

INTRODUCTION

It delights the heart of God when His children learn to truly walk by faith. But just what is true faith and how does one live by faith? On this subject, misconceptions abound.

This book is based on a collection of eight messages preached in a local congregation over a period of eight years (1980-87). Each message can be appreciated on its own, especially the last three messages. They have been compiled into a book because together they can contribute to an understanding of what true faith is, and how one can live by faith and become a man of faith.

The first five messages are a mini-series on faith and they lay the foundation for our understanding of this subject. The two messages that follow are part of the message series *Appearance and Reality*, and they examine the subject of faith from the standpoint of Paul's conversion and calling as an apostle, and of Joseph as a slave and prisoner. The final message about a heart on fire was preached as a single message.

Message 1 discusses what true faith is, and why it is an integral part of a life pleasing to God.

Message 2 helps us see that the life of faith is a Christ-centred life. The beginning, the continuation and the consummation of the life of faith all centre on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Message 3 points the way to how we can grow in quality of faith by discussing where faith comes from and how it grows.

Message 4 considers faith in action, as illustrated in the lives of Mary and Moses.

Message 5 considers the need to persevere in faith through puzzling and difficult situations, with a reflection on the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt, and how we can work together with God in faith.

In *Message 6*, we seek to understand the heart of Paul before his "sudden" conversion, the meaning of his conversion, and the depth of his response to the Lord. This can shed light on what constitutes a man of faith and how we can become men of faith. Paul's unceasing zeal is a powerful testimony to how much the man of faith can accomplish in God's kingdom by His grace.

In *Message 7*, we reflect on Joseph as a man of faith, while still a slave and a prisoner. His life is a strong encouragement to us to walk by faith, even in the most trying of circumstances.

Message 8 rounds up the book by viewing the man of faith as one whose heart burns for God. It considers what a heart on fire means, how it comes about and how it grows in intensity and meaning.

Questions have been included at the end of each message for personal reflection and group discussion. This is in response to requests by readers of my earlier books.

Living by faith is a fundamental aspect of the Christian life. It is my prayer that this book can help believers move towards a clearer understanding of what it means to live by faith. May it challenge each one of us to become a man or woman of faith. This is the kind of life God desires for all His children.