

Outline Ten: Faith

“The just shall live by faith.” This declaration of the Christian’s principle of life is found four times in the Bible: Hab. 2:1-5 (OT); Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:10, 11; and Heb. 10:38. In Habakkuk, we see the difference between the lives of the unjust and the just. The unjust are puffed up and live by their own self-sufficiency. But the just live by faith – their confidence is in God. To them, faith is more than a philosophy of life; it is the very principle of life (Hab. 2:4 OT). The just shall live his whole life by faith. He saved by faith (Acts 16:31); he is kept by faith (1 Pet. 1:7); and he lives by faith (Gal. 2:20). His faith shall be tried many times and in many ways (1 Pet. 1:7), but faith will always be vindicated, because it is more than equal to any occasion. Faith knows how to wait on the Lord (Isa 40:31 OT), and it is always victorious (1 John 5:4)

Faith defies reason; it moves mountains (Mitt. 17:14-21). Faith does not always face facts; it never gives up (Heb. 11:32-39). Faith says, “God is working out His perfect will in my life, and I can wait, endure, and suffer.” Faith does not make anything easy, but it does make all things possible.

- 1) **What is Faith? By Faith We Understand** (Heb. 11:1-3) **1) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.** **2)** For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. **3)** By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

“Now faith is the substance [title deed] of things hoped for ...” Your faith is your title deed to eternal life. Just as a title deed is evidence of real estate, so your faith evidence or your eternal estate in God (2 Cor. 4:18).

- a) Faith is taking God at His word and asking no questions (Heb. 11:8).
 - b) **Faith is knowing that “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose”** (Rom.8:28). Faith does not believe that all things are good, or that all things work well. It does believe that all things (good or bad) work together for good to them that love God.
 - c) **Faith has two sides.** One side has to do with the intellect. It is an intellectual conviction that Jesus Christ is God. The other side has to do with the will. It is a volitional surrender of the will to Jesus Christ as Master. This is seen when Thomas believed and confessed, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). “My Lord” this was volitional surrender; “My God” this was intellectual conviction. Together you have saving faith (John 20:31). Saving faith is an intellectual conviction that Jesus is God, and a volitional surrender to Him as Lord (Master) of your life. By faith, the mind trusts in God; the heart responds to the love of God; the will submits to the commands of God; and the life obeys in the service of God.
 - d) **Faith is paradoxical.** It goes beyond reason. It believes without understanding “why.” It sings in prison (Acts 16:25). It glories in tribulations (Rom. 5:3). It chooses to suffer afflictions (Heb. 11:25). It accepts all things as a part of God’s will (Phil. 1:12)
 - e) **You are not born with this faith.** It comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). This is why we are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, that they may hear and believe (Rom. 10:13, 14).
- 2) **The Importance of Faith** (Eph. 6:16) **16)** ... above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one

The shield of faith is a vital part of the Christian’s armor. You are to put on the “whole armor of God” because the Christian life is a warfare, a spiritual conflict. As Paul names the different parts of the Christian’s armor, he comes to the shield and emphasizes its importance by saying, “Above all, taking the shield of faith...”

For with the shield of faith, nothing can hurt you; "... in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). **The importance of faith is seen in that:**

- a) You can not be saved without faith (John 3:36)
- b) You cannot live victoriously over the world without faith (1 John 5:4)
- c) You cannot please God without faith (Heb. 11:6)
- d) You cannot pray without faith (James 1:6)
- e) You cannot have peace with God without faith (Rom. 5:1)
- f) You cannot have joy without faith (1 Pet. 1:8)
- g) You are justified by faith and not by works (Gal. 2:16)
- h) You live by faith Gal. 2:20)
- i) You are made righteous by faith (Rom. 14:1-4)
- j) Christ dwells in your heart by faith (Eph. 3:17)
- k) The Holy Spirit is received by faith (Gal. 3:2)
- l) "Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23)

Faith is important because it honors God, and God always honors faith.

- 3) **Little Faith** (Matt. 14:28-33) **28) And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water. 29) So He said, "Come."** And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. **30) But he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord save me!" 31) And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32) And when they got into the boat the wind ceased. 33) Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."**

At this stage in the spiritual growth of Peter, he was a man of "little faith." However, after Pentecost, he became a spiritual giant. Let us take a good look at his "little faith" and profit from it. Jesus, walking on the water in the midst of a storm, came to His distressed disciples. Peter asked to come to Jesus on the water. He must have thrilled at the thought of doing the impossible. Jesus said, "Come."

- a) **Peter did the impossible thing: He walked on the water, by faith.**
- b) **Next, Peter did the conceivable thing: He saw the storm and had a second thought – he doubted.** For a moment, he lost sight of Jesus. He may have turned and started back to the boat (Luke 9:12).
- c) **Now Peter did the natural thing:** He feared destruction. Doubt always breeds fear.
- d) **Then Peter did the expected thing:** He began to sink – he failed.
- e) **Now Peter did the right thing:** He prayed – "Lord save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him. Once more Peter made contact with Jesus by faith.
- f) **Again Peter did the impossible thing:** He walked on the water with Jesus to the boat. In this lesson, we see the success and failure of "little faith."

Now, let us recap the steps that led to failure. Peter started by faith and walked on water. Then he saw the storm and had second thoughts that lead to doubt, that produced fear, that caused him to turn back, that brought about failure.

You need a faith that is bigger than the elements that would drag you down to defeat. You can have big faith "prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:20-21) and by feeding your faith on the Word of God (Rom 10:17). You can have mountain high faith.

- 4) **Three Kinds of Faith** (John 11:21-44) **21) Now Martha said to Jesus "Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died. 22) "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23) Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24) Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26) "And whoever lives and believes in**

Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27) She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." 28) And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." 29) As soon as she heard that she arose quickly and came to Him. 30) Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. 31) Then Jews who were with here in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there." 32) Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33) When Jesus therefore saw here weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled, 34) and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." 35) Jesus wept. 36) And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!" 37) But some said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man also from dying?" 38) Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39) Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be stench, for he has been dead four days." 40) Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" 41) And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me. 42) And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that "Thou didst send Me." 43) And when He said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." 44) He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

In this chapter, we see the faith of Martha in connection with the resurrection of her brother Lazarus. Now Lazarus fell ill, and Martha and her sister Mary sent for Jesus to come and heal him. Jesus delayed His coming until Lazarus was dead and in the tomb for four days. Then He came to raise him from the dead, and found the limited, fundamental faith of Martha His only obstacle.

- a) **Martha's faith was limited.** She said, "Lord if You had been here, my brother would not have died." The death of Lazarus meant the end of Martha's faith. She believed that Jesus had the power raise her brother up from the sick bed, but not from the dead. Her limited faith restricted the power of Christ. Limited faith is controlled by circumstances, and motivated by fear of failure.
- b) **Martha's faith was fundamental.** Jesus said, "Your brother shall rise again." These words were spoken to kindle hope and faith in Martha; but, she said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Martha declared here fundamental faith in a great truth, but that is not enough. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus was saying that He had all power over life and death. Then He asked, "Do you believe this?" Martha evaded the question by stating her fundamental faith in here creed, to the living, all powerful Christ. Her faith limited the power of Christ, and "Jesus wept." Jesus wept when He came to raise Lazarus from the dead and found limited, fundamental only.
- c) **At last, unlimited faith came to Martha when she consented to have the stone moved from the grave.** When Jesus first ordered the stone taken from the grave, Martha objected in unbelief. Then Jesus, challenging her to believe, said, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" Martha believed and waited to see the glory of God, and she was not disappointed. We often here that "seeing is believing," but this is not so. You believe and then see. Faith comes before sight. Now Martha's faith no longer limited the power of Christ. She consented to have the stone moved from the tomb and Jesus "cried out with a Lord voice, "Lazarus, come forth,"" and Lazarus was raised up. Don't be satisfied with limited, fundamental faith only, when you can have unlimited faith that pleases God and reveals his glory.

- 5) **The Hall of Faith** (Heb. 11:32-39) **32)** 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, **33)** who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, **34)** 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. **35)** Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection, **36)** and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. **37)** They were stoned, they sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated **38)** (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. **39)** And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, **40)** because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Notes: **This chapter is call the “Hall of Faith.”** You need to come here often and linger long, that your faith may become strong in the Lord; for in this Scripture we get a view of the history if Israel and the church, as it is written by faith, in the blood of the saints.

They worshiped by faith as Abel. They walked by faith as Enoch. They worked by faith as Noah. They lived by faith as Abraham. They governed by faith Israel. They fought by faith Joshua. They conquered by faith as Gideon. They subdued kingdoms by faith as David. They closed the mouths of lions by faith as Daniel. They walked through the fire by faith as the three Hebrew children. They suffered by faith as Paul. They died by faith as Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

By faith they were patient in suffering, courageous in battle, made strong out of weakness and were victorious in defeat. They were more than conquerors by faith. It is only by faith in the all-powerful Christ that you can be superior to circumstances and victorious over all the evil forces that would destroy you. “Fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith.” The faith of the saints inspires us, but we look to Jesus as our example of faith.