

The Just Shall Live By Faith

Sermon #0918

Study given by W. D. Frazee—December 27, 1963

Over a hundred years ago a converted Jew named Joseph Wolf was greatly burdened to carry the message of the soon coming Savior to parts of the world that had not been reached by other messengers. He went to the near east, Asia Minor, traveled through Persia and back into the interior of Asia. It was at the risk of his life. Again and again he was in danger of being killed. He was beaten. He was imprisoned. He endured tortures. One time he was robbed of everything he had, and left without any clothes in the snow. He had to go on until he found somebody to take pity on him. From one place to another and one experience to another he kept on with this wonderful message of the soon coming of Jesus.

Many of the people he was traveling among were Mohammedans, and in some of those places they didn't want any Christians around. It was supposed to be death for a Christian to venture among them. In one of these places he was captured and dragged before the Emir. We would call him the judge, the governor.

The judge questioned him. "What is your name and where are you from?"

"I am from England," Wolf answered.

The judge asked him where he was going.

Wolf said, "I am traveling from here over to the city of Bacarah."

The judge asked him what he was going there for. He told the judge he was telling the good news of Jesus who had come to save men, and who was soon to return to this world.

In the place where he was talking it was just as good as writing his death sentence to start talking about Jesus, but he kept right on. It was evident that they were against him.

The judge asked him, "Why do you leave your family, your home, your country to go out like this? These people where you are going in the next town won't care anything about it. They won't care anything about you or your message. Why do you do it? Why don't you stay home and eat, drink, and be merry?"

It was Joseph Wolf's answer that impressed my heart. He held up the Bible and said:

"I have found by the reading of this book that one can bind one's heart to God only by believing in Jesus. And believing this, I am like one who walks in a beautiful

garden and smells the odor of the roses and hears the warbling of the Nightingale. I do not like to be the only one so happy. Therefore I go about in the world inviting others to walk with me arm in arm in that same beautiful garden."

Somehow the Holy Spirit impressed their hearts with the beauty of that picture, and from being his enemies they turned to become his friends. They kept him there for hours as he read the Bible and explained to them the wonderful things of Jesus first coming and His second coming.

Oh folks, have you been to the garden? Have you been in there with Joseph Wolf. Have you been in there with Jesus? Are you inviting others in? Young folks just sang that lovely invitation, Come unto Me and I will give you rest. Learn of Me and ye shall find rest unto your soul. Rest. Joy. Peace. Satisfaction. That has quite a bit to do with having a happy new year. What do you say?

I felt impressed to tell you a bit of what I have found in the garden. You can tell me some of the things you have found in the garden. And our great business in life is, like Joseph Wolf, to go about inviting others to walk with us in this beautiful garden where the perfume of the roses and the songs of the birds and the beauty of it mingles together in the atmosphere of heaven here on earth. Can it be, or is that just some poetry in song?

I believe it can. And while I do not pretend to have learned all there is about it, I do know something about it. And in telling something about it, I would like to do so without in the slightest way reflecting on anyone else or anything else that is good.

There are many facets to a diamond. The other day when the icicles were melting on the trees I chanced to look out the window, and there I saw a beautiful little sparkling ruby hanging in the tree. As I moved a little to one side it became an emerald. The rays of light from the sun had been caught in such a way as to first reflect that beautiful brilliant ruby, and then the green. Well, no one of us has caught all there is to the love of God, but every one of us can catch some and reflect it to others. Our business is to tell what we know, isn't it? So tonight I will tell you how it looks to me, and you can tell me how it looks to you.

The text I want to read is Romans 1:16,17.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17

The man of God lives by faith. The people of this world do not live by faith. In fact, it is worse than that. They do not live period. If any of you have known what this world is, and then known what this wonderful experience is that Joseph Wolf is talking about, you know that you were not living when you were in the world.

I wonder if there is anyone here tonight who knows what I am talking about. May I see your hands? Yes, there are dozens like that. Thank the Lord. You know what I am talking about.

I feel sorry for children and young people who grow up in this denomination and somehow think they have got to go out and see what a dead thing this world is before they can really appreciate this message. I don't believe a word of it. I don't think John the Baptist ever had any such experience. Do you? Is that the way Joseph did? Is that the way Easter did? Is that the way Mary of Nazareth did? Not a bit of it friends. It isn't necessary.

The poor fellow who struggled home from the far country with the odor of the pigs still on his rags learned the hard way. He didn't have to learn it that way, did he? No.

It is too bad that the older brother who stayed home with the father didn't learn it either. Even though he had been there all the while, he wasn't talking about the beautiful garden and the warbling of the Nightingales and the odor of the roses. He was thinking about all the hard work he had put in, and what little he had gotten for it.

Both of them missed it. I hope they both finally got it. Don't you?

Whether you have been out in the world and tasted of its so-called pleasures and found the things turned to ashes upon your lips, or whether you have grown up in this message, I invite you to consider that all the real life there is in this world is the life of faith. That is all. The just shall live by faith.

There are millions of people who have the idea that religion has to do with the invisible, the spiritual, and with the future life. It is very good for Sunday school and preaching service on Sunday morning. It comes in handy when there is a funeral. But at the same time there is a work-a-day life that must be lived. People have got to get in and dig Monday morning, and work hard all through the week. I want to study with you how the just shall live by faith as it applies to the working days of the week as well as the time when we are resting and worshiping. After all, wouldn't it be too bad to live by fits and starts?

That's what is the matter with some people. They need to have artificial respiration ever now and then. They need somebody to open up the chest cavity and massage the heart and get things started again. That is better than nothing. A whole lot better than nothing. But what a wonderful privilege God offers us to live day after day and week after week by faith. Faith is believing God.

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" Romans 4:3.

You and I are to live by faith. We are to live that way on Monday as well as on the Sabbath and on Wednesday. Every day live by believing God.

I would like to have you think of what a great area faith opens up. Let me illustrate it. I suppose all of you have five senses. Suppose that instead of five senses you only had four. Suppose the one you lacked was sight. Suppose we are all sitting here blind. We can feel, taste, smell, and hear, but we can't see anything. Would the world we are acquainted with be narrowed down somewhat? You know it would be tremendously.

How far can you feel? As far as you can move your hand out there. That is not very far. How far can you taste? Not very far. You can smell farther, can't you? Yes. How far can you hear? If a sound is loud enough, you can hear several miles. How far can you see? Oh, that opens up a vast expansion, doesn't it?

If there were some way beyond sight that would open as much more as sight opens up over the other four senses, wouldn't that be wonderful? That is exactly what faith does. The man that has faith is able to see things that other people do not see at all. Therefore he is able to do things that other people cannot do at all. It isn't some slight of hand or some hocus pocus. It isn't some magic. It operates according to laws just as real as the laws of sight and sound and taste and smell.

Please get the point. Faith is not opposed to reality, but it transcends reality as people in this world think of it. It is not against sight. It is beyond sight. There is a world of difference.

Faith does not lead people to do foolish things, but it may lead people to do things that look foolish to the ones who do not have it. Do you have faith? Then you have something that will take you through experiences that the people who do not have faith will fail in.

We have certain words in our vocabulary now that weren't known just a little while ago. When I was a boy nobody ever heard of radar or sonar. What are they good for? They are good for getting ships and other things through places safely where they would be in great danger. With radar and sonar they can go through fog, for instance.

How foolish a man would be who would say, I don't believe in anything that I can't see, and I can't see through fog. That fellow up there who thinks he has radar is all foolishness.

Such a man would be the foolish one, wouldn't he? It has been demonstrated that with radar men can see through fog.

That's what faith does. Faith enables us to see through some things that we could not see through otherwise.

"Faith looks beyond the difficulties and lays hold of the unseen, even omnipotence; therefore it cannot be baffled" *Gospel Workers*, page 262.

Faith looks beyond what? The difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen. That is the point I want you to get. It goes beyond what these eyes can see. Faith goes way beyond.

"Let us obey even though our sight cannot penetrate the darkness" *Ibid.*

People say, I believe I ought to do so and so, and I am going to do it as soon as I can see my way clear. Did you ever say that? Well bless your heart, brother. If you do it when you see your way clear, you will not need faith. You will get along very well without it. In fact, you will not use faith. Faith operates when you cannot see your way clear.

Watch this point: If that is so, will the life of faith be composed of some experiences of venturing into things where you cannot see your way clear? Let's turn that around. If a person is having an experience all the time where he can see his way clear, is that the life of faith? Hardly. He may be doing all right. He may be keeping out of jail. He may be a good citizen. He may be a good church member. But the life we are studying about tonight is the life of faith.

I have still got enough of the boy in me that I like something that has adventure in it. I do not mean crawling around on precipices and seeing if I can keep from falling off, or crawling into caves where I can just barely wiggle through between the stalagmites and the stalactites. Yes, there is some adventure in that. But I find as I grow up and get older, (and I'm still growing up) it takes more to satisfy me. It takes more adventure to satisfy me. The thing I rejoice in about faith is that it enables me to have one adventure after another.

Take this year that is closing in a few hours. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I have seen God do some wonderful things. I am glad for the things I have seen with my eyes. I am glad for the things where the way was clear. But the thing that makes me happy is that again and again God has done things for me through faith, through venturing something beyond what could be seen. That is the foundation of this program. I hope every one of you students will make up your mind that you are going to get all there is out of life. Do not settle for any less.

I sometimes illustrate that particular point in this way: Suppose we go up to Detroit where there are hundreds of thousands of people working on those automobiles. We go into one of the great factories and there are milling crowds of workmen. We go up to a worker and touch him on the shoulder and say, Tom, have you heard the news? Your rich uncle died last week. His will has been opened, and you have been left a million dollars.

What does he say? You know what he says? Nine times out of ten he throws his cap in the air and says, Hurrah! Goodby boys. I won't be seeing you anymore.

You say what's wrong with that? I see a lot of things wrong with it. I don't mean wicked. I mean pitiful. I feel sorry for that fellow. He is selling his life day after day. What is he there at that lathe for? Because somehow he cannot get money enough to get away from it. That is it nine times out of ten.

Now there are some people that are doing what they are doing because they love it. Fine. But what I am talking about is that nearly everyone in this world is not doing what he would do if he were free. I feel sorry for any such person.

Look at it another way. Suppose you go to a man and say, "How long do you expect to live?" He says, "I expect to live forty, fifty, sixty years." Not many people expect to live more than eighty years, do they? No.

We say to him, "I will give you five million dollars if you will sell me your life, and we will end your life right now. How many people would accept that? Now very many. In fact, not very many would sign up to be your slave for five million dollars for the rest of their lives, would they? Not if it was worded that way.

But all you have to do is be clever and word it a little different, and people will jump at the chance for a lot less than five million dollars. Won't they? Sure. They will not sell you their lives all at once but, on the installment plan. And there they are with their nose to the grindstone in the rat race, day after day, held to something. What for? They have to live.

Is that living? Not in my book. That is not living. That is existing. I think of the millions of people who are spending 50 weeks out of every year trying to get a little surplus so they can have a two week vacation, and do what they want to do. No wonder they try to get some fun on Saturday night or Sunday morning. Don't blame them. Be sympathetic if you can. The fact that they pick out the wrong thing to get some fun and pleasure is too bad. But it seems to me if I were selling my life that way on the installment plan I would welcome every opportunity to get away and have a little bit of pleasure. Wouldn't you? Yes. But that's not life. There is something better.

I asked a man the other day, what he would do if somebody would give him two million dollars. No strings on it. That man is sitting here tonight. That is a good thing for you to stop and think about right now.

What would you do if somebody would give you two million dollars? Would you take the next train out of here? Well if you would, then I suggest you go even if you can't get a train ticket. I will help you. I mean that kindly and sweetly. I am not trying to get rid of anyone. I just hate to have anyone held in involuntary servitude. I hate to have anyone stranded on a desert island because there is no boat leaving.

There is a happy life where the thing you are doing is the thing you would keep on doing if you had all the money in the world suddenly poured into your hands. What is that? Living the life of faith. And what is faith? Faith is believing God. Faith is believing that God has a reason for my being born. Faith is believing that God has a job for me to do today and tomorrow. Faith is choosing the job I believe God has given me to do. Faith is saying whatever God asks to be done can be done, and nothing can stand in His way. That's what faith is.

An old servant had a master who didn't believe in God. His master was talking with him one day about it.

He said to the servant, "If you thought God wanted you to jump through a brick wall, you would try it, wouldn't you?"

The old servant answered, "Sure I would. It would be my business to jump, and God's business to take care of the wall."

Did Moses find it worked that way at the Red Sea? And for forty years? We are told that when God told Moses to do anything he did it without stopping to consider the reasonableness of it. Isn't that nice? Now that doesn't mean that I am to go out here and demonstrate that I can get through the Red Sea. No. You know how many times God had people go through the Red Sea? Just once. That was enough. Do you know how many times God had the sun stand still so that a certain work could be finished within a day? Just once. Do you know how many times God made an axe head swim? Just once.

Why all those miracles just once? To show you and me that anything He needs to have done can get done and will get done. To show us also that most of those miracles are not what we need at all. We just need to have faith day by day to attempt to do the things that we believe God wants done without waiting to see our way clear.

I think sometimes I have a tiny bit of sympathy and understand with the angels. We are told that with almost impatience eagerness they wait for our cooperation. When the Lord gets us to the place where we have hearts of faith, He is going to finish this work fast. He says the work is going to go like fire in the stubble. Do you know why? Because all the people of God are going to have faith.

"Here is the patience of the Saints; here are they that
keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"
Revelation 14:12.

How did Jesus live? He lived by faith. Did it operate six days of the week as well as the Sabbath? Sure. Each day He did the thing He believed God wanted Him to do. For instance, up to the age of 30 He went every working day to the carpenter shop. How did He go? He walked. How did He walk? He walked by faith. And I mean by that He believed it was what God wanted Him to do, so he did it.

Do you suppose as He stood there with His hands busy with the chisel that His mind was way off somewhere. Do you suppose He said, Oh, I just wish I could be down in Judea with my cousin John. Wouldn't he and I have some wonderful times? Do you think He ever did that friends? No, He did not. That would not have been faith.

I wish I had wrapped up in a package all the hours that have been lost by young people wishing they could be where they are not. Don't you? And older ones too.

I have a little poem about that. I must read it for you.

"An old farm house with meadows wide,
And sweet with clover on each side;

A bright-eyed boy who looks from out
The door with wood vine writhed about,
And wishes his one thought all day;
Oh, if I could but fly away
From this dull spot the world to see,
How happy, happy, happy,
How happy I should be.

Amid the cities constant din,
A man who round the world has been;
Who amid the tumult and the throng
Is thinking, thinking all day long,
Oh, could I only tread once more
The field path to the farm house door;
The old green meadow could I see,
How happy, happy, happy,
How happy I should be."

Is that living by faith? No. That is not living by faith. That is not even living by sight. That is living by feeling. That doesn't make sense at all. I repeat, Jesus lived by faith, and by faith He went to that carpenter shop on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Correct? And when Sabbath came, by faith He went to the Synagogue. How did He get there? He walked. And by faith He went back to work again when the week began.

When He got to be thirty years old, He put down that saw and that plane, and He walked down to Jordan to where John was baptizing. What did He do that for?

Somebody came along and said, Jesus, there is an opportunity for You down there. There is a position where You can make more a week than You are making here in this carpenter shop. Was that why He went? No. Jesus, there's something going on down there, and if You can go down and get in on the ground floor You can become quite a power in that new movement. Was that it? Did anyone offer Him a position? Did anyone offer Him money? Did anyone pay His way down there? Did anybody guarantee His salary or even His expenses? Not a bit of it, my friends. He went there by faith.

Listen: If you want a life of adventure, start that program with God. Make a bargain with God and mean it. Say, Dear God, I do just one thing. I live by faith. That means, dear Lord, I will do every day the thing I think You want done without stopping to consider whether I can see my way clear to do it or not. Oh, it is glorious to be utterly independent of the money of this world, or the lack of money.

There is the story about Joseph Bates. Joseph Bates was not a wild-eyed fanatic or silly extremist. He was no lazy fellow either. He worked hard for what he had, but he spent it all in the William Miller movement. When the disappointment finally came he had practically nothing left.

Soon afterward he found the wonderful Sabbath truth, and his soul was just thrilled with this beautiful idea of the seventh-day Sabbath. As he studied and

prayed, a conviction came to his heart. Men of faith get convictions. If you don't have them, seek God for them. Find out what God wants you to do. It is your privilege. God said so (Jeremiah 33:3).

Joseph Bates found out God wanted him to write a little booklet on the Sabbath question, so he went into his study and sat down to write.

Presently his wife came in. She wanted some flour. He said,

"How much do you need?"

She said,

"I need three pounds or so to finish the baking."

He went down to the store and reached in his pocket and brought out a York shilling, got some flour, came back and put it on the table, and sat down to write again.

Presently his wife came in and said,

"Joseph, where did you get that flour."

He said, "I went out and bought it."

He has always bought his flour by the barrel. She said,

"You mean you went out and bought three pounds of flour? What is the matter?"

"Wife," he said, "I have spent for that flour the last money I have on earth."

The tears began to roll down her cheeks. She said,

"What are we going to do?"

He got up and with all the dignity of a sea captain commanding a vessel said,

"I am going to write a tract on the Sabbath question, and we are going to send it out all over."

She said, " Yes, but what are we going to live on?"

"Oh," he said, "The Lord will take care of us."

Do you know what some people would say? They would say, What a fool. I say he was either a fool or he was a man of faith. Which was it? He was a man of faith.

As he sat there writing the conviction came to him that there might be something at the post-office for him. He went down to the post-office and there was a letter, but the postage hadn't been paid. It was a nickel and he didn't have it.

The postmaster said,

"Take it along and pay me later."

Joseph Bates had known the postmaster for years, but he was a very careful man. He didn't care to take the letter without paying.

"No,"

he said,

"I won't do that, but I think there might be money in that letter. You open it, and if there is, take the nickel out and give me the rest. Otherwise I won't take it."

The postmaster opened it, and sure enough there was ten dollars. The postmaster got his nickel and Joseph got the rest. He got flour and all the other things needed.

Why didn't God let him get that letter the day before? Why didn't God let it come two weeks later? The timing is very interesting.

Somebody says, I wouldn't want to live upon that kind of a program. It would worry me to death.

Yes, it would worry you to death unless you had learned to have faith. Faith is not opposed to reality. It transcends it. It does not ignore sight. It does not do away with sight. It goes beyond sight.

I like to think of the experience where this same man, Joseph Bates, was deeply convicted of the Lord that there was a certain place he was to go to preach the message, but he didn't have the money to go there. He got on the train anyway. You say that was a foolish thing for him to do. It would be a foolish thing for you and me to do unless God had put us on there. We would have gotten thrown off at the next station.

As Joseph Bates sat there he knew the conductor was coming though the train asking for tickets. Presently someone in the train came and handed him five dollars. When the conductor came he had the money to pay his fare.

Now don't try that just because you heard someone tell that story. That is not the first lesson in the faith school. I would say that is up past high school anyway. It is not in the kindergarten. It is not even in the grammar grades. God starts us in on lesser tests, smaller adventures in faith than that. But sooner or later, if we get through to the end and live through the time of trouble, we are going to have experiences in faith beyond what Joseph Bates ever had.

"Oh, for living, active faith! We need it; we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us or drive us to despair. Beauty is the veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings. We should know this by our past experience"
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, page 215.

That's it friends. Take it. Fill your hearts with these thoughts of faith. And that does not mean to think up some crazy thing to do to demonstrate. God will take care of the demonstration. That is the beauty of faith. You don't have to worry about what your image is. Faith leaves that with God just as it leaves the money question with God. Just as it leaves all these other difficulties with God. Faith says just one thing. Lord, what is it you want done? What do you want me to do?

That is the thing that Paul got hold of on the road to Damascus that day. From then on he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. He was a wealthy man, but he used up all his money. It took all he had. There were times when he had to make tents. There were other times when he went without. He was busy preaching the Gospel.

Look at James White. There were times when he hauled stone for the railroad. There were times when he hauled hay and cut wood. There were times when he sat at his desk and wrote the present truth, and traveled from place to place depending on the providence of God. In other words, he lived the life of faith.

Faith doesn't mean not working. A friend of mine says faith is so good it works. And it does work. It works hard. But faith does not desert the plan and labor of God in order to solve some financial problem. Faith doesn't do that at all. Faith forges right ahead and says, Lord, whatever You want, I am going to do it, because I know You are going to carry me through.

A number of years ago I was helping Elder Tindall hold evangelistic meetings in the city of San Francisco. Among those who came to our meetings was a lady who was convicted of the truth. In fact, she kept the Sabbath for awhile. Several years later, when I went back to attend the General Conference, I met this woman there, and I inquired about how she was getting along. I found out that she wasn't living the truth. She wasn't keeping the Sabbath.

I was burdened for her, so I talked with her about it. She explained she had to work on the Sabbath because she had a child to support.

I said,

"Sister, don't you remember that God opened the Red Sea and that God sent manna from heaven to feed the children of Israel?"

"Yes,"

she said,

"But God would never do anything like that for me."

I looked at her for a minute and said,

"Yes, sister. That's right. God wouldn't do anything like that for you because you would never let yourself get to the place where God would have to do anything like that for you."

God doesn't work mighty miracles for people just for entertainment. When did God open the Red Sea? When they were going to die unless He did. When did He bring the manna from heaven? Only when they would have starved if He hadn't.

I said,

"Sister, long would you break God's Sabbath before you got anywhere near starvation?"

That is the problem. God doesn't work many miracles for people. They never get to that point on the road. Faith sees God work miracles because faith ventures out and goes ahead with God, and gets to the place where God has to work a miracle or else the man is sunk. And God delights to work miracles then. He did it for Elijah as well as for Moses, and He will do it for His saints today.

We read that the records of sacred history were written not merely that we might read and wonder, but so that same faith that wrought in God's servants of old might work today. He will work today where there are hearts of faith to be channels of His working no less than He did back there.

"Faith looks beyond the difficulties and lays hold of the unseen, even omnipotence; therefore it cannot be baffled" *Gospel Workers*, page 262.

I am wishing you a happy new year; an adventure with God that lifts you above depending upon the men of this world, the money of this world, the material things of this world; an experience that makes you independent of all that. I am wishing for you a happy new year in which you can do the things that you would do even if you had a million dollars. Just think of being so independent that no amount of money could make it possible for you to do what you want to do. You would do it anyway. I challenge you in Jesus' name to undertake just such a thing.

If you think there is something that God wants you to do, but lack of money is what hinders you, why not enter into a partnership with God and say, Lord, if you really want me to do that, You have got the money, I will furnish the hands. You have got the gold, I will furnish my time day by day. See what God will do for you. Expect things from Him. He delights to have people do it.

I was interested in how Sturgeon put it. "Brethren, be great believers. Little faith will bring your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul."

Let us have heaven on earth. What do you say? Let us walk the path of faith. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Oh, that God would help us to enter into the joys of living by faith.

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