

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

Sermon One – “Living By Faith, Looking Unto Jesus”

Text: Habakkuk 2:3-4; Hebrews 10:38—11:1-3

INTRODUCTION: *“Now the just shall live **by faith**.”* This is a quote from Habakkuk 2:4. A form of this truth is found two other times in the Scriptures (Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11).

I. LIVING BY FAITH, LOOKING UNTO JESUS

A. Habakkuk lived in a day of violence, sin, destruction, and injustice. It was a difficult and dangerous time.

1. He was perplexed.
2. He was concerned about how a holy God could use a wicked nation like Babylon to chasten the people of God.
3. He prayed that God would do something, but it seemed that God wasn't hearing his prayers.

B. Habakkuk wondered why God was not doing something about all the wickedness in the land.

1. He thought God was indifferent.
2. God assured him that He was working, even though Habakkuk could not see it (Habakkuk 1:5-11).
3. God gave Habakkuk a **revelation**, not an **explanation**.
 - a. Often what we need in times of **doubt** and **difficulties** is a new view of the awesomeness of God.
 - b. God told Habakkuk that He was doing a work that was so incredibly amazing that the prophet would be shocked if God told him what it was (Habakkuk 1:5).

C. Habakkuk thought that God was inconsistent because a holy God was using evil, idolatrous Gentiles to punish His own chosen people.

1. Habakkuk saw himself as a watchman on the wall waiting for a message from God.
2. God gave him a vision that changed his **worry** to **worship** and his **fear** to **faith**.

D. “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: **but the just shall live by faith**.” (Habakkuk 2:4)

1. The contrast is between people who trust in themselves and leave God out of their lives and people of faith who believe in God (Luke 18:9).
2. The unbeliever who is lifted up in pride and arrogance will love, live for and depend upon the world (I John 2:15-17).

3. This verse is quoted in Romans 1:17 where the emphasis is on the just, in Galatians 3:11 where the emphasis is on how the just shall live, and in Hebrews 10:38 where the emphasis is on faith.

E. The “just” (dikaios) = one who has been declared to be righteous because he has been made righteous by trusting in the finished work of Christ.

1. Romans 5:1
2. One who is just is a person who is a born-again believer in Christ.
3. The just person is a person who is a Christian.

F. “By faith” is the only way a Christian is to live.

1. The just should live by continued confidence on God.
2. What is faith? If the “just” is to live by faith, the “just” must know what faith is, Amen?!

II. FAITH IS CONFIDENCE (Hebrews 11:1)

A. Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

1. **“substance”** (*hupostatis*) = assurance; confidence; that which stands under something; the foundation; the assurance that what is looked for will surely come.
2. **“things hoped for”** = a solid assurance based on divine revelation (Titus 2:13).
 - a. Hope does not mean perhaps, a wish, or desire. Hope in Scripture means an absolute, rock solid assurance based on divine revelation.
 - b. Notice Titus 2:13 – *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*
 - i. The Lord’s return is sure! Jesus **is** coming again!
 - ii. There is no faith without hope and no hope without faith.
 - c. *“True Bible faith is confident obedience to God’s Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.”* (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, Vol. 2, Hebrews*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989, p. 317).
 - i. Faith operates very simply. God speaks and we hear His Word. We trust God’s Word and we act on it regardless of the circumstances.
 - ii. Faith is our response to what God has said in His Word (Hebrews 13:5-6).
 - iii. Faith is hearing and doing the Word of God (Roman 10:17; James 1:22; James 2:17, 20)!

III. FAITH IS CONVICTION (“the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1b)

A. Faith is a conviction that sees the invisible.

B. “evidence” (elegchos) = proof; an inner awareness of the reality; conviction.

C. If you have faith in your heart there is a conviction of something that you have not yet seen, but you know it is real.

1. It is an absolute confidence that leads to a conviction though you have not seen it.
2. Faith enables the believer to treat the future as the present and the invisible as the seen.
3. This is the inner conviction that what God has promised, He will perform (Numbers 23:19 – *“God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”*)

IV. FAITH IS COMMUNICATION (*“For by it the elders received a good report.”* Hebrews 11:2)

A. For by “it,” that is, for by faith the elders received a good report. In the realm and exercise of faith, or by means of faith the elders received a good report.

1. The *elders* (fathers) refer to the Old Testament saints, many of whose names are recorded in this chapter.
2. This verse does not talk about what the elders did, but speaks about what happened to them.
 - a. It is not about their reputation, but about the fact that the elders were conscious of God speaking to them.
 - b. The **“good report”** that they obtained by faith was the revelation of God.
 - c. God spoke to them out of heaven. God testified to them because they believed God.

B. “obtained a good report” (martureo) = to bear witness to:

1. It literally means “for by faith the elders were borne witness to.”
2. This word occurs in verse four (twice), verse 5, 39, and 12:1.
3. God bore witness to them that their faith gained victory for them over all obstacles and circumstances.
4. God bore witness to them. God gave testimony or witness to the faith of the Old Testament saints, so that they are witnesses to us (Romans 15:4; Hebrews 12:1).
 - a. The summary in Hebrews 12:1 calls the list of people in chapter eleven *“so great a cloud of witnesses.”*
 - i. They are witnesses to us because God witnessed to them.
 - ii. In each example, God gave witness to that person’s faith.
 - b. The witness of God was His divine approval upon their lives of faith.
I John 5:4-5 – *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”*
5. When confidence, conviction, and communication are put together you have in your heart what is called faith.
 - a. Faith should not be altered by appearances (John 20:29; I Peter 1:8).

- b. Faith should not be bound by feelings. Faith goes beyond our feelings.
- c. Faith should not be limited by logic. Faith is not totally contrary to logic (John 6:1-14).

V. FAITH IS COMPREHENSION (“*Through faith we understand . . .*” Hebrews 11: 3)

A. Faith enables believers to understand what God does.

1. “**understand**” (*noeo*) = to perceive with the reflective intelligence; it is the perception of the mind consequent upon seeing; it is never used of mere physical sight. Here it means the inward perception and apprehension of the visible creation as the work of God.
2. “**were framed**” (*kataritizo*) = to fit out or equip, so that a person or thing thus equipped might serve the purpose for which it was made.

B. The Word of God is an invisible force which cannot be perceived by natural senses. The great power which lies at the source of all that is, does not itself come into observation; we perceive only by faith which is the evidence of things not seen.

1. Faith is the dynamic of spiritual wisdom (verse 3).
2. Faith is the dynamic of spiritual worship (Hebrews 11:6).
3. Faith is the dynamic of spiritual wealth. It is the medium of exchange in the kingdom of heaven.
4. Faith enables believers to see what others cannot see (Hebrews 11:7, 13, 27).
5. Faith enables believers to do what others cannot do.
6. The best way to grow in faith is to get into the Word of God and get the Word of God in you!
7. Another way to grow in faith is to walk with those who are faithful.

CONCLUSION: The just shall live by his faith. If we are going to live by faith, we must begin by: “***Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith***” (Hebrews 12:2).

Have you been saved? Christian friend, are you truly living by faith; are you truly hearing and doing the Word of God?