

Faith for Faithfulness

The just shall live by his faith. —Habakkuk 2:4, KJV

Maybe we prayed every day during the week and yet have not experienced God's blessing or seen Him answer prayer. What then? "It is required in stewards [that is, those who have been given a trust], that a man [or woman] be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2, KJV). Anybody can be faithful when prayer is being answered, when the wind is at one's back, and everything is going well. But what is one to do when God suddenly hides His face? Until you have experienced the hiding of His face and come out on the other side, you won't really come to know God as a friend.

This was Habakkuk's experience. Habakkuk 2:4 is a famous verse that is quoted three times in the New Testament.

There is an intentional ambiguity here. The faithfulness can be God's faithfulness to us or our faithfulness to God: the verse can be read either way, and it means both. But it can equally describe the faithfulness of the individual himself, who doesn't give up hope. The person who trusts God and lives by His promise to bless is declared righteous in the sight of God. It applies to the future—to the fact that God will accept us in heaven—but it also applies to the present. God is saying that we are declared righteous now.

If we could only see this day, it would set us afire. If, in the moment when we don't see answered prayer, we could just look up to heaven and say, "God, I love You anyway," God would declare us righteous just because our faith pleases Him. That kind of faith has a cleansing result. We feel clean. We don't understand why God lets things happen, but we trust Him anyway.

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