

The Just Shall Live by Faith

by Steve Gallagher

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, and it's essential for living a victorious life and pleasing God.

Duration: 58:16

Scripture: Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Ephesians 2:8, 1 Timothy 1:19, 1 Timothy 4:1, 1 Timothy 5:8, 1 Timothy 6:10, 1 Timothy 6:21, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Living Faith", "Saving Faith"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith as a decision and a lifestyle, urging believers to live in the reality of God's kingdom and deepen their conviction in His character. It highlights the need to strengthen and deepen faith through trials and challenges, showcasing faith as a life of making decisions and reflecting what one truly believes. The speaker encourages a strong connection with God and living a life that pleases Him, emphasizing the significance of evidence of true saving faith.

Transcript

Okay, praise the Lord. Yeah, as Brad mentioned, I'm going to be sharing on the subject of faith this morning, and it really came about a couple of weeks ago in a meeting. I can't remember Jeff was talking about something.

I don't listen to him half the time anyway. He's one of my children, you know. No, I'm just kidding.

But anyway, and the Lord in the middle of while he was speaking on something, the Lord just put something in my heart and I knew that's what I'd be preaching on. So Thursday when Ed brought up the subject of faith, I figured he had been looking around in my inside world and trying to steal my thunder or something. Anyway, let's open up our Bibles to Hebrews 10.

I'm just going to read these verses mostly just to establish the thinking, the mindset, the atmosphere, whatever you want to call it for this message. Hebrews 10:36, of course, this is cutting into a long flow of thoughts, but I think we're okay to cut in here. Mainly, this is to set up 11:1, because people just typically start off with the 11:1 and it's cold.

Actually, there's been a thought building that reaches a crescendo in Chapter 11. Verse 36, for you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.

But my righteous one or the just one shall live by faith. If he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. That just adds a little element to the statement in 11.1. In other words, the writer of Hebrews, Paul maybe, is expressing a positive thought that you're not going to be one of those who falls away, but you're going to have faith to the preserving of your soul. Here's what faith is, it's the assurance of things hoped for.

That's what I want to say to you guys, the Lord brought you here to put that kind of conviction in your soul. Instead of going on week after week, month after month in this despairing unbelief, always assuming you're going to always be a failure, you're always going to live under the dominion and power of sin. No, you're going to break out of that, and you're going to step above that, and by faith, you're going to continue to live in victory from here on out.

It reminds me of a story in God's smuggler, where he had this Volkswagen and he didn't know anything about cars, and he drove it all over Europe, Eastern Europe, put out, I think it was 300,000 miles on it or something, and some mechanic finally took the engine apart to clean it up, and he said, it is impossible for this engine to be running. It's not possible this thing has been running. But it was the Lord, and one time the Lord spoke to me, I won't go into that, but he basically put that into me, that you are going to keep going like that Volkswagen.

It doesn't matter that everything around you says it's not going to happen, it is going to happen, because I will it to happen. That's what God wants you to know, man, is that he is behind you, he wills for you to live in victory. You've got to do your part, but as long as you do and you hold on in that faith, believing him for what he wants to do for you, he's going to take you through.

Praise the Lord. All right. Now, that was just something I came up with on the spur of the moment there.

It only goes uphill from here. Some people think that 11.1 is the definition of faith, and it could be a partial definition, but there is no way that you could define the Christian faith by one sentence. No way.

Let me put it in a whole different frame of thought here for a second, just to look at it in a fresh way. What if some third-world person who doesn't know all about American television shows and stuff, someone who lives down wherever, and you have to explain to them what it's like to be an American, living the American life, and explain it to them in one sentence. How do you do that? There's no way you could do that.

You'd have to tell all the stories. You'd have to tell about Muhammad Ali. You'd have to tell about, I don't know why Muhammad Ali is in my mind.

I liked Muhammad Ali. I know he's a total infidel, but I just liked the guy. Muhammad Ali, George Bush, the girl next door, whatever.

It would take so many stories. It would take so many different aspects of American life to be explained. You would need a book about the size of this one, to explain what American life is really like, wouldn't you? This is the definition of the Christian faith.

This and nothing less really, I think I could say that. One sentence may describe an aspect or two of it, but the Christian faith is something vast. It's something deep.

It's something all-encompassing. It's as large as God is, right? Pretty good. All right.

Now, I'm going to just share a few characteristics or descriptions of faith. This is not comprehensive by any stretch, but at least it'll get you on the right path in your thinking. So, this is where I'm going to start.

Faith is a life of decisions. Faith is a life of decisions. Every day, you have to live your life making a decision to trust God, to obey God, to pursue a meaningful relationship with God, to live your life for God, to do whatever he tells you no matter how crazy it may seem.

I'll tell you what, I have a lot of experience in doing crazy things. You know, I wrote a little article for the, what is that thing, Doak, that you always make me write articles for? The newsletter for the donors. Yes, the donor newsletter.

So, I wrote one called, what was it called? It was really good. You should have read it. It was a fool's dream, right? A fool's dream.

I can see you were really impressed by it. Last time I write an article for you. I told the story about how pure life came about, how the Lord put it in my heart when I was in Bible school way back when in 1985, put it in my heart to start a center for sexual addicts.

Well, let me tell you something guys, you don't think anything of this. Most of you weren't even alive back then, but you didn't talk about that stuff in 1985. No one was talking about sexual addiction in the church in 1985, trust me.

But God put it in my heart and I went to my mentor and I told him that I felt like God was, you know, calling me to start a ministry for sexual addicts. And he just had a pained look on his face. He just kind of shook his head, you know.

He didn't believe it. No one believed it. But look at what God has done.

Look at what God has done, you know. And that has been the way it's been for Kathy and me for all these years, is God just putting something in our hearts and us, you know, trying the best as we could to discern what he was saying. But really way back even before then, I was a deputy on the L.A. County Sheriff in the L.A. County Sheriff's Department.

And that was my dream job, you know. I mean, a cop in L.A. just doesn't get any better than that, you know. And the thought of leaving that was just crazy.

There's no way, if you knew what I had to go through to get that job, there was no way I was going to leave that job. But one day the Lord spoke to me. And as soon as he spoke to me, that was it.

I knew I was quitting and I knew I was going to go into the ministry. I didn't know anything about what that meant. And I put in my two weeks notice on the department.

People thought I was crazy. I was. But I knew that God spoke to me.

And I did it. Kathy and I left L.A., moved to Sacramento, went into Bible school, and that's when the Lord put that in our hearts. And then the Lord called us to travel across the country.

He had set Kathy up in the primo job, a management position. And, you know, again, same sort of thing. But when God spoke, without any fight or struggle or resistance, she quit her job and we went out on the road and stuff.

We ended up here. God spoke to us again, caused us to open our home up to men to come and live with us. That wasn't the plan.

You know, he didn't tell me that was what we were going to do. Divine deception. But anyway, he got us out here.

Once he got us out here, there wasn't much I could do. And then he laid it in our hearts to buy this property. That was crazy to think that we could afford this property, that we could do it, but God put it in our hearts.

And then the first building project, you know how many building projects we've built? You know why my hair is white and I'm only 33 years old? I remember the first building project was the main part of the main house over, I mean, the extension of the main house over there. We were so broke. We had no money.

I mean, it's not exactly like everyone was getting in line. Hey, I want to, you know, help support a ministry to sex addicts. You know, that's really not what's big in the church then.

But, you know, we were so dirt poor. We had got a couple hundred bucks together, enough to get the concrete to build the foundation. And I just, you know, I knew that we had to do it.

And so we stepped out in faith. That's all the money we could have. We couldn't afford that.

I mean, that meant that we were hoping money would come in to pay the bills. But we did it. We took a chance.

We took a risk. We bought that concrete. And once that got all done and everything, you know, the money came in to pay the bills.

And then we stepped out again, got some lumber. And before you know it, there's a building there. And that happened, that building, the next building, the next building, the next, how many do we got now? I don't know, 15 buildings or something.

You know, it was the same kind of thing. It's been that way the whole way through. But I want to use what happened last year as an example because it's kind of more tied in with you guys in the way you have to live life, going back to the Volkswagen story.

Last year, about a year ago, well, it was actually before that, a few months before that. The Lord spoke to me to go on a tour of the Middle East. I thought I was going to Pakistan, in fact.

I tried to get into Pakistan. I couldn't get in. But I was going to go through the Middle East on a preaching tour and then Europe.

There is no way, considering my health issues, which I won't go into, but there is no way, rationally speaking, that I could do that trip and speak 49 times, almost always at night when I am at my worst, you know, physically, when I'm really struggling physically. There is no way I could do that. And people told me there was no way I could do it.

But God, right? God told me to do it. I stepped out in faith. And I just, day by day, just like that Volkswagen, just kept running.

The Lord just kept it going, kept me going, you know. And I'd be exhausted all the time. But I would get up to speak.

And all of a sudden, the anointing was there. Energy was there. Life was there.

God moved, did what he wanted to do in that group of people. And I sat down and collapsed, you know. But while I needed it, the Lord was there.

Faith is a decision. You have to decide to step out of the safe and step into the open air, you know, off the cliff. You don't have faith if you're not taking some kind of risk.

Every decision you make for the Lord involves risk. You know, let's face it. Anybody can live by sight, right? Anybody can make their decisions when there's no risk involved.

Anybody can live their life for the temporal things of this world, but it requires a believer, someone who believes in something beyond themselves to live by faith, to risk it all on what God says, and to live his life in light of eternity. That requires faith. You have that? Because that's, that is what the Christian faith is.

At least that's one aspect of it. Making the decision that I am going to live my life like this. I'm going to take whatever risks God asks of me, whatever, and I'm believing that he's going to take me through.

All right, the second characteristic or aspect or whatever, faith is living in the reality of God and his kingdom. Now look here, this is where 11.1 comes in. Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and King James says the substance of things hoped for, which is one of those words, you know, assurance is probably closer to the Greek and the reality, but substance, what a great word to use.

The substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. So you have two phrases here, and they're describing a hope for, or a belief in something in the eternal that's promised in the word of God, and something in the now, and I'm, you know, I'm going to put them more in chronological order, so I'll take the second phrase and make it first. Faith is living with the conviction of the unseen realm.

That there is a kingdom of God. That there is a kingdom of darkness. That what the scriptures say about the character of God, the price of sin, what man is like, what God is like, what's really going on, that all those things are true.

That's living with the conviction of the unseen realm. Paul said we walk by faith, not by sight, right? And he also said, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. How do you look at things that are not seen? Through the eyes of faith, right? It's something the Lord instills inside you, the capacity to see things that are not there, that unbelievers are, they're there, but unbelievers can't see them.

But we've been given the capacity to see them. Faith is living in the reality of the unseen realm, and it's also living in the reality of things hoped for. The rest of that sentence, Paul's from 2 Corinthians 4.18, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal, right? So, you know, we are living our life, believing and acting as though this unseen realm that the Bible describes is real, it's true, it's here, and it orders the way that we live our lives.

Paul said things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him. You know, that is part of the Christian life, is living with the reality that there is something there awaiting us, something glorious, something wonderful. You know, and what's he say right here in 11.6? He says, and without faith, it is impossible to please him, for he who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

Well, what are the rewards of those who seek him? Eternal life, resurrection, a heavenly city, all of that is awaiting believers. Living Bible, this 11.1 says, what is faith? It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead. Yeah, that's a good way of putting it.

All right, number three. Faith is belief in God's character as presented by scripture. You know, in other words, another aspect of faith and a very, very, very important aspect of faith is that God really is like the Bible describes him.

You know, all that that means. Now, I'm gonna say it this way. I kind of wanna put it in a two-part conviction, and I'm gonna state it negatively.

Well, first of all, let me just say this. Jesus Christ, this may seem obvious, but we need to say it. Jesus Christ is the center of the Christian faith.

He is the center of the Christian faith. So my first negative statement is that you are not the center of the Christian faith. It's not you.

Praise the Lord. And I say that, you know, sincerely and seriously. For myself, too.

Praise the Lord that I'm not the center of my faith because I would be the most hopeless man alive if I had to trust in myself. Jesus is the center. You know, and it may seem ridiculous to even make a statement like this, but the reality is that there are multitudes of professing believers, people who say with their mouth that they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are the center of their faith.

Go back to, let me drop my notes here. Go back to this first one where I said faith is a decision. You know, faith is a decision to trust God, but they don't really trust God.

They trust themselves. Faith is a decision to obey God, but they obey God when it's convenient. Faith is a decision to live their life for God, but the reality is they live their life for self.

Faith is the decision to do whatever he tells you, no matter how crazy it may seem. But they really just kind of pick and choose when they're gonna do what he says. That's not faith.

Not faith in Jesus Christ. That's faith in self. Rex Andrews says something very profound about this.

Let me just read this little blurb he wrote. It is a very great thing, isn't it, when you come to that place where you are willing to acknowledge that God is not a liar. You have been acknowledging you are true all the time, and you have not been able to see that God is more true than you.

You have been believing in yourself, and that is unbelief. Unbelief is not that you do not have any faith, but you have the wrong kind of faith, a dead faith. You believe in the wrong thing.

You believe in yourself, and so it's no good. It keeps you from seeing the Lord. It keeps you from hearing the Lord.

It keeps you from growing in the faith of God. That's what belief in self and making self the center of the Christian life does to you. It strips you of the ability to really have faith in God.

All right, the other negative statement is that faith is not a doctrinal system. It's not a list of do's and don'ts. It's not you having membership in the evangelical movement.

It's not you attending church every week. That's not the Christian faith. Those things may play a part of it, but that is not the Christian faith.

The Christian faith is our relationship to a person. That's the faith. Excuse me.

Our faith is inextricably tied in with who he is, and it's so important that you know God for yourself, not your preconceived notions, not your superficial thing you've learned on the Christian radio or something, but a real knowledge, intimate knowledge of him as a person, a relationship with him, knowing him for who he is. You'll never trust him until you know him. I've known Jeff Cologne for 20 years.

I can say some nice things about him since he's not here. Don't you tell him. But if one of you were to come to me and say, I saw Pastor Jeff dipping into the till and grabbing money for himself or something like that, whatever.

Let's say Ed. Let's say Ed came to me and said, I'm pretty sure that Jeff's been siphoning off funds from the organization. There is no way you could get me to believe that.

No way. Ed, don't even try. Just put it out of your mind, Ed.

It's not gonna happen. Of course, everyone knows that anything Ed does because Carla tells him to. There is no way I would believe it.

I know Jeffrey. We have been through thick and thin together. We have traveled overseas together.

We have been through tight situations together. We've been through hard situations together. I know that guy and I completely trust him.

And when the Lord told me to step down from running Pure Life Ministries six years ago, there wasn't even a hesitation in my mind. I turned right to Jeff and said, Jeff, it's in your hands now. You are gonna run this organization.

Well, how did that happen? It's because for 14 years before that, I'd come to know who this guy was and I trusted him. Now, Ed, that's another matter. We're still working on that.

But that's what it's like to have a relationship, a saving relationship in Jesus Christ. It's not this church thing. It's not doing the evangelical thing and knowing all the books and knowing all the Christianese and singing the right songs and knowing them by heart.

It is a relationship with a person, someone who has proven himself faithful and trustworthy to you. And he will prove that to you if you give him the opportunity. He will.

It's what I said not long ago. You know, when I first came into this thing, I was kind of hoping for, and I sort of believed it. But now, 40 years later, when I first came to the Lord in 1970, 44 years later, I believe it with all my heart.

I believe it more than ever. In 10 years from now, I'll believe it even more because God just keeps proving himself over and over and over again that he is all that the Bible says about him and so much more. You know, we are surrounded by a mocking world that scoffs at God and the things of God and seizes every opportunity to try to cast a negative light on him or to disparage him or to confuse people with other religions and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Faith stands up in the middle of that crowd and says, I believe in you, Lord. Yeah, it's already rising up in his heart. Jude's going to be a mighty man of God one day.

Take that in faith, Sean and Susan. It's standing up in the crowd and saying, I believe in you, Lord. Do you have that in you? If a crowd, you know, this has happened to me before.

Literally, it has happened to me where I've had to stand up and in the face of hostility, express my faith in the Lord. But you've got to have it settled in your heart first. I believe the statements made about you, Lord.

I believe what you say. I believe your promises. I believe your warnings.

Most of all, I believe in you. That is my testimony to you after 44 years in this thing that I believe in the Lord and who he is. This is why we make such an emphasis on studying what the Bible teaches about mercy, his love, what he's like, the fire of his love, the holiness of God.

So you don't get these superficial perspectives that are bandied about. So, you know, that you come to a greater understanding of who God is. And I promise you, everything we teach you about what God is like, you will come into your own revelation of that over time.

And those things will move beyond just a nice little teaching into a substance that you can call faith. Just give him time. Test me now, he says.

And in the right way, we're allowed to do that. All right. Number four, faith is a conviction which must be strengthened and deepened.

Now, you would think if God wanted to convince people of himself that he would, you know, do miracles and supernatural things, all that kind of stuff, you would think that he would do a lot of that to convince us, right? I mean, doesn't that make kind of logical sense that, you know, if you want to prove yourself to people and you're not going to just, you know, show yourself exactly, then you're going to do mighty things. But you know something? God tried that with the Hebrews in Egypt. He sent Moses in there and told them what he was going to do.

And he pummeled the Egyptians with plagues that devastated that country. Then, you know, they got, excuse me, they went right to the Red Sea. He opens a sea and they walk through on dry land and then closes it over the Pharaoh and his army.

He leads them by a pillar of fire. He opens a rock up, you know, Moses just touches it with his staff and water pours forth. He sends manna down from heaven every day for years.

You know, all of this was leading to a point. The next thing for them to do was to step out in faith. He said, go forth now, I've prepared you.

Now go forth into the promised land. You know, it's kind of like you guys being here. You're in this incubator of faith.

God's building something in you and then you're going to step out. Are you going to be like the two spies or the 10? You know, the 10 came back with an evil report. In other words, just a black, just negative.

This ain't going to work. You should see those giants. You should see those walled cities.

Just focusing on all the reasons why you can't make it. That's what you can expect to hear from the devil when you leave here. All the reasons why you're going to fail.

But these two guys come back, Caleb and Joshua. Man, my mind just went blank. But I'm going on faith here.

I'm going to preach anyway. They came back and said, listen, we can serve a mighty God. He's proven himself.

You know, don't sink down in despair. Don't listen to that voice of darkness. That lying voice that wants to just drag you down until you have completely lost sight of the Lord and what he can do for you.

What he will do for you if you stay attached to him. It's just such a sad thing how quick they were to believe the worst scenario about the Lord. How sad, after all he had done to prove himself to them.

Just tremendous things. And yet they were so quick to believe the worst. You know, guys, God will do miracles in your life.

He will. I mean, I can tell you, our life with Pure Life Ministries has been living in the miraculous. It really has, literally.

What I mean by that is, that's what it's like living by faith. Is because you are constantly in a position, this is mainly in the first 20 years or so, but you're constantly in a position where you, you just, in the natural, you don't have a reason to believe that you're going to be able to move forward or whatever. And then God just comes through and he comes through and he comes through.

You know, that's what it's been like. But for the most part, your faith is not built on the miraculous experiences. Those things are a help.

It's, you know, the mountaintop experiences are great. They're mostly as a means of encouragement to keep you going. You know, it's just an encouragement.

But really, your faith is strengthened, not on the mountaintop, but down in the valley. When you're slogging through the marshes and, you know, dealing with snakes and crocodiles and whatever else is down there, fighting your way through, that's where your faith is strengthened. It doesn't make any sense, really, in a certain way, but it's true.

James said this, and I'm going to read this out of Philip's translation. This is your favorite verse. When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends.

Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character. That's what God's doing for you through this.

You know, the faith life is not built on God making it easy to believe. It's actually built on making it hard to believe. You know, I don't know how to... I do know how to explain it.

Let's take weightlifting as an example. If you want to have a lot of strength, you know, weightlifting tears your muscles down. And if you went out this afternoon, and, well, downstairs, and you got on the weight machines, and you just really did a heavy workout, man, you would be so weakened afterwards.

And yet, if you want to become strong in life, you've got to do that, right? You've got to tear your muscles down. And so that's what... It's just like that with building faith. God puts you in positions where it tears your faith down a little bit, but it's through that tearing down process that it becomes stronger.

This is something that God builds up over time. Let me illustrate it in a different way. Let's say Emmanuel Stewart was one of the great boxing trainers of the last century.

And I think he had a gym in Philadelphia, if I remember right. And let's say some kid comes in off the streets there and says, Mr. Stewart, I want to learn how to be a boxer. And he says, okay, kid, come over here.

And he puts him on the heavy bag, and just go ahead and throw some punches. Let me see where you're at with things. And the kid just starts flailing away, whatever.

He doesn't know what he's doing. He's not a boxer. He's never been taught anything.

But this trained man knows what to look for. And he sees in this kid, hey, you know something? This kid is strong. He hits with power, and he's fast.

He's got good coordination. He's got all the elements of becoming a real fighter. So what does he do? Does he take him down to the main event Saturday night and throw him in the ring with a trained fighter? No.

He spends months with him on the heavy bag and just teaching him how to hold his hands right and teaching him how to throw a jab and then a left-right and then a hook and just starts building him up little by little. After he trains him how to fight, he puts him in with an amateur, another guy like him with no experience. He has 20, 30 amateur fights.

Then he has his first professional bout. And he puts him in with a club fighter. You know what a club fighter is, right? Yeah, it looks like he's been clubbed half to death.

I mean, he doesn't have much skill, but I don't know, he fights. So anyway, he puts him in with him. And then over time, the quality of his opponents gets better and better and better pretty soon.

He is in the main event and he wins that and wins a couple of those. And then before you know it, he is fighting the champion of the world. And that is how the Lord takes us along in the faith life.

He's putting us in increasingly more difficult situations, building us up to that maturity of faith, to where we can handle the battle, because the Christian life is a battle, right? Peter is an example of it. We all know

how he failed the biggest opportunity. He really was thrown in with the champion right at the beginning.

And Satan just flailed him, just knocked him out. His big opportunity, Jesus' greatest hour of need, and Peter denies him three times. But after 30 years in the fight game, listen to what he had to say.

1 Peter 1, verses 6 and 7. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Precious faith. What you believe about God means more to Him than mountains of gold.

I don't know how to make that real to you guys. How? I don't even understand it. Why would God care? I don't know.

I'm just telling you it's true that what you think about Him, you guys, I don't know your names, Teron, what you think about God, Mike, what you think about God, and that's as far as my knowledge of the names go, but Bill, where's Bill? Bill, I knew you were here. That kind of preaching comes with experience, you know. Bill, what you think about God is so precious to Him that He will spend your whole life just carefully working to build it up, to encourage it, to strengthen it, to deepen it, to make it more broad and wide and greater.

Your whole life, that's what God's going to do. Because what you think about Him means so much to Him. It's an awesome thing, and it's true.

I don't know why. He's God Almighty. You know, in one certain sense, He doesn't need anything, of course, from us, but it's just true.

He cares so much about the way we see Him, about our relationship with Him, and so on. You know, I can't think of anything, really, that Jesus ever scolded the disciples about, except one thing, the littleness of their faith. Right? I think that's right.

I think that's the only thing He scolded them about is that their faith was small, little, that their sight of God, that the reality of the things of God, their willingness to take risks, and so on. It was just so small, even though He spent three and a half years with them, whatever it was. All right, now I'm going to wrap this thing up.

Let me go over these points again. Faith is a decision. It's a lifestyle of decisions.

Faith is living in the reality of God and His kingdom. Faith is belief in the character of God as it's been presented in Scripture. Faith is a conviction that must be strengthened and deepened.

All right, now let's... I'm going to test this by a few verses here real quick. And what I'm going to do is I'm going to exchange the word faith with a phrase. And the phrase is this.

This thing we've been describing, okay? The last 40 minutes or whatever I've been talking. This thing that we've been describing. All right.

Hebrews 11, 6. And without this thing we have been describing, it is impossible to please Him. Does that work? I got this half that are looking at me and nodding their heads, and this half are asleep. Say it again.

And without this thing we've been describing, it is impossible to please Him. Does that work? I mean, really, does it work? Okay. Habakkuk 2, 4. The just will live by this thing we've been describing.

Come on, guys, help me out. I mean, if you don't believe it, you just say no, but say something. Ephesians 2, 8. By grace you have been saved through this thing we have been describing.

Romans 10, 17. So this thing we have been describing comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. 2 Corinthians 13, 5. Test yourselves to see if you are in this thing we have been describing.

Now, let's look at a few more verses from a negative standpoint. All these verses out of 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy 4, 1. Paul talks about those in the last days who would fall away from this thing we have been describing.

1 Timothy 1, 19. Those who have suffered shipwreck in regard to this thing we have been describing. 5, 8. Those who have denied this thing we have been describing.

6, 10. Those who have wandered away from this thing we have been describing. And 6, 21.

Those who have gone astray from this thing we have been describing. You're not going to be this, right? But it does happen. I mean, it's just the reality.

You know, one of the things that Kathy and I did, one of the earliest things we did to step out in faith, we felt like the Lord was telling us to start getting up in the morning and having a definite time with Him every morning. This was in 1984, 85, something like that. And it just started off like 20 minutes, I think.

20 minutes of prayer and half an hour in the Word or something. Just, you know, it's just a small little beginning there. And it was hard.

So because it went against our natural grain, you know, it was difficult to get ourselves to do it. And we're kind of taking a risk. Is this thing really going to pay off? Is it really worth doing this? Well, unbeknownst to us, that was the very thing that was tying us in to God and giving Him the opportunity to keep Himself real in our minds and hearts.

And I'll tell you something, guys. I've run into men who have gone through the program countless times over the years in my travels. And I've run into guys who ended up back in sin.

And every single one of them, because I knew before I asked the question, I knew the answer. I didn't even have to ask. I knew the answer.

What happened? They let their devotional life go. Every one of them. Every single one of them let their devotional life go.

I'm not concerned about the sexual sin they got involved in. I'm concerned about their life with God, their life of faith. I'm concerned about their life with God.

Because I know that it's that connection with God, Him as a person, us having our eyes opened to seeing Him and living our lives that way. That is so much of what the faith life is all about. Now everyone here professes to be Christian, I assume.

You know, you say with your mouth, okay. What does your life say about what you believe? Because I promise you, the way you live your life is a manifestation of what you really believe. You say you believe in the Lord, does your life show that? Does it reflect that? Does it reflect someone who really lives with the reality that there are demons and angels and that there is a God in heaven looking down on you right this moment? That you are headed into an eternal realm.

Does your life reflect that? The just will live by this thing we have been describing. Or I could say the justified will live by this thing we have been describing. Faith is a life of making decisions.

It's an act of your will. It's not something that just kind of floats down from heaven and just kind of overtakes you. And then you suddenly, oh, I believe, and do everything right.

There is a decision in your heart and an ongoing process of making that decision and keeping that in front of you. You have to decide what you believe, and you have to live your life that way. And your life is going to reflect what you actually believe and the reality.

Like J.C. Ryle, wonderful Calvinist preacher of the 1800s, he says, evidence, evidence, evidence is what we're going to be looking for on Judgment Day. Evidence that you really had saving faith. He's right about that.

All right, let's close with a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, I know that faith is something that begins small. It's just like a wick that is barely smoldering.

And it takes time, and it takes experience, and it takes difficult situations for that faith to grow and deepen. And these men, many of these men, are just now coming into that. And I pray, Lord, that during their time here, I pray for each one of these men, Lord, that during their time here, that all that they face, all that they hear, all that they see and witness will all just kind of be rolled up together to create a substance within them, the substance of things hoped for.

Make yourself real to them, I pray, Lord, in a lasting way. Make a strong connection with them that won't be broken when they leave here, that will be maintained and actually deepened and strengthened in the years to come, that when I run into them one day, if I should, that they would have a glorious testimony, that their faith is strong and vibrant, that they are living their lives as if they really do believe that you exist. I thank you, Lord.

I don't understand your ways very well. After all these years, I still have such a superficial grasp of who you are as a person. But I know one thing, Lord.

You are good. You are merciful. You're a loving God.

You're a holy God. I know this, Lord. I know this.

And I want to live my life with the sight of that. Your character, I want my life to please you, Lord. And I believe that if I will continue to diligently seek you, one day there will be a reward for that effort, that fighting to know you and to have you.

I believe that, Lord. I believe that is the core of the Christian faith. So I thank you for helping us today, Lord, and the things that you have brought forth for these men to consider.

Make them real to them. In Jesus' name, amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/fnOADJxIrb8.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/steve-gallagher/the-just-shall-live-by-faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net