

RT Kendall: Stop Living by Your Faith!

I remember it so well. I drove our son, T.R., age 11, to school in Ealing, London, for his first day there. He would not get out of the car. This was the fourth school he would enter within a period of one year. None of the previous schools had been pleasant for him, and he could not bear the thought of starting all over again in a new English school.

I said, "Look at those boys on the playground; they will be your new friends." He would not budge. The anxiety was almost as intense for me as it was for him. "T.R., you really do have to go." He stared at the floor, would not move. I prayed hard to know what to do.

"T.R., look at me. I will be praying for you nonstop *all day long*. When you get nervous, remember, Daddy is praying for you. When you feel afraid, whatever time of the day it is, know that I am praying for you. *All day long nonstop—remember I am praying for you.*"

It worked. He opened the car door, walked onto the playground without looking back. It wasn't his faith that got him moving; it was my promise to pray for him that did it. He knew he could live that day by *my* faithfulness to pray for him without any letup. I don't know whether he himself prayed much that day or had much faith of his own, but one thing was for sure: he was counting on my praying for him. He was living that day by *my* faithfulness and my faith.

That was the first time I had applied my teaching about the faith of Jesus Christ in such a practical way. In my own Christian walk I had learned to live by Christ's faithfulness to pray for me at the Father's right hand with a perfect faith. The first time I became acutely aware of this was at

Oxford when I wrote a little chorus. I taught it to my church in Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire, and later shared it with Westminster Chapel:

I live by the faith of the Son of God,
I live by the faith of the Son of God
Who lived and died and rose again
And prays for me at the Father's right hand.
He prays for me at the Father's right hand,
He prays for me at the Father's right hand
With perfect faith and perfect love
He brings my need to the Father above.

Why is this teaching so important? It shows that there is nothing meritorious in *our* faith. Our faith is but the instrument that puts the promise and revelation of the righteousness of God into effect.

Essential though our faith is to be saved, the glory goes entirely to God, and that is why we should extol the glory of the cross. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the merit of Jesus' sinless life and faith is the foundation of our justification. The focus is not on our faith but the glory, faith and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was a man of faith. He was the perfect believer. This is why Paul says we are "saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). Jesus was given the Holy Spirit "without measure" (John 3:34). As our substitute He did everything that is required of us:

- He kept the Law for us (Matt. 5:17).
- He was baptized for us (Matt. 3:15).
- He believed for us (Gal. 2:16).
- He died for us (Rom. 5:9).
- He was raised from the dead for us (Rom. 4:25).
- He now intercedes for us at the right hand of God the Father (Heb. 7:25).

Thus in the moment we transfer our trust in good works to His

work for us, His righteousness is put to our credit—as though we too had done what He did. That is what saves us and guarantees we will go to heaven when we die.

R.T. Kendall was the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, England, for twenty-five years. Born in Ashland, Kentucky, he was educated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (master of divinity) and Oxford University (doctorate). Kendall is the author of more than sixty books, including *Total Forgiveness*; *Holy Fire*; *Pigeon Religion: Holy Spirit, Is That You?*; *The Sensitivity of the Spirit*; *Grace*; and *The Anointing: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*. This article is an excerpt from his book *Whatever Happened to the Gospel?: Rediscover the Main Thing* (Charisma House 2018).