

# Walking By Faith

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I read at verse 6, so we are always of good courage.

We know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. And particularly verse 7, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We walk by faith, not by sight.

As we know, nothing in this world lasts. Everything has its day, and everything will come to an end. Even the very world that we're part of will come to an end.

There is only one thing that will last forever, and that is the love of God in Christ Jesus to his people.

So that the souls of believers that the love of God in Christ fills will go to be with the Lord forever. I shouldn't say that that's all that will come from this world, because our bodies also, although they will decay, the scripture makes it very clear that our bodies will also rise and be reunited with our soul.

[ 1 : 1 6 ] So we cannot say that the soul is the only thing that will come from this world. Our body will, although it will be very different. Same body, exact same body as put into the grave, but very, very different.

And Paul likens it to how seed is planted, and the flower that grows from it, very, very different. And yet you couldn't have the flower without the seed.

And that's how it will be for ourselves as well. Now this section, this whole section, really begins at verse 16 of chapter 4. For we do not lose heart, though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.

And it's a wonderful encouragement to us, because while the aging process goes on, and the aches and pains of life, and maybe ill health and various things, there is a process that takes place that we cannot prevent.

But the great news is that even although that is happening to our body, God is at work within us, and he is changing us, he is renewing us, so that day by day there is, while there is the wasting away in our body, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.

[ 2 : 3 3 ] It has great news to know that God is at work, and that's with a huge difference between the Christian and the non-Christian, because for the non-Christian, there must be an incredible despair when all that they have is this world.

That's all that they have is this life. And when things are, when there's finding that life is passing by, and the end is coming near, and then there's nothing, everything that they've amassed, everything they've strived for, everything they've looked for, everything they've desired, everything that they've got, that's it.

So it's no wonder that there's sometimes a bleakness and a despair within people as time goes by, but not for the Christian.

Because for the Christian, we have hope, we have a great and glorious future. That's the wonderful thing. And so Paul is looking at the fact that our body is going to die, we're going to leave our body behind, and our soul will continue.

And he likens our body to a tent. And you and I know that a tent is not a place that you're going to live in forever. A tent is something, if you're away camping or whatever, you might stay in it for a night, you might stay in it for two nights, you might stay in it for a week, you might even go for a month, and you'd be camping here and there.

[ 4 : 02 ] But wherever you move, you take it down, you fold it up, and that's it. And he's saying that's kind of what our body is like. It's like a tent. Because we're here in a temporary, we've always got to remember that, this is only a temporary residence.

It's very difficult for us to grasp that, because this is all we've ever known. Who you are, who I am, that's all I've ever known. And we haven't seen the other side, though we know it by faith.

And that's what we're coming to see, that this is all by faith. We believe it to be so. So Paul is saying that at this moment we groan.

That's what he's saying in verse 4. For while we are still in this body, or in this tent, we groan being burdened. And the believer groans, we groan on, I would say, on two fronts.

One is we groan, that is without a shadow of a doubt, we groan because of all the burdens and the turmoil and all the difficulties of this life. But we're also groaning for the desiring to be released from these things.

[ 5 : 10 ] It's a strange tension that's within the life of the believer. On the one hand, there is a desire for self-preservation, which is the normal, natural instinct that we all have.

And that's what we want, is that we want to keep going and we want to preserve ourselves. We want to be able. But the other side of the coin is, and as we go on, we look forward to a day.

We don't look forward to death itself. But we look forward to what immediately follows death. And it's one of the things that the believer is saying, you know, I'm actually looking forward.

I do not know what process I have to go through. For some people, death will be immediate. For others, it might be lingering. For some people, it might be harrowing.

It might be difficult. We don't know. But the thing for the believer is, every believer knows that immediately following it, it's going to be altogether glorious.

[ 6 : 17 ] And that's what the apostle really is homing in on. He's highlighting here. And he talks about this confidence. Confidence regarding the future. And that's what faith does.

Faith absorbs these things. Faith absorbs the word of God. So that it's, we take it on board. We believe it. It's just a simple faith.

We don't say, ah, right, I've got to analyze this. Now, what does this mean? How can I look at it? We just accept it. That's what faith does. Faith is an accepting belief.

That's what God says. God said it. That'll do for me. I'm going to believe it. I'm taking it on board. That'll do me. I'm living by that. That's basically what faith is.

It's very simple at one level. And yet at another level, it can be very difficult. So faith is just accepting what the Lord says in his word.

[ 7 : 18 ] And so the Lord tells us that there is a great future. And it talks about it in different ways, about what's ahead. It's described as, for instance, a better country.

Now, we live in the country we live in here. And everybody, or most people, love their own country. And that is why, when there's a war, that people will lay down their life for their country.

It's an incredible thing. The supreme sacrifice, it is termed, and rightly so. But people's love for their country is such that their lives, that they die defending their country.

So that there is this, we do, we love our country, we're proud of our country. And you find that in athletic meetings, or in World Cups, or in all these things.

People support their own country. And that's just the way it is. It's not that we're, it's not being bigoted or anything, but there is always a national pride. And there should be in the country.

[ 8 : 23 ] That doesn't mean that we're looking down on others, but there should be a pride in the country that we belong to. But for the Christian, we also know that the country we're in is only 24 wee while.

Because we're told in Scripture, there's a better country. That is a heavenly. And we're on a journey to it, and we're looking forward to it. And that's why we read, we, you know, so often you say, I wonder what it's going to be like in heaven.

And that's why we digest all the passages that we can find that tell us a little bit about what heaven is going to be like. The better country that we're going to.

Again, it's described as a house of many rooms or many mansions. And again, in this world, there are some magnificent houses. But they're only going to be for a short time.

And you see sometimes these awful fires that wear over, like sometimes in California, places like that. And some of these stately mansions. And you see before photos of just the most magnificent almost palaces.

[ 9 : 29 ] And then just burnt to ruin in no time. And that's the way this world is. Nothing lasts. Even the most magnificent will one day crumble to ruins. But we're looking forward to a place, to a dwelling place.

And of course, at the very heart of it, it's my father's house at many mansions. That's where we're going. And that's what makes it so wonderful. Because he is at the very heart of it all.

So it's a better country. And it's a house of many mansions. It's also termed the palace of the king. And that's a great thing. You know, we might find it hard to realize.

But the scripture tells us we're actually royalty. We're told that in Revelation. That we're kings and priests. We are brought into the palace of the king. And the daughter of the king is all glorious within.

And so sometimes you say to yourself, is that how it's going to be for me? Yes. Royalty is awaiting us. We are going to dwell in the palace.

[ 10 : 40 ] We are going to share in the most glorious inheritance that has been purchased and provided by the Lord Jesus Christ. We often want to see into that palace.

And sometimes we get little glimpses. But we see, but through our glass darkly. Remember, that's what it says in the Bible. It's like looking through, you're seeing our glasses, maybe like some of these kind of really dark, really dark, say, a dark green bottle.

And you're trying to look through it. And you can see a wee, wee bit through it. But it's very, very limited. It's almost distorted. And in a sense, that's kind of what it's like.

We're getting a glimpse. And faith is kind of taking us there. And we long to actually see one day we will. So this is what's ahead. So faith, we're walking by faith.

And faith accepts all these things. That's part of our journey. We're walking by faith. And we know that this is what's ahead of us. We're always of good courage.

[ 11 : 45 ] Well, we know that while we're at home in the body, we're away from the Lord. Yes, we're of good courage. And we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

And when we do arrive at home with the Lord, what will we have? Well, we'll be in a place where there will be no more sin. No sin in any shape or form or degree.

And again, that's very hard for us to understand. We will be sinless. And the environment will be sinless. We can't understand that. Because that means there'll be no sorrow.

There'll be no shame. There'll be no tears. There'll be no death. All these things that are often linked together. They're gone.

Banished. No more sight of them. And it's really difficult for us to understand. What it will be like to be living. Living in the fullness of life at a level we've never lived before.

[ 12 : 50 ] In the full enjoyment of God with not a cloud in the horizon. Not one scrap of anxiety ever to cross by.

Nothing ever to worry us or perplex us. Or to shame us or say, Oh, why did I say that? Why did I do that? There'll be none of that in glory.

It's going to be quite extraordinary. It just shows how utterly and altogether different our life will be there. But it'll be fullness of life. I believe our life will, we will be more aware than ever we were in this life.

However sharp we might be and conscious of everything that's happening to us, I believe even there it'll be more so. No darkness. That's what it tells us.

There'll be no night there. Nothing sinister. Nothing in the shadows. Nothing hiding away that will creep up on us. No needs. Eternally fed and led by the Lamb.

[ 13 : 58 ] It's all that is lying out before us. But we're told that we walk by faith, not by sight. Walking is the primary manner of our getting there.

Now, of course, we go different ways. We run, we fight, we wrestle. All of these things are involved in our journey to glory. We're told that. But the principal thing that we find over and over and over again is the walking.

So often right from the very beginning you find how Enoch walked with God and was not for God to come. Right all the way through, walking is so much part of the Christian faith.

And walking compared to running is slow. And that's often the way we find our journey. We often feel that it's slow.

And you say to yourself, you know, I thought I'd be miles ahead in the Christian faith to how I am now. I feel I'm a real plodder.

[ 15 : 00 ] Do you ever feel that? That you're just taking like baby steps. In fact, sometimes you think maybe I'm taking a step or two backwards. But the thing is, we're walking.

We're moving. That's the important thing. Not in standstill. We're moving. Again, not only is walking slow, but walking, if you're walking and walking and walking and walking, non-stop, it's tiring.

You're bound to get tired. It's not as tiring, obviously, as running. Because you can walk and walk and walk. But eventually you're going to get tired. And the Christian life, that's how it is.

It's often tiring. Because, you know, there's a lot of enemies around. There's a lot of pitfalls. Every day when you get up, there are enemies that are marking you.

And they're working out, how are we going to trip him up? How are we going to trip her up today? Let us be quite persuaded of that. The devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour.

[ 16 : 09 ] And it's called the kingdom of darkness, which talks about a structure to it. And there's organized, we could almost say organized chaos, but organized in order to cause chaos within our lives.

So constantly, there is this. And it's often, we're often tired as Christians. You know, there are times, it's not that you say, I'm walking, I'm giving up.

But there are times you feel and you say to the Lord, Lord, I'm weary. I'm going on and on and on. And sometimes I feel I'm not really making anything of it.

And sometimes I wonder what's going to happen to me. What if, Lord, what if one day I give up? But the Lord will say to you, no, no. You didn't start this walk.

You didn't start this race yourself. I started you on it. I called you into it. And I set you off on it. And you're not walking on your own.

[17:10] I'm walking with you. And even if you feel like giving up. And even if you get tired. And you feel you're going too slow. So, I'm with you. I'm holding you all the way.

All the time. The Lord will never, ever let us go. And again, when we're in enemy territory, walking is dangerous. If you're fighting a battle, if you're in a battlefield, the last thing you want to be doing is walking.

You're wanting to be running, dodging this way and that. So, that you're a moving target is always harder to get. And the quicker you move, the harder it will be for the enemy to get you.

But we're walking. And sometimes you feel we're just sitting ducks for the enemy. But the great thing is that the Lord has provided an armor for us. And he wants us to put on that armor.

And he says, yes, there's enemies all around. And they would devour you were it not for me. But I've given you the armor. And again, we're told how we're to go forward in this race.

[18:17] We're looking unto Jesus, who is the author and the finisher of our faith. Our focus is upon him. New Year's Day, we're looking at that and the pressing toward the mark, pressing toward the prize, like the athlete running.

There's the finishing line, the focus there. Well, that's how we journey, by faith. Everything is by faith. You know, the unbeliever will often think the Christian is mad.

And they'll say, how on earth can you love someone you've never seen? And how can you be enthused about a place that you don't know anybody who's been in that place and has come back to tell you what it's like?

Well, you can say, well, I know the king of the place. Because he came from that place down to earth. And he has gone to prepare. And he has prepared a place for me through going on to the cross and back to heaven.

I know everything I need to know. He's done it all for me. And this is what faith does. Faith takes, remember how it says in Hebrews, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

[19:34] It's as real to you. You can't make, you can't, it's one of the things you can't really describe to somebody. People will say, demonstrate the faith. How do you, how do you, you can't really sometimes tell people.

But you know it. It's as real. It's as true. And God has given you that faith to believe, to accept that everything that he says is true.

And so as we journey on tonight, may we be encouraged that we're walking by faith, not by sight. We live in such a visual age.

And this world, the influence and the power of the world through the visual is quite extraordinary. So many things to take us away.

But no, it's by faith. We're going by faith. And that's why it is so important. And that's why it's good even on our Wednesday night to focus on things like that.

[ 20 : 34 ] Because it's easy to be sidetracked. And maybe some of you tonight, you just say to yourself, I've been pretty sidetracked already this week. Because I've had a difficult week. There's been lots of things come in. That's why it's good to come together.

And good to focus upon who we are and where we're going. And who is leading us there. So we journey every day, every night, by faith.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we give thanks for the faith. Faith that has been given to us by you. And we pray that that faith may indeed grow.

And that we may joy in the Lord. Grant us assurance. We pray for any of your people tonight who might be lacking in assurance. And we pray that you will strengthen their faith.

And they will be enabled to see you more clearly. We ask, O Lord, that you'll be gracious to us. That you'll be merciful to us. And we pray that you'll bless all who mourn.

[ 21 : 36 ] All who are sad. All who are downcast. We pray for those who are sick and laid aside at this time. We pray that you as a great physician will bring healing.

Watch over us, we pray. And take us to our home safely. Cleansing us from our every sin. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Sing Psalms in Psalm number 48a.

Psalm 48a. And we sing from verse 9 to the end. Sing Psalms 48a.

It's on page 63. We contemplate your steadfast love within your house, O God.

For like your name, your praise extends through all the earth abroad. All that you do is righteous, Lord. Mount Zion, joy is great. And Judah's towns rejoice as your judgments celebrate.

[ 22 : 36 ] Round Zion walk and count our towers. View every citadel. So that to children yet unborn a story you may tell. For God the Lord, who is our God, forever will abide.

He is our God forevermore and to the end our guide. These verses 9 to the end of Psalm 48a. We contemplate your steadfast love within your house, O Lord.

For like your name, your praise extends through all the earth abroad.

All that you do is righteous, Lord. Mount Zion's joy is great.

And Judah's times rejoice as they your judgments celebrate.

[ 23 : 51 ] Rise, Zion, walk and count our tower. View every citadel.

So that to children yet unborn our story you may tell.

For God the Lord, who is our God, forever will abide.

He is our God, forevermore and to the end our guide.

Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.