

The Joy of Faith in God's Promises

Hebrews 11:13-14

"All these died in faith... having seen and welcomed (the promises) from a distance..." (Hebrews 11:13).

I. A believer's great joy is in receiving and believing promises though they are not fulfilled –yet.

This is what faith is: "It is the assurance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen" (v.1).

Four times the Scriptures declare: "The just will live by faith." Our faith in the promises of God in Christ are just as essential to our salvation as His death for us. Faith is not our Savior, but with faith in what God has promised to us in Christ, we see the Savior, we welcome Him, and we rejoice in Him! *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad"* (John 8:56). Abraham was looking forward in faith to the Messiah (My day), and we look back in faith to the Messiah's day.

(A). The soul who believes the promises of God in Christ finds personal humility.

"As for the proud one, his soul is not right within: but the just will live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4).

(B). The soul who believes the promises of God in Christ finds true righteousness.

"For God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith: for the just will live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

(C). The soul who believes the promises of God in Christ finds peace with God.

"No one is justified by the law in God's presence; for the just will live by faith" (Galatians 3:11).

(D). The soul who believes the promises of God in Christ finds rest from self-effort.

"Now the just shall live by faith: I have no pleasure in the one who draws back" (Hebrews 10:38).

II. The ability to see and welcome God's promises allows a believer to confess to being a stranger.

"The figure of the 'stranger' applied to the child of God here on earth, is very pertinent and full. The analogies between one who is in a foreign country and a Christian in this world are many" (AW Pink).

- In a strange land one is not appreciated for his birth, but is avoided because of his birth (John 15:19)
- The habits, ways, language and customs of the countrymen are strange to the foreigner (1 Peter 4:4).
- A stranger has to learn to be content with the bare necessities of life (1 Timothy 6:8).
- A foreigner needs to be careful not to give offense to the countrymen of the land (Colossians 4:5).
- A stranger in a foreign land has to continually enquire his way (Psalm 5:8).
- Unless he conforms to the ways of that foreign country, he is easily identified (Matthew 26:73).
- He is often assailed with homesickness, for his heart is not where his body is (Philippians 1:23).

III. One of the ways to cement your faith is to say what you believe to others, not just think it (v. 14).

They *confessed* that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. They told others. They lived it. Abraham sought no inheritance here, but only a place to bury his wife and himself. Jacob made the same confession to Pharaoh (Gen,47:9). David said the same thing after Israel became a nation.

"Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Psalm 39:12).

"I am a stranger in earth: hide not thy commandments from me" (Psalm 119:19).

"For we are sojourners before you, and tenants in the land, just all our fathers were: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none who abide" (1 Chronicles 29:15).

We are strangers, because our home is in another country.

We are pilgrims because we are simply passing through this strange land on our journey home.