

For the Joy Set Before Us

Hebrews 12.1-3

December 15th, 2019

Introduction:

- Joy is, “The experience of deliverance and the anticipation of salvation provide the most significant occasions for rejoicing among the people of God in the OT. The coming of the Messiah, who delivers his people and brings salvation becomes the basis for rejoicing in the NT. The response of joy, gladness, or happiness is not only a deep inward feeling, but is expressed in celebration when God’s people gather together.”¹

Main Points: we can experience joy by...

1. Immersing ourselves in the company of people who **encourage** and **inspire** us - vs. 1a
 - We are surrounded - the image of the **amphitheatre**
 - The word “witnesses” is the word we use for **martyrs**
 - Surround yourself with people who **build** you up
2. Getting rid of **sin** - vs. 1b
 - Lay aside every weight - actually, in the athletic metaphor, means get rid of a few pounds
 - The sin that entangles - clothing that **impedes** movement
 - rid of anything that stops you from **pursuing** Jesus

3. **Anticipating** what is to come - vs. 2
 - Founder - author, pioneer, trail-blazer, **champion** - lit. the chief leader
 - Perfecter - **finisher**
 - Remember the bigger **picture**
4. **Focusing** on Jesus - vs. 3
 - Consider him -- It means *to reckon up; to consider in the way of **comparison***.
 - Ephesians 5.1; Matthew 5.48; 1Peter 1.16; Leviticus 11.44
 - We become like the people we associate with the most; associate with Jesus **the most**

Conclusion:

- Faith is the doorway to hope
- Faith is the key to peace
- When we have hope and peace, we experience joy
- We can have joy by...
 - Immersing ourselves in the company of people who encourage and inspire
 - Getting rid of sin
 - Anticipating what is to come
 - Focusing on Jesus
- Let us run the race with **faithfulness** for the joy set before us.

Amen.

¹ Arnold, C. E. (1992). **Joy**. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.), *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 3, p. 1022). New York: Doubleday.