

A Life of Faith

Whenever someone is successful at something you want success in, it's a good idea to look at their life and how they were successful. It's much simpler to borrow their ideas than to reinvent the wheel. Some ideas don't transfer well, while others are easy to pick up and use.

Outside of our Lord Jesus, possibly the person who best embodies a life well-lived would be the Apostle Paul. He's a good example of how to deal with suffering, how to pray, and countless other examples of Christian living. Take a moment to read 2 Corinthians 11:22-30. The false teachers had been belittling Paul and the other Apostles and he was defending himself. It's an impressive list of difficulties, far more than any of us will likely ever face. So, in general, how did he do it? What helped Paul successfully navigate a life of countless trials?

There are many facets to the jewel that is his life, but one facet he presents to us is pretty straight-forward and coincides with some of our recent meditations. Paul lived by faith. Here are a couple to consider.

Read Galatians 2:20

Paul is explaining how our growth in Christ takes place. We are free from the Law discussed in the prior context. When we believe in Christ, we are declared righteous before God and crucified with Him. He now is our righteousness. That is final. Now comes how we live and grow in Him.

Paul says the life we live as those justified is "by faith in the Son of God". Daily, constantly, faith is our way of life. It is relationship that is our focus now, not rules. But that relationship starts and continues with One who "loved me and delivered Himself up for me". On one level, faith is not easy. "What if He doesn't care? What if He doesn't respond to me? I mess up all of the time. And He is involved in so many peoples' lives". But the reality is that it is explicit for all of us that He loves us and delivered Himself up for us. To think otherwise is to choose not believe what is true and instead embrace thoughts and fears that are simply not true. When in doubt, especially when our emotions conflict with reality, it can be healthy to simply say (even out loud), "Father, thank you that you love me. Thank you that your Word is true when my emotions are out of whack. Thank you that, even when my feelings are not steadfast, Your Word is true and Your love is reality".

That's how Paul lived.

Read Ephesians 3:14-19

What a rich passage! Let's take a look at several parts of this prayer of Paul for the

Church.

First, we are praying that God would strengthen all of us with power “according to the riches of His glory”. His glory changes us (2 Cor. 3:18). That’s part one.

Next, we want God to do this through His Spirit and that takes place in our “inner man”. The Spirit strengthens our new self, the perfect part of every believer. That’s what we want to take over in our lives.

The third part is the immediate goal of Christ “having a home” in our hearts. That’s the idea of the word “dwell” here. He is already inside of all believers, but God wants Him “at home” in our lives. How does that happen? The answer shouldn’t surprise us. It’s by faith. As we believe God and walk by faith, He turns the “house” believers have into a “home” for Him.

Notice that it all starts with love. A good translation of that part of v. 17 is “and that you, having been rooted and grounded in love”. Just like Gal. 2:20, our faith starts with an understanding of His great love at the cross. After all, “we love Him because He first loved us” (1 Jn. 3:19).

But that love becomes a catalyst to help us understand what Paul has taught us in the first three chapters of Ephesians; God’s love for us is inexhaustible! It starts with love and continues with an understanding and appreciation for His love. That’s what Paul has covered in the book. He has blessed us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (1:3-14). When we were “dead”, He saved us by faith, made us alive, and joined us to Jesus (2:1-10). He is building us into a Temple in the Lord (2:19-22). And now He wants to see Himself reproduced in His Church (3:19).

But that only comes as we immerse ourselves into the reality of the vast ocean of His love (3:19). When we do, faith grows. And when faith grows, God’s temple is built in us and people see Him (1 Jn. 4:12).

As I wrote earlier, it’s hard to trust someone unless you believe they love you. Satan is a liar. He wants to convince you of things contrary to reality and truth. When events happen like are occurring today, it can cause us to question the reality of God’s love. It’s a good idea to follow the example of a man often beaten, jailed, and even left for dead. Paul’s whole life was based on his belief in the unending and limitless love of God. That faith led him to change the world. That’s not a bad legacy.

What will our legacy be?

Enoch is one of the least known figures in the entire Bible. Yet, here is what Hebrews 11:5-6 says about him, “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he

had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

What a legacy Enoch had. Imagine if the one thing people could say about you would be that you pleased God, that you were a person of faith.

That’s not a bad legacy for you to leave behind. And imagine how much God must love faith if He tells us that a man once lived about whom we know one primary thing: He believed God. And imagine that he pleased God so much that God took him to be with Him. Wow.

We can be that person that pleases God, if only we live by faith. And, hopefully, we’ll also be those He comes for and takes to be with Him...soon.

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