

IV. Remember, Consider, and Imitate

13:7-8: "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

1. Remember: "... your leaders."

The leaders (cf. **13:17, 24**) are "those who spoke to you the word of God."

2. Consider: "... the outcome of their way of life."

We are commanded to consider or to "fix our eyes" on the faithful leaders of the past just like we are commanded to "consider" or "fix our eyes" on Jesus (12:3). The whole course of their lives, from start to finish, now lies before us to review.

3. Imitate: "... and imitate their faith."

John Owen: "These guides are to be remembered, their faith followed, and the end of their conversation considered by repeated contemplation."¹

Jesus Christ: "... is the same yesterday and today and forever."

We may imitate the faith of the faithful from generations past because they trusted in Jesus Christ who never changes.

Therefore, brothers and sisters: Read Christian biography!

Questions or Comments? Nick Roark (nroark@ubcfayetteville.org)

Equipping Class:

Remembering the Faithful:

January 29, 2023

Lesson 1: Introduction to Christian Biography

I. Remembering the Faithful

A faithful cloud of witnesses (**Hebrews 12:1**) from the past still speaks in the present to followers of Jesus, the One who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (**13:7**).

The purpose of this class is to *remember, consider, and imitate* the Christ-centered lives and faith (**13:6**) of those of whom the world was not worthy (**11:38**).

Who are some of your heroes of the faith?

A much-needed reminder: "Her full nature... spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: *for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.*"²

¹ John Owen, *Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1968), 273.

² George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (New York: Penguin, 1872/2015), 785.

II. Introduction to Hebrews

- Hebrews is a “word of exhortation” (13:22)
- The recipients of this letter were in danger of drifting back into the bondage of Judaism (2:1-3)
- The writer of Hebrews argues that Jesus is better!
 - Jesus is a superior and final Word from God (1:1-4)
 - Jesus is superior to angels (1:5-2:18)
 - Jesus is superior to Moses (3:1-6)
 - Jesus is a superior High Priest (4:14-5:10)
 - Jesus is superior to the Aaronic priesthood (7:1-28)
 - Jesus is a mediator of a superior covenant (8:1-13)
 - Jesus is a superior sacrifice (10:1-18)
- The positive and negative examples recorded in Scripture are one means that the Lord has ordained to help us to persevere in the faith until the end.
- We learn from the *negative* examples recorded in Scripture (ex. the faithless “wilderness generation” in 3:7-19)
- We learn from the *positive* examples recorded in Scripture (ex. the “Hall of Faith” in **Hebrews 11**)

III. The Hall of Faith and the Founder of our Faith

11:32-38: *“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— 38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”*

12:1-4: *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”*

Application: Considering the faithful cloud of witnesses is intended to help us to consider Jesus, the Author of our faith. The best saints are still sinners. But we can still learn from them. Their faith and their faults magnify the Finisher of our faith.