

Risë Rafferty- Faith is not a Feeling

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James and I newly married – this young sensitive wife, there was a phrase my husband would often say: don't go by feeling – as well meaning as he was it didn't go over so good in my mind. It's still not my favorite phrase.

In defense of feelings: They are a very real and meaningful part of our humanity. Robots don't have feelings. Feelings add color and flavor to our lives. can be so beautiful as part of our Relationships, enjoyment, satisfaction, accomplishment. They are a part of our 6th sense which alerts us, provides valuable input. Something doesn't feel right. Hunch of what decision to make. Physiologically, we were designed to feel. When you read the Bible- God has feelings and expresses them. Feelings have their place but we need to know the place and boundary them up because feelings can be extremely powerful, become inflated, lead us in the wrong direction and try control. I appreciate that I can feel but I appreciate what my husband taught me: feelings are not my guide not the sole determiner what is right and wrong, I do not allow them to obscure reality, do not determine my value, or define me, nor are they the basis of decisions, obedience, doing the right thing. If not feelings then what? Faith!

What is faith?

Heb 11:1-Faith is the substance of what is hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The definition of substance, evidence. Greek: setting under/support, concrete, proof, **confidence**. We typically base our sense of confidence on feelings- not a solid foundation. Faith is.

Through faith we **understand** Heb 11:3 = exercise the mind

-Jesus defined great faith by pointing to a Roman general said **speak the word** and it's as good as done. Faith is super-glued to the power of the word to do what it says.

-Faith is **active belief**. Belief + Action = Faith or it's dead

- Woman who touched Jesus' garment.
- Noah building an ark for >100 years.
- Samson despite all his failures reaching out to God to do in the last moments of his life, arms wrapped around two pillars.
- The faith professed must be the faith acted.

- Projects into the future what isn't there yet. Syrophenecian woman who asked Jesus to cast the devil out of her daughter – O woman great is your faith be it unto you even **as you determine**. Mt 15:28

-Faith is **counted for righteousness** Ro 4:5 When God takes inventory of our lives – if faith is there it's the same as righteousness.

-**how we are Made righteous by faith** – Ro 3:22 What's righteous? when you see good, true love in action, integrity, kindness, unselfish giving, loyalty, caring for each other. That's righteous. We try self-righteousness, morality, legalism, what's good for me/ selfish motives. But genuine righteousness is by faith; only path to our right relationship with God.

-Faith is believing God is who He says He is and believing I am who He says I am.

All of those points help us to understand faith.

God has feelings but He also has faith, strong faith that prevails despite our lack of faith in Him

Ro 3:3 – our unbelief does not make the faith of God without effect. Our faith is typically based on what we see God doing or not doing. Strong faith when we see Him doing what we want Him to, children of Israel had strong faith while they are walking through the Red Sea. But where is it when they are faced with giants and armies with chariots? God's faith is not based on what he sees us doing or not doing. It's stronger than our lack of faith in Him.

God's faith is how He calls those things which are not as though they are Ro 4:17 – what a way to live! Every day filled with hope, with anticipation, expectation, confidence.

When Jesus said it is finished – declaration of faith not feeling. Jesus' feelings are not what sustained Him through Calvary

How do we get? Ro 12:3 – God gives to every man a measure of faith. What are we doing with what we've been given?

- Rev 14: some who **keep** the faith of Jesus
- **Those who live by faith** – grows as it is lived from faith to faith – Ro 1:17 in this way faith is increased. 2 Cor 10:15

If we don't keep and live by the gift, exercise it, it atrophying through disuse.

—Paul refers to the law of faith. Law that we are to keep and live by, but also it's a law in that it's reliable, strong, cause/effect. What a foundation, such relational confidence and hope in faith.

- Faith is not feeling, that doesn't make feelings bad, they just need a guide, a boss, a friend, a big brother, a judge, a parent.
- Don't confuse faith with emotion. We can feel such strong faith when Music on loud, reach the top of the mountain, watch the sunrise or the sunset. But, when we are in the depths of despair, when we feel hopeless, depressed, distant from God then we need to exercise our mind through faith and believe still (Lord I believe help my unbelief).
- On my best days of feeling connected and secure and on my worst days of feeling like a failure or distant, faith in God and His word is the basis of steady connection with God.
- In order for faith to be stronger than our feelings we must allow it to be in charge. There will still be times when faith will let the reins of feeling loose and let you ride the feeling but there will be times when faith will hold the reins tight, hold them back; acknowledge you feeling but we're going this way. It must be strong. For faith to be strong- must be exercised.
- **It takes strength to rest and live by every word of God** not because you feel it but because you faith it.