

21 01 24

Live by the faith of Christ Pt 1 The significance of living by Christ's faith

This is our first teaching on the instruction to believers to live by the faith of Christ. In this study we establish three points- (i) Christ Jesus had perfect faith, (ii) the disciples had little faith, and (iii) there were those who had "great faith" and so were healed and saved.

Our reference verse: Galatians 2: 20

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me". According to the GNB Galatians 2: 20 - "so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me".

To establish a little more detail on our three points we search the scriptures using the words- faith, obedient, and the phrase "live by":

1) The Lord Jesus had perfect faith

a) That which is not of faith is sin

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom.14:23).

b) Christ was without sin- Heb.4: 15- "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin".

c) Christ is the righteousness of God by His faith

[21] But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

[22] Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (Rom.3: 21-22).

We see a link between the faith of Christ and His righteousness.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes

[3] For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

[4] For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Rom.10: 3, 4)

d) He was obedient unto the Father even unto death- Phil.2: 8- "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross".

e) Jesus being full of the Spirit was led by the Spirit into the wilderness

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1).

2. Jesus' disciples believed He was the SOG, Messiah but nevertheless had little faith

[25] And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

[26] And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. Matt.8:25-26 CF- John 6:68-69-

[68] Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

[69] And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

The apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith

"And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith" (Luke 17: 5).

Jesus called their generation- faithless and perverse

[15] Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

[16] And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

[17] Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. (Matt.17: 15-17)

Thomas was a well known example of a disciple that Jesus called faithless- John 20:27- “Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing”..

3. There were those in Jesus’ day that exhibited “great faith”

[8] The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

[9] For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

[10] When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (Matt.8: 8-10)

It was the woman’s faith that her sins were forgiven (saved)

[44] And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

[48] And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

[49] they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

[50] And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. (Luke 7:44,48-50)

By their faith the lepers were cleansed.

[12] And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers...

[17] And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

[19] And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole (Luke 17:12,17, 19).

Illustration

There are two ends of the faith spectrum.

There is Abraham whose faith was reckoned for righteousness -Rom.4:9- “Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.” Or a post-cross example of a pastor who goes to India with his family and spends his life learning the language to preach to the indigenous people: like William Carey did. There is Saul who believed not God and was removed from being king. Or a post-cross example where a Christian goes to Bible college and his wife wants him to be a Methodist minister to collect their pension, so after qualifying they leave for ministry training: like a colleague of mine at BCNZ did.

Questions

- i) What is the fruit of the faith of Christ?
- ii) What else is attributed to God’s children in the body- by the faith of Christ?
- iii) What are the consequences of **no** knowledge in the body- of living by the faith of Christ?

Answers from the scriptures

i) The righteousness of God is the fruit of the faith of Christ.

ii) In addition we are-

a) We are justified by the faith of Christ- Gal.2: 16- “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but **by the faith of Jesus Christ**...that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified”

b) We are the righteousness of God by faith of Christ- Romans 3:22- “Even the righteousness of God which is **by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference”.

iii) When a corrupt copy of the scriptures removes the instruction to live by the faith of Christ then Christians are forced to live by their own faith. See one example in the CEV- “I was put to death on the cross with Christ, and I do not live anymore—it is Christ who lives in me. I still live in my body, but I live by faith in the Son of God...” And when the tribulations become too much you could find yourself discouraged, lose your faith, and encouraged down that path by the NCV that says “And you are being saved by it if you continue believing what I told you. If you do not, then you believed for nothing” (1Cor.15: 2) Where does your faith stand- steadfast by the faith of Christ or one continual struggle? When you seek to live by the scriptures preserved in the AB then you have assurance that Christ lived a perfect life, and His righteousness is imputed to you, and you can choose to live by the faith of Christ. But how do we practically live by Christ’s faith? Tune in next week! Amen!