

LIVING BY FAITH

(Hebrews 11:6)

In light of all we've studied, what does it mean to *live by faith*?

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for...

- *⁴By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead*
- *⁵By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death.... For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God*
- *⁷By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark*
- *⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country*
- *¹¹And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise*
- *¹⁷By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice*
- *²⁰By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future*
- *²¹By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped*
- *²²By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones*
- *²³By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict*
- *²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel*
- *²⁹By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land*
- *³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days*
- *³¹By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed*
- *³²And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. ³⁶Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— ³⁸the world was not worthy of them.*

*⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must **believe that HE EXISTS and that HE REWARDS those who earnestly seek him.***

- Those living by faith see a **Design to life and play their part**
- Those living by faith expect the **Designer to play His part**

QUOTES OF NOTE

Faith may be defined briefly as an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable. (H. L. Mencken, American author)

Occasionally we talk of our Christianity as something that solves problems, and there is a sense in which it does. Long before it does so, however, it increases both the number and the intensity of the problems. Even our intellectual questions are increased by the acceptance of a strong religious faith.... If a man wishes to avoid the disturbing effect of paradoxes, the best advice is for him to leave the Christian faith alone. (Elton Trueblood, Quaker philosopher)

Faith...is not so much believing this thing or that thing about God as it is hearing a voice that says, "Come unto me." We hear the voice, and then we start to go without really knowing what to believe either about the voice or about ourselves; and yet we go. Faith is standing in the darkness, and a hand is there, and we take it. (Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat*)

A person who lives in faith must proceed on incomplete evidence, trusting in advance what will only make sense in reverse. (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

The human mind is not capable of grasping the universe. We are like a little child entering a huge library. The walls are covered to the ceilings with books in many different tongues. The child knows that someone must have written these books. It does not know who or how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. But the child notes a definite plan in the arrangement of the books—a mysterious order which it does not comprehend, but only dimly suspects. (Albert Einstein, physicist and Nobel laureate)

God wishes to be seen, and he wishes to be sought, and he wishes to be expected, and he wishes to be trusted. (Julian of Norwich, 14th century Christian mystic)

Once there was a man who dared God to act. *Burn the bush like you did for Moses, God. And I will follow. Collapse the walls like you did for Joshua, God. And I will fight. Still the waves like you did on Galilee, God. And I will listen.*

And so the man sat by a bush, near a wall, close to the sea and waited for God to act. And God heard the man, so God answered. He sent fire, not for a bush, but for a church. He brought down a wall, not of brick, but of sin. He stilled a storm, not in a sea, but in a soul.

And God waited for the man to respond. And He waited.... And He waited.... And He waited.

But because the man was looking at bushes and not hearts; bricks, and not lives, seas, and not souls, he decided that God had done nothing. Finally, he looked to God and asked, *Have you lost your power?* And God looked at him and said, *Have you lost your sight?* (Adapted with minor changes from Max Lucado, *A Distant Thunder*)

Lord, loosen in me the hold of visible things;
 Help me to walk by faith and not by sight;
 I would, through thickest veils and coverings,
 See into the chambers of the living light.
 Lord, in the land of things that swell and seem,
 Help me to walk by the other light supreme,
 Which shows thy facts behind man's vaguely hinting dream.
 (George MacDonald, *The Diary of an Old Soul*)