

Walking By Faith

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Bible Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-11
Preached on: Sunday, February 28, 2021

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2 Corinthians 5:7. What I'd like for us to do this morning is to read this verse together in unison, if you would. Just a little verse here, and we may make this a memory verse later on in this year, one of our month's memories. How many people would like to have a nice little short memory verse? Yeah, let's read it together. 2 Corinthians 5:7. Ready? All together.

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

I want to speak this morning on walking by faith. Let's pray and ask the Lord to challenge us in this matter.

Father in heaven, we thank you that we can come into your presence and let our requests be made known to you. Lord, my request this morning is that you would meet here with us in a very manifest way, Lord, that we would sense the fact that you are here, and I pray that you would speak to our hearts and challenge us. Lord, I have no doubt I'm speaking to some folks that really could use some encouragement today and some of us need to be challenged in our walk with you, and maybe we've gotten a little slack, maybe we've gotten a little lazy in our daily Christian life and our maintaining our spiritual well-being. So, Lord, we ask you to challenge us and convict us, Lord, perhaps some of us have allowed sin in our lives and we're trying to hide it or trying to work around it or live with it. I pray you'd bring great conviction about that that we could come clean with you. And Lord, some of us need direction, some need, as I said, encouragement, Lord, you know our hearts and I'm asking you, Father, to use your word and that your Holy Spirit would speak through me to each of our lives wherever we're at spiritually and help us to step forward and leave here stronger spiritually than when we came in. I yield my will to you, I present my body and I pray with all my heart that you'd fill me and speak through me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

It's an interesting study if you'll go through particularly the gospels and pay attention to the things that Jesus praised people for, and he did that a number of times. He would comment on somebody, he'd commend somebody, or he'd praise someone for various different things, but there's one that rises, there's one thing Jesus praised people for above everything else and if you'll study the gospels carefully, you'll see it very very clearly and that is this: Jesus would praise people for living by faith, for exercising faith in him. And

as I study the Bible, I find that I believe one of the main requirements God asks of his disciples.... Let me stop here. How many folks here, you're saved and you know it? Say amen. How many of us would consider ourselves to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, not just a believer but we're seeking to live for him, follow him, follow his teachings? The one thing the Lord required of his disciples, I believe, as much as anything else was to have faith in him, to trust him, to live our lives by faith. He said in Mark 11:22, I claimed that verse back in Bible college and I just had overwhelming financial needs and the schedule was just so overwhelming, working and full-time school and ministry, and one verse stood out to me, the Lord spoke to my heart and I've claimed it all these years. Mark 11:22, very simple verse, he says this, "have faith in God." Have faith in God, and that's the one thing the Lord is looking for from you and I and from his disciples is that we would have faith in God, that we would walk in faith as the phrase here in our text this morning.

Now what does it mean to walk in faith? What does it mean to have faith in God? It simply means this, just to trust him. You know what it means to trust somebody, everybody here understands what it means to trust somebody, "You can trust me." We all do it all the time. We have people we trust. We entrust the bank with our finances. We entrust our boss at work that he's going to have a paycheck for us. We trust people for various things and what the Lord wants you to do and the Lord wants me to do, is he wants us to simply trust him, just have faith in him, trust him, and by that it means that we trust him and do what he instructs us to do.

I don't know if you've ever said something like this to your children, you tell them, you know, they need to do something and they'll say, "Well, why do I need to do that?" You say something like this, "You just need to just trust me is what you need to do." That's what the Lord says to us, "Just trust me. You just need to trust me." And that means we follow his instructions. It means that we claim his promises.

All right, how many times, I don't know how you are and I hate to admit this and you'll probably be very disappointed in me, but I tend to worry about stuff sometimes and things happen or something is going on, or the guy-wire on the radio tower gets pulled out, it's just everyday stuff and it tends to, I tend to worry. Boy, how the Lord deals with my heart and the Lord challenges me to, "Listen, you just trust me. Claim my promises. Just rest on my promises." God has given us a Bible full of promises and he wants us to trust him, he wants us to have faith in him, follow his instructions. What he tells us to do, hey, just trust him and do it. What he promises us, he gives us these great promises, hey, just rest on them. Trust him. He gives us warnings, over and over and over in the Bible God warns us about things and say, "Don't do this. Stay away from that. Be careful about this." And he gives us warnings there and why? Is he just trying to restrict us? Does he just want us on a lockdown? No, no, no, he cares about us and he wants what's best for us so he warns us and he gives us restrictions and so what I need to do is just have faith in him, just trust him and say, "All right, God says stay away from that. All right, I'm going to trust him. I'm going to stay away from that."

So over and over and over all through scripture, particularly the New Testament, we find the Lord praising those who have faith in him and trust him. It's interesting, those who exercised faith in him and trusted him and had faith, he praised them highly. Keep your place here, I want to illustrate a couple of these. If you would, come back to the book of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament, Matthew 8. There's an interesting event here in the life of our Lord and there was a centurion, he's a soldier, he was head over a platoon or whatever, I don't know how they had it broken down, but he was a leader in the military. In verse 5 of Matthew 8, look at this event here and this is fascinating to me. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion," this soldier, this leader, this captain or whatever, "beseeching him," he came to Jesus beseeching him, "saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him." Now look how this centurion responds. "The centurion answered and said, Lord," look at this, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only," look at this, "and my servant shall be healed." Wow. And he explains his reasoning, he explains his thinking. "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it," he did what? "He marvelled, and said to them that followed," he turned around to the people following him and he says, "Verily I say unto you," look at this, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom," and then he goes on and explains. But here the Lord stops, here's a centurion and he tells the Lord, "Listen, you don't even need to come to my house. You can just speak the word and my servant will be made well." And the Lord stops everything and he draws attention to this man that had faith.

God praises, God's highest praise, Jesus' highest praise in the gospels was for those who would simply trust him, simply have faith in him, that he was able to do what he says he will do. On the other side of that coin if you'll study the gospels carefully, the Lord's sharpest rebukes were towards disciples who lacked faith, who struggled with their faith. If you would, notice here in Matthew 8:23 he says, "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish." Now think about this for a minute, these are hardened sailors, these guys, most of these guys have made their living out on the sea fishing. This wasn't just something new to them. They'd been through many a storm but there was something about this storm that scared these guys and notice what they say, "Lord, we perish." They said, "We're going to die. This is beyond our ability to deal with. Lord, we perish." "And he saith unto them," Jesus, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of,," what? "Little faith?" I don't know about you but, you know, out on the sea in that ship in the storm, these guys and Jesus says, "O ye of little faith." Then he goes on and rebukes the wind and the sea and it calms down.

And over and over and over through the gospels we could go. I had another text here, Luke 9:4, we won't turn there but there he rebuked his disciples, they were unable to heal. This father had a son that was possessed of a devil and the disciples were unable to heal

him and listen, he rebuked them for not having faith in this situation. Listen to the terms he used in rebuking them. He said, "O faithless and perverse generation." I get the sense that Jesus Christ was frustrated with his disciples in that they would not exercise faith.

Now in every one of these situations, these are circumstances that are extraordinary, these are circumstances that every one of us would have no doubt struggled having faith and trusting the Lord in that, and yet he rebukes them sharply in some instances. I study my Bible and I find that God expects from me as a Christian, he expects me to trust him. He expects me to have faith in him. I can't find anywhere in the Bible where Jesus rebuked his disciples because they weren't wealthy enough. I can't find anywhere he says, he rebukes them for not having enough money. I can't find anywhere in the Bible where he rebuked his disciples because they didn't have a high enough education. He never does that. I can't find anywhere in the Bible where he rebukes his disciples because they weren't talented enough or they didn't have enough gifts of abilities. He doesn't rebuke them for any of that. He never rebukes them because they're not popular enough. It's interesting, all the things that this world values so much, wealth and education and popularity and abilities, Jesus Christ wasn't concerned about that in his disciples. The one thing he was concerned about was that they would have faith, that they would have faith.

Listen, don't ever think, listen, don't ever think, don't let the devil convince you that you can't be a good Christian because you're not educated enough, or you don't have enough money, or you're not popular enough, or you don't have enough natural abilities. That has nothing to do with living a successful victorious Christian life, but what does is having faith in God, trusting God. The interesting thing is even a child can have faith in God. In fact, Jesus tells us we are to emulate the faith of a child as we get older. Faith, and it's what God looks for in our lives, it's what he's expecting from us. It's not wealth, he never praises his disciples for it. He never rebukes them for not having enough money. He never rebukes them because they're not educated enough. He never rebukes them because they don't have any natural abilities or skills or talents. He never rebukes them because they're not popular enough. But he does rebuke them sharply, "You need to trust me. You need to have faith in me." That's where his rebuke comes in sharply.

If we had time, it would be a great study. I think Pastor Matt just preached through it with the young people in Revelation that seven churches of Revelation in chapter 2 and 3, and it's interesting, Jesus went through these seven churches and he kind of gave a critique, he kind of gave a review of them and some of them he rebuked, some of them he praised, but not one time, if you'll study that carefully, not one time does he rebuke them because they don't have a big enough budget. Not one time does he rebuke them because they aren't popular enough, or they don't have enough education. The one thing he does rebuke them, for not trusting him and following his instruction. The most important thing for Mount Lake Independent Baptist Church, the most important thing in my life and your life as a Christian is that we learn to trust God, just follow what he says, trust him and do what he tells us to do in that book, and stay away from what he tells us to stay away from, and claim the promises he gives to us. That's the most important thing we can learn in our lives. It's the most important thing we, as a church, can do. Faith.

In our text here, 2 Corinthians, if you would come back there, he makes this simple little statement, "For we walk by faith, not by sight," but I think what he's giving us here in these few words, this little verse, he's giving us a foundation – now follow my thinking here, hear what I'm saying here – he's giving us a foundational principle for living the Christian life, a foundational principle for living the Christian life. If something's foundational, what do you do? You have a foundation down, then what do you do? You build on it, and if we can get this one principle down, if I can get ahold of this one concept in my heart and mind, I can build a life, I can build a home, I can build a ministry that brings glory to God and has an impact in this world.

I believe 2 Corinthians 5:7 is a foundational principle for the Christian life. Here it is, "For we walk by faith and not by sight." Walking by faith and not by sight. I made three observations from this verse here and that's my outline this morning. 1. My first observation I make here is our progression through life. Now I'll explain what I mean by that, our progression through life. If you're progressing, what are you doing? You're moving forward, you're going ahead; we're progressing with this project, we got it started, we got everything in place, now we're going forward with it. We're working on our building project out there and we're still working on details and stuff, and at some point we're going to progress, we're going to start breaking ground and going forward.

So I think there is a progression through life and I get that from the word here in this verse, it says, "For we walk by faith." Now what does it mean to walk? You say, "That's a stupid question, everybody knows what it means to walk." To walk simply means to make progress, progressing from point A to point B. Walking means to put one foot in front of the other, start covering ground, progressing, going forward. Now the interesting thing, the Bible will often use the term "walk," sometimes it just means to walk, but in this case and other times in the Bible, it's more than that. The word "walk" as Paul uses it here under the inspiration of God is Paul uses it, it means this: my lifestyle; how I live my life, as I'm going through my life, my walk. Another term we'll use in conversation, how I'm living my life, my behavior, my conduct. As I go from the womb to the tomb I make this progression through life. It's our behavior as we live our lives, our conduct as we live our lives, and particularly he's addressing Christians here. He's writing this to a church.

I found this, to live the Christian life, if I'm going to be able to live the Christian life, I need to, first of all, be a Christian. How many people today, "Boy, that's profound, preacher." Actually, it really is because one of the most frustrating things in the world for some people is that they're trying to live the Christian life but they're not really a Christian. I read something recently, a little statement recently, they said this: folks, we have people in our churches that were raised in church but have never been in Christ. Huh? It's more than just being a church member. It's more than just being baptized. It's more than simply calling myself a Christian. If I'm going to live the Christian life, if I'm going to be able to do what this verse says and live, walk by faith, I need to, first of all, be a Christian. I need to be born into the family of God.

I got saved back in 1979 and, man, God just changed my life. I've told it so many times but, man, it's just amazing and here we are 42 years later, I'm still dumbfounded of what

God did so instantly in my life. And I just, God changed me and changed my thinking. It was all the Lord doing all this, and I wanted to be a witness, I wanted to tell other people about Christ, what happened to me. I didn't have any training and I didn't know anything and the church there wasn't real big on soul-winning and visitation, and they announced visitation Thursday nights and so I thought, I'm going to go out to that then and tell other people about Jesus. I went out and, lo and behold, I was the only person who showed up, a church of about 500-600 people. I was the only one that showed up. Preacher wasn't there, nobody was there. I stood there and waited around, nobody showed up, so I grabbed a bunch of gospel tracts out of the tract rack and there were some apartments back behind the church, a big apartment complex, and so I just went back there and just started knocking on doors and I didn't know what I was saying or doing, I just said, "Hi, I'm Denny," and take a gospel tract and say, "Here, I want to give you a gospel tract."

And so it went on and I remember one that stands out in my mind. Now understand, I'd been saved maybe a couple of months at the most. I didn't know hardly anything. I was just excited about everything and this lady answered the door and I gave her, left the gospel tract and I asked her this question. I didn't know, I just asked her, I said, "Are you a Christian?" I was just happy, bushy-tailed, "Are you a Christian?" And she goes, "Yeah, I'm a Christian." I said, "Oh, good. When did you become a Christian?" And boy, she got irritated. She goes, "I was born a Christian. I'm born in America. I'm a Christian." I didn't know a whole lot but I knew that's not how it works and I said, "No, you've got to accept Jesus as your Savior. You've got to be born again."

Here's what I'm trying to say is this: you're going to be very very frustrated in your spiritual life if you're trying to live the Christian life and you're not really a Christian. You need to know that you're saved. You say, "Preacher, will there be church people in hell?" Yeah, there will, folks that went through the motions and talked the talk but never knew Christ as Savior. Now the last thing in the world I would ever try and do is get a saved person think they're lost. I would not want to do that. If a person is saved, praise God, you're secure. Another thing I would never want to do is make a lost person think they're saved. That would be tragedy.

So living by faith as the Bible tells us here, is going to be very very difficult, it's going to be impossible, it's going to be very frustrating for a person that may be churchy and may call themselves a Christian and may consider themselves a Christian but you never come to the point where you recognize yourself as a sinner under the judgment of God, and the only hope of escaping God's judgment and eternity in hell, coming and trusting Jesus Christ, your personal Savior and you're born again into the family of God, you have new life, eternal life, and a home in heaven.

So as we progress through life, at some point, and the earlier the better, the sooner the better, at some point we need to know that we've accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we've been born again spiritually, born in the family of God, or it's going to be an empty frustrating life, an empty and frustrating life. You must be born again. Somebody said, "When's the best time for a person to get saved?" Oh, it would have been a long time ago. If you're here and you're not saved, the best time for you to get saved would

have been a long time ago. The second best time to get saved is today. Now. Settle that thing.

So we have this progression of life, for we walk, we go through life, we conduct ourselves as we go day by day goes by and week by week goes by, month by month, year by year, decade by decade, and we approach the end of our life, we walked, we lived this life, how we conduct ourselves.

He says here, "For we walk by faith." Walk by faith. Now the context of him saying this here, now this is interesting, I wish we had more time because this is a fascinating study. If you go back there and notice verse 1 through 5, he's talking about there's coming a day when you and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we're going to get new bodies in heaven. Now whether it's if we die before the rapture and we go to heaven, or we get raptured out, at the rapture we'll have these bodies resurrected, but he's talking about folks who die before the rapture and what kind of bodies we will have in heaven before these bodies are resurrected. It's a fascinating study but the fact of the matter is he's saying that you and I as believers are going to have new bodies.

As I was studying this, this week, I couldn't help but think of Brother Charlie Ross. He's been up in heaven, what, two weeks now? Three, going on three probably. And the new body that he has up there, Paul describes it a little bit here, these first five verses. He calls it a house, a new house, a new tabernacle we live in. You understand that these bodies, these aren't us, this is just what we live in until these bodies die. How many people understand that? Everybody understand that? We are a soul and we inhabit these bodies and as a believer, if I die before the rapture, then he has a house prepared for me in heaven, a body, a tabernacle for me to dwell in. So the context here is, the context of the statement is that as we go through this life, as we're passing through this life, ultimately we're heading to our eternal home, our home in heaven where we'll have new bodies. Verse 6 and 8, he says that when we get there, we're going to be with Christ. We're going to see him. I mentioned this in a message not long ago, maybe it's because I'm getting a little older, but the idea of seeing Jesus in person, physically in person, stirs my heart. To hear his voice, see his eyes, his complexion, to feel his hands, touch him, the God that created this world. He says we'll be with him. We're passing through this life. We're progressing through this life to a heavenly home where we'll have new bodies and we're going to be with Christ.

Then you get down to verse 10 and 11 and he says we're going to face accountability, the judgment seat of Christ. That's for you and I as a believer. Listen, the world's media is not going to tell you this, our universities aren't going to teach this, but the fact of the matter is every one of us are going to stand before a holy God and give an account of ourselves to that God. You say, "Well, I'm saved. I'm a believer. I don't face judgment." Not judgment for my sins but I do face the judgment seat of Christ to give an account how I lived my life as a Christian.

Look what he says there, look with me at verse 10, "For we must all," all Christians are going to be here, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," now look at

this, "that every one [of us] may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Notice how Paul responds to this thought that he's going to have to stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Notice how he responds, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Paul viewed the judgment seat of Christ not as a party or a picnic, he says, "Man, I tremble in my boots at the thought that I'm going to stand before Jesus Christ as a Christian and give an account for how I lived my life." Now it's not to decide whether we go to heaven or not, that's settled when we trust Christ, but it's concerning rewards of Jesus Christ for how we lived for him.

So here's the point, right in the middle of this whole context that we are passing through this life, by the way, this life goes quickly. I've got an old enough crowd here this morning that understands this life goes by quickly and we don't know when it's going to end. I hate to say this and I don't dwell on it, I don't want to be morbid but there's a very real possibility next Sunday this time some of us might not be here. You might be out in eternity. That's a very real possibility and I'm not just talking about the elderly, I'm talking about all ages, all groups. How many times have I done a funeral for a teenager or a middle-aged or a young couple or something over the years that one Sunday they're sitting in the pew, next Sunday they're in eternity?

So this walk, this progression through life, goes very very quickly. This morning, I got up and looked in the mirror, I can't believe I'm 60, you know? Just where in the world did it go? And you know, we don't know where it's going to end but we do know that it's going to end up with me in heaven with a new body, with Christ, and I'm going to give an account of how I lived this life, how I walked this life, my conduct, my behavior through this life as a Christian. Now that's the context here, progressing through this.

The world says life is short, live it up, right? The old commercial years ago, old beer commercial was, "Go for the gusto!" I'm telling you, liquor is a liar. I just see an ad on my computer, some ad or something comes up for liquor, I get mad, I delete it. It's the biggest lie. Hey, there is not a family been made better because liquor was introduced to that family. There's not a life been made better. You know, it's interesting, sports and all that and I'm not a big fan anymore of sports, but interesting, boy, they'll advertise beer, beer, beer, beer, but you know the guys playing the sports, they're not allowed to drink liquor when they're going to play. Why? Because it's bad for them, mess them up.

So, "Go for the gusto! You only have one life to live, man, get that bucket list and get everything out of this life you can!" That's the world's attitude. My Bible has a little different take on that. I've got one life, it's going by fast, I'd better get ready for eternity. Who in the world, who in the world do you think would want Christians to be so distracted by this world we don't prepare for the next world? I'm telling you, it's of the devil. He wants us so caught up in getting everything, going for the gusto, next thing we know we're standing before God. Whoa. Anybody follow what I'm saying?

So the progression through life, for we walk, we go through life, we conduct ourselves, we live our lives in such a way as we press through this. Our life here on earth is temporal. If you don't get anything else out of this, get this: our life here on earth is

temporal. We've been given a temporary assignment by God. Our life goes by quickly. We don't know when it will end and we will be held accountable for how we lived our life in the end.

Paul had great anticipation about being with Christ. Look with me, if you would, there at verse 2. He says, "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house," that's this heavenly body, this new body he has for us, "for our house which is from heaven." Look down at verse 8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from," this body, "from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Paul anticipated being with Jesus Christ. He had this longing, this groaning in his heart to be with the Lord in this new body. He was concerned about the judgment seat of Christ.

So the Bible says, "For we walk by faith," this progression through life, this walk through life. Most Christians live their lives like this life is all there is. Listen, I'm not trying to be unkind, I'm trying to be very honest, I'm wanting God to convict us, but I'm talking to some folks who are living your Christian life as if this life is all there is, there's nothing beyond this, and you're making a serious serious mistake. I have on my prayer list in Sunday school we're talking about how to pray, I have on my prayer list a number of people who profess to be saved, I trust they are, but they're living their lives as if this is all there is, as if this is all there is, and I'm telling you, this is not all there is. There's a world beyond this. There's a heaven and a hell. Those of us who know Christ as Savior, that heaven is an amazing place and it's not to be taken lightly.

So the progression of life, for we walk, we go through life, we conduct ourselves through life, now come back here and notice with me, "For we walk by faith," that's my second thought is this, first, the progression through life where we walk by faith and that's this, the principle of faith. The principle of faith. Now there's a little word here that we just read over and we don't give much thought to it but I think it's very important. Notice he says, "For we walk," what's that next two letter word there? "By faith." The word "by" has the idea of by the means of, or this was one of the definitions and this strikes home, under the direction of faith. For I live my life, I go through my life, I conduct myself, I behave myself under the direction, governed by my faith in God and what he says. That's what dictates my conduct. That's what dictates my behavior is my faith, the principle of faith.

The word "faith" means pretty much what we understand it to mean, to assurance, having assurance or confidence, conviction, reliance upon God's word. So here I am, I get saved, I trust Christ as Savior, for me it was May 7, 1979. I begin this walk, this Christian life. I begin conducting myself and behaving myself as I progress through life. I'm going to end up in heaven with the Lord, a new body. I'm going to face the judgment seat of Christ. And what is governing, the principle that should govern my life and my behavior is this assurance that what God says is so. Everybody follow? I don't know if I'm getting this across. I live my life in the confidence that God's word is so, that God is wise, he knows what's best for me, that God loves me, and I need to follow his instructions, I need to claim his promises, I need to heed his warnings as I go through my life, and let that dictate my life.

This is the way I thought to illustrate it. When we lived in Denver, we used to go down occasionally to the symphony, the Denver Symphony, and we enjoyed it; maybe once a year or so, we'd go down and see the orchestra. I just want you to know that I am a very dignified, high-faluting person, we go to the symphony. But I really very much enjoyed it, we really did. I liked the fiddles they had off there on the side. I don't think they called them fiddles, though. And we'd go down there and we'd get there early and all the instruments would be out there and they'd be tuning up, getting ready. Anybody ever hear that? I mean, it's chaos, right? Do you know what I'm talking about? And it's just all this noise and chaos and static and you're sitting there thinking, "Boy, this is a waste of 25 bucks." Then the conductor comes out. The conductor comes out. The place goes silent and he begins to lead that, and when he has them go up, boy, all those instruments in harmony lift their sounds. Then they go soft. Then they hold it out and then they cut it off and it's beautiful beautiful music. Why? Because each instrument is operating by the conductor's instruction.

Do you follow what I'm saying? And what Paul was saying here is we live by faith, we operate under the direction of God's word, what God tells us. He loves us, he's wiser than we are and he promises us things, and he warns us of things, and he instructs us to make sure we do this and don't do that and follow this, and we trust him, we have faith in him. And when that principle of faith dictates my actions and controls my behavior, I tell you, it's a beautiful life.

I see some Christians living their lives, I see some Christians living their lives and it's chaos, and you don't even see any influence of the word of God in their life at all. They're just saying and doing whatever comes to their mind, and whatever happens to be the whim at that moment. And what he's saying is you and I as Christians, we're just passing through this life. It's going fast. The next thing you know, we're going to be in the presence of Christ, we're going to give an account of ourselves, and it's all over and we can't go back and redo it. I need to make sure I'm living my life by the principles of faith, what God says, trusting him, following his instructions.

The greatest lesson I can learn in life is to trust God and follow his direction. If I can learn that. We teach it to our young people, the children's church, King's Kids and Wednesday night Master clubs, we're trying to teach them the principle of faith in God's word, faith in God. Do you know what I found out? I need it as much as those kids do. I've not attained, I've not reached, I still need to learn to live by this principle of trusting God. That's why it's important, I believe, and I know I probably overdo this but I believe it's important every day we get up, spend a little time in the word of God so I have some direction for that day, something God can give me, and then live by faith, trust in what he says, follow it.

So we have the progression through life. It just goes so fast. We don't know when it's going to end and, boom, now we're in eternity. We have this principle of faith, trusting God, following his directions. Here's the thing: you and I as believers, we don't live by the same principles the world does. We don't live by the values this world has. We have a

principle of faith in God and his word, and that's what needs to dictate our actions, that's what needs to dictate our decisions and our behavior. This whole world is doomed. This whole world is under the judgment of God. This whole world is in spiritual darkness. We need to learn to live by faith. If we can learn that one thing, to have faith in God, follow his directions, you get through this life and get to the judgment seat of Christ and bring glory to Christ. I don't know about you, it's almost a dream to hear Jesus Christ say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." I'd rather have the praise of Christ than the applause of this world any day. Any day.

You've got to learn to live by faith. Live by faith. That's why I don't watch the news much. They tell me how it is, they're telling me this, that and the other. I tell you, I want to read my Bible. I want God to tell me how it is. I want God to show me how to live and how to respond.

So number 1, the progression through life. 2. The principle of faith. And let me give you, last of all real quickly, the precaution of sight. Now look here what he says, "For we walk by faith," by that faith principle, believing God, doing what he says, following his instructions, and then he throws this in, "and not by sight." He's given us a little precaution out there, "Listen, don't you go by how things appear." That phrase "not by sight" means this: not by how things appear, not from my perspective. The most natural thing in the world for you and I to do is to respond to things by how they appear. Did you ever go somewhere and you thought you were following the right directions and after you got a-ways, you realized you were in the wrong? It appeared everything was right.

Years ago, I took a couple of guys, we were in Indianapolis and I took a couple of fellows in the church, Dr. Lee Roberson was preaching down in southern Indiana, about a two hour drive or so south of Indianapolis, a little camp meeting down there. We went down and heard Dr. Lee Roberson. I was so excited. He was my pastor for years and I went to the school there, and I had a bunch of guys and the whole time I'm saying, "Yeah, that's my pastor." They were, "Shut up, I'm trying to hear him preach." But we just had a blast and by the time we got out of there, it was late, we were talking to old friends and stuff, and we had a two hour drive back to Indianapolis, it was a week night, and I hate to admit it but I was the one driving and we hopped in the car and we got out on the interstate and we just got hammered down heading to Indianapolis, and we're driving and I don't know, we went for a while, driving maybe an hour or so, and we came up and there was a big thing, "Welcome to Kentucky." Huh? Everything looked right, everything by all appearances from my perspective we were heading northwest up to Indianapolis. We were actually heading southeast. I was going the wrong way and he's saying, "Don't do that."

Now we didn't have it back then, they just started leaving horse and buggies back then actually, we had just started driving cars, back then we didn't have GPS. Now I don't even pay any attention what it looks like, just say, "Turn right," okay. You don't even know where you're going. You don't even know where you're at. You're just following what that thing says. But you know, that's a good illustration of God's word. God says, "Do this." Yeah, but it looks like I ought to do... "No, no, no, not by sight, if you trust me I'll

tell you how to get there. I'll tell you what to do." I'll tell you the best reaction, that person is being hateful to you, that person is being mean, they're not being nice to you, by sight, by my perspective I ought to be mean back to them. They cuss me out, I'll cuss them out even more. They knock a tooth out, I'll knock two out of them, right? That's the way I see things but God says, "Don't operate by sight, by your perspective, the way it looks like to you. You have faith in me. So if they knock your tooth out, if they're mean to you, you be nice to them. They curse you, you bless them. They revile you and speak evil of you, you pray for them and do good to them." That's by faith. Sight says, "Well, from my perspective, this is...." No, no, no, no. No, no, no. We walk by faith. We trust God, what he says. We follow his instructions. We heed his warnings. We claim his promises. Not by the way it looks to me, not by my perspective.

The Bible is full of examples of this, of people who operated by sight rather than by faith. Anybody remember the disciple named Thomas? What do we call him? We call him what? Doubting Thomas. I think he got a bum wrap. I don't think he was that bad. But after the resurrection of Christ, the disciples came to Thomas, by the way, Jesus met with them of a Sunday night. They were all assembled together on a Sunday night, they had Sunday night church, all the disciples were there. Jesus showed up. Thomas stayed home and watched Sunday night boxing. He didn't go to church Sunday night. Did you hear he didn't go to church Sunday night? Jesus showed up and later the disciples found Thomas, "Thomas, where were you Sunday night? Jesus was there." He goes, "Yeah, right, he's dead." They say, "No, no, no, he rose really." "Yeah, I heard all the stories. I saw them bury him." "But Thomas, we're telling you Jesus was there physically!" And what did he say? "Except I see the prints in his hand and thrust my hands in that and see the pierced side, I will not believe." Do you know what he was saying? He's saying what people say all the time: seeing is believing. "I'll believe it when I see it." That tends to be the way I am. I tend to be skeptical, "I'll believe it when I see it." That's living by sight. That's walking by sight. God says, "No, don't do that. Walk by faith."

Thomas, now praise the Lord, he saw the Lord and the Lord was gracious and, by the way, it's interesting after Thomas said, "My Lord and my God, you are alive! You are who you claim to be!" And he became one of the most zealous disciples that Christ had. But it's interesting, Jesus said to him afterward and I'm putting this in my own words a bit here, but he said, "Blessed art thou, Thomas, who saw me but blessed are those who believe though they have not seen me." Faith. Faith.

Thomas walked by sight. Peter and the disciples were out on the ship and amidst the sea, they're crossing over at night and a storm comes up and they see Jesus walking on the water. Anybody remember that, familiar with that? They see Jesus walking on the water and Peter, bless his heart... They thought he was a ghost at first. They thought it was a spirit. "Oh no, a ghost!" And the Lord said, "Be of good cheer, it is I." Peter says, "Oh yeah, if it's you bid me come out there and walk on the water to you." The Lord says, "Come on." Now here's the thing: he did it. I love the picture of this in my mind. I mean, we're in a storm, you know, this thing's going up and down. He's putting his arm over the side of that ship and he goes down and he's hanging on the side, puts his feet down on the water, and he's walking on that water and as a wave comes, he runs up one side of the

wave and down the other. I mean, did you ever see the little kid's cartoon drawings of it? It's just like glass. He's walking along. That ain't how it was, I'm telling you. They're in a storm and he's doing great because he's walking by faith. He heard what Jesus said and he's confident and his trust is in Jesus that he can walk on the water, but then he started looking around and his faith, he switched from his faith controlling him to his sight dictating his actions.

The Bible says he saw the wind and the waves and he began to what? He starts going down. I don't know about you and I don't know how this played out, this is the way I picture it. I mean, he's walking on this water, there's waves all over, he's trying to keep going, and then he gets looking around and I don't know, if I'm standing on water and I start to sink, I don't think it goes slowly, you know, I don't think it was, "Oh no, I'm starting to go down." I think it was like, foom. Did you ever try to set a rock on water? Foom. Now I don't know how this played out but however it played out he had enough time to say, "Lord, help me!" The Lord got him and brought him to the ship.

So the illustration there is this: walking by faith or walking by sight. Now I'm not suggesting go out and try and walk on water, the Bible doesn't tell us to do that, but I am saying this, what the Bible does tell us to do. How about we do that and just trust God? You say, "But from my perspective this doesn't look right. From my perspective I ought to respond this way. I ought to be doing this. I shouldn't be doing that." But we don't operate by sight, we don't walk by sight, we walk by faith.

I'm telling you, fear has gripped this world like I can't even and would never have imagined how fear has gripped this world. Now I'm not suggesting we shouldn't be careful. A horse is prepared for battle but remember, safety is of the Lord. We trust God. We follow his instructions and we claim his promises, we heed his warning.

Peter and Thomas, here's somebody that walked by faith. How about Noah? Do you realize it didn't start raining until after the ark was built? For 100 and some years, he's building this ark, they never saw rain, didn't know what a flood was, none of that, but he believed God, he trusted God and it affected his walk, his behavior, his conduct.

So the principle of faith and the precaution of sight. Solomon, we studied Ecclesiastes, Solomon lived his life under the sun disregarding God and his word and disregarded faith in God and just lived his life under the sun, and he made a disaster of his life, destroyed it. Read Ecclesiastes, we studied it.

So if we can learn this one thing, if we can learn to live by faith, to trust God, follow his instructions, do what he says to do regardless of how it appears, regardless of what the world says, regardless of what my own reasoning, understanding. What's Proverbs 3:5 and 6 say? "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Don't walk by sight. You say, "Oh, this looks terrible!" What does Romans 8:28 say? "All things work together for good." So am I going to respond the way it appears or am I going to respond the way God says? How am I going to walk? How am I going to conduct myself?

For three years I lived in Boulder, CO and worked at Neighborhood Bible Time and, of course, you know one thing about Bible Time is they have lots and lots of ribbons. Anybody have any Bible Time ribbons here? Anybody? Three people, okay. See me. Yeah, I was going to ask, anybody have any in your Bible? Yeah, there we go, bunch of them around. My Bible is full of them. For three years I was on staff out there in Boulder, CO and one of my responsibilities was to print the ribbons. Now you need to understand, we went through about 300,000 ribbons a year back in the day, so I'm printing 300,000 ribbons. You say, "Oh, how hard can that be, you just push a button and they go through a machine." No. It was an old letter press. Anybody familiar with a letter press? It has a little motor on it and that thing goes cha-chung-boom, cha-kung-boom. It just sounds just like that, cha-kung-boom, and it prints one ribbon at a time. And don't let me forget I put my glasses there. And my responsibility was print 300,000+ ribbons one at a time. You'd put one in and it cha-poom, you pull it out, put another one in, and I'm telling you, you get that thing up and running and you could crank the speed up, and after you do about 250,000 you've kind of got a feel for it and we're just cha-jung, cha-jung, cha-jung, and I mean, I was a machine and I figured over the years and I helped print, well, even when I pastored here I'd go out and help train and I'd end up printing ribbons while I was out there, my gift. I figure I printed over a million Bible Time ribbons. I'm pretty confident I did.

But here's the thing, in that letter press it had a little frame that you would take and whatever you wanted imprinted on that ribbon, you would get these letters, these little, I guess they were lead letters carved out and you'd fit them in that frame, and then you'd tighten it up and then that would fit up on the pan of the letter press and then an ink would roll over that when it comes down, and it prints and it goes back up and the ink would roll through. When you put those letters in that little block frame, you put them in backwards. You had to put them in backwards and so when you look at that block, you look, that's chaos. This whole thing is a mistake. This is the wrong way it appeared by sight. You'd look at that block and this is a mess. Somebody put them all in backwards. But when it would print, the impression was correct. It was the correct way. And I thought about walking by faith and not by sight. Sometimes we look at our world and we look at our lives, look at our situation, and we think everything is backwards, everything is a mess, what in the world, this doesn't even make sense. But if we'll just trust God and let him direct us as we go through life, when it's all said and done we'll get to heaven, I think, we'll look back and say, "Oh, there's a perfectly clear plan and purpose for everything there."

But what we need to do is trust him, follow his instruction, claim his promises, heed his warnings, follow his instructions. We get to heaven maybe hear the Lord say, "Well done. You lived by faith." God's highest praise is for those who trust him.

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, I ask you to help us learn this important life lesson to live by faith, to live by faith, to trust you and obey you.

I wonder with our heads bowed and eyes closed, I wonder how many this morning say, "Preacher, I'm saved, I know I'm a Christian, I've trusted Christ, I've got that settled, I have a new life," but you say, "Preacher, as you were preaching, God spoke to my heart and there's some areas in my life as a Christian I need to learn to trust him." I don't know how God's Holy Spirit dealt with you, what issues or personal things the Holy Spirit is working in your life about. I don't know, that's between you and God, but I'm saying if he is, if he's addressing some areas of your life, I want to urge you, agree with him, trust him, make those changes, make those adjustments, address those issues that the Spirit brings to mind as his word is preached and let him have his way.

Go by sight. I wonder how many preachers say, "I'm saved. I know I'm saved but the Spirit of God has dealt with my heart today about some areas." Are there any like that by the uplifted hand, "God's Holy Spirit has dealt with my heart about some areas"? Any others. A lot of hands raised. How about it? Others? Yes, he did. I'm going to urge you if that's the case, I would recommend find a place at the altar and just say, "Lord, you're right. Help me." Do business with God and makes those adjustments between you and the Lord. Some folks haven't been to the altar in a long time, maybe some never been to an old-fashioned altar, how about we start, just start now and say, "Yes, Lord, I'm going to live by faith. I'm going to trust you. I'm going to follow your instruction."

There are some here this morning that say, "Preacher, I know someone and they're not saved. They need Christ so bad and I'm burdened for them and I'd like for them to know my Savior." You say, "Preacher, pray with me that I would be a good witness to them and be able to see them come to Christ." Are there any like that, "I know someone"? God bless you, hands all around. They need our witness. They need us to live by faith. They need to hear the gospel, need us to be a witness.

One last question, is there someone here this morning that would say, "Preacher, I'm not sure I'm saved. I'd like to think I'm a religious person maybe or I'm a decent person but," you say, "I've never trusted Christ. I don't know for sure my sins are forgiven and I'm on my way to heaven." You say, "Preacher, pray for me. I need the Lord in my life." Is there any like that, "Preacher, pray for me, I need Christ. I need to settle this. No more doubts. No more doubts. I don't want to die and go to hell. I want to know I'm going to heaven." Only Jesus can give you that assurance. Is there any like that, any at all?

Father, bless our invitation now. I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.