

Faith in God Is Life Itself

Hebrews 10:36-38

“My righteous one shall live by faith” (v. 38 NAS) or *“The just shall live by faith”* (v. 38 KJV). This is life. What does it mean for a Christian to “live by faith”? The writer of Hebrews is about to illustrate (Ch. 11), but before we look at the sixteen men and women he names, let’s take a closer look at faith’s strength! *“The just shall live by faith”* is a phrase used three other times in the Bible (Hab.2:4; Rom.1:17; Gal.3:11). *“The Lord takes no pleasure in those who shrink back ... for without faith it is impossible to please God.”*

I. Faith brings vitality and strength through trusting that God is always working on my behalf.

“My righteous one [the believer, the Christian, the saint] **shall live by faith.**” This is a description of us. What does it mean, I **live** by faith? It was said of Esau that *“Esau will live by the sword”* (Gen. 27:40). That means by that which Esau’s sword subdued and captured, he would live; not the sword itself. It is very easy for Christians to wrongly turn their focus to faith as the essence of the Christian life. It is not my binoculars that delight me at a football game; it is the game being played on the field. So, too, not my faith (the kind, the quality, or amount), but the object of my faith brings life (*zoe*).

A. Faith in God only ...

This means that though we recognize various means for our sustenance, God alone provides it. Our feelings are fickle and fleeting as are our decisions and future. Our God alone changes not.

B. Faith in God ordinarily ...

“There is nothing little to the Father in the things that bother His child” (Charles H. Spurgeon). *“He who gave us His Son ... how shall he not also with Him freely give us all things?”* (Rom. 8:32).

II. Faith brings vitality and strength by setting aside my religious performance to obtain God’s favor.

Martin Luther went to Rome in 1511 to “get rid of sins.” He went to the Santa Scala (Holy Stairs) in the Chapel of St. Lawrence to crawl up the 28 marble steps on his hands and knees. The Roman Catholic Church believes Helena, mother of Constantine, brought the steps back from Jerusalem in AD 326. These are allegedly the steps that Jesus climbed as he went to face Pilate after His beatings. In Luther’s day, you climbed the steps on your hands and knees, pausing and saying a prayer on each step in order to obtain an indulgence (forgiveness). While climbing these steps, a verse kept coming to Luther’s mind *“The just shall live by faith.”* To the astonishment of all around him, he stood up and never again sought to obtain the favor of God by his performance. We, too, should live by our faith.

III. Faith brings vitality and strength in every condition, experience and stage of life.

My righteous one shall live by faith. It doesn’t say *has lived* or *lived*; it is the present, continuous tense. I once heard of a slave during Civil War times whose master, a Christian man, was dying. The slave was asked, “Is your master dying.” “Yes sir, he is.” “And how is he dying.” “He is dying full of life.”

A. In times of blessing, your faith in God is needed.

George Mueller went from praying for food for his orphanage to becoming a world famous evangelist with plenty. “I need more faith to keep me from making a god of what I have, and trusting it.”

B. In times of loss, your faith in God is needed.

Mistrust of God has never put to flight the enemies of your soul. Trust in the Lord and do good.

C. In all times, and with perseverance, your faith in God is pleasing to Him.

This doesn’t mean there will be no tears, nor will there be no sorrows—there will be in the midst of your pain a steady grip on the binoculars of faith as you peer into the heavens and see God. He is good. He is loving. He is kind. He is just. He is powerful. He is King. He is Lord. He is Father.