



- We Worshiped The Lord:
  - Through Our Submission:
    - To His Word - As Has Been Preached & Proclaimed!
- On Sunday Mornings:
  - We Worked Our Way - Verse By Verse - Through:
    - Paul's Second Letter To The Corinthians:
      - Which We Will Complete In Just A Few More Weeks!
- But Then - We Will Begin:
  - A New Study Together:
    - As We Continue To:
      - "Let The Word Of Christ Dwell In [Us] Richly!"
- Be Sure To Make:
  - All Of Our Sunday Services:
    - A Priority In Your Life:
      - This New Year!
- During Our Weekly Prayer Meetings Each Wednesday:
  - Our Focus Throughout 2018 Was On:
    - ***The Basics Of Prayer!***
  - And We Went Through The Book:
    - Written Many Years Ago By The Great German Reformer, Martin Luther:
      - Who Was Asked By His Barber To Teach Him How He Prayed!
        - And So - He Wrote A Little Book Entitled - "A Simple Way To Pray!"
- And Then - During Our Sunday Evening Services:
  - Our Focus Throughout 2018 Was On:
    - ***The Basics Of Doctrine!***
  - And Each Month Of The Year:
    - We Looked At Another Article From:
      - The Brief Statement Of Our Christian Faith - Known As:
        - The Apostles' Creed!
  - And We Learned:
    - 12 New Hymns:
      - Written By Samuel Stone Back In 1860!
  - And We Will Complete This Series:
    - Tonight - As We Review:
      - These Fundamental Truths:
        - Of Our Christian Faith!
- 4. I Believe The Lord Blessed Our Times Of Fellowship Together:
  - Last Year:
    - As We Worshiped Him!
      - And Prayed To Him!
        - And Learned More About Him!
- 5. But As We Look Forward:
  - To A New Year:
    - Sometimes It Is Important For Us:
      - To Look Back!
  - 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!
    - But This Is Good Advice:
      - Especially When It Comes To Your Christian Faith!
- 6. And So - This Will Be Our Focus:
  - For The Year 2019!
    - Because It Is Important For Us:
      - To Look Back - From Time To Time:
        - To How The Lord Has Worked:
          - Both In & Through His Church:
            - In The Past!
- Unfortunately:

- All Too Often We Forget The Truth:
  - That We Find In Hebrews 12:1 - Which Reminds Us That:
    - “We Also Are Compassed About With So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses!”
- But Sometimes - In Order For Us To Move Forward:
  - As Christians & As A Church:
    - We Need To Look Back:
      - To The Great Heritage Of Faithful Witnesses The Lord Has Provided To Us In His Word!

7. And So - We Are Going To Develop This Theme:

- In A Few Ways:
  - We Are Going To Learn More About:
    - The Object Of Our Christian Faith!
    - The Reliability Of Our Christian Faith!
    - The Examples Of Our Christian Faith!
    - And The Purpose Of Our Christian Faith!
- And Hebrews 12:1-2 Ties All Of These Together For Us!
  - 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!”

\* Our First Goal For 2019 Is To Learn More About:

**I. The Object Of Our Christian Faith!**

- 12:2a - “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith!”
  - Our 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**:
      - And **Can Only Be**:
        - The Lord Jesus Christ!
  - You Must Never, Ever Forget That Your Faith **Depends Completely & Entirely** Upon Him!
    - After All:
      - Jesus Christ Is The Source Of Your Faith!
        - Because - 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!
          - Charles Spurgeon - “Remember, therefore, it is not thy **hold** of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not thy **joy** in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even **faith** in Christ, though that be the instrument—it is Christ’s blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to thy hand with which thou art grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to thy hope, but to Jesus, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of thy faith. We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by “looking unto Jesus.” Keep thine eye simply on him; let his death, his sufferings, his merits, his glories, his intercession, be fresh upon thy mind; when thou wakest in the morning look to him; when thou liest down at night look to him. Oh! Let not thy hopes or fears come between thee and Jesus; follow hard after him, and he will never fail thee!”

- 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!
- And So - 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 Christian Faith?
  - On Sunday Mornings, After We Complete Our Study:
    - Through 2 Corinthians - We Will Explore Another One Of Paul’s Letters:
      - Written To The Colossians - Which Reminds Us That Jesus Christ - “Is The Head Of The Body, The Church: Who Is the Beginning, The Firstborn From The Dead; That In All Things He Might Have The Preeminence!” (Colossians 1:18)

\* Our Second Goal For 2019 Is To Learn More About:

2. ***The Reliability Of Our Christian 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!”
  - This Means That Our Christian Faith Is ***Reliable!***
    - It Is Not An Invention Of Man:
      - But A Revelation From God!
    - It Is Not Something New Or Novel:
      - 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 Proves Reliable Because They Are:
  - Prophetic!
    - Our Christian 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!”
    - Our Christian Of Faith Is Reliable:
      - Because It Is Prophetic!
- \* Our Christian 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!
  - \* Our Christian 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 Christian Faith?
  - Each Wednesday Night - We Will Be Looking At:
    - A Psalm - To Help Us Prepare:
      - For Our Use Of That Psalm:
        - In Our Worship Service On The Coming Sunday!
  - Many Of These Psalms:
    - Are Prophetic Themselves:
      - And “Testify” Of Christ!
  - And So - It Is Important For Us To:
    - Study The Psalms!
    - Sing The Psalms!
    - Pray Through The Psalms!
    - Because They Will “Tune [Our] Hearts To Sing [God's] Grace!”

\* Our Third Goal For 2019 Is To Learn More About:

3. ***The Examples Of Our Christian 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)
  - This Means That 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 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 Of These Witnesses:
    - Saw Jesus With Their Own Eyes!
  - Many Of These Witnesses:
    - Heard Jesus With Their Own Ears!
  - Many Of These Witnesses:
    - Touched Jesus With Their Own Hands!
  - But, All Of These Witnesses:
    - 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 Christian Faith?
  - On Sunday Nights:
    - We Will Be Going On A:
      - “Journey Through The Book Of Acts!”
        - Which Is Luke's Chronicle Of Jesus' Ongoing Work In & Through The Early Church!
    - And We Will See For Ourselves:

- How Jesus **Started**:
  - To Build His Church!
- But Also - On Sunday Mornings:
  - During Our Sunday School & Discipleship Time:
    - We Will See How Jesus **Continued**:
      - To Build His Church!
  - By Learning About:
    - Some Of The Key People, Places And Events:
      - Throughout The History Of The Christian Church!
  - We Will Begin Each Class Session:
    - Watching A Brief Video On Church History:
      - And Then Spend Some Time Discussing How The Holy Spirit Has Been Saving, Sanctifying, And Organizing His People For The Past Two-Thousand Years!
- Christian & Church History Really Is:
  - His - Story!
    - And In Many Ways - The Principle Of Biblical History Can Be Applied To Church History As Well!
      - 1 Corinthians 10:11 - "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come!"

\* But This All Leads To Our Fourth Goal For 2019! And That Is Learn More About:

**4. The Purpose Of Our Christian 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!"
- Your Faith In Christ Ought To Affect Your Heart!
  - "Let Us Lay Aside Every Weight, And The Sin Which Doth So Easily Beset Us!"
  - Your Faith In Christ Calls You To A Life Of Purity!
    - So That We - By God's Grace & Through His Strength - Will "Lay Aside" Every:
      - "Sin" - That Which Is Wrong! But Also:
        - Every "Weight" Or "Hindrance" - That Which Is Not Best!
  - Your Faith In Christ Ought To Affect Your Will!
    - "And Let Us Run With Patience The Race That Is Set Before Us!"
  - Your Faith In Christ Calls You To A Life Of Perseverance!
    - Because Of What You Are Running From!
      - 1 Peter 5:8 - "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour!"
    - Because Of Who You Are Running To!
- Your Faith In Christ Ought To Affect Your Mind!
  - "Looking Unto Jesus!"
  - Your Faith In Christ 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!"

**Conclusion:**

1. My Prayer & Desire For Us As A Church This New Year Is That Together We Will Learn More About:
  - The Object Of Our Faith – The Lord Jesus Christ!
    - After All - He Is Our Reason For Being!
  - The Reliability Of Our Faith!
  - The Examples Of Our Faith!
  - And The Purpose Of Our Faith!
2. And As We:
  - Look At & Follow After:
    - The Good & Godly Examples:
      - Of Christians - From The Beginning Of The Church:
        - In The Book Of Acts - Even To The Church Of Today:
  - That We Will Seek To Be:

- And Strive To Be:
  - Good & Godly Examples As Well!
  - As Paul Wrote To Timothy - In 1 Timothy 4:12 - "Let no man despise thy youth; but ***be thou an example of the believers***, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity!"
- 3. May This Be Our Challenge For The New Year!
  - ***"Be Thou An Example Of The Believers!"***
  - Only Then - Can We Say As Paul Said:
    - 1 Corinthians 11:1 - "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ!"
- 4. Because - You Too:
  - Are A Member Of This:
    - "Great Cloud Of Witnesses!"
  - That Can Encourage & Motivate Others:
    - Both Now & In The Future:
      - To Look To & Live For Christ As Well!

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