

Simplicity of Faith

#0665

Study by W.D. Frazee

“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith” Habakkuk 2:1-4.

There are a number of interesting thoughts presented in these four verses. Notice the Lord says to write the vision, and make it plain upon tables. We often emphasize tables, and that is fine. But the point is to make it plain. The use of illustrations is merely to accomplish the objective of making plain.

“The just shall live by his faith.” Paul quotes this text several times. He quotes it in Romans 1. He quotes in Galatians 3. He quotes it in Hebrews 10. It forms the basis of the great reformation truth of justification by faith. Notice the particular way it is worded by the prophet. We find it in the New Testament as the just shall live by faith. That is correct. But Habakkuk is very specific. The Lord, speaking through Habakkuk is very specific. The just shall live by his faith. That is not in any way to suggest that man has a faith, or can have a true faith apart from God. Faith is the gift of God. Like every other good and perfect gift, it is from above. The faith the remnant keep is the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12). But the point God would like us to get is that although faith is the gift of God, until that faith is accepted and used by us, absorbed by us until it becomes our faith, it can never bring us to the point the prophet is speaking of here.

“The just shall live by his faith.” It must be an individual exercise of faith on the part of the Christian. Ezekiel emphasizes that. He says that even though Noah and Daniel and Job were in the land they couldn't save a son or daughter. They will deliver only their own souls.

We are going into a great time of trouble. The world is tottering on the brink of it all the while. So the world is going to go over the precipice. But the people of God are going to stand unmoved through that time. Why? They are people who live by faith.

Do you want to live? God's people are going to live by faith. That has a very literal and practical and physical application as well as a spiritual application. If we expect to live in this world and the next we must live by faith.

Take the concordance and look up faith. You will find it used a good many times. Notice the different things that come to us by faith, the different results of having faith. Paul says we walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). He expresses the glorious wish for us that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. I notice that the way we receive the Spirit is by faith. I want to receive the Spirit, don't you? Well, if we will open our hearts to the Spirit by faith, we can have that gift.

"That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" Galatians 3:14.

We want to live by faith. We want to walk toward the kingdom of God. If we walk it is by faith. We want Christ to dwell in our hearts. If He does, it is by faith. We want to receive the promise of the Spirit. If we receive it, it will be by faith.

"How to exercise faith should be made very plain"
Education, page 253.

The great truth of the second chapter of Habakkuk thundered in the ears of Luther and drove him from those stairs in St. Peter out to stir Europe with the message of justification by faith. The message was that the just shall live by his faith. How to exercise faith should be made very plain.

If you and I can learn how to exercise faith, and do it, we will live and have Christ dwelling in our hearts. We will receive the promise of the Spirit. Concerning the gift of the Spirit, we are plainly told that this gift claimed by faith brings all other blessings in its train.

Years ago the angel told the messenger of the Lord about exercising faith. The angel said:

"Some tried too hard to believe. Faith is so simple we look above it" *Manuscript 1*, 1850.

The angel said some tried too hard to believe. The reason we don't get some things done is because we don't try hard enough. But here is something that it is possible to try too hard at. The angel said faith is so simple. The opposite of simple is complex. There are some things so complex and difficult that only men like Einstein could grasp. But the subject of faith is not like that. It is so simple that we look above it.

If you were shooting at something, there would be two ways to miss it. One would not shoot high enough. The other would be to shoot too high. If you want an interesting experiment shut one eye and put a finger out to touch a certain thing. Nine times out of ten you will either overshoot it or undershoot it. That is why the Lord has given us two eyes.

The angel said that faith is simple, and some tried too hard to believe it, so they looked above it. The difficulty of God's people were that they were reaching above faith. Not only reaching there, but looking there. A person who looks above is the way he talks. Oh, I wish I had more faith. I wish I had faith like Abraham or Jacob or Paul. But that isn't all he may say. I will be so glad when we have the faith to get the answers to our prayers. We look up and to the time when we shall have more faith and more power, and consequently more results. And we expect to get there after awhile. Get where? On that higher plain where we have faith. And all the while the difficulty is that the kind of faith God is talking about is right here where we can reach it. It isn't up there.

I know there are some things up there we haven't reached yet. I see that. But the faith you and I need to exercise is not one of those. Faith is in the kindergarten. You can't get much more than that. Faith is so simple it is like A B C. We are not going to find it in some great, advanced attainment. Of course, you will use it there like you use A B C. No matter how far you go in a university you will use A B C. You never get beyond faith. But what a strange thing for a child to be asked what this letter is, and the child would say, I don't know the name of that letter. But I understand if I keep studying, by and by when I get to college they are going to teach me what that letter is. So I am going to school and hoping some day I will know what that letter is and what it means.

We learn those letters right down at the beginning of our education, don't we? Some tried too hard to believe. Faith is so simple we look above it.

"Many who are sincerely seeking for holiness of heart and purity of life seem perplexed and discouraged. They are constantly looking to themselves, and lamenting their lack of faith; and because they have no faith they feel that they cannot claim the blessing of God. These persons mistake feeling for faith. They look above the simplicity of true faith" *Messages to Young People*, page 111.

Notice it doesn't say they look below the simplicity of true faith. They look above it. That ought to be encouraging to us. This statement is where we can get hold of it.

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" Romans 10:6-10.

That is the word of faith. Where is it? It is nigh. It isn't something you have to reach so high for or so deep for. We don't need to look above the simplicity of faith. It is nigh.

“That if thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed”
Romans 10:9-11.

Isn't that simple? Yes. So let us get the fact that this simple faith we are talking about is right near us. And let's not make the simple mistake of looking too high, and having such an exalted idea what to exercise faith would be like a glorified fairy tale.

Right now every one of you can exercise the saving faith that Habakkuk and Paul are talking about, and that the Spirit of Prophecy is talking about. It is ours to exercise. There is no question about it.

How are we going to exercise it? It is made very plain. The danger is in overshooting the mark. Some tried too hard to believe. The danger is in looking above it. So let's look right down where we are.

Wouldn't it be too bad to have in our pocket the solution to a problem, and we had it there all the time? But wouldn't it be a wonderful feeling to say, Thank God, I don't have to go around feeling discouraged. I have the answer. I have the solution to the problem.

There is one thing you have to do before you can exercise faith. That is to fully surrender your heart and life to Jesus. The kind of faith men exercise without that is not faith, but presumption. You must give yourself fully to Jesus. How do you do that? You do it with your will. You don't do it with your feelings and emotions and desires. You do it with your will.

Did you ever do anything you didn't want to? I hope so. It is a glorious thing that God has put into man a choice which can decide to do things even though the poor human flesh does not want to do them. It is wonderful that we have the power of choice.

So the first step is to surrender yourself to Jesus. Give Him your will. Decide to believe and trust God with the choice you used to make the surrender. Do it in the same way. That decision to surrender you expressed with your lips.

Suppose my problem is that I have been smoking cigarettes. The Spirit of God comes to my heart, and I say, All right Jesus, I am going to give you the cigarettes. I give them up. With the mind I make the decision, and with my mouth I confess it.

I believe in the same way. I choose to believe. That is to exercise faith.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

I read that and say, Dear Lord, I confess my sins. I confess that I have sinned against You in abusing my body with cigarettes. I am sorry. I wish I hadn't done it.

What is the second thing to do? Lord, I believe your promise. I believe that you have forgiven my sin of tobacco. I believe Your promise that You will keep me from doing it again. You have said that You will keep me from falling, so I believe it.

Thank God, I have the victory.

Someone says, You had better wait a week, or at least a day to see whether or not you can keep from smoking.

Who said that? Satan. That is the spirit of doubt. How does doubt and faith go together? They don't. They are the opposite of each other. When doubt comes in faith goes out. When faith comes in doubt goes out.

But as I listen to faith on one side and doubt on the other, who decided which shall speak? I decide it. And right there is where the battle is gained or lost. It isn't some high experience way up out of reach in the clouds where only a few people who can get into a jet plane can reach it. No. It is nigh you. Anyone can say, I will surrender my life to Jesus, and I will believe that what God says is true. Anyone can do that. The weakest person in this world can do those two things. That is the exercise of faith.

Don't try to make it complex, because it isn't. It is simple.

The trouble with a lot of people is that they say they are exercising faith when it is merely exercising their belief that something is going to happen that they want to happen. There was a man down in Georgia who was drilling an oil well. The state of Georgia has offered a great bonus of hundreds of thousands of dollars to anyone who will bring in a good producing oil well within the state of Georgia. So this man has already poured tens of thousands of dollars trying to get oil. I presume he has a certain amount of hope. But suppose he were praying about that. He should pray so hard that he would say, I have faith that God is going to bring me an oil well.

Would you call that faith? No, I would call it hope. It would be all right to pray about it, but the only kind of faith that could operate in a thing like that would be the kind of faith that if God sees it is for the best He will help me to find oil. But the bold statement that I am going to find oil isn't faith. It is presumption. That is looking above it. Way out of reach. Faith is right down here nigh you.

"The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power, which works in the children of men unto

obedience to God, or unto disobedience" *Messages to Young People*, page 151.

It is not the taste. That isn't the will. It isn't inclination. None of those is the will. The will is the deciding power.

"You may believe and promise all things, but your promises or your faith are of no value until you put your will on the side of faith and action. If you fight the fight of faith with all your willpower, you will conquer. Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions, are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable" *Ibid*, pages 151,152.

What isn't reliable? Your feelings and impressions and emotions. None of them are reliable. Why depend on them then?

"But you need not despair. You must be determined to believe, although nothing seems true and real to you. . . . It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ; . . .

"You cannot control your impulses, your emotions, as you may desire" *Ibid*.

Did you ever try it? Suppose I go out and there is a flock of crows. I say, Come. Will they come? You know they won't. That is just about how much you can control your emotions.

"But you can control the will, and you can make an entire change in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, your life will be hid with Christ in God, and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from God that will hold you fast to His strength. . . .

"Will you not, without delay, place yourself in right relation to God? Will you not say, 'I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now.' and from this moment be wholly on the Lord's side?" *Ibid*, pages 152-153.

That is surrender. That is the first step. I suppose all of you have made that decision. If you haven't, make it right now. If you have slipped in the past, make it over again. You can. If tobacco, liquor, stealing, breaking the rules, or anything has come between you and God, can you give it up to Jesus right now, for His sake? How do you do it? By the act of the will.

I remember when I was sitting in camp meeting just a barefoot boy. Everyone thought I was a Christian. I had been baptized. I was a member of the church. I studied my Sabbath School lesson. I knew my memory verses. But in my heart and mind there was something that had come between me and Jesus. It was a book.

Some people would not have thought it was a bad book. But it was bad for me. It had come between me and Jesus.

As I sat in that camp meeting the minister was talking about people coming up to the altar and giving their hearts to Jesus. The Spirit of God was talking to me about that book and the things that grew out of that book.

Since then I have had many people come to me and say, Brother Frazee, how did you know what to give tonight? How did you now what I had been doing?

That isn't the point at all. The Spirit of God knows what to talk to my heart and your heart.

The Spirit of God was talking to my heart that day under the canvass. The Spirit of God was taking what the minister said that didn't know my experience at all, and bringing it right to my heart. Finally I said, All right Lord, I will.

Notice He gives us the very words to say, "I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now." How many of us, by the grace of God, will say that with all our hearts right now? Are we united in that? Thank God.

"Say, 'I will believe, I do believe that God is my helper,'
and you will find that you are triumphant in God" *Ibid*.

Do not bargain with God. God is bargaining with us.

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou
mayest be rich" Revelation 3:18.

What are the terms? It is a free gift, but it is given only to those who give all to Jesus. The mere giving does not in itself give you the gift. I gives you the right to accept it. How do you reach out your hand and accept it? You simply say, I believe Lord. I accept it. And that is true of every promise God has made.

Take the matter of forgiveness of sins. God says if we will confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. When am I going to get the benefit of that? Nineteen hundred years ago my Lord went to the cross and laid down His life. His blood was shed that those sins might be covered in the cleansing blood. Tonight I give those sins to Jesus and say, Lord take them away. But if that is all I do, I may still carry a heavy heart. Take the second step and say, Lord, I believe. I believe that Jesus died for my sins. I believe that as I have confessed those sins He accepts me just as if I had not sinned.

That is righteousness by faith. Some of you may like the subject if I called it that. But call it any name you wish, it is the same—simple truth. It is how to exercise faith, and you do it by an act of your will, your choice. With the heart and mind man believes, and with the mouth he confesses it. He says, I do believe.

"Say, 'I will believe, I do believe that God is my helper.'" and you will find that you are triumphant in God. It will take every part of the will power you possess. To

hold that will in gear on the matter of surrender and the matter of faith will take at times all the will power you have. But don't miss it. Just as long as you say, Lord, my choice is still the same to give everything to You, my choice is still the same to believe Your word and believe You have accepted me, and just as long as those two things stay settled I don't care how you feel, you are a Christian. I don't care what emotions surge through your heart, you are a victorious child of God just as long as those two things stay settled. Take Christ as His word and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory. Let's move into the blessed experience of faith.

It isn't over the sea that someone has to go over and fetch it for us. It isn't up in heaven that someone has to reach way up there. It isn't down in hell that someone has to go down and pull it up. No, the word is nigh thee even in thy heart and mouth. If with your mind you decide to give yourself fully to God and decide to believe, and with your mouth confess it, that is the exercise of faith.

I hope it has been made simple and plain. It would be a shame to have something within our reach and not take it. By the grace of God let's take it.

Are we going to take the second step? Here is where some people get so conscientious. They are afraid that they are not good enough, or that they haven't arrived at that point. They are afraid it is up in college, and they are only in the first grade. Everything I am talking about is in the first grade. It is all right down here. You don't have to be good to do it. All you have to do is be willing.

Do you want to be a child of God? Do you want to give your heart to Him. Then, do it. Do you want to believe? Then believe. Say, Yes Lord, I believe Your word. I will not doubt you anymore. I believe with my heart and express with my lips.

To do the thing I am talking about is so simple that everyone ought to see it. It shouldn't take some struggle. Nevertheless for some people it is just as hard a battle as it is to give up whiskey or tobacco. It is harder, because there is nothing tangible about it. You can give up a package of cigarettes or a bottle of whiskey. You can lay it down and go off and leave it. But give up doubt. Give up the kind that says, I am just not good enough, I am not worthy. How could you be worthy of even one of the blessings of the covenant of grace? I would hate to get the kind of blessing I am worthy of. I don't want it. God save me from it. Oh, no. I want what Jesus is worthy of. He has told me I can have it if I will just give myself to Him.

God has made Jesus sin for us, who knew no sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in Him. He was treated as we deserve that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sin in which He had no share that we might be justified in His righteousness in which we had no share. Oh friends, let's tell Jesus that we are going to take that second step with no reservations.

To some weary heart it may sound too good to be true. But it is too good not to be true. There is something about this particular thing that is something like the surrender step. It is either all or nothing. You can't surrender nine things to God and hold back one. The nine don't really mean much. Jesus said to give Him how much? All.

You can't believe half-way. You can't say, Lord, I believe you forgave me for those things I did a year ago that were so terrible, but these things I have been doing day after day is hard for me to believe that You will forgive. If I can go a week without them, then I can believe that they are forgiven and gone. That's not faith. Faith says, Thank God, no matter if I have sinned a thousand times or ten thousand times I believe my Lord loves me. I am going to give my heart all over to Him and simply believe that He has fulfilled His word. I will believe, I do believe that God is my helper.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

Who gets the results of that great sacrifice of love? Whosoever believes. Will you believe? When? Right now.

“The just shall live by his faith.” Let's do it tonight, and enter into these precious promises.

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W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 102, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org