

## Living By Faith

*(Heb. 10:35-39)<sup>35</sup> Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.<sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.<sup>37</sup> FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.<sup>38</sup> BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.*

Verse 38 is a direct quotation from Habakkuk 2:4.

...And there are three different times this verse is quoted in the New Testament and each time with a little different emphasis.

- Romans 1:17 The **RIGHTEOUS** live by faith
- Galatians 3:11 The righteous live by **FAITH**
- Hebrews 10:38 The righteous **LIVE** by faith

### 1. The RIGHTEOUSNESS of Faith

*(Romans 1:17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "**BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**"*

Reading this passage of scripture Martin Luther stopped short and said,

*"What does this mean, that there's this righteousness that is by faith, and from faith to faith?"*

*... What does it mean that the righteous shall live by faith?"*

As Martin Luther studied these words, the light suddenly came on.

... and he began to understand that what Paul was speaking of here was a righteousness that God (in His grace) was making available to those who would receive it **passively...**

... a righteousness from God that we did not and could not actively earn or achieve.

For Luther this was a big deal.

You see ... the word 'justification' comes from the Latin word "justicare" ...

... this was terminology left over from the Roman judicial system.

'justicare' is made up from the word 'justice' (or righteousness) and "facare" which means "to make."

So, in that world (before the reformation) they understood the doctrine of justification to mean what happens to someone when they took the sacraments of the church ...

... through the practice of the sacraments unrighteous people were made righteous.

However, Luther wasn't reading this scripture in Jerome's Latin translation...

... Luther was reading the *Koine Greek* the original language that the New Testament was written in.

... So, he wasn't seeing the Latin word '**justicare**' that Jerome had written ...

... Luther was reading the original Greek word that Paul used ... '**dikaosune**' [di-kaio-su-na]

... and unlike justicare which meant to **make righteous** Paul's dikaosune means to **count or declare as righteous**.

That was the moment of awakening for Luther.

Luther said, "*Here Paul is not talking about the righteousness by which God Himself is righteous, but rather a righteousness that God gives freely by **His grace** to people who don't have any righteousness of their own.*"

**Now stay with me ...**

This means that the righteousness by which we are saved, is not our righteousness ...

... we are not saved by our good choice or good deeds ...

... we are saved by what Luther calls “alien righteousness”

... a righteousness from outside of us that rightfully belongs to someone else.

Every part of the act and work of salvation comes from outside of us ... it comes from God!

And Luther said, “**When I discovered that, I was born again of the Holy Ghost and the doors of paradise swung open, and I walked through.**”

## **2. The FAITH of the righteous**

*(Galatians 3:11) Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."*

I'm sure you've heard phrases like “name it and claim it” or “prosperity gospel” or “the faith movement” ...

There is a large swath of evangelical Christianity that has been infected by the false teachings of the false teachers.

... and we believe these false teachings ... we like these false teachings because they feed our ego.

Turn on the TV and they talk about the “power of faith” **a lot ...**

... but they **are not talking** about biblical faith they are talking about something else ...

They have this false idea of an “impotent faith” that can be “empowered” or “made stronger” through one's own effort.

- This is the belief that you possess inside yourself the power to create your own future
- ... a personal power to alter and change your reality ...
- If you believe strong enough then you can believe things into being.
- You can create healing.

- You have the power to create or determine your own destiny.

Now, I'm not saying don't dream ... dreams are wonderful.

But this is not faith...

... what they are talking about is the power of positive thinking ...

Faith is a God-given ability to trust the future that God has promised.

The truth is, I don't want to be responsible for determining what my future is going to be.

... I'd much rather leave my future in the hands of the ONE who loves me perfectly and infinitely.

Listen to how the writer of Hebrews describes biblical faith.

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. <sup>2</sup> For by it the men of old gained approval. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. (Heb. 11:1-3)*

I'm afraid we've heard these verses so many times ... they have become so familiar ... that we are missing the power of what is being said...

... Look at that little word "is" ...

Faith IS the **assurance (or foundation/ or substance)** of things hoped for ...

In other words, faith **must have a foundation** for its hope ...

... and what is that foundation for faith's hope? IT IS THE WORD OF GOD!

The question of the hour is not "if we believe" but rather WHOM do we believe?

Faith means we are confident that what God has told us is absolutely true!

One of the mistakes we make is that we think faith is about the **sincerity** of someone's belief ...

... it is not

... Faith is about the **substance** of our belief!

“Faith is the *hupostasis* of things hoped for ...”

Many Greek scholars translate this word as “title deed.”

In other words ... **Faith is the “title deed” of things hoped for.**

... the presence of faith is the guarantee that what has been promised will be received.

... the writer of Hebrews is saying that **in faith the things hoped are apprehended!**

... faith enables us to step out, act, and live supported **by only** the promises of God.

There is something that God puts inside us that says, **“I have trusted God and that faith changes the way I live my life!”**

And this is exactly the lesson that we will be learning in Hebrews 11.

- This faith shaped Abel's worship ... but without faith Cain's worship was unacceptable.
- This faith was the testimony of Enoch's life.
- This faith formed Noah's work, guided Abraham's walk, directed Abraham's obedience,
- the determination of Isaac and Jacob
- the loyalty of Joseph
- the courage of Moses.

But don't mistake the action of obedience for faith...

Faith is not something we do ... Faith is something we have been given.

... you see the word for “faith” is the Greek word *pistis* and it is not a verb ... it is a noun.

I love that this word is a noun because it emphasizes exactly what faith is ...

**Faith is not something we do ... it is a commodity we possess.**

Yes, believing can be a verb but that is not what this text is talking about.

In **Ephesians 2:8** Paul says that grace saves us through the **faith that comes from God** ... it is not of works.

... there is no doubt that faith is something we are in possession of ... Paul is very clear in 1 Corinthians that “faith” like hope and love is a gift that God gives us.

Faith is not seeing something you want and then bringing it into existence...

Faith is confidence...

Faith is conviction in the reality of something not yet realized.

As we go through Hebrews 11 we are going to see men and women who had nothing but the promises of God to rest on...

... nothing but the promises of God to hope for.

No visible evidence that the messianic promises would ever come true,

... no visible evidence that the promised kingdom would ever materialize...

Yet the promises of God were **so real and so reliable** that these people built their entire lives and hope on them ...

... the revelation of God’s promises was so profound to them that they risked everything in obedience to God.

*<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the*

*power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. (Heb. 11:32-34)*

The faith of the righteous turned them into champions for God.

### **3. The LIFE of Faith**

***(Hebrews 10:38) BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.***

The author of Hebrews is emphasizing that faith in the promises of God produces an enduring life.

... He wants us to know not only that through faith we are saved by grace ...

... He also wants us to know that Faith enables us to live.

(Paul says it this way.)

***(Gal. 2:20) "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.***

We are saved by grace but the life we live in the flesh we live by FAITH.

God has always required that His people live by faith.

... even in the time before Christ.

You see, just as we trust in God's promises because Jesus has come, they trusted in God's promises that Jesus would come.

I say it this way because I don't want you to make the mistake of thinking that the salvation of the Old Testament saints was different from our salvation.

... everyone that has ever been saved was saved by grace through faith.

However the **life of faith** for the Old Testament believer was different.

The faithful obedience that God demanded from His people under the Mosaic covenant included worship at the tabernacle ... feast days, and sacrifices ...

And although all of those things pointed to Jesus very few people in the Old Testament saw clearly how these Mosaic commands pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ ...

... but that did not hinder their obedience.

... they took God at his Word and obeyed the law.

**For example, consider the Passover ...**

... The Israelites were told to sprinkle the door of their house with blood on the side and top post then the angel of death would pass over and spare their first born...

**... What did they do?** They took God at his Word and believed him ...

... they exercised faith, and by God's grace, the wrath of God was put away and their firstborn son did not die.

... and the text says that by the obedience of faith, they gained approval.

Then year after year they repeated this same celebration of the Passover event and that annual obedience continually pointed forward to the ultimate Passover Lamb...

... which makes Paul write to the Corinthians and say, "**Christ, our Passover has been sacrificed for us**" (1 Cor. 5:7).

**Again,** they did not clearly see the whole truth of redemption ... certainly not as clearly as we can see it today looking backward through history ...

... They didn't have Hebrews and Romans to tie all those pieces together ... but all the pieces were there.

Although they didn't have all the revelation that we have today ...

... those in the Old Testament were expected to take God and His word and **to trust Him to forgive their sins** according to His mercies.

... and when the author of Hebrews writes that "by Faith men of old gained approval" ... this is both an exhortation and a chastisement.

... He was saying to these Jewish Christians who were drifting back to the Old Covenant ...

... *"men of old had far less revelation than you and they trusted God and took Him at His word ... you should also trust God and take him at His word."*

By faith:

- **Abel** obtained the testimony that he was righteous
- **Enoch** obtained the witness that he was pleasing to God
- **Noah** believed God's warning, built an ark, and became an heir of righteousness
- **Abraham** went out not knowing where he was going to receive an inheritance he had not seen.
- **Sarah** received the ability to conceive

... and the writer of Hebrews says that based on these things,

***"Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."***  
***(Hebrews 1:16)***

Think about it ... we are born in sin.

... we have often failed God.

... even on our best days we are weak.

... even on our strongest days we are faithless.

**BUT** God puts His Faith in us,

...in spite of us He makes gives us His righteousness

... even the life of victory we live, we live by faith in Jesus Christ ...

No accomplishments, no victories of our own doing ... and yet God looks at us with love and favor (and might I say fatherly pride) ...

... and he says, "I am not ashamed to be your God, I am preparing a place for you."