

“A Heritage Of Faith!”
Hebrews 12:1-2

Introduction:

1. Have You Ever Heard The Phrase:
 - “Those Who Ignore The Past Are Doomed To Repeat It!”
 - Perhaps You Heard This From Your Parents, Or Your History Teacher!
 - It’s Good Advice, Especially When It Comes To Your Christian Faith!
2. This Morning, I Want To Share With You What I Believe The Lord Wants The Focus Of Grace Baptist Church To Be For 2006!
 - Our Focus Will Be: “A Heritage Of Faith!”
 - What Is A Heritage?
 - A Heritage Is So Much More Than Just History!
 - History Is Something That Happens To You!
 - A Heritage Is Something That Belongs To You!
 - Something That Has Made You Into The Person You Are!
 - Our “Heritage Of Faith” Needs To Be Our Focus Because We So Often Forget What Our Christian Faith & Life Is Based On!
 - So Many Churches & So Many Individual Christians – Perhaps Even You – Are Looking For Something Fresh, Something New, Something That Seems To Have More Life, More Strength, More Vitality!
 - So, You Might Try New Programs, New Techniques, New Music, New Expressions!
 - And In Coming Up With New, You Discount The Old – Calling It “Old Fashioned”!
 - But You Are Forgetting The Great “Heritage Of Faith” That Your Faith Is Based Upon!
 - 3. In Order For You To Move Forward In Your Christian Life:
 - You Have To Look Backward!
 - To The Great Heritage Of Faith The Lord Has Given You!
 - 4. How Are We Going To Develop This Theme This Year?
 - By Learning More About:
 - The Object Of Our Heritage Of Faith!
 - The Reliability Of Our Heritage Of Faith!
 - The Examples Of Our Heritage Of Faith!
 - And The Purpose Of Our Heritage Of Faith!
 - 5. Hebrews 12:1-2 Ties All These Together To Reveal The Great Importance Of Your Heritage Of Faith!
 - 12:1-2 - “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and 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 First Look At:

1. ***The Object Of Our Heritage Of Faith!***
 - 12:2a - “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith!”
 - Your Christian Faith Has The Same Person As Its Object As The Faith Of Every Believing Christian Since The Beginning Of The Church, Over 2,000 Years Ago!
 - The Object Of Your Faith Is & Can Only Be The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - You Must Never, Ever Forget That Your Faith Depends Completely Upon Him!
 - Jesus Christ Is The Source Of Your Faith!
 - He Is “The Author” Of Your Faith!
 - **IE:** Just Like A Story Does Not Exist Apart From Its Author, So Our Faith Would Not Exist Apart From The Lord!
 - Your Faith Depends Completely Upon Him!
 - Jesus Christ Is The Substance Of Your Faith!
 - He Is The Object Of Your Faith!
 - He Is Real! You Can Truly “Look Unto” Him!
 - **IE:** Your Faith In Christ Is Not Like Staring Off Into Space, Looking At Nothing But Air!

- Your Faith Depends Completely Upon Him!
- Jesus Christ Is The Sustainer Of Your Faith!
 - Often Times Our Faith Is Weak & Falters!
 - **IE:** Like The First Steps Of A Toddler!
 - But It Is Not The Strength Of Your Faith That Really Matters! It Is The Strength Of The One Your Faith Is In!
 - **IE:** Like The Strength Of A Bridge Over A Steep Ravine!
- Your Faith Depends Completely Upon Him!
- Jesus Christ Is The Settler Of Your Faith!
 - He Is “The Finisher” Of Your Faith!
 - He Is The Only One Who Is Able To Bring You To The Promised End Of Your Journey! (**IE:** Guide)
 - Your Faith Depends Completely Upon Him!
- The Object Of Your Faith Must Never Change!
 - You Must Never Stop “Looking Unto Jesus The Author And Finisher Of Your Faith!”
 - You Must Not Look To Anything Or Anyone Else!
 - You Must Be Able To Say:
 - “My faith has found a resting place,
Not in device or creed;
I trust the ever living One,
His wounds for me shall plead.
I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me!”
- How Will We Develop Our Focus On The Object Of Our Heritage Of Faith?
 - On Sunday Mornings, We Will Be Exploring The Book Of Hebrews Together!
 - Because, Throughout The Book, Hebrews Elevates Christ To The Highest Position Of Our Faith!

* The Second Aspect Of Our Heritage Of Faith Is:

2. ***The Reliability Of Our Heritage Of Faith!***

- 12:2b - “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!”
 - Your Christian Faith Is Reliable!
 - It Is Not An Invention Of Man, But A Revelation From God!
 - It Is Not Something New, But Is Something That Has Withstood The Test Of Time!
- Hebrews 12:2 Talks About:
 - Christ’s Work!
 - Christ’s Endurance!
 - Christ’s Position!
 - And Every One Of These Things Prove Reliable Because They Are:
- Prophetic!
 - Your Heritage Of Faith Is Based On Accurate, Fulfilled Prophecy That Has Come Down Through Time!
 - Abraham Spoke Of Jesus Christ 2000 Years Earlier - John 8:56 - “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad!”
 - Moses Spoke Of Jesus Christ 1500 Years Earlier - John 5:46 - “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me!”
 - Isaiah Spoke Of Jesus Christ 700 Years Earlier - Isaiah 7:14 - “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel!”
 - Your Heritage Of Faith Is Reliable Because It Is Prophetic!
- * Your Heritage Of Faith Is Also Reliable Because It Is:
 - Historic!
 - The Things That Were Prophesied About Christ Actually Happened – It Is No Fairy Tale!

- It Is Not Something To Be Wished For!
- It Is Something To Be Believed In!

* Your Heritage Of Faith Is Reliable Because It Is:

- Lasting!
 - What Jesus Christ Did 2000 Years Ago Still Impacts & Changes Lives Today!
 - As Alfred Ackley Wrote:
 - "I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living, whatever men may say.
I see his hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
and, just the time I need Him, He's always near.
 - He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart!"
- How Will We Develop Our Focus On The Reliability Of Our Heritage Of Faith?
 - On Sunday Evenings, We Will Continue To Explore The Book Of Isaiah Together - Completing It This Year!
 - Because "They are they which testify of me!" Christ Said! (John 5:39)

* The Third Aspect Of Our Heritage Of Faith Is:

3. ***The Examples Of Our Heritage Of Faith!***

- 12:1a - "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses!"
 - A Witness Is: "One who can give a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or experienced!" (AHD)
 - You Are Not Alone In Your Christian Walk!
 - In Fact, Millions Have Gone On Before You & Millions Walk Along With You!
 - You Can Look At & Learn From Their Examples As You Look To & Long For The Object Of Your Faith, The Lord Jesus Christ!
- Christ's Witnesses Are Abundant!
 - "So Great A Cloud!" - A Whole Host Of People!
 - This Verse Comes Right After Hebrews 11, The "Hall Of Faith," Describing The Heritage Of Faith Of Many!
- Christ's Witnesses Are Experienced!
 - They Know What They Are Talking About!
 - **IE:** Witnesses Are Called Before A Court Because Of What They Know, Not What They Don't Know!
 - Many Saw Jesus With Their Own Eyes!
 - Many Heard Jesus With Their Own Ears!
 - Many Touched Jesus With Their Own Hands!
 - But, All Were Changed By Jesus Through His Love!
- Christ's Witnesses Are Expressive!
 - How Do We Know What We Know About The Lord?
 - Because Noone Could Quiet Those Who Were Changed By Jesus!
- How Will We Develop Our Focus On The Examples Of Our Heritage Of Faith?
 - On Wednesday Nights, During Our Prayer Meeting Time, We Will Look At The Lives Of Many Of These God-Fearing & Christ-Honoring Examples – Heroes Of The Christian Faith!

* The Fourth & Final Aspect Of Our Heritage Of Faith Is:

4. ***The Purpose Of Our Heritage Of Faith!***

- 12:1b-2a - "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus!"
 - There Is A Purpose For Us Looking At Our Heritage Of Faith, Because There Is A Purpose For The Lord Giving Us A Heritage Of Faith!
 - These Purposes Are The Responses & Responsibilities You & I Have In Light Of Our Great

Heritage Of Faith!

- Your Heritage Of Faith Ought To Affect Your Heart!
 - “Let Us Lay Aside Every Weight, And The Sin Which Doth So Easily Beset Us!”
 - Your Heritage Of Faith Calls You To A Life Of Purity!
 - Sin - That Which Is Wrong!
 - Hindrance - That Which Is Not Best!
 - Yet, Hindrances Can Become Sin!
 - Romans 14:23 - “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin!”
- Your Heritage Of Faith Ought To Affect Your Will!
 - “And Let Us Run With Patience The Race That Is Set Before Us!”
 - Your Heritage Of Faith Calls You To A Life Of Perseverance!
 - Because Of What You Are Running From!
 - **IE:** Who’s Trying To Catch You In The Race?
 - Because Of Who You Are Running To!
- Your Heritage Of Faith Ought To Affect Your Mind!
 - “Looking Unto Jesus!”
 - Your Heritage Of Faith Calls You To A Life Of Perspective!
 - Having Only One Thing In Mind For Your Life!
 - Philippians 1:21 - “For me to live is Christ!”
- We Will Develop Our Focus On The Purpose Of Our Heritage Of Faith Throughout!
 - Because Your Christian Heritage Is So Much More Than Just History!
 - History Is Something That Happens To You!
 - Your Heritage Is Something That Belongs To You!
 - Your Heritage Is Something That Has Changed You!
 - Your Heritage Is Something That Will Continue To Change You!

Conclusion:

1. Have You Forgotten Your “Heritage Of Faith?”
 - My Prayer & Desire For You This Year Is That Together We Will Learn More About:
 - The Object Of Our Faith – The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - He Is Our Reason For Being!
 - The Reliability Of Our Faith!
 - The Examples Of Our Faith!
 - And The Purpose Of Our Faith!
2. Keep Your Heart & Mind Open To The “Old Time Religion!”
 - “It Was Good For Our Mothers!
 - It Has Saved Our Fathers!
 - It Will Do When I’m Dying!
 - And It’s Good Enough For Me!”
3. Is It Good Enough For You?
 - Because It Will Change Your Heart, Your Will & Your Mind!

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