



**By President
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THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

The Rabbi and the Soap Maker

There is an old Jewish tale about a soap maker who did not believe in God. One day as he was walking with a rabbi, he said, “There is something I cannot understand. We have had religion for thousands of years. But everywhere you look there is evil, corruption, dishonesty, injustice, pain, hunger, and violence. It appears that religion has not improved the world at all. So I ask you, what good is it?”

The rabbi did not answer for a time but continued walking with the soap maker. Eventually they approached a playground where children, covered in dust, were playing in the dirt.

“There is something I don’t understand,” the rabbi said. “Look at those children. We have had soap for thousands of years, and yet those children are filthy. What good is soap?”

The soap maker replied, “But rabbi, it isn’t fair to blame soap for these dirty children. Soap has to be used before it can accomplish its purpose.”

The rabbi smiled and said, “Exactly.”

How Shall We Live?

The Apostle Paul, quoting an Old Testament prophet, summarized what it means to be a believer when he wrote, “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17).

Perhaps in this simple statement we understand the difference between a religion that is frail and ineffectual and one that has the power to transform lives.

But to understand what it means to live by faith, we must understand what faith is.

Faith is more than belief. It is complete trust in God accompanied by action.

It is more than wishing.

It is more than merely sitting back, nodding our heads, and saying we agree. When we say “the just shall *live by faith*,” we mean we are guided and directed by our faith. We *act* in a manner that is consistent with our faith—not out of a sense of thoughtless obedience but out of a confident and sincere love for our God and for the priceless wisdom He has revealed to His children.

Faith must be accompanied by action; else it has no life (see James 2:17). It is not faith at all. It doesn’t have the power to change a single individual, let alone the world.

Men and women of faith trust in their merciful Heavenly Father—even during times of uncertainty, even during times of doubt and adversity when they may not see perfectly or understand clearly.

Men and women of faith earnestly walk the path of discipleship and strive to follow the example of their beloved Savior, Jesus Christ. Faith motivates and, indeed, inspires us to incline our hearts to heaven and to actively reach out, lift up, and bless our fellowmen.

Religion without action is like soap that remains in the box. It may have wondrous potential, but in reality it has little power to make a difference until it fulfills its intended purpose. The restored gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of action. The Church of Jesus Christ teaches true religion as a message of hope, faith, and charity, including helping our fellowmen in spiritual and temporal ways.



President Uchtdorf and his daughter, Antje, visited refugees in a camp near Athens, Greece.

A few months ago, my wife, Harriet, and I were on a family trip with some of our children in the Mediterranean area. We visited some refugee camps and met with families from war-torn countries. These people were not of our faith, but they were our brothers and sisters and they urgently needed help. Our hearts were deeply touched when we experienced firsthand how the active faith of our Church members brings help, relief, and hope to our fellowmen in need, regardless of their religion, nationality, or education.

Faith yoked with consistent action fills the heart with kindness, the mind with wisdom and understanding, and the soul with peace and love.

Our faith can bless and righteously influence both us and those around us.

Our faith can fill the world with goodness and peace.

Our faith can transform hatred into love and enemies into friends.

The just, then, live by acting in

faith; they live by trusting in God and walking in His way.

And that is the sort of faith that can transform individuals, families, nations, and the world. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Uchtdorf explains that faith is more than just an expression of belief. True faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ requires action, and living by faith has the power to transform lives and homes. You could invite those you teach to share moments when they have seen the blessings and power of living by faith—from either personal examples or observations of others. Encourage them to pray for guidance to know how to better live the gospel.