

LIVING BY FAITH

HEBREWS 10:38-39 • TV103A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21ST, 1979

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Transcribed, edited and published
JUNE 15TH, 2016

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Hebrews 10:38-39

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

I’ll be speaking today from the book of **Hebrews chapter 10:38** and our subject is: **“THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH or LIVING BY FAITH.”**

Let’s pray that the Spirit of the living God will give me some wisdom and liberty to deliver this message and that the Spirit of God will give you ears to hear the Word, eyes to see the beauty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and a heart to embrace Him, to receive Him, to love Him, and to believe on Him.

Now, if you will, take your Bible and open it to **Hebrews chapter 10, verse 38-39**; let me read it to you, **Hebrews 10:38-39**: *“Now the just shall live by faith but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him: But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”*

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Now, I have preached from this text many, many, times and I expect to preach from it many more times. And I will give you four reasons why I preached so many sermons from this one text: *“The just shall live by faith.”*

First of all: Because it occurs so many times in the Word of God!

Did you know that this one statement, *“the just shall live by faith”* occurs four times in the Word of God? You will read it in **Habakkuk chapter 2:4**. You will read it in **Romans chapter 1:17**. You will read it in the book of **Galatians chapter 3:11** and you will read it in **Hebrews chapter 10:38**.

Now, a text repeated so many times in God’s Word is sufficient justification to preach on it quite often, *“the just shall live by faith.”* This was the verse of Scripture that the great Martin Luther read and was used of the Holy Spirit to convince him that a man could not be saved by works.

Martin Luther was a monk in a monastery, cooped up in a small cell, trying to establish righteousness before God. He was trying to find acceptance with God by the deeds and works which he performed.

And studying the Bible he came across this verse of Scripture, *“the just shall live by faith”* and he read it and then he went on reading other parts of the Scripture but his mind kept coming back to this verse of Scripture because he wasn’t living by faith.

He wasn’t trying to find redemption by faith. He wasn’t looking to God by faith. Martin Luther was depending upon his works, the deeds of the law, his religion to present him to God almighty, to find acceptance with God almighty.

And it wasn’t until the Holy Spirit made this one verse of Scripture, *“the just shall live by faith;”* it wasn’t until the Holy Spirit made it effectual to his understanding that this man came to any peace or joy in Christ Jesus. *“The just shall live by faith;”* it occurs four times in God’s Word.

Secondly: Another reason why I preach often upon this passage of Scripture, *“the just shall live by faith,”* is because faith is the foundation of all graces!

The graces of God (fruit of the Spirit) are *“love, peace, joy, long-suffering, patience, and meekness”* but the foundation of all these graces is faith because *“without faith it is impossible to please God.”*

And our Lord Jesus said: *“He that believeth on the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life.”* Whatever else he has; he may have some degree of love or some degree of joy or some degree of kindness, humility, and these things but if he hath not faith he hath not life. *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath life. He that believeth not the Son of God shall never see life.”*

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So faith is the foundation of all grace. It's the beginning: "*Without faith it is impossible to please God. He that cometh to God must believe.*" It doesn't say, ought to or should or it would be better if he would; the word says, "*he must believe, he must believe.*" That's the foundation of all grace.

Our Lord Jesus Christ told the apostle Peter that he would deny Him and yet he finished with this remark: "*But I prayed for you, that your faith fail not.*" That's the main foundation. That's the very ground of all other graces.

Thirdly: The reason I preach so often on "*the just shall live by faith*" is this; the Word of God is written that we might believe; that's the purpose of the Word of God!

Now, the Bible is not just a scientific Book. I think the Bible is scientifically accurate. I believe one of these days that we are going to look back over the Word of God and see that it was scientifically accurate.

The Word of God is true and the Word of God is a book of history, accurate accounts of what happened in the past. The Word of God is a book of philosophy and a book of love but the Word of God was written not that you might study the subject of science, philosophy, a book of proverbs or good sayings or morality.

But, the Bible was written that "*you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name.*" That's what it says in **John chapter 20:31**: "*These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.*"

I would say a word to you who teach Sunday school and to you who preach. When you are preaching on the Ark of Noah; that Ark is a picture of Christ. When you are preaching on Israel being delivered from Egypt and the Passover Lamb being sacrificed and the blood on the door and the lintel; that blood is Christ.

The high priest of old was a type of Christ; the tabernacle where God met men and men met God, that tabernacle is Christ. That rock in the wilderness, when the people were thirsty and had no water to drink and God told Moses to smite the rock which he did; water came out of the rock. Well, the Bible clearly says "*that rock was Christ.*"

And our Lord said: "*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.*" That serpent is a picture of Christ.

As Jonah was three days in the belly of the whale, you know; people talk about and sit around and argue about whether Jonah was really in a belly of a fish or he wasn't. And they spend all their time talking about the marvels of being in the whale's belly and so forth.

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The whole reason for that story is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. *“As Jonah was three days in belly of the fish so the Son of man shall be three days in the heart of the earth.”* It’s a picture of the burial of Christ and the resurrection of Christ.

So, this Bible is not just a book of proverbs, a book of science, a book of history, or a book of philosophy; it’s a book of life; the Words of life, and *“they are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ.”*

Now, notice what this text says and what it doesn’t say. It says: *“The just shall live by faith.”* It does not say, now note this carefully and this will help you; it does not say *“the just shall live because of their faith.”*

We don’t live spiritually because of our faith, on account of our faith. Christ said: *“Because I live, ye shall live.”* We live because Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. Eternal life is not in my faith; it’s in the object of my faith, it’s in Christ Jesus the Lord. *“Christ is the hope of glory.”*

When we end this life and our bodies are buried and our souls go to be with God who gave it, the song of the redeemed is going to be: *“Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own precious blood.”*

We are not going to sing the praises of faith, the praises of repentance, the praises of the church, or the praises of the ceremonies and the law; we are going to sing the praises of Christ; He said, *“Because I live ye live.”*

We don’t live because of our faith. Faith is not the cause of life. Christ is the cause of life. Faith is not the begetter of life; Christ is the begetter of life. He is our life, *“Christ in you the hope of glory. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory.”*

So, that needs to be established. This text is not saying *“the just shall live because of his faith.”* This text also does not say: *“The just shall live upon their own faith.”* We don’t feed on faith. I will tell you this; if I had to live on my faith and feed upon my faith and draw my nourishment, spiritual nourishment and strength from my faith; sometimes I would starve to death and you would too because our faith is so small. We feel like the Centurion of old who said: *“Lord; I believe, (you know I believe, but God) help my unbelief.”*

My friend, we don’t feed on our faith. We don’t have faith in our faith. We don’t rest upon our faith. We don’t draw our nourishment and peace and strength from faith. We draw it from Christ.

Our Lord said: *“I’m the bread of life. I’m the water of life. Ho everyone that thirsteth; come unto me and out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water.”* Christ is the water of life. Christ is the bread of life. And He said: *“He that cometh to me shall never hunger. He that believeth on me shall never thirst.”*

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So, this needs to be established as we begin this message on: “**THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH,**” not because of faith.

We live because Christ died for us. We live because Christ intercedes for us. We live because Christ is our substitute and our sin-offering, our great High Priest, and our Mediator with the heavenly Father. Our life is in Christ. Our life is not in our faith. It's in the object of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our life.

And then, we don't live upon our faith. We don't draw from our faith, any strength; we draw our strength from Christ. We don't get any nourishment, or strength, or grace from our faith. Faith may be strong today and weak tomorrow but Christ is the same.

I may be on the mountain top of joy and happiness today and tomorrow in the valley of doubt even, and fear and darkness but Christ is the same. And whether I am on the mountain top or in the valley; I draw all of my life and strength from Him. I live because Christ lives and I feed upon Christ.

He said; “*All ye that hunger and thirst, come to me, you will never hunger and thirst.*” But the Word also says this: “*The just shall live by faith.*” Now, what do we mean by that?

First of all: We live a life of justification before God by faith!

In **Romans 5:1**, the Scripture says: “*Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Do you know what it means to be justified? It means to be completely without sin. It means for all sin to be taken away, blotted out, covered over, removed and remembered no more.

Someone gave this definition one time, he said, “to be justified means just if I had never sinned.” Can you imagine such a thing? And yet, that's exactly what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are justified before God, justified in the sight of God. We are justified not by our words, if I say I have no sin, I'm a liar and the truths not in me. “*If I justify myself my own mouth will condemn me.*”

We are not justified by words or claims. We are not justified by works. No man is justified by works in the sight of God. We are not justified by law. We are justified by the obedience, the righteousness, and the death, of the Son of God. “*He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*”

And before God, on our account, the law is honored, justice is satisfied, and God is reconciled. “*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.*” So, by faith in Christ we live a life of justification before God, in the sight of God. We are totally justified because “*Christ Jesus bare our sins in his body on the tree. By his stripes we are healed.*”

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We live a life, by faith, of complete justification in the sight of God; we are justified. There are no charges against us. *“Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”* That is what Paul asked in **Romans 8**: *“It is God that justifieth.”*

“Who is he that condemneth? Christ has died, is risen again, has ascended to the right hand of God and makes intercession for us.” We live by faith, not by works, not by deeds, not by law, by faith, a life of complete justification before God. That’s happiness, that’s peace, and that’s joy to know that our sins are forgiven.

Do you know what Paul wrote in **Romans 4:7 and 8**? *“Blessed is the man to whom God will not charge sin. Blessed is the man, (happy is the man) to whom God will not impute (or reckon) sin (any sin).”*

Now, that’s not performed by us. We can’t do a thing in the world about the sin we have already committed; we are now committing, and we shall commit. But God can do something about them.

He can do it in a way that is satisfying to His justice and honoring to His holiness and in keeping with His righteousness and that’s by the death of His Son. So, we live, live by faith. We live a life of justification before God.

Secondly: We live a life of righteousness before God!

Do you know that every believer is totally and completely sanctified in Christ Jesus? I know there’s a progressive sanctification and I know there’s an eternal sanctification. We are sanctified or separated or set apart by the act, the will, the council, and purpose of God almighty.

And we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit and we are progressively sanctified by the Word of God. But my friend, there is a sense in which every believer is totally and completely sanctified by the obedience, by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have a perfect righteousness in Christ. The hymn writer put it this way:

**“When I stand before his throne
Clothed in beauty, not my own
Then, and not till then, shall I know
How much I owe, how much I owe.”**

Paul put it this way in **Romans 5:19**, he said: *“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”* By the offense of one man, by the sin of one man, many were made sinners. By the disobedience and sin of one man, we were made sinners. By the righteousness and obedience of Christ we were made holy and righteous.

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So, we live by faith. This is all by faith, it comes by faith, it's received by faith, and it's given by faith. We live by faith, a life of complete justification, no charge, no condemnation, and no sin. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ."*

We live a life of perfect righteousness: "With his spotless garments on we are as holy as God's own Son."

Thirdly; then, we live a life of peace and a life of joy. That's something the whole world here is trying to find, peace and joy. Do you know where it's found? It's found in Christ. *"He's the Prince of Peace."*

He talked about my joy, *"that my joy might be fulfilled in you."* He said, *"Come unto me; I will give you rest."* He said; *"My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

Do you know; there are three things that I believe every religious person is looking for? He's looking for the way to God. Now, I know a lot of them are trying to find the way to God by the baptismal pool, and the sacramental tables and the communion tables.

They are trying to find their way to God by works, deeds, laws, humanitarian efforts, and all of these things. But Christ said: *"I am the way. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."*

Do you want to know, sincerely want to know, the way to God, the way to God in mercy and salvation, the way to God in reality and communion and in fellowship? Christ is the way.

I believe that most religious people are looking for the truth. And I imagine lots of people today are saying, "I wonder if that preacher preaching right there on that program is telling the truth? Is he telling me the truth?"

Who's speaking the truth? Who's preaching the truth? Everybody says they are preaching the truth, and yet so many are preaching so many different things. Who's preaching the truth?

Christ said, *"I am the truth."* The truth is a person; it's not a philosophy it's a person. Christ is the truth! He's the truth of God. *"No man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him."*

Would you know God? That's what the disciples said, they said; *"Show us the Father."* He said: *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. The words that I speak are not my words, they are his words: The works that I do are not my works but his works."*

Would you know God? Would you know the truth? Don't look for the truth in any living human being today; look for the truth in Christ, the truth about yourself, the truth about God, the truth about justice and righteousness, love, and holiness. The truth is Christ!

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And then men are looking for life, eternal life. Where is eternal life? Where can I get eternal life? What can I do to inherit eternal life? What must I do to gain eternal life?

Christ said: *“I am the life.”* The life is in Him; eternal life is in Christ. *“Eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent.”* Christ is the life! I can’t emphasize that strongly enough. *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.”*

What is faith? *“The just shall live by faith.”* What is faith? All right; look at **Hebrews 11:1**, right down there, **Hebrews 10:38** is our text: *“The just shall live by faith.”*

Now, drop down just two verses there to **Hebrews 11:1**; and it says: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* Now, that’s faith. Well, let’s look at that a little bit.

Years ago an old writer gave this definition of faith; “faith is knowledge, confidence, and committal.” That’s good. *“I know whom I have believed;”* (you can’t trust an unrevealed Christ), *and I’m persuaded that he’s able to keep that which I’ve committed to him.”*

It’s knowing Christ. It’s having confidence in Christ and it’s a committal, a sincere, earnest, eternal committal of myself to Christ, not just my talents, and time, and tithes, but committing my heart.

God said, “give me your heart.” *“My son; give me your heart,” If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead.”* Give me yourself. It’s a committal of self to Christ.

But here’s a definite, a scriptural definition of faith; it says, *“faith is.”* We are always safer when we get scriptural definitions. You know, Christ said: *“Eternal life is to know God.”* Our Lord said that.

And here, Paul writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says, *“faith is the substance of things hoped for.”* Well, what are the things that we hope for? In order to understand this verse let’s answer the question, *“what are the things we hope for?”*

Well, we hope for forgiveness of sins. We hope for righteousness before God in Christ. *“Who shall stand in his presence, he that hath clean hands and a pure heart?”* I want that righteousness. I want to know that righteousness.

Then, I hope for eternal joy, and eternal glory. I hope for the resurrection of this body. I hope for deliverance from death and judgment. I hope for eternal fellowship with God. Those are the things hoped for.

Well then, he says: *“Faith is the substance (or faith is the confidence, insurance, and the title-deed to these things at this moment).”* These things are our hope.

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These are the things we hope for, forgiveness of sin, righteousness, acceptance with God, resurrection, and eternal life. Well, faith is the ground of that hope. I hope for those things.

And what is the substance of them, the ground of them, the foundation of them, and the title-deed to them? It's to believe, "*Abraham believed God.*" Abraham had the promises; "*He staggered not at the promises of God.*" but he believed that everything God said God would do and perform."

Now, that's what faith is; it's believing just that, it's "*staggering not at the promise.*" What a great promise it is, complete remission of sins, complete knowledge of all curse, all condemnation, and all guilt.

What a blessing is righteousness before God, to stand holy, justified, without blame, before God. Well now, faith is the substance of that; it is the ground of that, and it is the evidence of it. It's the assurance of it. It's our faith.

Abraham believed God. Abraham, why are you leaving your home? I believe God. Abraham, why are you giving Lot the plains and going to the mountains? I believe God. Abraham, why are you sitting about waiting on a son in your old age? I believe God. That's the substance of the whole thing, I believe God. Who do you believe?

Then he said "*faith is the evidence of things not seen.*" Faith is the proof of things not seen. What are the things not seen? Well, there are a whole lot of things not seen in regard to our relationship with God.

Everything that happened in eternity past is not seen, in the eternal councils of God; God established a covenant with His Son and with the Holy Spirit. God purposed to save a people. In all of that Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Everything that happens in time was purposed in eternity. I haven't seen that.

Then, in time the virgin was with child and brought forth a Son and the star hung over His birthplace and the angels announced His incarnation. He walked the earth and lived a perfect life and died on the cross and was buried and rose again. I didn't see any of that.

And then in time, the Holy Spirit came and regenerated me and called me by His grace and revealed Christ to my heart. Those things are not seen.

Then, in the future God is going to raise us and God's going to receive us unto Himself and God is going to give us eternal glory. These things are unseen.

Then what proof do we have that these things are facts, not fiction? Faith; we believe God.

The hymn writer says:

"I serve a risen Saviour

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**He's in the world today
I know that He is living
Whatever men may say,**

**I see His hand of mercy
I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him
He's always near.**

**He lives, Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way,**

**He lives, He lives, salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives
He lives in my heart."**

"Faith is the evidence of things not seen," the proof of it, the reality of it in heart.

And I will tell you; faith will overcome anything. *"Thanks be unto God who causes us to always triumph in Christ."* Believers are victorious in Christ.

Faith will triumph over works as Abel's sacrifice. Faith will triumph over death as Enoch's translation. Faith will triumph over time as Noah's long-suffering 120 years.

Faith will triumph over home and family as Abraham proved by leaving his father's house. Faith will triumph over infirmity as Sarah proved bringing forth a child in old age. Faith will triumph over natural affections as Abraham proved by the sacrifice of his son, living by faith, living by faith!