

Hebrews

Hebrews 10:38-39 – Living By Faith - Part 3

September 20, 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. 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.
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. To rest in God means waiting patiently for Him to do what He wills to do when He wills to do it.

B. Living By Faith – Continued

1. **To live by faith** is to pursue humility to the point where we believe that God is everything and we are nothing.
 - a. Now you may be wondering what it means to believe that God is everything and we are nothing. Consider:
 - (1) Without God, we would not exist – for God is our creator.
 - (2) Without God being for us, we would not be able to sustain our existence with food, shelter, and clothing – for it is

God who makes the sun shine, the rain fall, and the seasons for planting and harvesting.

- (3) Without God on our side, death would mean oblivion for us – that is, the end of our existence.
- (4) Without God's grace, there would be no salvation from the penalty, power, and practice of sin. We would remain slaves of Satan and sin forever, and condemned to eternal destruction forever.
- (5) Without God's empowerment, we could never become a new creation. We could never put off our old sinful nature and put on the likeness of Jesus Christ. We could never love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We could never have renewed minds. And we would have no hope of being holy as He is holy.
- (6) Without God, there would be no Holy Spirit, no Scriptures, no Church, no godly faith, no answered prayer, no hope in trying times, no comfort in disastrous times, no loving Father, no meek and humble Savior, no forgiveness of sin, no resurrection of the body, and no eternity with God after this life.

- b. **Are you getting the picture?** As Paul writes in **I Corinthians 4:7** . . . What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift? This is why the humble person believes that God is everything and we are / I am nothing.
- c. Okay, so you can see why the humble person believes God is everything and we are nothing, but what does living by faith have to do with humility? What is the inseparable link between faith and humility?
 - (1) Whether or not sin originated with the angel Lucifer, it is clear from the Biblical account of Lucifer that sin's first manifestation in his life was pride. (**Isaiah 14:2**)
 - (2) In the Garden of Eden, part of the devil's sales pitch to Eve was the idea that she should consider herself at least equal to God – and that because of this supposed equality she deserved what God forbid.
 - (3) We see in these two examples that pride promotes disobedience. We also know from scripture that

disobedience is the outward manifestation of unbelief. Put those three together – pride, disobedience, and unbelief and you begin to see the inseparable link between pride and unbelief.

- (4) In contrast to pride, humility toward God promotes submission to God which results in obedience to God. And as you may recall from our previous studies, **living by faith** means doing the will of God and obeying the Word of God. Therefore, just as unbelief and pride are inseparably linked, so faith and humility are inseparably linked.
- d. Because I this truth is so important to our spiritual well-being, that is, to living a life of faith, I want to show you why faith and humility go hand-in-hand from another direction.
 - (1) Jesus said in **John 5:44** . . . "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?"
 - (2) What is the point Jesus is making here?
 - (a) Seeking praise and honor from the people around us puts us in the position of having to please the people around us in order to gain their approval. Of course, that means we will have to continue pleasing them if we are to keep their approval and praise over a long period of time.
 - (b) Now listen carefully here. When pride, or self-exaltation, or gaining praise, or keeping approval from those around us becomes more important than gaining and keeping the approval and praise of God, we will compromise and even reject the will of God in order to keep receiving the approval and praise of others.
 - i) The reality is – no matter how pretty we may want to paint it – we cannot compromise or reject the will of God without exercising self-rule in defiance of His rule – which is nothing less than disobedience to God.
 - ii) And since faith and obedience to the will of God are synonymous, the prideful pursuit of self-exaltation and approval from others renders faith impossible.

- (3) To summarize Jesus' point here in **John 5:44**.
 - (a) Pride seeks the approval and praise of men regardless of what God thinks about us or wants from us. This is unbelief.
 - (b) Humility seeks the approval and praise of God regardless of what those around us think of us or want from us. This is living by faith.
- e. To help you see in a practical way what I am talking about, I want to give you **four** examples from scripture which show this link between humility and faith (**God is everything, we are nothing**).
 - (1) (**Matthew 8:5-13**) When the centurion came to Jesus to plead for the healing of his servant, Jesus said he would go to the Centurion's home and heal his servant. At this, the centurion said, "Lord, **I am not worthy** for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed." To which Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such **great faith** with anyone in Israel.
 - (2) (**Matthew 15:21-28**) A Canaanite woman came to Jesus and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." Jesus ignored her at first. Then his disciples asked him to tell her to leave. Then Jesus made a comment about the work he was sent to do. Finally Jesus said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she said, "Yes, Lord; but **even the dogs feed** on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, **your faith is great**; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.
 - (3) (**Genesis 13**) Abraham, the uncle of Lot and therefore the superior of the two, humbled himself when it came time to split the land between them by giving Lot the opportunity to choose first. In response, God blessed Abraham.
 - (4) (**Numbers 12**) One day Miriam and Aaron publicly criticized Moses because he had a Cushite wife and proclaimed that because of Moses' wife they were just as important as he in speaking for God to the people. Moses responded by stepping back and letting God solve the

conflict. In telling this story, God says of Moses in **Numbers 12:3** . . . Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth. We see the reality of this humility in **verse 13** where, in response to God's judgment on Miriam (leprosy), Moses cried out to God for grace and healing on behalf of his sister Miriam.

- (5) I trust you are able to see in these four examples of people like you and me the inseparable link between living by faith and a life of humility.

- f. Let me now point you to Jesus as an example of what we are talking about. In the Gospel of John we read these words that Jesus spoke about himself in relation to the Father. Listen to how Christ's humility led him to the recognition that he was nothing and God was everything. And as you hear these scriptures, consider how profound an impact Christ's humility had on doing God's will in fulfilling his ministry.
 - (1) **John 5:19** . . . Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.
 - (2) **John 5:30** . . . I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
 - (3) **John 6:38** . . . For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
 - (4) **John 7:16** . . . My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.
 - (5) **John 8:28** . . . I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.
 - (6) **John 8:42** . . . I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.
 - (7) **John 8:50** . . . But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.
 - (8) **John 14:10** . . . The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

- (9) **John 14:24** . . . He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.
- g. Therefore, **to live by faith** is to pursue humility to the point where we recognize that God is everything and we are nothing.
- h. I want to make two more points related to faith and humility.
- (1) When it comes to serving the Lord, worthiness and effectiveness rises out of two primary character qualities – **holiness** and **humility**.
- (a) For example, consider Noah, Abraham, Moses, David. These are men whose character made them worthy to be selected as servants of God.
- (b) Sadly, the current basis of service in the Church today is not first and foremost character, but giftedness, natural ability, education, and in some cases, past experiences of success in doing what you are being considered for now.
- (c) Oh that we would care far more about character – holiness and humility – than giftedness, natural ability, and education in being servants ourselves and in allowing others to serve within the church.
- (2) Humility before God is nothing if it does not prove itself in humility before men. Christ, himself said, “I am among you as one who serves.” His humility was not just toward God. It was toward those around him as well.
- (a) He then says to us that we are to follow his example of humility in our dealings with one another.
- (b) Paul wrote to the **Romans**: " Give preference to one another in honor"; "Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly." "Be not wise in your own estimation." To the **Corinthians**: "Love does not brag and is not arrogant or puffed up, it does not seek its own, is not provoked." To the **Galatians**: "Through love serve one another. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another." To the **Ephesians**, right after the three chapters on worshiping God, Paul says: "Therefore I, the prisoner

of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, [3] being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"; "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." To the **Philippians**: "Do nothing from selfish or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. Have this attitude (mind) in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and humbled Himself." And to the **Colossians**: "Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other, even as the Lord forgave you."

- (c) It is in our relationships with one another, in our treatment of one another, that we show forth the true humility of Christ and validate that, like all of God's righteous ones, we are living by faith.

IV. Conclusion:

- A. Once again, **to live by faith** is to pursue humility to the point where we believe that God is everything and we are nothing.
- B. And should you think this is all loss with no gain, let me close this teaching today by reminding you that it is the humble person whom God protects and frees from bondage. He loves and comforts the humble. He turns His face toward the humble, and gives them greater grace. He reveals His hidden truths to the humble, and deals with them as a gentle shepherd deals with his sheep. Because the humble person lives by faith, that same humble person rests in the Lord and therefore enjoys an overriding inner peace – even in the midst of relationship conflicts, personal trauma, and difficult circumstances.
- C. May we pursue the quality of humility until we are convinced God is everything and we are nothing.