

Faith is the Only Basis of Righteous Living



Faith (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today.

In my talk yesterday, I dealt with the difference between faith and hope. I established the following distinctions:

First, faith is in the present. Hope is in the future. Second, faith is in the heart. Hope is in the mind. Third, faith relates us to Jesus as the Author of our faith; hope relates us to Jesus as the Perfecter of our faith. Fourth, faith is based on what Jesus has done. Hope looks forward to what Jesus will do. To use the imagery of Scripture, faith is the breastplate that protects our heart, hope is the helmet that protects our mind.

Today, I'm going to share with you another main reason why faith is so important. It's the only basis of righteous living.

For our opening Scripture today, we'll turn to Romans 1:16 & 17, where Paul says this:

> "For I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." (NAS)

Where Paul speaks of the gospel and its power, there's a tremendous emphasis on faith. In verse 16, he says, "To everyone who believes..." that's the key to releasing the power of the gospel in our lives. And in verse 17, the word faith actually occurs three times in that one verse. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, and then, he quotes the passage from Habakkuk 2:4:

> "...But the righteous man shall live by faith..."

So, in that verse, faith occurs three times. As I've already indicated, that statement "the righteous man shall live by faith," is quoted from Habakkuk 2:4. And that same passage in Habakkuk is also quoted twice more in the New Testament; in Galatians 3:11, and in Hebrews 10:38. In other words, four

times in the Bible, God tells us this vital fact: the righteous man shall live by faith. This unites both righteousness and life with faith. It makes both righteousness and life depend upon faith.

The word "live" is one of the most all-inclusive words that we could use. It covers everything that's a part of living. It does not refer merely to what we might consider to be religious or spiritual. Things like prayer, or going to church, or reading the Bible. But "living" includes ordinary, everyday acts, like sleeping, eating, talking; all of these come within the compass of faith. The only way we can be righteous in any of these every day acts is through faith. There is not righteousness apart from faith.

Interestingly enough, further on in Romans, Paul applies this principle specifically to something so mundane and everyday as eating; and in the verse that I'm going to quote, which is Romans 14:23, he states the "converse." In Romans 1:17, he says, "the righteous man shall live by faith," and in Romans 14:23, he says the opposite: "Whatever is not from faith is sin." Again, this brings home the fact that the only basis for righteousness in our total living is faith. And if anything does not proceed from faith, it's not righteous. In fact, it's sin.

Let's look at what Paul says, then, in Romans 14:23:

> "But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin."

So, even eating not from faith is sin. Well, that raises an interesting question, which we could look at for a moment.

What is it to eat from faith? How can faith be the basis of something so mundane as eating? I'll suggest to you a number of different things that are involved in eating from faith.

First of all, we acknowledge that our food comes from God. In Psalm 104:14 & 15, the Psalmist says this very clearly. He says:

> "[God] causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth, And wine which makes man's heart glad, so that he may make his face glisten with oil, and food [but literally, bread] which sustains man's heart." (NAS)

So, all our basic provision of food comes from God. Faith acknowledges that. As a result of acknowledging it, faith thanks God for the food. And this in turn sanctifies the food. It gives it a special quality. Paul says this in 1 Timothy 4:4 & 5:

> "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; For it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer." (NAS)

So, as we thank God in prayer for our food, we sanctify it. We make it wholesome.

And thirdly, to eat in faith means also that we dedicate to God the strength our food supplies. Paul says in Romans 12:1:

> "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." (NAS)

So, our bodies receive their strength and their sustenance from God, and in turn, we acknowledge God by dedicating back to Him the strength which the food supplies to our bodies. Peter says, in 1 Peter 4:11:

> "Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; Whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies..." (NAS)

So, we acknowledge that through our food, God supplies us the strength with which to serve Him.

And then, let's just look for a moment at the opposite of eating in faith. This is really very interesting.

In one of the books of the Bible that's less often read, Ecclesiastes 5:17, Solomon depicts what is meant not to eat in faith: many parts of Ecclesiastes deal with what we would call the "natural man," the man, the man who's not related to God through faith. And in Ecclesiastes 5:17, this is what Solomon says about such a man:

> "Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger." (NAS)

So, to eat not out of faith is to eat in darkness. And the results are: vexation, sickness and anger. I think we see many demonstrations of that in our contemporary society today, a people eat their food without acknowledging God, without

having His blessing, and without dedicating to Him the strength their food supplies. They're eating in darkness, and many, many times, the consequences in their lives is vexation, sickness and anger.

We've seen that the only basis for righteous living is faith, and that this applies to every area of our lives. We've looked at what it means to eat out of faith.

The same applies also to sleeping. Let me give you some words of God's people about sleep. In Psalm 3:4–6, David says this:

> "I was crying to the Lord with my voice, and He answered me from His holy mountain. I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustains me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me round about." (NAS)

Notice that David's sleeping and sleeping in safety and awaking again, he attributes to his prayers. "I was crying to the Lord with my voice; he answers me…" In what way? In this way, "…that I lay down and slept, and I awoke, for the Lord sustains me." David acknowledged that his sleep came from God. Again, he says in the next Psalm: Psalm 4:8:

> "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me to dwell in safety." (NAS)

Alas, I fear there are many, many people in contemporary society who haven't learned that secret of lying down in peace and sleeping that is reckoning with God's protection. Isn't that a good remedy for insomnia? "In peace I will both lie down and sleep." The basis of it, of course, is faith. Faith in God's faithfulness.

And then, again, in Psalm 127:2, the Psalmist says this:

> "It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors, for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep." (NAS)

That's the New American Standard version; and it says that, even while we are asleep, God is giving what we need. He doesn't sleep. He's providing. He's watching over us. The New International Version renders it a different way, which is also legitimate:

> "In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat. For He [that's God] grants sleep to those He loves." (NIV)

So, whichever way you interpret that Psalm, and I believe each is legitimate, sleep is a gift from God. And if we really have faith in God, we can lie down in peace and sleep. We'll know that God will protect us while we are asleep, and that even while we're sleeping, He is working on our behalf and making provision for all our needs. He gives to His beloved, even in sleep. He gives His beloved sleep. I like to take it both ways. When there's two different versions of Scriptures, and both of them are good, I take it both ways.

Well, we've come to a conclusion which I just want to unfold before I close my talk today.

Our conclusion is this: the only channel through which we receive life and righteousness is faith. The measure of faith is the measure of righteousness and life that we enjoy. And therefore, let me say this—and it's a kind of paradox—it's dangerous in the Christian life to be too safe. It's dangerous to settle down within the narrow limits of our own ability and our own covenience, 'cause one we're not needing faith, then we're not experiencing life and righteousness; and God will arrange our lives so that we continually have to stretch our faith and continue to live in faith the life of righteousness.

Well, our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be dealing with the opposite of faith. that is unbelief. I'll have some serious warnings to give you about the danger of unbelief.

Radio Program

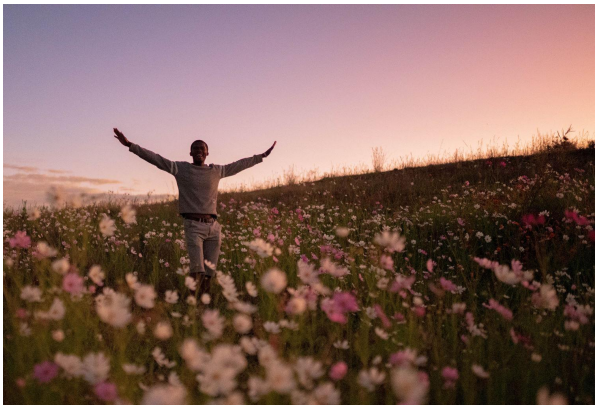
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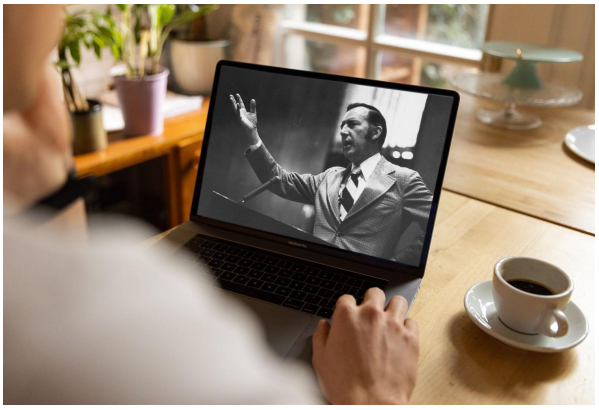
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