

God's Faithfulness 4-28-02

This is the second Sunday in our series on the character of God. Who is God? He is the sum of all His attributes – descriptive words that inform us of His makeup. Each attribute or characteristic we find perfected in God. In fact, all other expressions of that attribute are mere reflections of that characteristic perfected in God. There are faithful people, but if we want to see real faithfulness we look at God. Faithfulness is one of God's attributes. There are good people, but if we want to see real goodness, we look at God. The best things we see in people are just a portion of the perfection of all the good that is in God.

All the characteristics of God are perfect and in perfect harmony with one another. The facets on a diamond could serve as an illustration. Each cut makes a surface on the diamond, and light goes in and out of all the surfaces making a sparkle. If one surface is marred you do not have a perfect diamond and it will not sparkle like a flawless diamond. Each perfect surface is one of the attributes of God. We looked at one last week, goodness. This week we will just take a peek at His faithfulness.

If God was faithful but He was not totally righteous, what is it that He would be faithful to? If God is love but is not just then what does He love? You see how the attributes of God interact and are perfected by the other attributes? Each adds to the beauty and perfection of the others. If any one were missing, none would be perfect. In this series we will look at today's topic, His faithfulness, and the Lord willing, in the coming weeks we will look at the other facets of the diamond of His character, sovereignty, immutability, mercy, grace, love, holiness, justice and perhaps a few others.

It is very important that we understand God's character. It is His character that sets the standard for right and wrong. It is because He is faithful that we should be faithful. Have you ever thought about what makes a thing right or wrong? It is not just because God says so, for anyone can make a demand. It is right because it is godly, like God. This concept is almost lost in today's society. Abortion isn't wrong just because God says "Thou shalt not kill", but because in Him is Life. Lies are not wrong just because God tells us not to lie, although that is reason enough. The greatest reason is because God is true. Something is wrong because it is at odds with the character of our perfect God.

As we enter this subject we are standing on holy ground. We are not walking on the disputable territory of the opinions of men but the declaration of Scripture. How do we know God is faithful? The word of God tells us so, and He cannot lie. He has proven Himself faithful in the lives of the characters throughout Scripture. Listen to the declaration of Scripture and hear the truth about God's revelation of this part of His character. You will see that when His faithfulness is mentioned often another characteristic of God is mentioned alongside it.

*Ex 34:5-7 (NIV) Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and **faithfulness**,⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."*

Here God declares Himself to be abounding in faithfulness. The Hebrew word used here for faithfulness is *emeth*. It is used in Genesis 24:27 when the servant of Abraham looks for a wife for Isaac and is led right to her; he declares that God has been *emeth* with Abraham. God answered Abraham's prayer and provided a wife for Isaac. That was an expression of God's abounding faithfulness. Faithfulness is translated 'true' in the KJV. Strong's concordance says *emeth* means: firm, sure, reliable, and stable. That is what God declares Himself to be.

Hasn't He proven Himself *emeth* with you? Has He answered your prayers and provided for your needs? Have you found Him to be reliable? Then you have experienced His faithfulness. I can certainly tell you He has been faithful toward me. Even when I was faithless, ignoring His warnings, fighting His Holy Spirit, He was faithful. He was faithful to discipline me, faithful to continually to convict me when I walked in rebellion, faithful to provide a way to escape, faithful to bring brothers and sisters to help, faithful to teach me. He has been nothing but faithful (*emeth*) to me.

Deut 7:9 (NIV)⁹ *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the **faithful God**, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.* This word is *aman*: To support, confirm, and be faithful – It is used of the support pillars for a door. Here it is used in connection with His covenant of love. He is the One that confirms it and supports it. "*He is the faithful God,*" means you can count on His love continuing in your life. Where do you run when the earth shakes? Between the door pillars, the faithfulness of God! Where do those who do not know God run when there is trouble? There is no one else that can support us like God can.

Deut 32:4 (NIV)⁴ *He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A **faithful God** who does no wrong, upright and just is he.* Here the word 'faithful' is *Emuwnah* – firm, steadfast – You can count on God to do what is right with consistency. He is never one way this week and of a different bent the next. He is steadfast! When you go to Him, you always know what to expect. He'll never be out to lunch, sleeping on the job, not ready to hear your need. No, our God is steadfast. He is always on the side of good because He is good.

Psalms 36:5(NIV)⁵ *Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your **faithfulness** to the skies.* Do you recall the old children's song, "So high you can't get over it, so low you can't get under it, so wide you can't get around it, you gotta go in through the door"? His love and faithfulness are always bigger than our need.

I've been tempted to doubt God's faithfulness, His dependability. I think we all have doubted. If we did not doubt we would believe every word of Scripture as if it was a contract with the most capable, most dependable person to ever live. Come to think of it, it is! Has there ever been anyone more capable, more dependable than Jesus? Then why do we not utterly trust His every Word? We certainly should.

Psalms 86:14-15 (NIV)¹⁴ *The arrogant are attacking me, O God; a band of ruthless men seeks my life-- men without regard for you.¹⁵ But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and **faithfulness**.*

Abounding faithfulness! When we are under attack, when it seems like everyone is against us, we can count on the abounding love and faithfulness of our Father. He is

seeking our best, in contrast to those that seek to harm us. Compassionate and gracious, abounding in love and faithfulness, what an awesome God!

*Psalms 89:1-2 (NIV)¹ I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your **faithfulness** known through all generations. ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your **faithfulness** in heaven itself.*

David wanted to tell every generation of God's faithfulness. The youth can trust Him to raise them up to be men and women of God. The adults can trust His faithfulness in guiding them into the ministry He is leading them into. The aged can count on His faithfulness to see them through to their heavenly home. He says the foundation of this faithfulness, this eternal love of God, is fixed in heaven itself, not here on this changeable realm. Four of the last five scriptures have tied love with faithfulness. He is faithful to you because He has set His love on you.

*Psalms 91:4 (NIV)⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his **faithfulness** will be your shield and rampart.*

*2 Thess. 3:3 (NIV)³ But **the Lord is faithful**, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.*

His faithfulness protects you. You surely must realize that Satan would destroy you in a moment for he came to kill, steal and destroy, but the Lord is faithful to protect you! Take that protection away for an instant and we would be gone. Thank God for His faithful covering. Don't step out from under it. Walk in obedience.

*Psalms 119:75 (NIV)⁷⁵ I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous, and in **faithfulness** you have afflicted me.*

Illness can be an expression of His faithfulness. If there is something we need to learn, or something we will not heed any other way, His faithful love will bring us into affliction. God does not always want to heal. Those who He loves, He chastens and He scourges every son He receives.

Isaiah 25:1 (NIV)¹ O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago.

All He does is in perfect faithfulness. You will notice that perfection is applied to all His attributes. There is not even a tiny flaw in His faithful acts. All that God has planned will happen, and it is all planned in consistency with His perfect faithfulness. We are so used to thinking of God as being like man that we have a hard time really grasping how perfect and wonderful He is. He is utterly trustworthy. Where are you placing your trust?

*Lam 3:22-23 (NIV)²² Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.²³ They are new every morning; great is your **faithfulness**.*

His love and compassion are always new every morning – what great faithfulness!

*1 Thess 5:23-24 (NIV)²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁴ The one who calls you is **faithful** and he will do it.*

We wonder if we are ever going to be made into the image of the Son of God. Well, this passage declares that the One who called you is faithful, and He will do it. He will present you faultless before the throne of God. Thank God it is not up to my faithfulness or yours, but His! Whew! What a relief! Tell the person next to you, "I'm glad it's not up

to you." Now tell them, "I'm glad it's not up to me." *The one who calls you is **faithful** and he will do it.* Why? Because He is faithful!

1 Cor 10:13 (NIV)¹³ *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

God is faithful to limit our temptations to what we can bear, and in our temptations to provide a way out. He doesn't leave us in there to be clobbered in our weak areas. He provides an escape in His faithfulness, but we must chose to enter the escape He provides. He has always provided a way of escape for me. He always has and always will for you too.

1 Peter 4:19 (NIV)¹⁹ *So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their **faithful Creator** and continue to do good.*

Troubles in this fallen world and persecution from the ungodly may cause us to suffer, but remember God is the faithful Creator. Commit yourself to Him and keep on being obedient. He is our faithful Creator in spite of our present sufferings. Count on His presence and His promises to see you through. He's never failed me yet, and He never will. He may not act according to my wishes, but He will be faithful to do what is good.

1 John 1:9 (NIV)⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is **faithful** and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

When we confess our sins, He does not debate forgiveness, hold a grudge or put our past works on a scale, NO; He faithfully forgives us because of what his Son did for us.

Rev 19:11 (NIV)¹¹ *I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called **Faithful** and True. With justice he judges and makes war.*

Jesus name is Faithful and True. The Old Testament word for faithful was often translated true. He is truth, and because of that He is also faithful. Here faithfulness is mentioned alongside justice. God's love is His faithfulness toward those who receive what Jesus has done for them, and His wrath is His faithful justice toward those who reject Him and all the goodness that He is.

From these passages we have a clarification of this attribute and how it is displayed toward our lives. We also see what we should be like. Let me go over these Biblical implications of the faithfulness of God as declared in these passages.

He is dependable to answer our prayers and to meet our needs. We can count on His love continuing in our lives. He will always be consistent. In every thing He does and in all His ways, faithfulness is displayed. It is huge (reaching the skies). It never changes. It seeks what is best for us. It protects us. Sometimes it afflicts us to teach us. It assures us that all God's promises will be kept. It is perfect – without the slightest flaw. It brings new compassion each morning. It will see us to be made complete, blameless in body, soul and spirit. It limits our temptations, providing a way out of temptation. When we confess sin it applies forgiveness and cleansing. It is inseparable from truth and it should be a part of our character.

What should this mean to us in our everyday lives? We may believe God is faithful but do we act on it. To act on His faithfulness means not to worry about tomorrow. It means fretting and fear have no place in our lives, for God is entirely trustworthy. It should give

us a sense of peace regardless of our situation. We will all face times when it will be hard to see His faithful love in circumstances in our lives, but if we are believing what we know of His character, we can praise God in the midst of the trial, knowing He is faithful. In the Psalms, David pours out his complaint to the Lord and then says, "But in the past You delivered me and I know You will do it again." Then he begins to praise God. That was His confidence in God who is always faithful. He has delivered you in the past and He will deliver you in the future. Have the same confidence in His faithfulness that David had!

Today, faithfulness has hit an all-time low in our society. Divorce comes from a lack of marital faithfulness, insecure children from a lack of parental faithfulness, ruined businesses due to financial unfaithfulness. Since God is calling us to the faithfulness that is His own character, how does this work in your life? How can you express His faithfulness to your mate, children, employer or employees, and those you come in contact with every day? Can they see God's faithfulness in your actions? Is God calling you into a deeper walk of faithfulness today? In what area of your life? And how will you let Him express it in you? He is faithful and He will help you to live in an expression of His faithfulness if you are willing.

When I look back on my life, I see many times when I doubted the faithfulness of God. As time passed I could see that God was faithful even when man was not. God was faithful, even when I was not. If you are in a time of wondering, let me encourage you that one day you will see, God has been faithful. I say that with all certainty. One day you will see His faithfulness has never wavered one tiny bit. It never has. It never will. Just as God is good all the time, He is faithful all the time. We can say with certainty that God is faithful all the time. And all the time God is faithful. Let this truth sink into your heart and affect the way you see and interpret the world around you.

I have shared with you this list of Scriptures and some of their implications so you can examine what God desires to work into your heart and life. He wants sons and daughters that look like Him. Be a godly expression of faithfulness in the world in which you live for His glory, in response to His faithfulness to you.