



Word Study | June 6, 2021

We Believe...We Walk by Faith not Sight

Welcome

We live in a culture saturated with information—that's no new news. We can retrieve what we want or need to know when we want or need to know it from just about any place on the planet. When we make decisions about where we should go and or what we should do, we do so with confidence in what we can know by seeing, measuring—empirical knowledge. This is what we might call walking by sight.

Spiritually speaking, we are called to walk by faith. This is a radical 'step' in a different direction. When we walk by faith, we make decisions about what we should do and where we should go based on a trust that God will equip us by faith. Our knowing is based on the assurance that God will lead us. Walking by faith means that we measure our next step and our decisions based on what God knows about our future.

Praying The Passage...

Gracious God, we thank you for gathering us again today. We gather with the expectation that you will break open your word for us to bring us hope and confidence. You have prepared so much for us and have given us your Holy Spirit as a guarantee. So, we are confident this day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Can you remember a time when you had to get around the house in the dark? Perhaps the electricity went out or you awoke in the middle of the night and had to get from one room to another without the benefit of seeing. We've all done that; we walk slowly, deliberately and probably with our arms and hands outstretched to assure we don't walk into something. What was that like for you? Share with your group why this image is an appropriate metaphor for what it means to walk by faith.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-17 paying close attention to the first 5 verses. Here Paul is referring to the temporal nature of our lives on this side of eternity.

WE READ THE BIBLE TOGETHER 2nd Corinthians 5:1-17

5 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

•*When you read these verses, what images and questions come to mind for you?*

•*What does it mean when Paul says in verse 2, “For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—”*

In the message this weekend, we learn that walking by faith and not by sight means that “we are called to look at one another and our particular situations from God’s point of view.” Faith is a radical confidence in the active love of God towards us. We trust that this love will reshape whatever happens to us into an eternal possibility.

•*How is this so in your life?*

•*What does it mean to say that faith is a radical confidence in the active love of God toward us?*

Read verses 14 and 15. There is a certain ‘holy optimism’ at work in these verses.

•*Think of some people you know who have a holy optimism. Who are they? What drives them?*

Mother Teresa was a woman motivated by the love of God in her life and God’s love urged her on in the midst of difficult challenges! Some would say that it’s easy to be optimistic when everything is going well—when we’re able to walk by sight.

•*What does it mean to be optimistic in our faith life when things are challenging and we’re walking by faith?*

Holy optimism is not naïve. There is no dismissing of Paul’s difficult circumstances in his life and certainly in this passage. Nor would Paul call us to a false optimism that claims life will be easy through faith. But our optimism is the triumph of God—a triumph that we, by faith, are invited to share. Our behaviors ought to reflect this heaven-sent confidence when others doubt, we believe; when others despair, we dare to hope; when others are immobilized, we are urged on by Christ into action. When others give up, we persevere. How does this passage from 2 Corinthians encourage you to live by faith this week?

•Can you identify one area of your life where you will live as if you walk by faith and not by sight this week?

Closing Prayer

Holy God, we want to walk by faith this week and not by sight. We confess to you that there are times that not only do we not see you, but there are times when we do see you but choose to look the other way. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on you so that when we do attempt to walk by faith, we are walking with you. In Jesus' name. Amen.