



**Faith Series
Living By Faith
Hebrews 10:35-39
Westport Christian Church
March 28, 2010**

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
Heb 10:35-39NASU

Today is Psalm Sunday. It is the beginning of what many people call "Holy Week," the week before Jesus goes to the cross. In preparing for today's lesson, I decided what a great time to finish this series of faith by looking at "Living by Faith." After all that is the message of Psalm Sunday is it not?

The purpose of this short series has been that we discovered together that faith is not some magic wand that a person can wave around and say, you got it. Faith is a consuming trust in God's justice, love, and mercy. Faith is more than the acceptance of a body of beliefs, though doctrines are extremely important. Faith is growing in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. It is staking one's life on God's promises.

But I must ask you a question. Have you ever looked out upon this world with its injustice and violence, and asked the question: "Why doesn't God do something?" It looks like the wicked are prospering and the righteous is suffering. Godly people pray, but it seems as through their prayers does no good.

Let me share with you a couple of thoughts that may help us to understand a little bit. Many people have asked me, "Why do people behave that way?" "Why are they so mean and evil?" "Why do they go around and kill and steal?" My answer to those who ask is this, "Why shouldn't they?" That is the way people who are living by the principles of the world live. That is the way the ungodly behave. They are living by what they believe. Remember, how a person acts tell you what they believe in.

There is another reason as to why we have to deal with some of the garbage we deal with and that it is simply as test. Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (James 1:2-3NASU)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. (1 Peter 4:12-13NASU)

Since the time sin entered into this world, there has been a battle going on and today it is a battle for your soul. Before Jesus went to the cross He said, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33NASU)

Paul said, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12)

So, the contrast is clear there is a real difference between the godly and the ungodly. If we understand that unbelievers act the way unbelievers

should and we are going to face hardship, how are we to live, by faith.

I. LIVING BY FAITH IS LIVING

In our text we read, “But the righteousness will live by faith.” 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.**” Rom. 1:17

Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “**THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**” Gal 3:11

When we walk by faith and not by sight, we follow God. We put our whole trust in Him that He will do what He says. At camp I try to play a game with the kids that I call, “listen to the voice.” This is how it works. Each person puts on a blindfold. They line up with a person in front and a person in back, with one hand on the person in front of them. The goal is to follow the person in front of them as they listen to my voice as I call out information. As you can imagine this is hard for the kids to do, and so it is with us many times following God.

You see, God wants us to hold on to Him, keeping our ears attuned to hear His voice. Yes, I know that God does not speak to us audibly, but He does speak to us through His Word and through other people. Faith gives us a hope to hold onto which is an anchor for our soul. It is only faith that will sustain the faithful in tough times.

Helen Keller once shared, “I believe that we can live on earth according to the teachings of Jesus, and that the greatest happiness will come to the world when man obeys His commandment “Love one another.” I believe that we can live on earth according to the fulfillment of God's -will, and that when the will of God is done on earth as it is done in heaven, every man will love his fellow-men, and act toward them as he desires they should act toward him. I believe that the welfare of each is bound up in the welfare of all. I believe that life is given us so we may grow in love, and I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the color and fragrance of a flower—the Light in my darkness, the Voice in my silence. I believe that only in broken gleams has the Sun of Truth yet shone upon men. I believe that love will finally establish the kingdom of God on earth, and that the cornerstones of that kingdom will be liberty, truth, brotherhood, and service.”

Even though Helen Keller couldn't see or speak, she understood that living by faith, was truly living.

II. LIVING BY FAITH IS INSPIRING

Living our faith out is a testimony to others and inspires them to live out their faith. After the writer of Hebrews goes through the great hall of faith, at the beginning of chapter 12, he writes, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith." (Heb.12: 1-2NASU) He writes those words to inspire us to live out our faith.

Sweeping across Germany at the end of World War II, Allied forces searched farms and houses looking for snipers. At one abandoned house, almost a heap of rubble, searches with flashlights found their way to the basement. There, on the crumbling wall, a victim of the Holocaust had scratched a Star of David. And beneath it, in rough lettering, the message: I believe in the sun-even when it does not shine. I believe in love-even when it is not shown. I believe in God-even when He does not speak. (Robert Schuller)

Speaking to His disciples, Jesus declared, "You are the light of the world." The late Harry Emerson Fosdick said, "A saint is a person through whom the light shines."

We often sing the song, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." When we see people living their life by faith it inspires us and others as well. It encourages us to draw closer to the Lord in our walk, does it not? You see, when we live and walk by faith, it inspires and encourages others to follow.

III. LIVING BY FAITH IS VISIBLE

It has been said, "some things have to be believed to be seen." The drought of the past winter threatened the crop in a village of Crete. The priest there told the church members, "There isn't anything that can save us, except a prayer for rain. Go to your homes, fast during the week, believe and come on Sunday for the prayer for rain." The villagers who had heard him, fasted during the week and went to church on Sunday morning, but as soon as the priest saw them he was furious. "Go away, I will not pray for rain, for you do not believe," he told them. But they protested, "we fasted and believe." In which came the reply, "Believe? And where are your umbrellas?" (Unknown)

People can tell by watching us if we have faith or not. There is a big difference between those that believe and are faithful and those who do not believe.

“It’s not what men eat, but what they digest that makes them strong; Not what we gain, but what we save that makes us rich; Not what we read, but what we remember that makes us learned; Not what we preach or pray, but what we practice and believe that makes us Christians.” (Francis Bacon)

Like I have said so many times, our faith must be visible by the things we do, not by the things we say. Faith works. Faith walks, and faith wins others. Living by faith must be visible, other may hear your words, but they see your faith by your actions.

IV. LIVING BY FAITH IS ETERNAL

Living by faith on earth means that we will have eternal life in God’s Kingdom. The wife of Martin Luther last words were, “I will stick to Christ as a burr to a topcoat.” Our life in Christ must be so entwined that there is no possible means of being separated.

Paul writes, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:38-39)

We must truly grasp that concept and live our life like we mean it.

AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. “Shrink back” means fall away, “apostasy.” In other words, to give up the faith. God said, in that person He has no pleasure. Living by faith is an ongoing process. It is not a one time deal then you are free to do whatever you want. It continues on until we stand face to face, with our Lord, and Savior. Then and only then will our faith be turn to sight. Conclusion; Living by faith is living, inspiring, visible, and eternal. Living by faith, walking by faith, means that we are on a forward procession in our relationship with Christ.

A twelve year-old boy became a Christian during a revival. The next week at school his friends questioned him about the experience. “Did you see a vision?” asked one friend. “Did you hear God speak?” asked another. The youngster answered no to all these questions. “Well, how did you know you were saved?” they asked. The boy searched for an answer and finally he said: “It’s like when you catch a fish, you can’t see the fish or hear the fish; you just feel him tugging on your line. I felt God tugging on my heart.”

Perhaps you are feeling God tugging on your heart this morning. Are you prepared to walk by faith or are you going to continue trusting in

yourself? Your answer will affect you forever.

AMEN