Him to endure the shame of the worst that men could cast upon Him and suffering a more ignominious death than any before or since – what does our pride and sense of self-worth mean to us in the face of the shame to which this world subjects us.
 - 4) The exalted position was the end for which He came that He might both intercede and rule in our behalf.
3. He is both the designer or author and the object and so the substance of true faith. We would reiterate that there is a real danger of men having faith in faith!

III. Our Witness (v. 3)

1. Consider again the Apostle in: *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:2.*
 - 1) No programs or methodologies of men
 - 2) No devices to give comfort to any outside of Christ our Lord!
2. Thus we consider Him in determining our course of action (and we have one even it is indifference).
 - 1) His manner who went about doing good and honoring His Father in all
 - 2) In His self-abnegation in that He deferred to the Father and those He came to serve (us)
 - 3) The sacrifice which is the proof of the love we claim and so He prevailed
 - 4) This He did in spite of the “contradiction of sinners against Himself...”
3. Such is the witnesses and the witness that have endured and have been received up into glory.
4. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Philippians 2:5 AND*
5. *¹If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ²Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Colossians 3:1-3*