

HOW TO KEEP OUR FAITH TO THE END

(Hebrews 10:32-39)

- A. There are few endeavors in life where everyone who begins actually finishes — the ability to finish what you start is an important trait.

- B. The Parable of the Sower teaches that not all who begin to follow Christ will stick by His side to the end (Matt 13:18-23).

[What is needed in order to keep our faith, to remain faithful to God until the end of life?

There is certainly a great incentive to do so (Rev 2:10).

We will see in this lesson that what is needed is certainly within our grasp.]

I. FAITH IN WHAT WE CANNOT SEE

(Vesta McDaniel; HFW #527)

A. **By Faith I See.** “By faith I see Mount Calvary, by faith I see that cruel tree; I see His pain, I see His strife, by faith I see my ransomed life.”

1. We sing another song entitled “Were You There?” Yes, by faith we were present.

2. Thomas, who had just seen the resurrected body of Jesus, said “My Lord & My God”.

John 20:29 – Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed [that was not a compliment]. ***Blessed are those who have not seen & yet have believed.***”

3. We need to have faith in what we cannot see, or what we have not seen, if we hope to have faith in Christ when He comes in judgment.

B. **Paul promised** that we would have to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7), & our only connection to faith is the revealed Word of God (Rom 10:17).

1. Abraham had faith in what he could not see (he could not see how he could become the father of many nations); he walked by faith.

Rom 4:20-21 – Yet *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief*, but was *strengthened in faith*, giving glory to God, 21 & *being fully convinced* that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

2. In contrast, the 1st generation Israelites could not enter the Promised Land because she did not believe that obeying God would yield the great result that He promised it would (**Heb 3:18-19**).

- C. **Our goal is** the same as Abraham's ("the father of us all" **Rom 4:16**), & his goal was "the city [with] foundations, whose builder & maker is God" (**Heb 11:8-10, 16**).

[To keep our faith in Christ to the end of life we need a deep faith in what we cannot see –except by faith;

...the faith to see "the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (**Jas 1:12**)

...a faith that will "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (**Phil 3:14**).

Only then will our faith in what we cannot see become a reality one day.

A second trait we need to keep our faith to the end is courage.]

II. COURAGE THROUGH TRUST IN GOD

- A. **Courage is** "a quality of spirit that enables you to face danger or pain without showing fear."

1. Courage is what it takes to defuse an IED – no rational person would dare attempt such a dangerous task without knowing HOW to do it.

- B. **Likewise, courage is** what it takes to be faithful to Christ until death, & it is dangerous business unless you know HOW to do it.

1. And of course, we should know HOW to follow Christ; we should know HOW to overcome the challenges to our faith in Him.
 - a. As Jesus did we must rely on the power of God's Word when our faith is tested; we must be ready to respond with "it is written" (**Matt 4**).
 - b. That will take all the spiritual danger out of living this life & it will give us the courage to move forward in our service to the Lord.
2. Courage gained by trusting in the Lord is what strengthened Paul to endure the dangers & painful ordeals of his life & to complete his task.

Acts 23:11 – But the following night **the Lord stood by him** and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

2 Tim 4:16-17 – At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. 17 But **the Lord stood with me and strengthened me**, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

- C. **With Israel**, not only was it a lack of faith in the unseen that caused them to miss the Promised Land, but they also lacked courage – *you might say they were cowards*.
 1. They refused to trust in the power of God & the faithfulness of His Word (**Num 13:30-33**), so they lost the courage needed to take the Promised Land.
- D. **A lack of courage** is a serious thing: it can literally cause us to lose our souls.

Rev 21:8 – But the **cowardly**, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, & all liars **shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire & brimstone, which is the second death**.

1. The cowardly, don't have any courage, they're simply afraid of the danger & pain of doing what God commands them to do.

[Reaching the end of life with our faith in Christ intact requires having the courage to forge ahead in obedience to God, regardless of the dangers & pain that we will face.

But there is a third trait needed...]

III. THE WILL POWER TO GO FORWARD

A. Willpower is the ability to “resolutely control your behavior” – to keep going when there are good reasons to quit.

Luke 9:51-53 – Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that **He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem**, 52 & sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. – only the beginning

Acts 20:22-24 (Paul in Miletus) – And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains & tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do **I count my life dear to myself**, so that I may finish my race with joy, & the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (cf. **21:10-14**).

[But how do we implement faith, courage & willpower?]

IV. TAKE ON ONLY ONE DAY'S BURDENS

A. We would be overwhelmed by the difficulty of living this life if we were allowed to see the future.

1. We would do one of two things: we would give up & quit, or we would learn to take on only one day's burdens at a time!

Matt 6:33-34 –But **seek first the kingdom of God & His righteousness, & all these things shall be added to you**. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Deut 8:3-4 – So **He** humbled you, allowed you to hunger, & **fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know**, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. 4 Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years (cf. **Exo 16:17-18**).

[Our Heavenly Father is not only planning ahead to take care of us, but He is providing for us & strengthening us to take care of our problems in the present.

So today is the only day that we can or need to apply our faith, courage & willpower.

Finally, everything we have pointed out as to HOW we can keep our faith to the end means little if we do not respect ourselves.]

V. SELF-RESPECT

A. If we respect ourselves, then we will keep our faith to end.

1. Because, we gave our word (promise) of fidelity to Christ when we made the good confession before witnesses at our baptism - and only a self-respecting man (woman) keeps his word throughout his life.

B. Besides that, there is considerable joy & peace of mind in knowing that we have kept our promises.

1. We ought to recoil at the thought of being faithless & undependable – *especially to the One who gave His life for us*.
2. I have to think that self-respect is partly what drove Paul to make his valedictory statement.

2 Tim 4:6-8 – For *I am* already being poured out as a drink offering, & the time of *my* departure is at hand. 7 *I have* fought the good fight, *I have* finished the race, *I have* kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for *me* the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to *me* on that Day, & *not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing*.

[Paul is saying, “I have enough respect for myself, that I didn’t allow anything to prevent me from keeping the faith until the end.

- He kept faith in what he could not see.
- He kept up his courage by trusting in the power & word of God.
- So he had the willpower & the self-respect to shoulder each day’s burdens.

CLOSING

- A. We are blessed to not only have Paul as an example of how to keep our faith to the end, but we have Jesus too, the Author & finisher of our faith (**Heb 12:1-2**).

God’s Plan For Our Salvation:

Hear the gospel of Christ: Acts 2; 3; 13; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God: John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31

Repent of sin: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess faith in Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Baptized for the forgiveness of sins: Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3-4; Acts 2:38

Obedient to Christ: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48