

LIVING BY FAITH

HEBREWS 10:38-39 • TV148A

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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.”

Our subject this morning is: **“LIVING BY FAITH.”**

I want you to open your Bible to the **Book of Hebrews**. I will be reading from the **10th chapter, Hebrews 10**: we will read **verses 38 and 39**.

Here is the text in **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.”* Four times in the Word of God we read these words, *“the just (or the justified or the redeemed) shall live by faith.”*

Our Lord was pleased to record this sentence four times in his Word, in the **Book of Habakkuk**, in the **Book of Romans**, in the **Book of Galatians** and in the **Book of Hebrews**, *“the just shall live by faith.”*

I wish I had the ability to describe to you the importance of faith, the importance of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. I do know, in **Hebrews chapter 11:6** it says this: *“without faith it is impossible to please God.”* It doesn't say that it is difficult or hard to do; *“without faith it is impossible to please*

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God. He that cometh to God must believe that he is and he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Our Master said: *“all things are possible to them that believe.”*

Let’s look at this statement a moment, *“the just (or the justified) shall live by faith,”* that is, the just begin life by faith; we begin the spiritual journey by faith. We enter into eternal life by faith.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life: He that believeth not the Son (whatever he does, whatever he knows), he that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

When the Philippian jailer came to the apostle Paul and fell down trembling, he cried *“sirs, what must I do to be saved (or how can I acquire or attain eternal life)?”* This is the answer of the apostle; *“believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved and thy house.”*

When our Lord gathered His disciples about Him before He ascended back to the Father, after He had died on the cross and was buried and rose again, the disciples assembled round about Him, the Master gave them this commission!

He said, *“All power (all authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Now, look at our text again in **Hebrews 10:38**, Paul says: *“the just shall live by faith; (he begins to live by faith). If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”* Now watch this next verse, **verse 39**: *we are of them that believe to the saving of the soul (not of them that worketh or earneth the salvation of the soul); we are them that believe to the salvation of the soul.”* So, *“the just begin to live by faith.”*

Secondly: The just continue to live by faith! We are not justified by faith and then perfected by the flesh. We are not justified by faith and then made pure or sanctified by the law; we continue to live by faith. Paul said, *“We walk by faith, and not by sight.”*

Galatians 2:20 says: *“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: And the life which I now live (in the flesh), I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Listen to Paul in **Colossians 1:22**; The Lord Jesus by the body of His sacrifice and His blood hath reconciled us to the Father. *“He has reconciled us and will present us holy and unblameable in God’s sight if we continue in the faith.”* Do you see that in **Colossians 1:23**, *“if we continue in the faith?”*

There is no promise to those who depart from faith. There’s no promise to those, though they begin in faith that do not continue in faith; there is no promise. So, the believer, the justified, he begins by faith and he continues by faith: He shall live by faith.

Two or three times in **Romans 8** Paul says: “*we walk by faith, and not by sight.*”

Thirdly: The justified shall die in faith! He continues to live in faith and this is the way he dies. In **Hebrews chapter 11:13**, speaking of all of those great men of faith, it says: “*and these all died in faith.*”

They died not having had faith on one occasion, not having had faith sometime in the past; they died in the faith. That is how they lived, that is how they began, that’s how they continued, and that’s how they died; they died in faith.

Our Lord said: “*I am the resurrection and the life. He that liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*” So, you see the importance of faith; “*without faith it is impossible to please God.*”

So, here is the question: what is saving faith, what is this true and living faith? How can I know that I have the faith of God’s elect? What are the marks of saving faith?

There are all kinds of faith. There is mental faith, material faith, temporary faith, and all kinds of faith but what are the marks of saving faith? Let me give you some words that might help. Now listen to these words; I’ve got five, or six, or seven of them.

First of all: We know this and we are confident of this; this is true from the Word of God. This is not what I suppose, or what I think, or what I heard somebody say; I know this for a fact that God is the source of faith.

That is where faith comes from; God is the source of faith. Now, why do I say that? Well, faith is a grace. Faith, like love and hope is a grace and all grace is of God.

Secondly: Faith is a gift! There is no question about that: “*for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*” If faith is a gift, “*we know that every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from God.*”

Thirdly: Then, my friend; faith is a blessing! God is the author of every blessing; there is no question about that. If any man lacks faith, there is one place to go, the same place where you go for everything else that is good, holy, and beautiful, and that is to God.

James says: “*If any man lacks wisdom let him ask of God.*” I say to you, if any man needs faith or lacks faith or desires faith, let him go to God; God is the source of all faith.

Listen to **Philippians 1:29**: “*for unto you is given, (that’s a gift), unto you is given in the behalf of Christ, (for the sake of Christ, and on the merits of his work), unto you is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake.*”

Do you see? It is very clear from Scripture that “*faith is the gift of God,*” and God is the source of all faith. “*The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

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“*The wages of sin is death*” and there is no question about this; we earn judgment, we earn condemnation, we earn God’s wrath; we deserve it.

Robert Murray McCheyne discovered “*that faith is the gift of God.*”

First of all: That’s first, the source (“*unto you is given in the behalf of Christ*”). God is the source of faith.

Secondly: I know that Christ is the object of faith! Faith has to have an object. We believe in someone or we believe on someone. We believe in something. You see, faith has to have an object, just like love; it has to have an object.

You may love yourself but you love somebody. You may love a friend but you love somebody. Faith has got to have an object.

Faith doesn’t look to an experience; true faith does not look toward a feeling. True faith does not look to a time or a place. Listen to me; I am telling you the truth: Faith does not look to a feeling, an experience, a time or a place; faith looks to a person.

The object of true and saving faith is a person. If your faith has any other object than Jesus Christ, it is a false faith; there is no question about it. Christ is the object of faith. “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth on the Son hath life.*” That’s clear all the way through the Scriptures.

Why is Christ the object of faith? Well, here are the reasons:

First: “*He is the surety of the everlasting covenant;*” Christ our Surety!

What is a surety? It is a guarantor. Back in eternity past, almighty God made Christ the “*surety of the everlasting covenant,*” the Surety of His people. Christ became the Surety.

There’s a story in the Old Testament when Joseph was down in Egypt and his brothers came to Egypt to buy corn. They didn’t know Joseph but he knew them. They had left their little brother Benjamin at home.

So, Joseph kept one of the brethren; I believe that he kept Simeon. He said: “The other nine of you go back and you bring your little brother and when you bring him I will let this fellow go.” They told him that they had a little brother at home: Joseph said: “well, you go get him.”

That was Joseph’s brother, Benjamin; he wanted to see him. They said: “You fellows go back and get this little brother of yours and bring him up here and then I will let Simeon go.”

So, the brethren went home and they told their father Jacob; they said: “this king in Egypt, he has plenty of corn, and plenty of food and he is glad to give it to us: But he doesn’t believe us; he doesn’t take us at our word.”

“We told him that we had a little brother and he told us to go get him and bring him up here, but he kept Simeon in jail. He would let him go if we would bring the little brother.” Jacob said, “*No. Joseph is not, now Simeon is not, and would I lose Benjamin too?*” He told them “no.”

So, Judah stepped forth and Judah is the tribe from which Christ came: “*the scepter shall not leave the tribe of Judah until Shiloh come.*” Judah stepped forth and he said: “my father; let me be surety for Benjamin.”

“I will take him to Egypt and if I don’t bring him back you will hold me responsible, me and my wife, and all of my children and everything I have. I will be responsible to bring Benjamin back home.” That’s a surety, “I will stand for him; I will go on the line for him; I will bring him back or you hold me responsible.”

Now, the reason that Christ is the object of faith is that He is our Surety. The heavenly Father hath committed into His care, into His trust, all of His people. Christ said: “*All that my father giveth me shall come to me:*

“I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me and this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that he hath given me, I will lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day.” Christ is the Surety.

Secondly: Now, another reason why He is the object of faith is that He is our Representative!

He was not only the Surety in eternity past but “*he is the surety of an everlasting covenant,*” a guarantor of His people for He came down here to this earth “*in the likeness of sinful flesh. He took on himself the likeness of sinful flesh:*

“He was tested, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.” God in human flesh, and He met and obeyed perfectly God’s Holy Law as our representative. And all that He did was imputed to us or reckoned to us or charged to our account, so that in Christ we have a perfect righteousness.

Thirdly: That’s the reason He is the object of faith; He’s our Surety, He’s our Representative, not only that but He is our Substitute.

You see, the law of God in salvation must be honored, but so must the justice of God. Not only did God command us to obey the law perfectly inwardly and outwardly, but He commanded us to satisfy His justice in death, “*for the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*”

Christ came down here and “*his soul was made and offering for sin,*” (not only His soul but His body). “*He bore our sins in his body on the tree that we being dead to sin might live in him.*”

“We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. He who was without sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” So, that’s why He is the object of faith; He is our Substitute.

Fourthly: Another reason why the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of faith is that He is our Mediator!

Now, the heavenly Father says, *“there’s one God.”* Do you believe that? “Well, sure I believe that preacher.” *“There’s one God and there’s one mediator between God and men and that’s the man Christ Jesus.”*

You see, one Mediator, no one else is the mediator, no one else is the Great, High Priest; Christ is the Mediator. He’s the object of faith!

Fifthly: Christ that prophet!

God told Moses, *“I’ll raise up from among the people one like unto you and him shall ye hear.”* He’s that prophet to reveal God. He will tell everything about God. He will reveal God to the people.

Sixthly: He’s our King to reign over us and He is our life! *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the father but by me.”*

So, what is saving faith? Where does it come from? How do you acquire it?

First of all: God is the source!

Secondly: Christ is the object of saving faith!

Our eyes must be turned to Christ. We must look to Him. He said: *“Look unto me and be ye saved. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on the Son might have life.”*

Thirdly: Watch this word: foundation! We know not only that God is the source of faith and Christ is the object of faith but the Bible is the foundation of faith.

Now, nature reveals to you there is a God. You can go out on a summer night and stand under the starry sky and see the moon and the stars and all the other planets and the wonders of nature and you can know beyond a doubt that there is a God.

In fact, in **Romans 1**, that is one of the charges against the pagan Gentiles is *“that which may be known of God is revealed unto them, being revealed by the things that are made so they are without excuse.”*

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But nature will not reveal to you the mercy of God in Christ. You can stand and look at the stars and the moon, the trees, and the sun, the planets and all the things that are made until you die and it still wouldn't tell you about salvation.

Will God forgive sin, how does God forgive sin, who is Jesus Christ, what did He do, why did He do it, where is He now, will God show mercy to the chief of sinners? You can't find those answers in the stars and the moon.

Fourthly: And another thing, conscience reveals the holiness of God!

You will find that in **Romans 2:14-15**; *“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.”*

Every man knows right from wrong although he has never seen a Bible or heard a preacher or heard the law read? How does he know? It's his conscience!

But the only way; now listen to me, only the Bible, only the Scripture can reveal the mercy of God and the grace of God and the salvation and redemption of God in Jesus Christ. There's no other way!

I'm not being hardheaded and I'm not being dogmatic over it at all; I'm not being poetic or radical. I'm just stating the fact that nature will reveal the existence of God, *“yea, even the powers of God, yea, even the wisdom of God.”*

Conscience will reveal to you the holiness of God and the righteousness of God and the law of God but only the Bible can reveal to you the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

How do I know that God will forgive sin? I read it in the Word. How do I know that Christ is the Messiah? He is the fulfillment of every Old Testament promise, prophecy, and picture, ceremony, type, and tradition.

How do I know that? The Bible tells me that. How do I know that He died for my sins? The Bible tells me that. How do I know that faith is the way to God? The Bible is the foundation of faith, it's the foundation: *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* That's the foundation of faith!

**“How firm a foundation
Ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for your faith
In his excellent Word.**

**What more can he say
Than to you he hath said
To you who unto Jesus
For refuge has fled.”**

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When our Lord Himself stood on that mountain and was tempted of Satan, how did He answer Satan? How did He reply to his temptation? Every time He spoke he quoted the Scriptures.

When Satan tempted Him, He replied with this comment: *“It is written, it is written; it is written.”* Today I tell you that’s the only foundation of faith: *“it is written.”*

The apostle Peter, James, and John, went with our Lord to the Mount of Transfiguration and there they saw with their own eyes the Lord Jesus transfigured, right before them.

Affiliating with Him were Moses and Elijah who discussed with Him the way that He should die. Peter, telling about this later on (I believe in **2 Peter 1:17-19**) said, *“For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”*

But, Peter said, *“We have a more, sure word of prophecy,”* (surer than a vision, surer than a transfiguration, and more sure than a personal revelation). What is that Peter? It’s the written Word of God! That’s what Peter said; *“it’s a more sure word of prophecy.”*

I would rather have one verse of God’s Word than 10 dreams. I would rather have one verse from the Scripture than 10 visions because you can be deceived by a vision and deceived by a dream. But God said in **2 Timothy 2:19**, *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*

Fifthly: All right; here’s another word: tried!

We know that true faith is going to be tried. It’s going to be tried and it’s going to be tried by sorrow, heartache, trouble, tribulation, and chastisement. It’s going to be tried.

Faith that is not tried is not faith at all. I’m telling you the truth. **James 1**; listen to it: *“My brethren; count it all joy when you fall into different trials, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience.”*

God never had but one Son without sin and that’s the Lord Jesus Christ. He never has had any sons without suffering; they all suffered. *“They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*

This is the attitude that David took toward trial and affliction: He said; **Psalms 119:71**: *“It’s good for me, that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.”*

Sixthly: Here’s another word about faith, it will be tried, but it is also called precious!

It goes right along with three other precious things: The way that God talks about “*the precious blood, the precious promises and he (Christ) is precious.*” Then Peter says: *We have obtained precious faith.*” Oh boy, I will tell you: faith is important isn’t it?

Now, listen to this; turn to **Hebrews 11** and let me show you something in this chapter of faith, somebody called it “the roll call of faith or the hall of faith, at least that is, in this **11th chapter of Hebrews**, an account of Old Testament men and women and in studying men and women of faith, in studying this account of their faith I see some marks of saving faith. I want to give them to you just briefly in **Hebrews 11:3!**

First of all: Faith understands!

I hear people say: “well, blind faith.” No, faith is not blind, faith sees. Listen to **Hebrews 11:3**: “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.*”

Have you ever heard somebody talk about blind faith? Well, faith is not blind; faith sees, faith understands. By faith we understand. Listen to **1 John 5:20**: “*We know that the Son of God hath come and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true.*” Listen to this in **John 6:40**: “*He that seeth the Son and believeth on him,*” he that sees. Faith understands, that which is revealed by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit.

Now look at **Hebrews 11:4**: “*By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.*” Faith not only understands but faith offers a sacrifice, not of works, not of religious service, not of material substance, but the sacrifice of Christ.

Faith looks to His sacrifice. Faith does not dare come to God without a sacrifice. Faith knows “*that without the shedding of blood there is no remission.*” Faith speaks like Isaac as he walked up the hill there on Mount Moriah with Abraham and he said: “*here’s the altar and here’s the fire, father, where is the lamb?*”

Faith doesn’t dare approach God without a sacrifice. It is shown all the way through the Scripture. No man comes to God without a sacrifice and that’s because sin must be put away. Listen to what it says in **Hebrews 10:14**: “*By one offering, (one sacrifice), Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*” Faith understands; faith understands my sin; faith understands God’s justice and holiness to a degree, although not perfectly. I don’t understand all of it and neither do you. We understand what has been revealed.

Faith sees Christ as the only sacrifice and faith doesn’t dare approach God, not on a promise, not on a resolution, not on a vow, and not on anything but the blood of Christ. He dares not come. Now, notice this in **Hebrews 11:5**: “*By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*” Faith walks with God; “*by faith Enoch walked with God.*”

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My friends; true faith is not a creed; true faith is not a profession. I hear people talking about “a profession of faith;” it’s more than that. True faith is not a system of thought; true faith is a living principle.

True faith is a living and vital union with the Son of God. We don’t go to a church building and meet God, we fellowship with Him who dwells in us. Our Lord said: *“My Father and I will come and take up our abode in you.”* That’s true faith; true faith walks with God.

Let me show you something else; look at **Hebrews 11:7**; now watch this: *“By faith Noah;”* what we are looking at all the way through this **11th Chapter** are these men of faith, *“by faith Noah being warned of God moved with fear and prepared an ark.”*

True faith obeys God. True faith understands; true faith doesn’t dare come without a sacrifice. True faith walks day by day with God and true faith obeys God. John said, *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”*

True faith loves God and true faith hears God. True faith serves God, true faith obeys God. True faith finds that obeying the Word of God is to be the greatest delight and pleasure. He finds his greatest joy in obeying his Lord.

Just like Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus who sought, who understood, who cried for mercy and who replied: *“Lord, what will you have me do?”*

Now, watch this in **Hebrews 11:10**: *“By faith; Abraham looked for a city, which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.”*

Faith, what are the marks of faith? It understands; it’s not blind, it understands, it brings a sacrifice, not of its own making but Christ’s sacrifice and it walks with God and obeys God. It looks for eternal mercies and eternal life.

We are sojourners here and we know it. Abraham never owned a foot of land here; he had God’s promise, and that was it. He had God’s promise and he believed God’s promise. *“He believed that God was able to do all that he promised,”* and like Abraham I am a sojourner here, dwelling in a temporary tent.

Oh how fragile is that tent. This is not my home. I am always looking for that home; I am looking for His return and the day I shall be like Him. Like David said: *“I’ll be satisfied when I awake with his likeness.”*

And true faith expects that day to come; he looks for a heavenly city whose builder and maker is God! He looks for the Lord Jesus Christ who is coming!