

WALK BY FAITH

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Jesus is alive!

His resurrection from the dead has a direct impact on the lives of those who trust in Him. It's more than a wild story to stir the imagination. It's more than a religious fable.

It is real. He showed Himself alive to His first disciples by many infallible proofs. It is a truth that has stood the test of time. Today, 2.5 billion people on the planet consider themselves followers of Jesus Christ. If only one half of those believe in His living presence among us, the number is still significant.

His resurrection implies (and secures) our resurrection after death.

His resurrection introduces a new life—a life of righteousness and fruitfulness and peace.

His resurrection reveals that God is not done creating and working. His plan is so much bigger than our brief lives on earth.

And yet... our lives don't always seem so short. Sometimes, circumstances drag on day after endless day. And the burden of it all may seem nearly unbearable. Sometimes, even death seems like a welcome release.

It is to just such situations that the Apostle Paul speaks, as he writes to the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 5:1-10):

¹ For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down—when we die and leave these bodies—we will have a home in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. ² We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long for the day when we will put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. ³ For we will not be spirits without bodies, but we will put on new heavenly bodies. ⁴ Our dying bodies make us groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and have no bodies at all. We want to slip into our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by everlasting life. ⁵ God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

⁶ So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. ⁷ That is why we live by believing and not by seeing. ⁸ Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. ⁹ So our aim is to please him always, whether we are here in this body or

away from this body. ¹⁰ *For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies.*

We long to slip into those new bodies. The ones—like Jesus’ resurrection body—that are no longer susceptible to sickness or pain or death.

And, even though God has prepared us for exactly that, it is not for today. So, Paul adds that we do not lose hope. We remain confident in God.

And this paradox of “new, yet not new,” or “new, but not new altogether yet” generates a peculiar “in between” experience. We have been moved into the Kingdom of Christ, and He is at work in us, but “old world” realities confront us every day.

At times, it is confrontational. At other times, it is confusing. Most times, it is challenging.

Paul addresses this by writing: “We walk (or, live) by faith, not by sight.”

Those words seem simple enough.

However, living out those words can be a tough assignment. It requires courage and strength (perhaps, more than you now possess). God may call you to be misunderstood, or even abandoned. Are you willing?

You may need to surrender any semblance of control of your life that you thought you had or had a right to. Are you willing?

He may call you to look like a complete fool in the eyes of others. Are you willing?

Your Destiny

Your faith in Jesus Christ will determine your destiny—in this life and the next.

Walking “by faith and not by sight” may require you to go to a place you do not know, one that God will only reveal step by step, as you walk in obedience to Him. Consider the history of Abraham, the father of our faith:

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. (Genesis 12:1)

Your Dreams

Walking “by faith and not by sight” means that you continue to cling to the dreams God has planted in your heart, even they have been dismissed by others, or your life has been discarded, or you are sent to prison for crimes you didn’t commit. Consider all that Abraham’s grandson, Joseph, endured (Genesis 37-50). What others intended for his harm, God permitted in order to bless and use him.

Your Challenges

Walking “by faith and not by sight” requires a persistent determination to follow God’s plan, regardless of what life may throw at you. Consider how Daniel demonstrated the resolve not to sin against God.

But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. (Daniel 1:8)

Your Opportunities

Walking “by faith and not by sight” may necessitate the courage to stand up for those who are hurting, broken, or down-trodden, or even to face death yourself for the good of others. Consider how Queen Esther risked her life to rescue her people, the Jews.

Your Reputation

As you walk “by faith and not by sight,” you just may have to play the part of a fool. Think about Noah building an ark for a flood, when the earth had never before even seen rain. Think about Abraham clinging to the promise that he would be the father of many nations even though he was still childless at the age of 100. Think about how Moses stood before the Israelites in the wilderness and told them they would eat meat until it disgusted them, while having no idea where that meat would come from. Think about Joshua leading the march around the walls of Jericho just as God had instructed him (Did he wonder what good their march would do?).

Perhaps you’re worried about your own questions—questions that won’t leave you alone, yet you are afraid to ask. After all, you want to show your confidence in God. You don’t want to appear as a doubter.

Let me tell you, my friends, your nagging questions and sincere doubts do not disturb God. What does trouble Him and interfere with your relationship is your lack of confidence to bring everything to Him. Is there something that you could tell Him that He does not know already?

If He loved you when you were a complete captive to sin, has His love for you diminished since you put your faith in Jesus? Does He imagine that you are all-knowing already?

How would you, as a parent, feel if your child feared to confide in you or ask you anything? Isn't that one of the treasured roles of a parent—to comfort, explain, and instruct?

In fact, doubt—sincere, wondering doubt—is part of the path to complete faith. The opposite of faith is NOT doubt. It is sight!

We believe in what we see more than we believe God. His words to us seem like a fable in the face of everyday realities, like sickness, bills, and loss.

The Path of Faith

If you choose the path of “walking by faith, not by sight,” you must be willing to let God shake your world or turn it upside down. You must be willing to let God show up in your life as he sees fit.

Maybe it will be a calling to do something you never dreamed before: foster or adopt children, leave your secure job and become a missionary, or trade in your worldly comforts for heavenly treasures.

Maybe it won't seem clean and neat and socially acceptable. Maybe you will struggle with infertility or addiction. Or maybe your world will be turned upside down by the behavior of others. Maybe you have a prodigal child that completely changes the direction of your life. Or, maybe you've experienced the loss of a child—a hurt like no other.

God is teaching you to trust Him so He can do something bigger and better than you ever dreamed possible. *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think* (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Perhaps God is teaching you to let go and trust Him with your heart, your soul, your life... instead of your head. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Maybe God is teaching you to walk every single day in step with His Spirit so that he can do even greater works in you and through you. Jesus said, *“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father”* (John 14:12).

In everything, God is preparing you to be a beacon of light and hope to a world which desperately needs to see Jesus.

I don't know where you are on this journey of "walking by faith, not by sight," but I encourage you—I beg you, I plead with you—to wave the white flag of surrender. Let God take your life, your pain, your loss, and use it for His glory.

Ask Him to do an amazing work *in* you so He can do an amazing work *through* you.