

Faith to live By

Faith in the NT is like a precious diamond with many facets but its essential nature always agrees with Heb 11:1 It is ... “the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

However the nature of faith expresses itself in a variety of distinct but related forms.

The bible describes Faith as coming to us in three major ways:

1. That which is measured out to us at our creation our Faith to live by.
2. Faith we receive as a Gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. Faith we receive as Fruit worked in us by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:3 (NKJV)

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

In 600BC God gave the prophet Habakkuk a revelation that was to provide a basic foundational truth of the NT. *Habakkuk 2:4 (NKJV) the righteous shall live by his faith.*

So accurately does this prophesy express the central theme of the NT that it is quoted three times in the NT Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11 and Heb 10:38.

Of these three passages it is most fully expounded in Romans. In fact it provides the central theme of the whole letter.

By way of analogy the book of Romans can be compared with a symphony with an introductory part where the main theme is introduced which is then followed by three main movements

Rom 1:1-15 constitutes the introduction where Paul introduces the main theme in vs. 16 & 17 “the righteous man shall live by faith.”

The symphony is then divided into three main movements the 1st being chapters 1-8. Here Paul’s approach is doctrinal where he works out a detailed logical analysis of his theme showing how it harmonizes with the prophecies and patterns of the OT.

The second movement occurs in chapters 9,10 and 11 where Paul applies the theme to Israel and shows how Israel attempting to achieve righteousness by works rather than by faith, blinded their recognition of their Messiah and so deprived them of the blessings offered to them by God through Jesus.

The third movement in chapters 12-16 Paul’s emphasis is practical and here he shows how this theme of living by faith must be worked out through all the different activities, relationships and daily living by believers.

To appreciate a symphony properly we need to pick out the composers main theme when it is first introduced and the carefully follow it through the whole piece. Unless we keep the main theme in mind we will not appreciate the various modifications and developments it undergoes in the successive movements.

The same principal applies to Romans. Firstly we need to grasp is that the main theme that runs throughout the letter is that the righteous man shall live by faith. We then need to keep this main theme always in mind as we study Roman’s main divisions noting how it applies to each particular subject that is dealt with.

Rom 1:16 states the one basic requirement for experiencing the power of God for salvation

Romans 1:16 (NKJV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Salvation is made available here to “everyone who believes” without exception, irrespective of race or religion, these things are irrelevant.

God’s all inclusive offer of salvation to the human race has one single and important requirement that never varies. – It is Faith.

In vs. 17 Paul goes on to explain how this truth of salvation can be known...

Romans 1:17 (NKJV)

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

The word faith occurs three times here in this verse.

God's revelation comes from faith to faith. It originates in God's own faith, it is transmitted through the faith of the one who delivers the message and it is taken up by the faith of the one who receives the message.

The message is that; "the righteous man shall live by faith." From beginning unto the end the theme is faith.

Lets look at this word LIVE more closely. To live means more than just to have a physical existence, even the wicked enjoy this. What it means is that there is another kind of life that has its source in God alone and the only way we can experience this kind of life is by faith in Jesus Christ

What is this life? The apostle John wrote extensively on this subject:

John 1:4 (Referring to Jesus.) "In Him was Life."

John 3:36 (John the Baptist) He who believes in the Son has eternal life."

John 6:47 (Jesus) "He who believes has eternal life."

John 10:10 "I came that they might have life and that they might have it abundantly."

John 10: 27-28 "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give eternal life to them."

Finally at the end of the gospel John states that the main purpose for which it was written was: *John 20:31 (NKJV)*

*but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. **And***

1John 5:11-13 (NKJV)

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

It is important to see here that John consistently uses the present tense throughout these verses for this is in essence the Gospel message... There is a divine eternally lasting life which has as its source God Himself. God has made this life available to us in Jesus. As we receive Jesus by faith in our hearts and yield our lives to him in full obedience, we receive in Him the very life of God Himself.

This life is not only for another world or some future existence but it is for us here and now. ' He who has the Son has life. Eternal life is for us to experience and enjoy from the moment we first put our faith in Jesus.

Having received this new kind of life through faith in Jesus we are now faced with the challenge of living it out day by day and doing it all by faith. How do we do everything we describe as "living" such as eating, drinking, sleeping, working and all the other activities that make up our life by faith or does faith not apply to these mundane things.

Actually scripture would indicate that it is only when we learn to apply faith to the simple areas of life He releases us to greater things luke 16:10

Only after we have we made our faith work in the very little things and proved faithful there will God entrust us with greater responsibilities and the true spiritual riches.

Therefore in examining how we can work out our faith in daily living we will consider two practical down to earth areas: food and finances

