

# 2 Chronicles 16

by Mack Tomlinson

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of living by faith, examining the story of King Asa in 2 Chronicles 16 as an example of starting well but not finishing well in faith. It challenges listeners to trust God in every aspect of life, to walk by faith, and to depend on Him alone. The message highlights the need for continuous faith, even in the face of challenges and uncertainties, and encourages a life of faith that pleases God.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 11:6, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Hebrews 12:2, Romans 1:17, Hebrews 11:1, Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 3:5, Mark 11:22, Ephesians 2:8, James 2:17

**Topics:** "Living by Faith", "Trusting God in Challenges"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want to talk about living by faith. And I want to encourage you, as you turn in the Scriptures, if you can, to the Old Testament, to 2 Chronicles, I want you to think about this today. I want you to examine your heart, your life, where you are right now, what you're facing, what challenges, besetting sins that are defeating you, what issues with family, children, loved ones, what issues with job uncertainty, what issues with help.

You know, I don't make a joke when I say this. In the last year, I've had to learn to sleep at night by faith. Trust God for sleep when I haven't been able to sleep.

And I commit myself to Him and I say, Father, You have said You give Your beloved sleep. You have said You shall lie down and Your sleep shall be sweet. So, I just want, I ask You to remember Your Word and help me to sleep.

And the Christian life is a life of faith. I don't care if you have a six or seven figure income or you live paycheck to paycheck. When a sinner, when an unconverted sinner who doesn't know the Lord Jesus Christ is brought to trust Christ in faith alone, not by words, God gives them faith in their heart and they trust by looking away to Him.

And what happens then is, God gives them in their heart and their spirit living faith. It's alive for the first time. And faith then is the living principle and reality, the life of God in the soul of a person.

They start to live by faith, trusting Him. We learn to love Him by faith. We learn to believe His Word is true by faith.

We learn to obey Him by faith. When He tells you, step out, you say, I don't want to step out on that water. I got to be careful with this illustration.

Lord, He won't hold me. If I do that, I'm ruined. I'm scared to step out in faith and obey what is clearly in the Word or what You show me.

But listen, Peter stepped out and the water held him, didn't it? Until fear took his eyes off Christ and he saw the waves and his heart panicked and beginning to sink. Now listen, when you step out of a boat or in a pool, you don't begin to sink, you sink. He began to sink.

And Jesus grabbed him and saved him. So we have to learn to walk by faith in everything. And it's a life of faith that pleases God.

Without faith, it's impossible to please Him. So, where are you right now in your life in living a life of faith? What do you face that is so monumental, so big, so beyond you, so scary, that you would say, if God doesn't intervene, I'm a dead duck. If He doesn't help, I won't have help.

I can't manipulate this. I can't control it. I can't change it.

I need God to come through. Lord, help me. That's living by faith.

Are you living by faith? Are you depending on yourself? Are you living by dependence on yourself or others or this world system? We're either living by faith in the living God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, walking by faith, trusting Him, or we're trusting ourselves or someone else. That's what I want to talk about this morning. And I want you to see yourself in the mirror of God's Word and say, Lord, show me where and how I'm not trusting You, and bring me to the place of surrender and resignation and trusting You in my life.

And teach me, as scary as it is, and as hard as it is, teach me how to walk by faith. So, that's the introduction. Let's go to the Bible.

2 Chronicles 16. There was a king named Asa. You find that in verse 1. Well, we're not going to read it, but if you read 1 through 6, Asa said, hey, I've got to administrate this deal.

I've got to go to this king and I've got to get a new agreement. And he will have my back so we won't get overthrown. He's manipulating it.

He's panicking. He's saying, you know, I've got to take care of this. He was desperate in his panicking to take things into his own hands.

Now, before I read, beginning in verse 7, I want you to realize something. You go back to chapter 14. The Bible says that Asa did what was right and good in the eyes of the Lord.

He was walking with God. He was pleasing God. And he trusted God.

But then later, fast forward to chapter 16, he doesn't. Do you know, at one point in your life, you can be trusting God and a year later, you're just declining from a life of faith? A year later, you're not trusting in a given situation? Faith's not automatic. It's not uniform.

It's not without a living activity. We have to trust God every day, every month, every year. Because many start out living by faith, but they don't continue long term and live by faith to the end.

Asa started well and he didn't end well. Verse 7, At that time, Hananiah the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, listen to this, and I want you to apply this to your own heart right now. Put your name in there.

Would God say to me these words? Would He say these words to you? Because you relied on the king of Syria and did not rely on the Lord your God, the armies escaped you. There was a shot for God to fight for you and you lost it. You missed it.

What an opportunity, Asa, you missed it. Because you relied on someone else other than the living God. And then verse 8, he's reminded of the time that he did trust God.

We're not the Ethiopians and the Libyans. A huge army. You know how big that army was? Two chapters back, a million man army.

That's a big army. They were going to be overtaken. Asa, Judah didn't have as big of an army.

Overwhelming odds. And God caused them to defeat that Ethiopian army. Here, this prophet is reminding Asa that we're not the Ethiopians and the Libyans.

A huge army with many chariots and horsemen. Yet, because you relied on the Lord, He gave them into your hands. Now look at verse 9, brethren.

Memorize this and make it a life verse. God is on a holy manhunt looking for people who will trust Him. What does He see when He looks at me? What does He see when He looks at you? Look at verse 9. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward Him.

Or not perfect. Is trusting Him, is wholehearted trusting Him. We can't play games with God.

We don't set terms with Jesus. He's not the man upstairs to help us in a time of foxhole religion. We need Him when the pressure's on and we can handle it when the sun shines good.

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth. He's looking not for the rich, not for the famous Hollywood person, not for the great politician not for the guy who has a great resume. No, He's looking for those whose hearts are toward Him.

What's He finding in us? Today, God is here. He's with us. The Spirit of God's here.

And He gazes with love right into our soul and our spirit and He knows exactly where we are. He knows the thoughts and intents of our heart. Everything is naked and open before the God with whom we have to do.

Aren't you thankful that He's our Father? It's terrifying if He's not your Father. But brother and sister, He knows us all together. He knows if my heart is toward Him.

He knows if I'm seeking to trust Him. In my weakness, the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole borough, throughout all of New York City, across America, across the waters, across the nations. And He's looking for people who will live by faith.

Where are you in that? So, here Asa started well and he doesn't end well. You read the end of his life. He became hateful.

He judged this prophet and put him in prison. And then God sent him a severe disease that he died in that disease. He started well.

He didn't finish well. So, Asa at the beginning when they faced that army, he said, here's what he prayed, O Lord, there is none like You to help. Help us, O God, for we rely on You and in Your name we go forth.

In that battle, that day, he had real faith that was saying, Lord, we're relying on You. We don't have any other help. We're relying on You.

And he didn't continue that way. It doesn't matter ultimately how you start. It's how you continue.

And it's how you end. To live a life of faith, if the Lord Jesus Christ saves you as a teenager or in your 20s, to be loving Him and living by faith when you're 30 and 40 and 50 and 70 and 90. A life of faith.

So, this is not a long message, but it's going to be very pointed and I want the mirror of God's Word to make the reality of living by faith in a living Savior, alive and real to us and fresh. Where you go home today and before God in this week, you say, Lord, my faith is often weak. I'm afraid when I ought to be courageous.

I compromise in weak ways when I ought to take a stand. Lord, I see that I don't truly live by faith. So, Lord, let's stop now.

Let's take inventory. I want to examine myself. Father, shine Your light on the cracks and crevices of my soul and expose to me where I don't live by faith and where I don't trust You.

You have the courage to do that. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.

And see if there be any evil way of unbelief and change me and make me a man and a woman and a young person that really does walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just sing the songs, but live the life. Make me a person of faith.

I just want you to think of this this morning. Think of this great reality of how the saints down through the ages lived by faith. Abel offered unto God an acceptable sacrifice.

Not by works, but by faith. Faith is an action. Abel offered unto God by faith only.

Enoch, what did he do by faith? He walked with God for 300 years. He walked with God and pleased God not by his performance, but by faith. Abraham and Noah obeyed God by faith.

By faith, women conceiving children when it doesn't seem possible. Sarah, by faith, received power to conceive because she considered Him who's faithful. Lord, I can't have children, but my womb's not the

deciding factor in this.

You're faithful and you promise. And she supernaturally conceived and had that child. By faith, Moses refused Egypt and he chose the people of God as his people and his identity.

And here you are, you say, I'm a Christian now. I'm trying to be a Christian. I believe I'm a Christian.

And then you face the heat. Family? Family out there? Friends out there? The workplace? Somebody hears this, they say, you're what? A Christian, you're one of those narrow-minded, intolerant people? You're what? Here's the moment of truth. Are you going to cave? Are you going to waffle? Or are you going to take courage and by faith say, yes, I've come to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? You confess Him by faith in the darkness when enemy's all around, but He's your strength.

And you courageously say yes, I'm a Christian. You say it by faith. And you know, time doesn't allow, as Hebrews 11 says, Gideon, Barak, Samson, David, Samuel, the prophets.

By faith, and you can do this, they conquered kingdoms. They conquered things that were unconquerable. They obtained promises.

Listen, when you're facing the hardest thing, you get in the Word of God and you say, speak to me, Lord. Give me bread for this situation. Give me promises.

Speak to me and give me something to live on. Because man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Jesus in the wilderness, He lived on the promises.

He lived on the Word. You get promises from God about a situation and the Spirit of God quickens those to your heart and they're real. You can live on those.

You can die with them. You can face the lion with them. You can conquer anything when God gives you a promise.

Young people, are you a Christian? And you're in a surrounding at school. It's just hard and dark and you can't see any other Christians there and you feel alone. Get a promise from God where He says to your heart, Lord, I'm with you always.

I'm with you. And you don't need anybody else here now. Living by faith in the living God because Christ is in you and He's with you.

Conquering kingdoms. Obtaining promises. Daniel stopped the mouths of lions.

Quenched the power of fire. Made strong that of weakness. And by faith, Hebrews 11 at the end says, by faith, they suffered.

They were imprisoned. They were stoned. They were martyred.

They were destitute. Their faith, their lack of faith cost them everything. Now, it doesn't cost every Christian everything.

We live at ease. We live in comfort. We don't know what it might yet cost us.

The days coming, it could cost us. All these were commended in Hebrews 11 because of one thing. They were living by faith and trusting their God because He had saved them and put faith in their hearts.

Faith is not something that's past. It starts in your life and it's a living reality. You're on a journey of faith.

Faith is in your heart. You can believe God. You can trust Him.

He will not fail you. Will we trust Him? No matter what happens. Blessed is the one who trusts in You, O Lord.

Now, you remember Elisha? Elisha's there with his anonymous servant. And what does the servant see all around them? They're surrounded. They're absolutely surrounded.

What'd that servant do? He got nervous. He wanted to panic. And he appeals to Elisha.

What did Elisha say? The Lord opened his eyes and they saw angels. And Elisha, what did he say? He said, they that are with us are more than they that be with you. Look, you've got the world, the flesh, and the devil after you.

You've got temptation after you. You've got people around you that hate the Gospel and hate Christianity. And the intolerance is growing and growing and growing, isn't it? A lot of things against us, but listen, there's more that's before us than are against us.

God the Father is for us. The Lord Jesus Christ is for us. The Holy Spirit is for us.

The promises of God are for us. The angels of God are for us. They're sent forth to minister for those who are heirs of salvation.

There's no telling how many times angels kept you or helped you and you didn't even know it. And it's good you didn't know it because you'd have wanted to write a bestseller on it and make money on it. There's more for us than there is for them.

And we win because we're more than conquerors through Him who loved us. So, blessed be the name of God, our Savior. He was the author and finisher of faith.

Do you realize as a man, not depending on His deity, though He was fully only ever deity as a man, but He lived a life of faith as a man, not depending on His deity. And He had the same resources you have. A life of faith depending on His Father.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit which you have if you will let the Spirit of God control you more. And He had the promises of God. Jesus used what we have.

And He was the ultimate man of faith. He's our example. He's the author and finisher of true faith.

And now He's in heaven reigning. And the cloud of witnesses are up there. And they're saying to every Christian, come on, come on, you're going to make it.

Come on, trust God. Come on, He's with you. Trust Me.

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. Will you allow God to make you more than ever this year a person of faith? If you and I don't learn to trust God alone and not depend on something else, we

will never really live by faith. Now closing, some of you here probably aren't Christians.

I don't know. You've come through the influence of a friend, a loved one, those who you've come to trust who worship here. And if you're honest, you have to say, you know, I know I don't know God.

I don't understand the Gospel. I don't believe yet. But I'm open.

I see reality here. I see people that say they're Christians and they're real and they love Me. I don't get that anywhere else.

And I know God is real. But you haven't believed in the Lord Jesus Christ yet. The Gospel says He died once and for all to pay for sin.

He died the just one for the unjust. And unrighteous, that's us. He bore our sins fully on the cross and paid the penalty and took the wrath of God toward our sin which was toward us.

He bore it all and He accomplished full salvation and it's free without work. You don't have to clean yourself up. You don't have to do anything.

You have to say, Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner in need of a Savior and You did it. I believe You died for me. I want You.

Save me. Have mercy on me. And He will save anyone who will come to Him in faith.

Why not today? Why not today for you to throw away your fear and say, come out of the darkness and come into the light of God's truth and His mercy and His love and say, I want Christ. Lord Jesus, I've never prayed. I don't know how to pray.

Listen, when I was 19, I was a lost college kid. Grew up in a church that didn't preach the Gospel. I didn't know anything.

But a friend began to share one night Christ with me and the Spirit of God convicted my heart. And everything I was hearing was hitting me. Yes, Lord, all I've ever done is sin.

And I have nothing to offer You but sin and myself. So here I am. I'm Yours.

And God saved me in that moment 47 years ago. And I love Him today. And I'm still trying to live by faith, trusting Him.

Would you come to Christ today if you don't know Him? Just surrender to Him in your heart. Believe the Gospel. And go to the Lord.

Bring words to God in prayer sincerely. And just tell Him, here I am. I believe, Jesus, You did die for me.

I believe You took my sin and salvation is free. And I'm Yours. I'm Yours.

Have mercy on me. And that starts. You're saved by faith.

He will justify you and declare you righteous freely. Make you a child of God. Send His Spirit into your heart where you know God as Father.

And you start a life of faith one step at a time. And then you need your church family. You need pastors.

You need older Christians to mentor you and disciple you and encourage you. To come alongside you. The family of God is the greatest family in the world.

So why not today come to the Lord Jesus Christ if you don't know Him? Where are you today? May God baptize us afresh with a spirit of faith and power and love to say, Lord, keep me, Lord. Keep me cleaving to Yourself and still believing until the hour of my receiving. I promise joys with You.

The just shall walk by faith and not draw back, living by faith. Brethren, go forth with fresh fullness of the Spirit. Seek Him.

Draw near. And say, Lord, I'm a candidate. You're on a holy manhunt looking throughout the earth for those who are trusting You.

Here I am. I'm a candidate. I'm going to trust God no matter what.

Let's pray together right now. Lord, we thank You today that the Gospel calls us to believe this message that God sent a Savior, the Savior of the world, His Son Jesus Christ. And the Gospel says, look unto Me and be saved.

And Lord, the Christian life says we're to walk by faith and not by sight. So, Lord, search our hearts. Take our hearts and work this in us to will and to do of Your good pleasure, to the praise of the glory of Your grace, in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

God bless you, dear church, dear brothers and sisters. Thank you, Pastor Peter, for allowing me the privilege.

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