

Hebrews

Hebrews 10:38-39 – Living By Faith - Part 2

September 13, 2009

I. **Hebrews 10:32-39** . . . But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, [33] partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. [34] For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, **knowing that you have** for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. [35] Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. [36] For **you have need of endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. [37] For yet in a very little while, he who is coming will come, and will not delay. [38] But **My righteous one shall live by faith**; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. [39] But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those **who have faith to the preserving of the soul**.

II. Prayer

III. The Final Lesson Of These Transitional Verses – Living By Faith

A. **Hebrews 10:38-39** . . . But **My righteous one shall live by faith**; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. [39] But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those **who have faith to the preserving of the soul**.

B. Review:

1. **To live by faith** is to believe that God exists as the one and only true God, and that we are created by Him and for Him.
2. **To live by faith** is to believe God is perfectly and eternally good.

C. Living By Faith – Continued

1. **To live by faith** is to do the will of God and obey the Word of God – regardless of the cost to us.
 - a. One of the teachings of scripture is that faith in God and obedience to God are synonymous. Couple that truth with the teaching here in Hebrews that salvation is not a one time act of faith but rather a life long act of faith – and you begin to see why the righteous live a life of obedience by faith.

- b. Let me point out just two scriptures concerning faith and obedience.
 - (1) **John 3:36** . . . John the Baptist said “he who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him”
 - (2) **Luke 17:5-10** . . . The disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith.
 - (a) Jesus responded by telling them what they could do if they had faith like a **mustard seed** (*which must trust in and obey the rules of nature to become a mustard plant*).
 - (b) Then Jesus asked them what they expected from their slaves? Of course, the obvious answer is **unqualified obedience to the master’s will**.
 - (c) And the master’s will is that the slave is to **look after the master’s interests first** – then his own interests second.
 - (d) Jesus concluded this example by saying, “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, “We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.”
- c. What is my point here? Faith and obedience are synonymous. They are so inseparable that you cannot have faith in God without obedience to the will and word of God. To put it another way, we don’t believe in God any more than the demons if our faith does not result in an obedience that transforms our character, thinking, and behavior in accordance with the Father’s will and word.
 - (1) The demons believe in God, and as a result they tremble with fear – but their faith has no transforming impact on their thinking or character or behavior. Why? Because it is not accompanied by obedience to the will and word of God.
 - (2) In other words, to claim we have put our faith in Jesus for salvation is not enough. Why? Because failure to live by faith – that is, go on from the moment of salvation to live a life of obedience to the will and word of God – puts us in no better a position with God than the demons have.
- d. Look at the first readers of Hebrews and the list of folks in chapter 11. Are they not held up as people of faith? And is not

their faith demonstrated by obedience to the will and word of God – and sometimes at great cost to themselves? And are not these examples of faith put here in Hebrews to make crystal clear why God says four times in the Bible, “My righteous ones shall live by faith”?

- e. Not to distract us from this great truth – that faith and obedience are synonymous – but the scripture also says that love of God and obedience to God are synonymous.
 - (1) This means that to live a life of obedience to God is not only proof of our faith in God, it is also proof of our love for Him (**John 14:15, 21, 23**).
 - (2) My exhortation to you is to tie all three together – faith and love and obedience – because the most rational and motivating basis for living a godly life – day by day – is obedience driven by your trust in God and your love for God.
- f. Two additional scriptures on faith and obedience:
 - (1) **James 1:22** . . . But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. . . . [25] But one is a doer of the word who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it. . . .
 - (2) **Jeremiah 17:7-8** . . . Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD. [8] For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit. (*Though there is a great cost to self in obedience, it's reward is an abundant life.*)
- g. **A Story of Faith** . . . Niagara Falls is a well known landmark on the St. Lawrence Seaway. Millions have visited these magnificent waterfalls to see their beauty and grandeur. A few have gone there to defy the power of the water as it pours over the falls, creating turbulent whirlpools with mighty undertows in the river below. Most everyone who risks their life in these daring feats goes over the falls in some contraption. Most often, the water wins, and a life is lost.

One of the few who tempted the falls and won was Charles Blondin, a famous French tightrope walker. Instead of going over the falls in some contraption, he walked across the falls

on a tightrope. In fact, he walked across several times: once blindfolded, once on stilts, once carrying one of his helpers on his shoulders, and once pushing a wheelbarrow. It is said that before each crossing Blondin asked the crowd if they were confident he could make it. Each time, the crowd gave voice to their confidence with wild cheering.

Upon returning from his first wheelbarrow crossing, Blondin again approached the crowd. This time he asked if they thought he could push one of them safely across the falls. The crowd cheered loudly, proclaiming their confidence that he could do it. After quieting them down, Blondin then asked which one of them would step forward and get into the wheelbarrow. No one moved.

It is one thing to profess faith in something or someone. It is quite another to live by that professed faith.

At best, professed faith is intellectual agreement with what is obvious and the admission of possibility with what seems to be true. Therefore, professed faith is not faith, for it requires no personal trust or dependence on the object of faith. It involves no personal risk. It demands no commitment. It produces no behavior in agreement with what is claimed to be believed.

The onlookers at Niagara Falls publicly and enthusiastically professed faith in Blondin. Yet when he asked them to live according to their faith, it became obvious they trusted in something other than Blondin and his wheelbarrow. Though they professed faith in his ability to take someone across the Falls, no one trusted him enough to put their own life in his hands. No one stepped forward and acted according to the faith they claimed. In fact, they acted as those who have no faith. Why? Because they didn't trust Blondin to do with them what he claimed he would do. They were willing to intellectually agree with what was obvious and admit the possibility of what seemed to be true, but they were not willing to trust him.

On that day at Niagara Falls, faith in Blondin would mean getting in the wheelbarrow and trusting him to safely

transport you back and forth across the falls - in spite of all the potential risks to your well-being. However, getting in the wheelbarrow would only be the first step of faith. To be transported over and back safely would require following every instruction and obeying every command, so as to do nothing other than exactly what Blondin said to do. Any movement contrary to his will, even if you thought you were simply protecting your own well-being, would be an act of unbelief in Blondin and probably result in the loss of life. In other words, you would only have faith in Blondin if you willingly placed your life in his hands by getting in the wheelbarrow **and** following all his instructions as he took you back and forth across the Falls.

So it is with God and us. Faith for salvation is the first step of faith – and an essential step, for sure. Yet living by faith until we reach the end of life is just as essential as taking that first step of faith.

- h. Therefore, **to live by faith** is to do the will of God and obey the Word of God – regardless of the cost to us.
- 2. **To live by faith** is to rest in God. To rest in God means waiting patiently for Him to do what He wills to do when He wills to do it.
 - a. For us Christians, this means no anxiety or irrational, sin-promoting fear.
 - b. What is anxiety? It is mental distress or uneasiness because of fear of danger or misfortune. To be anxious is to allow your mind to obsess on what it is you are worried about.
 - (1) Common synonyms of anxiety are: concern, disturbed, apprehensive, fearful, and uneasy.
 - (2) The most **common activity** of anxiety is projecting as true what is only imagined as true, or projecting as certain what is only a possibility of being certain. And though we cannot prove our projection of doom as true, we treat it as if it were true.
 - (3) The **sin of anxiety** is unbelief. When we feed fear or concern or an inner uneasiness by allowing our minds to dwell on assumed truth, or treating as fact what we assume to be fact, or project what may be true as if it were

true, we are displaying a clear distrust of God, God's goodness, God's faithfulness in being our provider and protector, God's love for us, and God's will for us.

- (4) The **evil of anxiety** is a deliberate turning away from God and from doing the will of God in order to take matters into our own hands. Once we take matters into our own hands, we seek a self-managed or worldly solution in an effort to calm our fears and quiet our concerns. In other words, anxiety is distrust of God which easily leads to self-rule in defiance of God-rule.
- c. Let's look at four scripture portions that speak of living by faith in God instead of giving way to anxiety.
 - (1) **Isaiah 26:3-4** . . . The steadfast of mind (*unwavering in faith*) You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You. [4] Trust in the LORD **forever**, for in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock.
 - (2) **Psalms 37:7-8** . . . **Rest** (*quietness, ceasing activity, relaxing*) in the Lord and **wait patiently** for Him; **do not fret** (*do not feel or express worry, annoyance, discontent, or the like*) because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. [8] Cease from anger and forsake wrath; **do not fret; it leads only to evildoing**.
 - (3) **Philippians 4:6-8** . . . Be **anxious for nothing**, but in **everything** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (*anxiety is turning away from God - prayer is turning to God in faith*). [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [8] Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **dwel** on these things.
 - (4) **Matthew 5:5** . . . Blessed are the meek (*humbly patient, long-suffering, obedient even to our own hurt*), for they shall inherit the earth.
 - (a) **Psalms 37:9-11** . . . For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land. [10] Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no

more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. [11] But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

- d. Resting in God requires believing that God is good, that nothing can separate you from His love, that what God has promised will come to pass – if not in this life than in the next, and that there is no safer, no better place to be than in His hands. When we live by faith in this way, it leads to **an inner peace** regardless of the circumstances.
- e. Therefore, **to live by faith** is to rest in God – which means to wait patiently for Him to do what He wills to do when He wills to do it.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Summarize what we have covered so far –
 - 1. **To live by faith** is to believe that God exists as the one and only true God, and that we are created by Him and for Him.
 - 2. **To live by faith** is to believe God is perfectly and eternally good.
 - 3. **To live by faith** is to do the will of God and obey the Word of God – regardless of the cost to us.
 - 4. **To live by faith** is to rest in God – which means to wait patiently for Him to do what He wills to do when He wills to do it.