

# The Just Shall Live - by the Faith of the Son of God

by G.W. North

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*The sermon explores the concept of faith, distinguishing between natural faith, original faith, and the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and highlighting the significance of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in the lives of believers.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 11:1

**Topics:** "Righteousness", "Faith"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of faith in the context of righteousness and divine grace, tracing the lineage of faith from Abel through Noah, and highlighting the perversion of worship that led to humanity's downfall. He explains that while sin spread, the principle of righteousness was preserved through the line of Seth, culminating in Noah's voluntary sacrifice, which was an act of faith rather than a command from God. North distinguishes between different types of faith, including natural, limited, and original faith, and stresses the importance of focusing on Jesus as the author of faith, especially for New Testament believers. He encourages believers to recognize the unique faith imparted through Christ, contrasting it with the faith of the Old Testament figures. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of faith that transcends mere observation and leads to a genuine relationship with God.

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## Transcript

Everything, all creation, flowed from that; it was not only anticipation, foresight, foreknowledge, incredible wisdom and infinite love, it was also immeasurable grace and promise and inexhaustible provision; the Lamb slain was an application of a principle of law of divine life and being. Because of this, righteousness did not become immediately extinct on the earth following the advent of sin. Depravity set in and with the multiplication of men on the earth became almost total, so that by Noah's time he only was righteous in all his generations. The line of righteousness which had continued down through Adam's third son SETH (born after the death of Abel) had preserved its purity, but the progeny of Cain deteriorated with every successive generation throughout the centuries, until by Noah's day it was ripe for destruction.

Being themselves fallen, men did not wish to retain the likeness and knowledge of God, nor would they worship Him as God, but without restraint changed His image into the likeness of corruptible beasts and birds and creeping things and worshipped them. Doing so they became inwardly like them. Without contesting their impudence, God's Spirit strove with them to no avail, until at last He gave them over to

their contemptible lusts and abominations. The result of it all was that in process of time everything within them became twisted and perverted to wrong uses and ends. Sacrifices and offerings were made to devils, the work of the law written within them became bias and power to sin and corruption of the vilest order and in the end God repented that He had ever made man. The knowledge of the principle of sacrifice and acceptability which God originally made known to Cain did not die out in his strain -- on the contrary it became perverted. They deliberately prostituted everything to satan, therefore God decided to destroy them by the flood.

Through the Seth line however this principle was retained as it had been originally discovered by Abel and upon Noah's exodus from the ark following the flood it reappears on the cleansed earth. What Noah did was quite voluntary; he did not receive commandment from God to sacrifice to Him and the offering was entirely without reference to sin. He did it in faith; he was just acting in harmony with his conscience in accordance with his inward knowledge of God, therefore he was righteous.

At this point care must be exercised to distinguish between different kinds of faith lest we fail to grasp the reason why there is so much difference between one man and another. This distinction is nowhere brought out more clearly than in the great section on faith in the Hebrews letter, which commences at the end of chapter ten and continues unbroken into chapter 12. In chapter 11 many of the famous worthies of the Old Testament are named, together with the great variety of works they accomplished by faith. It is a portrait-gallery filled with word-pictures which men have studied for centuries to their eternal profit. But when we reach chapter 12 we are told in no uncertain terms to take our eyes from these men and women and to look off unto Jesus. All these others are but a cloud, He is the sun. They witness to faith but He is the author of it. That is why we are to look off and away from them all unto Him. He, (not they) is the author of all faith, especially the faith of the New Testament saints.

Paul in the Galatian letter clearly speaks of a time which he describes as 'before faith came' and contrasts it with 'but now faith is come'. He is plainly speaking in terms of B.C. and A.D. There is obviously a distinction being made. Seeing that Hebrews 11 is filled with the faith exploits of men and women who lived B.C., 'what manner of persons ought we to be' who live in the age of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ? Again the apostle deals with another aspect of faith in Romans 10, where he says that by some means or other every person in the world has heard the word of God. Referring to the heavens and the heavenly bodies, he declares that by them all men have heard the word, therefore they have no excuse.

DAVID speaking in greater detail of God's handiwork in the firmament says 'their line is gone out into all the earth, there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard'. We may therefore conclude that there are different kinds of faith, yet all are developed from a common root:

- (1) That which observes nature and deduces the existence of God and seeks to find Him.
- (2) That which comes by hearing the word of God, responding and living according thereto.
- (3) That which is spoken of as the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ which is imparted to us.

These may be described as: (1) natural faith, (2) limited faith, (3) original faith.

Abel's faith may be described as 'natural' in that, although he offered to God the correct kind of sacrifice he did not do so in response to a direct word from God. Unlike present day heathen, he did know of the true God, for his parents were His direct creation and had known Him intimately over a period of time before

their expulsion from the garden. It would be totally unreasonable to assume for the sake of mere literal accuracy that Adam and Eve had never spoken to their children of the former life they had lived with God in Eden. Reason has it that, as with all parents, they would most surely have instructed their sons about the ways of the Lord with them and taught their boys all they knew of their own personal creation and the Creator. Many hours must have been spent with their children recounting the anecdotes of a lost communion and sharing with them the facts of creation as told them by the Lord. The eyes and hearts of Cain and Abel must indeed have seen that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork.

However, Adam and Eve could not tell their sons how to regain lost Paradise. The angel with the flaming sword kept the way of the tree of Life -- there was no way back. Nor could the parents instruct the boys in the order of sacrifice and offering, for they themselves had never made any. They had never built an altar in their past life, nor did they do so following their fall. There had been no need in Paradise for there was no sin until the day they were expelled; worship and communion had been as natural a process as was walking with God. Except perhaps in the limited sense with which inanimate vegetation and floral life in process of time renews itself, they had never witnessed death; they had slain nothing and had never seen the expiry of any animate creature; everything in the garden was glorious with the beauty of life, unmarred by corruption. They knew nothing of death or of ways back from death to God; how then could they tell anyone else?

Therefore on the day Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord neither of their parents could give them any guidance even if they offered advice. They could no more assist Abel with a clear word of guidance from God than they could restrain Cain with a word of warning. Not one of those four knew the way with certainty; Abel was a pioneer. Thank God he discovered and led the way for us all.

The knowledge he gained was passed on and as time progressed successive men of faith also built altars unto the Lord in their day. These were sacred spots of earth, places of elevation, platforms to heaven and to God to which they often resorted to worship. Abel's original discovery bore fruit. He did not die in vain, for, smelling Noah's offering after the flood, God was at rest. But He could not let the matter rest there, nor allow the continuance of this highly personalised manner of approach and worship, for it did not best exhibit eternal truth.

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