

Hebrews

Hebrews 10:38-39 – Living By Faith - Part 1

September 6, 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. These verses form a transitional point in the book of Hebrews – separating the first part of Hebrews from the second.
 - A. As transitional verses, they provide us with a grand conclusion to all that has been said before – from the **Hebrews 1:1 - 10: 31**. And they prepare us for the final three chapters of **Hebrews – 11-13**.
 1. **Hebrews 1:1 - 10:31**, is essentially about the reality of Jesus Christ and the reasons why we should put our faith in Him for eternal salvation and listen to Him for daily living.
 2. **Hebrews 10:32-13:25**, is essentially about the life of faith – that is, how we are to live as Christ-ones from the moment of being born again until we see Christ face-to-face.
 - B. In between these two parts we find these transitional verses which give us some key qualities and principles which we will need if we are to move beyond faith in Christ for salvation to living the Christ-like life until Jesus returns or until death takes us home to Heaven.
 - C. And so I want to review the seven key qualities and principles – which I called “Practical Lessons,” from this transitional section of Hebrews.
 1. Remember the good in your life and use it to build more godliness.
 2. The decision to repent and put our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from the power, practice and penalty of sin is a very

serious decision. Why? Because it requires us to make God everything and ourselves nothing.

3. Remember joy is as different from happiness as day is from night.
4. We are God's people and our home is not here, but there! Here, we are merely sojourner's and tent-dwellers on our way home.
5. On a planned daily basis, or at least on a regular basis, confidently come into God's presence for an extended time of intimate communion, prayer, meditation, contemplation, worship, listening, and learning.
6. Never forget your need for endurance – to go from where you are today to the end of your life as a full-fledged Christian so that you will be approved for eternal life at the judgment seat of Christ.
7. Christ is coming again. May we be people who long for his return and people who live according to the will of God so that at the judgment we will hear "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into my rest."

III. Prayer

IV. 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. Things to take note of:
 1. **NOTE: Verse 38** begins with a quote from **Habakkuk 2:1-4**.
 2. **NOTE:** The opening statement of verse 38 is repeated four times through out the Bible. One time in the Old Testament and three times in the New Testament.
 - a. **Habakkuk 2:1-4** . . . Judgment is coming upon all who live in unbelief – just as it came on Israel for their unbelief in refusing to enter and take the Promised Land. Only those who live by faith will pass through the judgment approved/justified.
 - b. **Romans 1:16-17** . . . The gospel is about a life of faith, and it is those who live righteously by faith in God/Christ who are saved.
 - c. **Galatians 3:1-11** . . . It is the life of faith that receives the promises and gifts of God – thus affirming that it is those who live a life of faith in God who are approved/justified by God.

This is affirmed by pointing to the gift of the Holy Spirit (empowerment of God) as coming through faith and not through keeping the Law.

- d. **Hebrews 10:38-39** . . . It is those who live by faith who will not shrink back to the old sinful ways and therefore will preserve their salvation unto eternal life.
 3. **NOTE:** This first statement in **verse 38** does not say, “*My righteous one shall be saved by faith*,” it says, “***My righteous one shall live by faith***.”
 - a. This does not in any way remove the God-given requirement to be saved by faith.
 - b. What it does is extend that requirement of faith from the first step of salvation to the way we live the Christian life the rest of our days here on the earth. In other words, faith is not just required for getting saved from the penalty of sin, it is required for the whole of the Christian’s life – from our new birth to our entrance into God’s eternal presence.
 4. **NOTE:** Unbelief – spoken of as shrinking back (*remember Israel their first time at the Jordan River*) – leads to eternal loss – which is spoken of as destruction (*remember Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness*). The opposite of unbelief is an enduring, perpetual life of faith which leads to the preserving of the soul – entrance into eternal life with God upon the return of Christ or physical death – whichever comes first.
 5. **NOTE:** A life of faith is not a guarantee that we will not shrink back to a life of unbelief – or as Hebrews says, fall away from the faith. However, persevering in living by faith not only keeps us in right standing with God, it makes falling away nearly impossible.
- C. With these things in mind, I want to move on to the question: “What does it mean to be a righteous one who lives by faith (**Hebrews 10:38**)?” Though the answer to this question is found throughout the Bible, we will draw our answer primarily from the life of the first readers of this letter and from the examples of the people of faith given in **Hebrews 11**.
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.
 - a. As God puts it in **Hebrews 11:6** . . . And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must

believe that He is (exists) and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

- b. Therefore, to believe that He is the one and only true God, and that we are created by Him and for Him is to believe He is GOD and we are merely created beings. In other words, He is the potter and we are only the clay.
 - (1) He is the greater and we the lessor.
 - (2) He is the Lord and Master and we are His servants (slaves). **Note** what Jude says about himself in his introduction.
 - (3) He is our Father and we His children.
 - (4) He is the judge and we will stand before Him one day for a final judgment.
- c. Therefore, **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.

- a. John writes that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. David says to give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
 - (1) Martin Luther, in his great hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” says of Satan – “For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe.” Satan’s single intent is to turn us against God so that God has to turn against us.
 - (2) In contrast to Satan, God never seeks to work us woe. All that He wants for us and does for us is calculated and designed to work us good.
 - (a) Though our circumstances may make us feel like we are suffering as Job suffered, we are no less anchored in the love and goodness of God than Job.
 - (b) When we lose sight of God’s goodness in the midst of trying circumstances, it is because we have lost sight of the fact that our good is tied to eternity and God’s glory rather than happiness here and now.
- b. To believe that God is perfectly and eternally good is to believe that the rewards of righteousness far exceed the cost of righteousness, while the cost of sin far exceeds its benefits.
 - (1) Now the benefits of sin always come first – in an effort to hide the cost from our eyes – and so sin requires no faith.

All sin requires is selfishness, pride, unbridled desire, perverse passion, and the forsaking of self-control.

- (2) On the other side, the cost of righteousness almost always comes first – with its rewards following after. And when I say following after I mean sometimes the rewards of righteousness do not come to us until after we have left this world and are ushered into God's eternal Kingdom.
 - (a) And so we see that faith in the goodness of God is required if we are to say no to our human reason and powerful urges in order to remain faithful while passing through the cost of obedience on our way to the benefits of obedience.
 - (b) This is why we have statements like **James 1:2-4** ... Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. [4] And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- c. To believe that God is perfectly and eternally good is to believe that God is faithful in acting as our provider, our protector, our healer, and our source of security – or as we sing, our all in all!
 - (1) An example – **Luke 8:47-48** . . . When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. [48] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.
- d. One more point on this one: If we wind up on the "wrath" side of God it is because we have done the will of the devil and followed the way of our flesh rather than submitting to the will of God.
- e. Therefore, **to live by faith** is to believe God is perfectly and eternally good.

V. Conclusion:

A. Summary:

- 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.
- B. May God speak to you and to us as a local body of believers so that we will be people of faith.