

Life Link**Video Illustration: Focus****Slide Background: The Journey of Faith****Title: "The just shall live by faith." Text: Rom 1:16-17**

Big Idea: **Introductory Illustration:** The believer walk begins with a "Focus" on faith and end with a "Focus" on faith. It is clear that Faith is the most important word or concept in the Bible. Hebrews 11:6 states that "it is impossible to please Him" without faith. Faith begins with Love, the love of Jesus brings to a faith, not a live io activities but a life of faith. The word "faith" is defined as:

Faith pistis (pis'-tis); from NT:3982; persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself:

KJV - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity. (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

Habakkuk 2:4 "The just shall live by faith" (v. 4).

Warren Wiersbe writes: This is one of the most important verses in the entire Bible. It forms the text for three NT books: Romans (1:17 — emphasis is on the just); Galatians (3:11 — emphasis is on shall live); and Hebrews (10:38 — emphasis is on by faith). Verse 4 describes two kinds of people: those who are "puffed up" because they trust in themselves, and those who are saved and humble because they trust in the Lord. See the Pharisee and publican in Luke 18:9-14. The Chaldeans were the ones who were puffed up by their victories, not realizing that it was God who enabled them to conquer. (from Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament © 1993 by Victor Books/SP Publications. All rights reserved.)

Text Illustration: FAITH FIGHTS**Habakkuk 2:4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

I heard a story about a Midwestern farmer 50 years ago. The farmer went to the bank to borrow money to buy seed to plant his whole farm in corn. He fired up the old tractor and plowed for many days. He disked the ground. He spread fertilizer over the whole farm... and planted the corn.

The rains came and the corn grew. In one day millions of grasshoppers flew on to his property and his precious crop was being consumed by the grasshoppers. One Sunday at prayer meeting the farmer cried out to God... Father, we will loose the whole farm, I owe money at the bank...

The farmer got up from prayer in GREAT FAITH... As he walked home, his heart kept

saying, let the chickens out...

Now the farmer pondered: HOW WILL LETTING THE CHICKENS OUT HELP ME?
The next day the farmer was up at dawn, he opened the doors to the chicken house...The chickens came out and ate the grasshoppers...

The chickens thrived... there were many baby chickens hatched. The eggs were plentiful. The farmer started loading up the eggs and chickens and traveled the area selling the chickens...

No, the farmers faith never saved the crop, but GOD HAD A BETTER IDEA. For several years the farmer made his living from the chickens that God blessed...Source Sermon Central: Wade M. Hughes, Sr

Read Sermon Text

Rom 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." NKJV

1. Power of God (vs. 16)

Romans 1:16 <The Just Live by Faith> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is **the power of God to salvation** for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. NKJV

1. The world is filled with people who are trusting their eternal security in the way in which they have lived their lives. They are hoping that the good things of their life will outweigh the not so good and as a result they will have eternal life in heaven. Paul writes in Ephesians it is only through faith that salvation is attained. Faith is the most important aspect of Christianity, it is the glue that bonds a person to an absolute certainty of eternal life in heaven.
2. One often compares their life to others and that their life overall is better than others but our lives are not compared to other but Jesus. Isa 64:6 describes our lives in this way. We are infected with sin it is like a virus that we are borne with and sin has infected and contaminated our body and lives. While sin is similar to a virus that permeates our entire being it is not contagious in a way that it does not spread to others it is limited to us as individual. It cannot spread to someone else but all have sin embedded within us and there is only one cure. JESUE!

Isa 64:6 We're all sin-infected, sin-contaminated.

Our best efforts are grease-stained rags.

We dry up like autumn leaves —

sin-dried, we're blown off by the wind. (from THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary

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Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God**, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. NKJV

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing **by the word of God**. NKJV

1 Corinthians 1:18-24 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved **it is the power of God**. 19 For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. NKJV

1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit **and of power**, NKJV

1 Corinthians 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — **unless you believed in vain**. NKJV

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 Now thanks be to **God who always leads us in triumph in Christ**, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? NKJV

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but **mighty in God for pulling down strongholds**, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, NKJV

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, **but also in power**, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And you became

followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, NKJV

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, **the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.** NKJV

Hebrews 4:12 **For the word of God is living and powerful,** and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. NKJV

Illustration: I have been following a television series entitled the "Last Ship". The world has been infected with a pandemic virus that results in death. If a cure is not found then world population will be destroyed. A U.S Navy ship and crew has on board a Doctor who has found and developed a cure. It is trying to get that cure to the remaining population before the world population is been destroyed. Many are refusing to believe the cure discovered will save them. Sin is like that deadly virus. It is in all of us and it will destroy ever hope we have of eternal life if people refuse to the cure. There is only one way to be rid of the sin in our lives and it is not within the power of medicine, science or man the cure can only be found within the power of God through Jesus Christ . The Bible reminds us that "All have Sinned" and the payment for sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Rom 3:23 for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, NKJV

Rom 6:23 For **the wages of sin is death,** but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NKJV

2. Purpose of God(vs. 16)

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation **for everyone who believes,** for the Jew first and also for the Greek. NKJV

Text Illustration: A PLAN FOR EVERYONE

In the opening pages of his autobiography, An American Life, Ronald Reagan writes, I was raised to believe that God had a plan for everyone and that seemingly random twists of fate are all a part of His plan.

My mother - a small woman with auburn hair and a sense of optimism that ran as deep as the cosmos - told me that everything in life happened for a purpose. She said all

things were part of God's plan, even the most disheartening setbacks, and in the end, everything worked out for the best. If something went wrong, she said, you didn't let it get you down: You stepped away from it, stepped over it, and moved on. Later on, she added, something good will happen and you'll find yourself thinking - "If I hadn't had that problem back then, then this better thing that did happen would'nt have happened to me."

After I lost the job at Montgomery Ward, I left home again in search of work. Although I didn't know it then, I was beginning a journey that would take me a long way from Dixon and fulfill all my dreams and then some.

My mother, as usual, was right. SOURCE: An American Life by Ronald Reagan

1. Gods plan may not be that you become a famous actor and President of the United States I can tell you with absolute confidence that God's plan is that God is not willing that any should perish.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.** NKJV

Ex 18:23 If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, **and all this people will also go to their place in peace.** NKJV

1 Tim 2:4 **who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. NKJV

In Revelation God gives Jezebel time to repent, but did not.

Rev 2:21 **And I gave her time to repent** of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. NKJV

2. The cure for the sin our lives can only be found in Jesus Christ, "what can wash away of sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ." Christ died that we may have life. In the book of Exodus the people complained and murmured against Moses and God and God sent in to the camp serpents and all were bitten and were dying yet even in Gods punishment He provided a way of escape. God told Moses to make a "brazen serpent" and place it on a pole and lift it up so that all may see and anyone who had the faith to look up would be saved. Today is the same, we all have been bitten by the serpent and are infected by sin and the result is death. But if we will just look to Jesus we will lived.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, **even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,** 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him should not perish but have**

everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, **but that the world through Him might be saved.** NKJV

3. Plan of God (vs. 17)

Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God **is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."** NKJV

Text Illustration: How many of us have watched Trading Spaces on TLC or seen Bob Villa and became inspired to finally do something about our own tired and outdated homes? It's easy to get inspired to do something. Once inspired by seeing a week's work condensed into a one hour TV show we can easily envision the lasting improvements we can make in our own homes. Yet here we sit; one month, six months, one year after starting and our weekend transformation sits half finished as we struggle to find the time to finish what we started.

This can happen in our spiritual lives too. We begin our walk with Christ full of excitement. Fully intending to do whatever it takes to make it all the way. But after a while, Christianity becomes too daily. It's the same thing over and over again. The same prayers, the same worship, the same Bible stories; we want to follow Jesus but we begin to drift. We get distracted. The excitement cools, our dedication weakens, we begin to neglect prayer and study and church. Before we know it, our faith is weak, perhaps even dead. What then . . . ?

1. It is not God's plan to see what you can do for Him but for you to see what He has done for us. That is to see Jesus as the author and the finisher of our faith. There is a way that seem right to us but that way leads to destruction but God's way is Jesus. Jesus, said "I am the Way" and like the Israelites in the wilderness who refused to look up to the serpent on the pole they died. So will all who refuse to have faith in Christ.
2. What can we do for God, the answer is simple. Take God at His word and look up to Jesus for He will save you. When Jesus asked Peter "whom do men say that I am?" Peter's response was "You are the Christ the Son of the Living God."

Conclusion: Text Illustration: BY LIFE OR BY DEATH

John Piper, in his book, Future Grace, reprinted a letter by Carl Lundquist, former president of Bethel College and Seminary. In 1988, the doctors told him he had a rare form of cancer called mycosis fungoides, which invaded the skin over his entire body and ended his life three years later. He wrote this letter the day after he heard the news of his cancer:

That day in the hospital room, I picked up my Bible when the doctor had left. I turned to the joy verses of Philippians, thinking one might stand out. But what leaped from the pages was Paul's testimony in chapter one, "I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage so that now, as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or death. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." And I discovered that a verse I had lived by in good health also was a verse that I could live by in ill health. To live - Christ, to die - gain. But by life or by death, it's all right either way ... So I simply trust that [God] in His own way will carry out for me His will which I know alone is good and acceptable and perfect. By life or by death.

Hallelujah! SOURCE: John Piper. Future Grace: The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in. Multnomah Publishers Inc.; ISBN: 1576733378; (March 1998)