

## WALKING BY FAITH

There is a short statement of fact in I Corinthians 5:8. “For we walk by faith and not by sight.” This magnificent declaration is vital for us in these last days. Many of you have traveled the journey of grace with us since 1972 when God gloriously delivered me from a walk of living almost exclusively by sight. But as you well know, the majority of people in this world, even the majority of believers seem to have no problem with walking by sight exclusively. That is not to say that they do not possess faith. Nor would we say that their faith is not exercised, e.g. believing by faith that our Lord Jesus is returning in all His majestic splendor. They believe in the existence of heaven and hell, in the miracles and the prophets. They believe that our sins are forgiven or will be forgiven depending on whether they are reading Ephesians 1:7 or I John 1:9 at the moment you are asking them.

But do they walk by faith? This particular passage is set in the context of some of the things I just mentioned. For example, that this body of ours is groaning and perishing, wasting away! Within the last week one of my uncles as well as a first cousin died. Betty and I feel deep compassion for their spouses and children. Another relative is bravely battling lymphoma. My little bride had a cancerous sweat gland removed again with cancer for the third time. Others of our staff have close relatives with diseases such as Alzheimer’s, dementia, cancer, and heart disease. As my own body gets older, my hands tremble so much that we have had to devise new ways to handle the communion cup---even though it doesn’t always work! I now understand why my dad spilled on his tie each Sunday at lunch without fail. So certainly, by faith, we look forward to God’s promise for a new body, a glorified body of which this temple is a mere seed.

Nevertheless, there is a way to live by faith that we have not yet approached in these examples. Paul writes that “while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” II Corinthians 4:18. I love this verse, it is a verse which is fleshed out the book “The Rest of the Gospel” by Greg Smith and Dan Stone. This is a book all of you should read, it has been used to transform many a life.

How then can we walk by faith in a profound and yet simple way so that we do not live as the world lives, but as Paul states? First, it is critically necessary to be trichotomous in your view of man. You have to believe that there is a part of us that is invisible, but existent nonetheless. And that part of us is our spirit which in turn is united to God’s Spirit. I Cor. 6:17. If you are dichotomous, that is, that is you only believe that man is two parts—body and soul—there will be no part of you that is fixed, which is joined to Christ that is perfect! There will be no part of you that is eternal and that allows you to be wherever Christ is. Therefore you cannot be in the spirit with other Christians. You will be space and time bound like an earth bound worm.

You will not, indeed you cannot, as Hebrews reads, have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the

judge of all, to the spirits of just (righteous) men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. Hebrews 12:22-24

You see, to live by faith means that we live by what is happening in the invisible, unseen world! Those who live merely by sight live by that which the soul and body do and they apprehend the natural, the logical, and the obvious. Thus they live by what they can figure out, feel, act upon, see, hear, touch, taste, smell, choose, and speak. However, the believer is the only one of God's creatures that was designed to live by sight and by faith! Faith has to do with the invisible, the unseen, and the eternal.

Thus when we live by faith we must learn to live from our enthronement in the heavenlies, where we are far above all powers, principalities, darkneses, kings, dominions, and thrones. We live above the circumstances. We derive our identity from our life in Christ in the invisible realm, not from some misguided relative's view of us.

We believe the visible is run by the invisible. We praise an invisible God, pray to an invisible Lord, live in an invisible kingdom. We do not fight with visible armament, but with invisible weapons. It is not taekwondo or judo that we glory in, but rather calluses on the knees and worn out pages in our Bibles! We do not judge men outwardly, indeed II Corinthians 5:16 reads, "Therefore from now on we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet we know Him thus no longer."

So the question remains—do we really live by faith or by sight? There is no way to live by faith if we do not live by what we cannot see. We cannot live by what we cannot see if we do not know what the Bible says about our part in the invisible realm. In brief, our identity, our kingdom, our victory, our reign, our strength, our joy, our peace, our love, our Savior, Lord, Spirit, our mansion and our armament are all dependent on living by faith. For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things, which are not seen, are eternal!