

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church  
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.  
Schultz**

**Pentecost 13 Hebrews 12:1-3  
August 18, 2013**



Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endures such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

If you travel overseas you need to go to the travel clinic. If you are going to Haiti they will make sure you have your Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B shots up to date. They will give you a shot against Typhoid shot at least 2 week before you go. They will give you a prescription for Malaria. You take a Malaria pill every Monday – Monday/Malaria – the Monday before you leave – every week you are gone – and 4 Mondays after you come home! You are supposed to sign up with the United States State Department. They will send you e-mails – warnings if there is any situation where you are traveling. The day I got back from Haiti we get an e-mail that said, This update is to warn you regarding the “crime level, lack of adequate infrastructure – particularly in medical

facilities – seasonal severe inclement weather, and limited police protection.” There are UN peace keeper baby blue trucks full of soldiers rolling on the streets that are literally full of rotting garbage. Infrastructure – that’s medical facilities – including ambulance services, are particularly weak. Some US citizens injured in accidents and others with serious health concerns have been unable to find necessary medical care and need to be evacuated to the United States – so get evacuation insurance. US citizens have been victims of violent crime, including murder and kidnapping, predominately in the Port-au-Prince area – where we were going to work. So far this year – 2 US citizens arriving in Port-au-Prince on flights from the United States were attacked and robbed shortly after leaving the airport. While the Haitian government has made progress in recent months to arrest and disrupt perpetrators, kidnapping for ransom can affect anyone in Haiti – particularly those who are there a long time! If you get out in the outlying areas like where we were “authorities ability to respond to emergencies is limited and in some areas nonexistent. “From 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. embassy personal are under an Embassy-imposed curfew and must remain at home or other safe facility during curfew hours.” **So...it’s a dangerous world out there.** The older you are the more you know that! And this is just physical danger. The worst danger is to faith and to your immortal soul. That’s one of the reasons it’s so important to read your Bible and come to church and Lord’s Supper – to bring your children to Sunday School and to come to Teen and Adult Bible Class. Spiritual danger is just one of the reasons our Day School and Luther Prep and Lakeside Lutheran High School and MLC and WLC and our Seminary are among the most precious blessings Jesus has given us.

This morning – we are concentrating on just part of the Letter to the Hebrews. God’s Word is again very fundamental

## **Jesus Disciplines His Children!**

### **I. Run with perseverance**

### **II. Fix your eyes on Jesus!**

The People’s Bible Commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews was written by Pastor Lauersdorf – from St. John’s in Jefferson – and so? Pastor Lauersdorf calls Hebrews the riddle of the New Testament. Nowhere does it say in Hebrews who is writing. It does tell us the one who wrote Hebrews was not someone who was say – one of the 12 Disciples. It was not someone who knew Jesus face to face. Rather he heard the Gospel from “those who heard Jesus.” He seems to have known Paul’s friends and co-workers like Timothy. He shows a very deep understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures. So – maybe it was Barnabas – Paul’s traveling companion. Martin Luther strongly suggested it was Apollos – “a descendant of Abraham – a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures – instructed in the way of the Lord – who spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately.” Apollos was known to be a gifted speaker. Gifted – is a wonderful word – gifted – to have a gift from the Lord. The Lord has given us the gifts we have – in the combinations Jesus decided – in the amounts Jesus decided – at the time Jesus decided. In many ways Jesus made each of us – very different – unique – like snowflakes – no two of us exactly alike. Jesus calls each of us to faithfulness – to be a good manager of the gifts we have now. Use them faithfully – and see if Jesus doesn’t make you manager of more gifts. Be

unfaithful – fail or refuse to appreciate your gifts – and see if one by one they don't slip away. How tragic would that be?

The Letter to the Hebrews is one of comparisons – memory hook – comparisons. Angels – think about angels – not little breakable Precious Moment figurines. Not people we love – not my Grandma Minnie Schultz – but wondrous spirit beings – powerful – confirmed in their holiness – messengers – the essential meaning of angel – messenger. They are more powerful than you can imagine. They always see the face of their Heavenly Father – and at the same time cover their eyes and look down in great awe in the presence of the Great I AM – the Holy One of Israel. Glorious angels – Jesus is by far greater! Moses! Who in the history of Israel was ever greater than Moses? Moses – who told the mighty Pharaoh – **“This is what the LORD says: ‘Let my people go!’”** I love saying that – **“Let my people go!”** Moses – the baby in the bulrushes – Moses and the burning bush – Moses and the Exodus! Jesus is by far – by far greater! The Sabbath rest – the High Priest – Melchizedek – Prophet, Priest and King – the Tabernacle worship – whole burnt offerings and sin offerings and guilt offerings the ark of the covenant and the most holy place – all of this combined – Jesus was far *far* greater!

**Chapter 11. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for – and certain of what we do not see.** And so? It's the leap of faith – like the little child standing at the edge of the swimming pool – their dad standing in the pool their arms open – their powerful hands open saying, “Jump in! Go ahead – jump in – I will catch you! Don't be afraid!” Chapter 11 is the heroes of faith chapter that concludes with the thought: **“And what more**

shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was tuned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.”

**Hebrews 11:32-39**

**Chapter 12.** Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. When you remember the Old Testament heroes of faith – people like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah – Daniel in the lions’ den – the three men in the fiery furnace – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah – remember Obadiah – just 21 verses – the pride of puffed up Edom? When you remember those heroes of faith – God’s Word makes you strong. **Throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily**

**entangles!** Think of all the things that try to trip us up! There is danger that we get caught up in the materialism and self-indulgence of this world. Everyone should spend a week in a place like Haiti. See all the people everywhere who are missing arms and legs – hands and feet from the earthquake. See the little children – no socks, no shoes. See an orphanage where they have a building too small to park one of our cars or trucks – a cement floor with inflatable mattresses – no sheets, no pillows – some<sup>27</sup> little boys sleeping there – two and three on a mattress. No heat – no air conditioning – no electricity – no lights. Sleep on the floor – where there are bugs – little lizards who have come to eat the bugs – ants that come to eat the lizards – little mice – big rats – wild dogs and stray cats – goats eating the garbage. Think about that and pray about that – the next time you wake up in the middle of the night – and think it's too hot and too humid to sleep! Think about little children going to Kindergarten in Haiti – where they speak Creole – a kind of combination of Spanish and French – where they have no text books, no work books, no pencils or pens. Think about that – the next time you look in your kitchen junk drawer – where you have all those pens and pencils from the bank and from the insurance guy and from the whatever – all in a big clump with a rubber band around them – think about people who have no rubber bands! Think about people who have no post it notes – no educational toys – no back packs – when we pick out pink Nikes and shoes that actually blink! Not that there's anything wrong with buying wonderful things for our children and grandchildren – but it is wrong – if we continue to indulge our every whim and pleasure – while

fellow believers – little believers – widows and orphans are painfully in need – if we do nothing to help them!

**Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...** The Greek word for race here – is the word from which we get our English Word *agony!* This race is not easy. Not everyone runs the same race. Some are sprinters. Others are marathoners. No one knows when you come around the corner – and there is our finish line. We have had funeral for Frieda Knoll – one hundred and two years, 8 months and 10 days. That was a marathon. She went home to heaven on the anniversary of her confirmation. The day her pastor put his hand of blessing on her head and said, Luther Bibel 1545 (LUTH1545)

**<sup>10</sup> Sei getrost bis an den Tod, so will ich dir die Krone des Lebens geben.**

And we had a funeral for a little baby born so early his tiny heart was beating—but he didn't breathe. He was baptized—was held and loved for a few hours and now is safe by Jesus in Heaven. We will see him again! Jesus is the one who loves us and disciplines us. He will keep us safe as many days as he gives us. And then he will bring us safely across the finish line into heaven.

**To God alone all glory!**

*Rev. Anthony E. Schultz*