

“Saving Faith’s Priorities & Purity”

Hebrews 12:1b

March 31, 2019

VIDEO: *“Where I Belong”*

INTRO: That’s an anthem of Christian priorities & purity...

➤ It’s also a perfect prep for today’s singing sermon

CONTEXT:

➤ Series... ***“Hold On”*** – Book of Hebrews

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.... (Hebrews 1:1-3)

➤ Hebrews’ 5 warnings & **1 EXHORTATION!**

➤ **Victory In Jesus**... Today’s continuation of 12:1...
▪ *“Faith’s Clarity & Encouragement”*

➤ Believe the Gospel

➤ Apply God’s Word.

➤ Know who’s who.

➤ BE “the great cloud of witnesses”

VIDEO: *“My Victory”*

PREVIEW: Today... **the next 5 steps** to victory in Jesus!

BIG IDEA: *Saving faith grows in Christ-like priorities & purity!*

TEXT: Hebrews 12:1b

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us,

I. **BE the WE**

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us

- When WE believe... WE become biblical warnings & loving biblical witnesses...
- *“We are NOT of those who shrink back...”*
- We biblical believers are the great cloud...

When I was 12 and getting ready for my first time flying in an airplane, I was told that if my flight took off on a rainy day that I would see the most amazing thing when the jet broke through the clouds... I was told that rather than seeing the rain coming down, I would see rain drops going up... Well... it never happened :-)

But... I have to tell you, that memory and heartfelt expectation came back to me this week as I was preparing this message from Hebrews 12:1...
Because when “we BE the great & growing cloud” of Christ-like witnesses, one day, the Lord’s disciples, like dew drops from His great cloud, will defy gravity & go UP... to meet our King in the heavenlies!

T/S: *To “BE the WE” is to BE the biblical believers!*

VIDEO: “WE Believe!”

II. CHOOSE to LOSE

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us

- Notice the voluntary nature... choosing to lay it down
- **Simply put, put it down...** put the WORLD DOWN!
- Don’t ever forget... MOTIVE & METHODS MATTER!

“Whoever finds their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it!” - Jesus (Matthew 10:39)

When you lay down your stuff & your sin, the Lord lifts up your spirit and your service...

He witnesses to your witness!

(cf. Hebrews 11:2-6, & 39 = 5X)

This is how we fight the good fight of faith...

When our worship is our witness we win! -JDP

- So... Praise Him!
- So... Love Him!
- So... Obey Him!
- So... WORSHIP Him!

VIDEO: *"The Way We Fight Our Battles"*

T/S: *Have you ever noticed that it's hard to hold on to things... with hands that are open & lifted up in worship?* -JDP

Surrender to Victory friend!

III. ACCEPT "every" ABSOLUTE

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us

- At the risk of overstating the obvious, "every" means:
 - EVERY means ALL & ALL means EVERY...
 - **Absolute totality: God is all about absolutes:**
 - Genesis 1:1; Lev. 19:2; Proverbs 3:5-6
 - John 14:6 & ch.15; 1 John 1:9...
 - Ephesians 2:1-10 & Romans 3:23 & 8:1
 - Matthew 28:18-20 & Titus 2:15

VIDEO: *"Hold Nothing Back"*

IV. RE-EVALUATE EVERYTHING

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us

NOTE: the full armor of God is “heavy” so we know that the English word “weight” is not the best translation... This is why “Encumbrances” (the ok but unnecessary options in life) is the better term...

Spiritual encumbrances & weights are NOT defined ‘morally’... they are defined missionally! - JDP

- Good vs. God...
- The Neutral vs. The Faithful

The ONLY question that matters is... does it enhance your opportunity to win... if not, it is, at best, an encumbrance – and at worst, a sin. - JDP

- Redeem your time.... (**Eph. 5:16**)
- Live a life worthy of the gospel...
- Do ALL things as unto the Lord...

What’s good in the world is often bad in worship! - JDP

- Encumbrances are like straw on a camel’s back
- Encumbrances are like weeds in a garden (Demas)

While weeds aren’t illegal... they are lethal! - JDP

➤ **Encumbrances are dilutions & distractions:**

- Eve was “*just talking to*” the serpent...
- Haggai... *just taking care of their homes*
- Unprepared bridesmaids... **dilly-dallying**
- The “stronger brother” has his “rights”
- Rich Young Ruler was far better than most

A.W. Tozer’s top 5 encumbrances:

(personal to each individual)

1. Worldly “**amusements**”
I define such amusements as empty things that fill empty times & empty spaces in life. - JDP
2. Unhealthy **relationships** (especially “friendships”)
3. Distracting & destructive social norms & “**habits**”
4. Bad “books,” “**bad teachings**,” & bad teachers
5. Impure & unblessed “**personal-plans**”

Encumbered people are like brains on drugs. - JDP

ILLUSTRATION: 2 sponges...

Encumbrances are like spinning plates that tie us up and prevent us from receiving God’s blessed assignments...

*We are **like sponges FILLED with water**... when the new water comes, we can’t absorb it because we’re filled up already with the old & ordinary... thereby causing us to miss out on the extraordinary! (**OPPORTUNITY COSTS**).... The “good news” is... that same principle can*

& will hold true in reverse... If & when you are filled with Living-Water, the temptations of the world's water will not have any room to fit in you BECAUSE you are already filled-with Jesus the Christ! Amen & AMEN!" - JDP

VIDEO: *"Never Be The Same"*

"The self-life is the greatest hindrance to the spiritual life." - Andrew Murray

T/S: "and" is a conjunction...
The presence of "and" means "every" has 2 homes!

V. STOP SINNING! *(Seriously... stop sinning!)*

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin

- Defining "sin" biblically is critical!
- Most common **definition**: *"missing the mark"*
- **Sin separates us from God...**
 - Eternally – the lost
 - Temporarily – the found!
- **Sin is anything & everything that goes against:**
 - God's Word...
 - God's will...
 - God's ways!
 - **Put down the poison!**

- Sever your ties with your sins!
 - Simplify your life!
- BE holy!
 - Take every thought captive...
 - Take Romans 6,7,8 to heart!
 - Trust & embrace God & His promises:
 - Philippians 4:13 & 2 Peter 1:3
 - Acts 1:8 & Matthew 28:18-20

Where & when love increases, sin decreases! -JDP

T/S: When that's the fruit of the gospel (mMm) you'll know, see, and live out "victory in Jesus" – no matter what trajectory you're on, trouble you're in, or tragedy you've experienced... Amen & AMEN!

VIDEO: *"Victory In Jesus"*

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us

T/S: Entangled sin is **like cholesterol in the veins...** as blood races through the veins, cholesterol clogs & blocks & leads to inevitable and devastating explosions of the heart...

"easily entangles" in Gk. = **"wraps around, surrounds"**

The point here is simple... even saints stumble!

*** Just think about it... running a race in a long, toga-like, draping robe (or a ball and chain) is like trying to thread the eye of a needle, while driving down a bumpy road...

There are some things that you just cannot do together...

You can't be selfless & selfish at the same time... You can't be on the broad & the narrow road, with at the same time. - JDP

*Victory in Jesus is lived out and exemplified
by faith... in the priorities & purity
of faithfully following Christ!*

That's it friend... *by God's grace* & for His glory:

- Be the we!
- Choose to lose!
- Accept every one of the Almighty's absolutes!
- Re-evaluate everything!
- Stop sinning!
 - To be entangled in sin is to live ensnared...
 - To live ensnared is to live **enslaved**...

*But praise God! ...to live out Hebrews 12:1 is to live out victory in Jesus... which means, you're **no longer** entangled, ensnared, or **enslaved by sin!***

Let's PRAY!

VIDEO: Zach Williams – *No Longer Slaves!*