



The Newsletter For Women By Christian Women

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Living by Faith

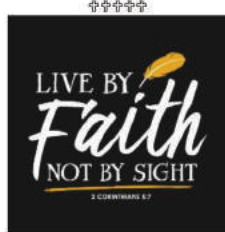
*I care not today what the morrow may bring,
If shadow or sunshine or rain,
The Lord I know ruleth o'er everything,
And all of my worry is vain.*

*Tho' tempests may blow and the stormclouds arise,
Obscuring the brightness of life,
I'm never alarmed at the overcast skies,
The Master looks on at the strife.*

*I know that He safely will carry me thro',
No matter what evils betide,
Why should I then care tho' the tempests may blow,
If Jesus walks close to my side.*

*Living by faith (yes, living by faith),
In Jesus above, (in Jesus above),
Trusting, confiding (trusting, confiding)
In His great love; (yes, in His great love;)
From all harm safe (from all harm safe)
In His sheltering arm, (His sheltering arm),
I'm living by faith, (I'm living by faith)
And feel no alarm. (feel no alarm)."*

*James S. Wells, 1918
J. L. Heath, 1918*



Living by Faith

Yes, we would call him crazy! People didn't even know what rain was, for all the plants were watered by streams and underground waters. Here was Noah, building what he called an ark because it was going to rain. He worked on that project for years with his sons alongside him. He said God told him to build it and how to build it. He preached while he worked, warning the people to repent of their ways and follow the Lord God. Can't you just hear them laughing?

Do you know what it took for him and his family to keep working on that ark, day after day, year after year? It took faith. Noah was a righteous man in a world much like ours today. The majority mocking God and Noah, treating them with disdain. His family must have suffered socially, yet his sons continued to work with him, and surprisingly found strong women to marry. Who else would have married into that crazy family?



We know the outcome... Noah and his family were the only humans saved, and God allowed the animal kingdom to be taken care of so the earth could be replenished after the flood.

What would that faith look like in our culture today? We are reminded over and over in the epistles to stand strong. The early Christians, even with the apostolic teaching and imparting of spiritual gifts, left their first love. Where are those strong congregations of Ephesus and Corinth now?

We have to wake up and stand strong today, or what will the future say of us? Christians are mocked for their



beliefs and are taken to court for trying to exercise those beliefs. If something encouraging is posted to social media,

immediately negative responses and put downs flood the comments. It is hard to keep going...but we must.

We already know how the story ends. Christ paid for our sins. He conquered death. He has prepared a home for us. All we have to do is to keep living by faith. Keep yourself in His word and especially involve your family. It is so important for us to live our faith and encourage our families to do likewise.

Only eight souls were saved in that flood – the majority got it wrong.

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, TX

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HOW BIG IS YOUR FAITH?

In Acts 14 in the city of Lystra, Paul was stoned for preaching Christ. Stonings ordinarily took place outside the city, but this one took place right in the city. Afterwards, his assailants dragged his body out of the city and left him for dead. The disciples gathered around his body and witnessed his revival from what seemed to be death. He got up and went **right back into the city** where he had just been stoned!

The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe, where they again boldly preached the gospel. Can you imagine being in the crowd and hearing the gospel from a man still bearing the bloody bruises and scrapes from his stoning the previous day? What effect would it have on you to hear the good news of Christ from the lips of a man who had literally been left for dead *just the day before*?

Most of us have heard many, many sermons in our lifetimes, but ***I have never heard a sermon from a man who had been literally battered for Christ the day before.*** Would we hesitate and count the cost of casting our lot with the Christ whose followers were so persecuted? Would it help us to realize how very precious that gospel message is if it means so much to the preacher that he would be willing to preach after so narrowly escaping death?

As Paul neared the end of his life, he expressed his earnest desire and hope *"That in nothing I shall be*

ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:20-21). Paul knew that death would be the worst thing his persecutors could do to him—and that would only bring him gain!

During the second and third centuries, the church underwent a tremendous persecution; and many Christians were martyred. Some were put into the arena with wild beasts that devoured them; some were tied to the stake, covered with oil and set on fire as human torches; and thousands were martyred by other means. One notable example is Polycarp, who in his 80's was threatened with death if he did not renounce Christ. His reply was, "Fourscore and six years have I been His servant, and He hath done me no wrong. ***How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?***"

In the early days of the Restoration Movement, many preachers gave of themselves in incredible ways. Many toiled on their farms all week and studied the Bible by lantern light at night. They then would walk or ride for miles on horseback to preach the gospel. The story of J. D. Tant, an early preacher, is one example. He spent months of each year traveling and preaching. Sometimes he had to ford swollen rivers to get to his next preaching appointment. In the good times, he had an extra change of clothes. Often, he was paid with a dozen eggs or a pound of butter. There were hundreds of such dedicated preachers in his day.

Missionaries today serve in far-away places with few rewards, yet they continue to serve the Lord in their adopted lands by ministering to those in poverty. I know one missionary who ingested some bad water in India and became deathly ill. He received intravenous treatments during the day and ***got out of his sick bed to preach at night.*** He continued to preach the gospel in India for another three weeks after becoming so extremely ill. He still suffers the effects of that illness to this day—and he continues to travel all over the world preaching the gospel.

One missionary couple served in a South American country in a local congregation. They also cared for orphaned or abandoned children, most of whom suffered from malnourishment, neglect and/or abuse. Because of their love for children in need, they gave up the comforts of living in America. They chose instead to endure hardships and deprivations working in the mission field. Many missionary families serve the Lord in such ways throughout the world.

The “bumps and bruises” modern day missionaries and gospel preachers suffer for Christ are perhaps not as brutal as Paul’s having been stoned, beaten with many stripes, and experiencing shipwreck, hunger and thirst. However, their sacrifices are very real. Their rewards will never be creature comforts in this life. Instead, they are laying up treasures in heaven by bringing the hope of heaven to people who have little hope in this life.

Several years ago, a teenage girl, caught up in the school shooting at Columbine in Colorado, was told to renounce Christ and she would be spared. Obviously, others knew she claimed Jesus as her Savior, and they thought they could force her to forsake Him. She adamantly refused to reject Christ and was summarily executed because of her faith.

In 2004, Abdel Youssef from Iraq was taught and baptized, along with his wife and 13-year-old daughter. He then dedicated his life to spreading the gospel throughout the Middle East. He personally taught people in Yemen, Bahrain, Oman and Libya. **For his efforts, he was imprisoned, beaten, had one eye gouged out and numerous bones broken.** Still he persevered even though he was betrayed several times by spies in group Bible studies. He was killed by a group of assassins in October, 2004.

His work was carried on by one he converted, Muhamed Mula, who also lost his life in April, 2005. Shortly before his death, he wrote, "We are surrounded by folks whose lives are bloodthirsty. We know we may die, but we don't give up. Our faith is from Jesus, not men. They will



destroy us, but they will not kill our faith." He wrote that the churches in Yemen had grown greatly with over 1,200 people meeting each

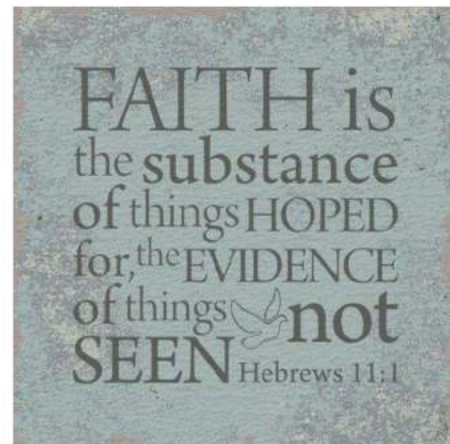
Sunday and that there were between 300-400 strong church members in Libya. His final words were, "Don't grieve for our lives. Grieve that some men want to kill the church."

Should we ever find ourselves in circumstances where our lives are threatened or we must give up some of our creature comforts because we are followers of Christ, **may we take courage from Paul's example** (and that of the Middle Eastern Christians) of boldness in living for Christ. His bumps and bruises only strengthened his love

for Christ and his determination to teach the gospel to every person he could reach. May we love as much.

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri

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The Hard Way

If I could have ordered my life,
I would have chosen the easy way,
A Beaver Cleaver existence,
Mom in pearls and heels,
Kisses and hugs, cookies and milk,
Dad and a briefcase home for dinner,
Soft words, a listening ear,
Warm bed, dreams of wonderland.
But life cannot be ordered,
It happens while you're waiting for something better
A latch-key existence,
Parents more concerned with their wants than your needs,
Accusations of who's to blame,
Harsh voices, no desire to understand,
Cold beds, nightmares in full color.
So I grew up the hard way,
And who's to say which would have been better?
With no challenge to discover the true me,
Would I be strong in my convictions?
A champion for those less understood?
Able to see grey between the black and white?
We cannot appreciate where we have been
Until we get to where we are.
Looking back over the years,
Contemplating our choices and paths,
Considering the "Road not Taken."
Perhaps the easy way was for another,
One who did not have my strength,
My courage to take control
And charter my own course.
There is still a sad little girl

Who lives inside my heart
And wants kisses and cookies.
But she has become strong and straight
And is blessed to have grown up
The Hard Way.

From Peggy to you
Crosby County, Texas

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“Faith-isms” by Charles B. Hodge

*I cannot be perfect for one minute
But I can be faithful one day at a time.*

*Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known
God.*

*Faith is both the way to life and the way to live.
People of faith live out their faith.*

*Faith does not give us all the answers.
Faith allows us to live without the answers.*

*Having faith means trusting in advance
What will only make sense in reverse.*

Peter exchanged his faith for doubt. He sank.

*You may doubt your faith,
But never believe your doubts.*

Faith is daily.

*Begin the day with God,
End the day with God,
And walk through the day with God.*

Guard your faith.

*If God is, nothing else matters;
If there is no God, then nothing matters.*

*Live as if Jesus died yesterday, arose this morning,
And is coming back tonight!*

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BOBCAT RIDGE

Today I discovered the ruins of an old cabin in the foothills near my home. It spoke to me of life, love,

loss...and God's grace. Not much was left really, only such articles that withstood a fire that raged through the area decades ago: a bedframe and springs, a watering trough, and a finely-wrought cast-iron stove.

They are footprints of those who lived here long ago. Now they are just hunks of iron, slowly rusting away. And yet, they have endured long past the lives of those who manufactured and used them. The homesteaders who hunkered over this stove, struggled to provide for their family and livestock and to forge a fulfilling existence are forever gone, leaving nothing but their junk behind.

Is this the grace of God, or just a cosmic joke? I choose to believe the former. Assuming they were faithful Christians, those people have been called home to live forever in the goodness of God's presence. Their toil is over. Eternal paradise. God has allowed their footprints to linger for a while, here in Earth's decay, to slowly dissolve in entropy and attrition. He's done this to remind those of us who have come after them, that there were lives before us. Lives that, while now forgotten, are unique and special and ultimately matter. They matter to God. And so do I.

Author's Name Withheld by Request

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Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveLove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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