

WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT

2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11

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There is no better time to admonish children of God than when we gather to worship to build up our confident hope in God. The church is faced with the challenge of Absenteeism that is, brethren forsaking the gathering of the saint chiefly to reasons of things happening around or to them such as hunger, joblessness, hardship insecurity, childlessness, marital conflicts, dissensions (disagreement) so many but a few to mention.

The church at Corinth was faced with similar dilemma as a result of false teachers. Paul had led them to faith with the assistance of mature believers in Christ, but when Paul was gone the church was easily swayed by outsiders who opposed his teaching. In Paul's absence, they fell apart and it was easy for opponents to convince the church that his suffering was a sign that Paul's faith was actually folly. If Christ has really come to save sinners, why the suffering, imprisonment and so on. Apostle Paul had to write to the Corinthian brethren encouraging them in II Corinthians 5:1-6 that;

"1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6

So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

He went further in encouraging the brethren that irrespective of the situation that they are faced with they should

"walk by faith not by sight- II Cor 5:7.

To walk as figuratively used by Paul means " to live life in a manner that is consistent with our believe in God's promises. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen- Heb 11:1.

Sight simply means " a thing that one can see".

To walk by faith, not by sight is to live according to God's promise even though we cannot see them and not according to the arbitrary things that our eyes often see- II Corinthians 4:18;

18 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.Nkj

Christ has promise to never leave us- Heb 13:5.

To walk by faith, not by sight means that even though we may not see God working right now while in our pains, suffering and tribulations, we trust and believe that He is preparing us for blessing and relief from what we re going through or facing. Paul in Romans 8:23 wrote that;

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

It is that we keep rejoicing and praising God through the hard times knowing that God is still in control. I Peter 1:6-8;

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by

fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen a you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

It takes a Christian walking by faith, not by sight to count it all joy when hard times, or troubles come- James 1:2.

The writer of the book of Hebrews gave us a summary of the heroes of faith who had faced their situations in an exemplary way. They lived their lives on things not seen. From Abel to unnamed characters of a later period. They lived at different times and experienced different struggles, but they all shared something. The simple expression “walk by faith” describes their lives. These men and women, despite the difficulties of being God’s people, found their own place to stand in the midst of adversity, and they did not find their security in tangible things.

Keith Lancaster wrote that

"By faith we see the hand of God in creation's grand design,

In the lives of those who prove his faithfulness.

Who walk by faith, not by sight"

Noah built the ark after he was warned about things not seen (Heb 11:7) and for this act he became God's heir.

Sarah received the power to conceive by faith because she trusted in God's promise (Heb 11:11).

By faith our fathers, that is Isaac, Jacob and Joseph invoked the blessing of the future-Heb 11:20-22. Moses gave up the treasure of Egypt, choosing affliction instead because he was looking to the reward- 11:26. He left Egypt without fear, for he endured, seeing Him who is unseen- 11:27.

Beloved faith has always been the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. He who comes to God must believe that He is God and that He reward those who seek Him- 11:6.

The hero's of faith live in anticipation of a country of their own. Abraham "went out, not knowing where he was going" (11:8). Similarly, Moses gave up on the enticements of the age for the sake of faith (11:25,

Walking by faith involves accepting the insecurities of being a sojourner upon the earth because we have found our assurance on things not seen. The hero's of faith learn that faith may involved suffering, imprisonment and or public abuse. The writer of Hebrews presents a list of hero's who experienced suffering because of their faith and even died in faith. They knew that walking by faith involved enduring even when there was no immediate answer to their pains. They did not behave like people who believe that one living the good life is found among things that we see. To walk by faith means holding on in spite of all the appearances. To walk by faith, not by sight, children of God must walk;

1. By Trusting in God till the very end. I Corinthians 1:9-10; 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does a deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, Nkj

Also, Jeremiah wrote "7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. 8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear b when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. 1:17

2. With Patience. That is to wait on the Lord. Christians must be patient if we are to walk by faith, not by sight. Patience is "waiting without complaining." Children of God must be patient with Him in their prayer life. God is not

in a hurry; He will do what's best in the fullness of time. Remain steadfast and don't get discouraged -"James1:3-4; 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. NKJ

Romans 12:12; "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;" see also I Peter 2: 20, James 5:7.

3. With obedience. Duet 28:1; 1 "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

4. With humility. It is the desire of God for us to be humble. The humbled are honored because they honor instruction. To be humble is to lose oneself for a cause. James 4:6; 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."NKJ.

Conclusion

Beloved as we walk by faith, not by sight, Children of God must not give up at the first sign of despair. We must accept them and keep the faith.

As a church, we have been called by faith to go in the power of the spirit to the lost, to deliver the captives and to preach the good news in every corner of the earth.

Finally in the words of Keith Lancaster "Let us stand as children of the promise, let's fix our eyes on our souls reward till the race is finished and our work is done. Let us walk by faith, not by sight.

May the God of peace abide with us as we walk by faith in Christ name Amen.