

The Life of Faith

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Galatians 2:20

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The title of this message is “The Life of Faith.” Now I have two passages that I want to read and use for a text on the subject, “The Life of Faith.”

The first one is Galatians two verse 20. Now many of you probably are familiar with this Scripture, but listen to it again. Galatians 2:20, Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live I live by faith. And the live which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God and by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. I live by faith.”

And then the second text is one which occurs in the Scriptures four times. That’s right, four times. You heard me right. Four times this phrase occurs in God’s Word. It is in the book of Habakkuk in the Old Testament. It is in the book of Romans chapter one verse 17. It is in the book of Galatians chapter three. It is in the book of Hebrews. And in all four places this is what it declares. “The just shall live by faith.”

I live by faith. Now the just, we are talking about the justified, the believer, the child of God who has been made just by the blood and righteousness of Christ. But the justified live by faith.

What does this mean? I live by faith. The just live by faith. Do we live by faith as a power, faith itself as a power, as an influence, as a feeling or as an attitude which causes things to happen and the more faith we have the more power we have, the more faith we have the more things that we can get done. Is that how we live by or upon faith?

Certainly not. We don’t live upon faith at all. Paul didn’t say the just live upon faith. He didn’t say in Galatians 2:20, “I live upon faith.” He said, “I live by faith upon Christ. I live by faith upon Christ.”

Faith is not my hope, Christ is my hope. Faith is not my peace with God. Christ is my peace with God. I live upon Christ. I find my peace in him. My peace is not in my attitude. My peace is not in my feeling. My peace is always the same. It is in Christ. It is from Christ. He is my peace. He made peace through the blood of his cross. He is my hope. Christ in you is the hope of glory, not faith in you. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Christ is my wisdom. Christ is my righteousness. Christ is my holiness. Christ is my redemption.

“Where did you get that, preacher?”

1 Corinthians 1:30, 1 Corinthians 1:30. “Of God are you in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption.”

You see, I don't live upon faith. I don't feed upon faith. I don't rest upon faith. I don't get my strength from faith. I feed upon Christ. I live upon Christ. I get my peace and joy and hope and confidence and comfort from him. By faith. Faith doesn't produce blessings. It receives them.

Faith, listen, does not produce blessings. It receives them.

Now unless Moses touches the rock the water is not going to come forth to quench the thirst of the children. But the water doesn't come from the rock. The water comes from the rock. The rock supplies the water. The rock provides the water, not the rod. And Christ is my life, not faith. Christ is my peace, not faith. Christ is my redemption, not faith.

So we don't live upon faith. We live by faith upon Christ. Now you stay with me. I know what I am talking about and this is what the Scripture says. I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live. Yet not I. It is Christ who lives in me. And the life which I live by faith, the life which I live in this flesh is by faith in Christ, in Christ, upon Christ.

Let me show you something here. Faith is not the Savior. It was not faith that was born in Bethlehem. It was not faith that walked up Calvary's mountain carrying the old cross. It was not faith who died on Calvary. It was Christ.

So I live by faith upon Christ who loved me and gave himself for me. Faith is not the position. People talk about divine healing as if faith got the job done. Faith doesn't heal anybody. Faith looks to Christ to heal.

He said, “I wound and I heal. I kill and I make alive. I the Lord do these things.”

Faith brings us to him who heals us. Faith doesn't heal anyone. We don't live upon faith. We live by faith upon Christ. We feed upon him.

Come thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy praise. Faith is not the Christ. Faith is not the Mediator. Faith is not the altar nor the high priest nor the blood nor the mercy seat nor the sacrifice. Christ is all those things. We live by faith upon Christ.

Do you see that? Let me show it to you a little stronger. Faith does not cleanse us, but faith brings us to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood wheth-

er their faith is weak, whether their faith is strong, whether their faith is of long time or short term. Sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

Faith doesn't bring us to God. Christ died the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh and quickened by the Spirit. He brings us to God.

So, you see, faith doesn't save us. Christ does. Faith doesn't cleanse us. Christ does. His blood. Faith doesn't bring us to God. Christ brings us to God. We look to him. Faith doesn't keep us in God.

Now listen to me. We are kept by the power of God through faith, but we are kept by the power of God. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling to the only wise God our Savior be glory and dominion and power both now and forever. Now unto him that is able to keep us...

I hope you see what I am saying because it is so vital. And what is being preached in this day all over this country is people are feeding upon faith and when they can't find it they collapse. They are resting upon their faith. They are trying to conjure up more faith and forge more faith because preachers are telling them more faith they have the more they can get the job done and the more they can claim from God and the more they can have and all these other things.

It is all in Christ, not in your faith. I hope you see what I am saying because the Lord Jesus Christ will not share his glory. He will not share his redemptive glory, no, not even with such an essential gift of God as faith. Faith is not going to rob Christ of his glory. The life of faith is the life of Christ. We live by faith upon Christ.

Now then let's stop right here just a moment. I want to encourage some of you who feel that your faith is so weak. And if everybody out there was as honest as you ought to be, if everybody out there was as honest as you ought to be most of you, most of you would say, "My faith is so imperfect, my faith is so weak. My faith is so small."

If the disciples could be rebuked by the master because of their little faith, woe is me. I could be rebuked 10,000 times, 10,000 because my faith is so weak.

Well, now you listen to me. It is not the strength of faith that saves. It is the strength of the object of faith. If you have an iron post in the ground and you have got some vines growing around that post it is not the size of the vine that holds it up. It is the post. You move the post and the big vine would fall and the little vine would fall and the tiny vine would fall. But as long as the post stands all of the vines whether they are strong, big, little, weak or tiny they are held by the post.

And weak faith, weak faith is as genuine and true and saving just as much as strong faith if it is in Christ. And if your faith is in Christ alone, that is what I am talking about, not in yourself, not in your works, not in your church, not in your baptism, not in your feeling, not in your profession, not in your momma or daddy, but in Christ. If you are look-

ing to him and him alone and resting in him and him alone, his blood and his righteousness, your faith may never be strong. It may never be great. But I will tell you this. It is saving faith if you are looking to him, if you are looking to him.

And those folks over yonder in the book of Numbers that were bitten by the fiery serpents, they looked to the serpent lifted up and it didn't matter whether they could see good or not see good or whether they looked in that direction or were blind and looked in another direction, but they were looking to him. You are looking to Christ.

Let me illustrate that. In a few days I will be almost 70 years old. There was a time when I was young and strong and I am older and I am weak now. But I tell you this. A weak, trembling hand, a weak trembling hand can put food in the mouth as well as a strong, young vigorous hand. And the body is not nourished by the hand. It is nourished by the food. And I will tell you. A weak trembling faith can lay hold on Christ and look to Christ and rest in Christ just as confidently and certainly and saving as the strongest faith that has ever come down the pike because it is not the strength of the faith that saves, it is Christ. And I am going to say that if God gives me one more year of 40 more years I am going to say it is not your faith. It is Christ. We live by faith upon Christ.

Now you just...you folks be encouraged. You honest people, honest people. I wouldn't lie to God, honest people. Oh, I wish my faith...the disciples said, "Lord, increase our faith. Increase our faith. Help us. Help us."

[?] said to him, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief."

If you start getting honest you will start praying that way, too, and quit talking about how strong your faith is. And maybe it is yours. Maybe it is not God given at all. God given faith is honest faith.

Well, let me give you several things about this life of faith to encourage you who really believe in Christ, really believe. First of all saving faith, weak or strong, little or great, saving faith lives, lives upon the name of Christ, upon the name of Christ.

That's right. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, his name.

Let me ask you a question. Did you ever have a door open for you in somebody else's name? You a nobody, a person didn't know you, never heard of you, but you used a name and a door opened for you.

We had a son killed in Vietnam. Many of you knew about that. Several...1969, my oldest son. And just a short time after that, a month or a year or two it was a doorbell rang, my front door. And I went to the door and opened it and there stood a young man. I had never seen him in my life.

And he said, "Are you Mr. Mahan?"

I said, "Yes, Henry Mahan, yes, sir."

He said, "I knew your son, Robbie." He said, "I was in the service with Robbie and I always thought if I ever came around here I was going to look you up."

And that was all he needed to open my front door, spread my table and give him a place to sleep or anything else he wanted, the name of that boy.

And I will tell you this. If you want anything from almighty God, you are going to get it only through the name of Christ, not your name. Your name won't open heaven's door. Your name, the throne of God is off limits to you and me and everybody else, but in the name of Jesus Christ whosoever shall call on the name of the son of God shall live.

Seeing we have such a great high priest, Jesus Christ the righteous who has passed into the heavens, let us come boldly before the throne of grace and call his name. And whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

My faith won't even get me a hearing on earth let alone in heaven. My name won't get me a hearing, but I tell you Christ's name will. Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide. Jehovah Shamah, the Lord my peace. Jehovah, Tsidkenu, the Lord my righteousness. That will open the door. That will open the door.

You learn to call his name. You learn to rest in his name. You learn to trust his name. You learn to use his name honestly. God the Father loves the Son. He loves the Son and that love never changes and he loves us in Christ and for Christ's sake. God hath forgiven us for Christ's sake.

I open that door and let that boy in for my son's sake. That's right.

Then faith lives upon the blood of Christ.

You know the Scripture says the life of the flesh is in the blood. A lot of people don't like to talk about blood. They get real squeamish when you talk about blood.

"I don't want to talk about blood."

Hold on a minute now.

I was in a Bible conference one time in Arkansas and there were some little boys and girls running around through the church building and one of the little boys was about 12 or 13 years of age ran through a storm door and it just cut him to shreds. And his blood was flowing out like a fountain. And some of the men knowing where the main arteries were and a place to put pressure under the arm and other places got to him and held some of that blood in check. And we took him to the hospital. And you could just see life draining out of his body, his face getting white and pale.

And when they got him to the hospital one of the first things they did was hook up what? Blood. And that blood started flowing into that boy's body. His color came back.

The life of the flesh is in the blood. And I tell you that father was fighting for the blood.

Well, the life of the flesh is in the blood and God said, "I have given it to you upon the altar, the blood maketh atonement for the soul."

That is right. The spiritual life is in the blood, not our blood, his blood, not our blood, his blood. It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul. We are redeemed not by corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious, precious blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanseth us, cleanseth us from all sin.

Oh, boy, yeah, we live by faith upon the blood, upon his name, upon his blood.

And then, thirdly, faith lives upon the righteousness of Christ, the life of Christ, not just his death, his life.

You have read Romans five verse 10 I know. It talks about our being reconciled to God by the death of his Son and being saved by the life of his Son, the life and the death of Christ.

You see, the death of Christ on the cross was not an example. That is not why he died, as an example, as a martyr, as a reformer. He died as a substitute. And most all of you are aware of that. He died under the justice of God, under the wrath of God as a substitute for our sins. It is just like when Abraham took Isaac off the altar and put the ram on the altar the ram was the substitute. The ram died. Isaac lived. Christ died. I live. Christ bore my sins. I don't bear them. Christ paid my debt. I don't owe it. Substitute.

Well, in the same manner his life on earth for 34 years, 33 and a half years, from the cradle to the cross it wasn't an example, although he certainly is an example. But that is not why he lived. He lived as a substitute. He lived like he died as a substitute. He was made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them born under the law. And here on this earth as our substitute he was under the law, obligated to fulfill it, to love God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength and his neighbor as himself to keep God's law in every jot and tittle.

You see, God is righteous and holy. And God demands of us the same holiness. And we can't produce it. But Christ did. He became a man and did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

Are you familiar with Romans three verse 19 through 22? You need to be, you just need to be. Romans three. Start with verse 19 and read through verse 26 actually.

It says, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith it saith to them who are under the law." That is all of us. "That every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now, but now the righteousness of God is manifest without the law. If even the righteousness of God which is by the faithfulness, obedience and life of Jesus Christ. So being justified freely by his grace we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

One of the old writers wrote this hymn. "Jesus thy blood and thy righteousness my beauty are, my glorious dress. Mid flaming worlds in these arrayed with joy shall I lift up my head."

Faith lives on the name of Christ. Faith lives on the blood of Christ. Faith lives on the righteousness of Christ and faith lives on the Word of Christ. He is the Word of God.

He said this. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

You know, my friends, that was the very foundation of Abraham's faith. You talk about Abraham the man of faith, the friend of God, the father of the Faithful. What was the foundation of his faith? He believed God. That is what it says. He believed God. He believed that God was able to do all that he had promised. It didn't matter how old he was or how helpless he was or how weak he was or how unworthy he was. He believed that what God said, God would do.

Now that was his faith and it was counted to him for righteousness. And that wasn't written for his sake alone, but for me, too, and for you if we believe on him who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. He believed God.

There is nothing more precious to the believer than the Word of God in times of joy, in times of sorrow, in times of sickness, in times of health, in times of success and in times of failure. It is his Word. His Word teaches us. His Word rebukes us. His Word convicts us. His Word corrects us. His Word comforts us. His Word inspires us. His Word encourages us. His Word gives faith, gives hope, gives love. His Word. We live on his Word. How can you be without it?

And then in the fifth place in the life of faith, faith lives on the intercession of Christ.

John wrote this. "My little children, these things I write unto you that you sin not." Wouldn't that be wonderful never to sin? Impossible. "But if any man sin, when any man sins we have an advocate with the Father. We have a lawyer. We have an intercessor. We have a mediator who is Jesus Christ the righteous."

And one old writer said, "I may be condemned by the world, I may be condemned by the law. I may be condemned by my conscience, yet I shall carry the day in the court of heaven because of who my lawyer is, my advocate, my advocate, my mediator is the

Lord Jesus Christ. And he is on the throne at the right hand of the Father. He is the Lamb slain. He is the accepted sin offering. He has the Father's ear. He has never lost a case. And his will, his will, his will is the law of that court of heaven because he said, "Father, I will that those whom you have given me will be with me where I am." And faith lives on that.

So, see what I am talking about? It is not the strength of your faith. It is the strength of the object of faith. It is the strength and power of Christ. You look to him. Believe on him. Rest in him. Faith lives upon Christ.