

# We Walk By Faith

Dee Bowman

Faith is the mind's eye. It is our way of seeing something that is not visible to the physical eye. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:7, tells us "we walk by faith and not by sight." If you're a Bible believer, you've likely heard that verse many times, but what does it actually mean?

Faith is our way of seeing the unseeable. I believe there's an Australia or a Paris, even though I've never been there. I believe in open-heart surgery, though I've never seen it done. There's too much evidence for it to be otherwise.

We don't walk by sight, he says. "Sight" is the natural way of seeing, and is equal to our word "appearance," observing with the eye. I believe there's a New York, because I've seen it. I believe that work accomplishes wages, because I've done it. It's foolish not to believe what you've actually seen, or experienced.

And so, we walk by faith—that is, we proceed along a course that is not marked by physical markers, but by faith, a unique way of seeing what is not otherwise observable—and not by sight.

Faith is described by the Hebrew writer as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (11:1). Notice these two affirmations in reverse order:

There must be an assurance of the things not seen. That assurance can only come from an absolute trust in someone qualified to affirm some truth. God is that someone. He has spoken to us by His word and we believe His word to be truth because of Who and What He is. "Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth" said the Lord (Jn. 17:17). Our further assurance comes from the testimony given in support of the facts He affirmed. Notice how that comes in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 Paul says he declared to them the gospel "which I received, which ye believe, and by which ye are saved, if ye keep in memory the things I have commanded..." He then tells how that Christ died, was buried, and resurrected, and then "seen of Peter, then of the twelve, then of above five hundred brethren at once..." We didn't see such, but we believe those who did. They have given us assurance of things not seen.

This faith then becomes "the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1). "Substance" is comprised of sub, meaning under, and stance, meaning a place to stand; and so, to have something underneath on which to stand (compare "under-standing"). Our hope rests on our faith. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). It is faith in God that gives us our desire for heaven, and the expectation that He will fulfill His promise.

To walk by faith, then, is to walk in the light of God's revelation with an abiding trust in all that it affirms.

How does that faith come? "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Faith comes of the thing heard. We hear what is affirmed in His word, that affirmation having been authenticated and solidified by the miracles performed by Jesus and His apostles and prophets (Mk. 16:15-18; Heb. 2:3-4), and that forces us to a settled conviction, or faith.

That gospel message is immutable because He who gave it is immutable. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). And so, He warns us that any effort to change His gospel will be met with dire consequences. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). It's serious business to fool with the things of God. "Whoso goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 Jn. 9). You don't mess around with what causes your faith, else it no longer produces what it was intended to.

Faith is not faith if doesn't do what is commanded. James tells us that "faith without works is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:20). When a thing is dead, it ceases to exist. So what James is really saying is that when faith is present, there is action; when there is no action, there is no faith. It's as simple as that.

We walk by faith. Let us seek His word and that only as the basis for our faith. And let us remember to use what He has said to make our way to heaven, for "we walk by faith, not by sight."