

Three weeks ago we looked at the steadfast love of God. His love remains unchanging toward those with whom He is in a covenant relationship. We saw that God described Himself as abounding in steadfast love, but also in faithfulness. ⁶ *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,"* Exodus 34:6 Faithfulness is translated "true" in the KJV. Strong's concordance defines this Hebrew word to mean: firm, sure, reliable, and stable. That is what God declares Himself to abundantly be.

We don't always associate the word true with the word faithful but that is the Hebrew sense of the word. We say that if a person is true to his or her word, then they are faithful to their word. We call people who live up to their word, faithful friends. God is ever true to His Word. He is faithful.

The Hebrew word used here for **faithfulness is *emet***. It was first used in **Genesis 24:27** when the servant of Abraham looked for a wife for Isaac and was led right to her; he declared that God had been faithful (*emet*) to Abraham. God answered Abraham's prayer and provided a wife for Isaac (**Genesis 24:7**). That was an expression of God's abounding faithfulness. Abraham had been promised a son. When the son of promise was finally born, God tested Abraham's faith. God had already shown Himself to be faithful in fulfilling the promise of Isaac's birth, but He demonstrated that faithfulness again when He answered the servant of Abraham's prayer by directing him to the girl that was to be Isaac's wife.

Often the first use of a word in Scripture gives us a guideline for the use of the word. At first I didn't think that was the case with this word, but the more I thought about it, the more I could see that God ordained for this word to be used first in one of the most important events of life, choosing a spouse. **If we seek Him for direction for these momentous decisions of life, He will be abundantly faithful.** Do you believe it?

Because Isaac is a foreshadowing of Christ, this passage in Genesis speaks to God's faithfulness to send the Holy Spirit to seek out the bride of Christ. How appropriate then that this should be the first use of the word (**Ephesians 5:32**). We'll return to this theme at the close of the message.

The Bible is a revelation of the nature of God and man as well as God's solution to the separation caused by sin. Over and over in the Old and New Testaments God is referred to as a faithful God. ^{9a} *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God* Deuteronomy 7:9a In this case the Hebrew word is "aman". It speaks of the faithfulness of a caring father. We are reminded of the Prodigal Son parable (**Luke 15:20**).

Commented [PW1]: Genesis 24:27 (ESV)

²⁷ and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen."

Commented [PW2]: Genesis 24:7 (ESV)

⁷ The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

Commented [PW3]: Ephesians 5:32 (ESV)

³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Commented [PW4]: Luke 15:20 (ESV)

²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

⁸ *O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you?* Psalm 89:8 Here the word "faithfulness" is translated from the Hebrew word "emunah". It is the feminine form of the word for "firmness." It implies God's dependable loving support. This word can also be translated "truth," just as our first word "emet" can be.

Some of the verses we are looking at today you'll remember from three weeks ago. That is because steadfast love and faithfulness are often mentioned together. ⁵ *Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.* Psalm 36:5 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"? It's a song about the love of God, but it applies to His faithfulness as well. His love and faithfulness are always bigger than our need (Ephesians 3:18-19).

¹ *I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.* ² *For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."* Psalm 89:1-2 David wanted to tell every generation of God's faithfulness. The youth can trust Him to help them stand against peer pressure and to raise them up to be men and women of God. The adults can trust His faithfulness in guiding them in their calling. The aged can count on His faithfulness to see them through to the completion of their call and on to their heavenly home. The psalmist wrote that the foundation of this faithfulness, this eternal love of God, is fixed in heaven itself, not here on this changeable realm. Numerous Scriptures like this one tie love with faithfulness. God is faithful to you because He has set His love on you.

Sometimes God's faithfulness afflicts us. ⁷⁵ *I know, O LORD, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.* Psalm 119:75 That is one way we learn and grow. Those who claim they have divine health and are never afflicted are missing out on this form of God's faithful love toward His children. Affliction makes us take time to stop and consider what God is trying to teach us. Our deepest lessons and closest walk with God often are found in affliction. Thankfully, God's faithfulness doesn't leave us there.

³¹ *if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments,* ³² *then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes,* ³³ *but I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness.* Psalm 89:31-33 God will not remove His steadfast love and He can't be false to His faithfulness. He will bring you out, and you'll be closer to Him than before.

You may even suffer just for doing God's will. ¹⁹ *Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.* 1 Peter 4:19 But it's alright, because we entrust our souls to the all-powerful, all-knowing

Commented [PW5]: Ephesians 3:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Creator. At other times, we can't understand the purpose or reason behind our suffering. We just can't see what God sees. Still, we should know He is faithful and by faith know that one day we will understand (John 13:7).

God is said to employ this attribute in leading and teaching us. ⁵ *Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.* Psalm 25:5 Remember you can substitute the word "faithfulness" for truth in this verse and each time you see *emet* translated truth. Lead me in your faithfulness. It is God's faithful, consistent nature that leads us through life. The lessons He brings our way, whether learned through pain or joy, are the product of His faithfulness to guide us through life.

We often run ahead without waiting on God. Waiting gives us the opportunity to be led by the faithfulness of God. The salvation mentioned here in this verse is throughout eternity but begins now. We experience the salvation of God when we are led by His faithfulness.

The last words of Jesus on the cross were of relying on this attribute of the Father. Jesus was quoting Psalm 31:5 ⁵ *Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.* While Jesus did not finish the verse, you can be sure the faithfulness of the Father was what He was counting on. What a verse to quote on your way out! This is similar to what Ed and Mariko both prayed when they thought it was their time. No wonder the peace of God came over them. When you know God has redeemed you, the God who is the faithful Eternal Almighty, there is every reason to have peace.

Since God is always true/faitful to His Word, we would expect to find the same attributes applied to His Word. ¹⁴² *Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true (faithful).* Psalm 119:142 – insertion mine. ¹⁵¹ *But you are near, O LORD, and all your commandments are true.* Psalm 119:151 ¹⁶⁰ *The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.* Psalm 119:160 In each verse here the word for truth is *emet*. God's Word is true and faithful because He is.

Of course the New Testament carries on this same theme. Paul wrote that the God who called you is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9). His mercy is faithful (1 Corinthians 7:25). God is faithful to provide a way of escape when the testing becomes too severe (1 Corinthians 10:13). God is faithful to establish us (2 Thessalonians 3:3). Paul even tells us that when we are faithless that God is still faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). And John wrote that God is faithful to forgive us when we confess our sins (1 John 1:9). Everything God does is done in His faithfulness because that is who He is.

As with each sermon in this series, let's see if the attribute of faithfulness applies to Jesus. First off, we can see that it is one of His names. ¹¹ *Then I saw heaven opened,*

Commented [PW6]: John 13:7 (ESV)

⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."

Commented [PW7]: 1 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Commented [PW8]: 1 Corinthians 7:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

Commented [PW9]: 1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Commented [PW10]: 2 Thessalonians 3:3 (ESV)

³ But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

Commented [PW11]: 2 Timothy 2:13 (ESV)

¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

Commented [PW12]: 2 Timothy 2:13 (ESV)

¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. Revelation 19:11 Jesus is the manifestation of the faithful truth of God.

But that is at His return, what about during His life? The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is our faithful high priest who made propitiation for our sins (Hebrews 2:17). He was faithful to lay down His life for us in obedience to God. That is extreme faithfulness. Jesus was faithful to do the will of the Father in everything He did (Hebrews 3:2). He is the faithful witness of who the Father is (Revelation 1:5; 3:14). Jesus' promises are as faithful as the Father's (Hebrews 10:23).

The life of Jesus was an expression of the faithfulness of God. When we see the example of Jesus, we know it should be true of us as well. If He has made His home in us (John 14:23), the world around us should see His faithfulness in our lives.

The Greek equivalent for these Hebrew words for "faithfulness" is "*pistuo*." It is the New Testament word for believer as well. We could call a Christian a "faithful one." Paul opens with a greeting in his letters to the Colossians and Philippians calling the believers "the faithful" (Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:2). Jesus has entrusted us with salvation and the power of the Holy Spirit. He has asked us to be His witnesses to the world of His love and grace (Acts 1:8). We are stewards of the Word of God. One thing He requires of stewards is that they be found faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2).

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 often poured out his complaint to the Lord. But then says something to the effect of, "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! That will change your attitude as you go through the storms of life.

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 our lives? How can you express His faithfulness to your spouse, 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

Commented [PW13]: Hebrews 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Commented [PW14]: Hebrews 3:2 (ESV)

² who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.

Commented [PW15]: Revelation 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

Commented [PW16]: Revelation 3:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

Commented [PW17]: Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Commented [PW18]: John 14:23 (ESV)

²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Commented [PW19]: Ephesians 1:1 (ESV)

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Commented [PW20]: Ephesians 1:1 (ESV)

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Commented [PW21]: Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Commented [PW22]: 1 Corinthians 4:2 (ESV)

² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

you into a deeper walk of faithfulness to Him 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.

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 questioning God, 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'd like to close with the theme I started this message with, the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit to draw you to Jesus. If you have received Jesus as your Savior, He is now faithfully transforming you into His bride. If you haven't accepted Him, you're missing out on the most wonderful decision you could make and a glorious future.

When one of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, doubted that Jesus was raised from death, Jesus appeared to him. He invited Thomas to be certain it really was Jesus by putting his finger in the nail holes in Jesus' body. Then Jesus told him to not be faithless but to have faith (John 20:27). That is the word we are looking at today. Be a person of faith. Stop doubting and live up to the calling on your life. Stop floundering and be faithful to God like He is to you. ESV translates the word "faith" as "believe" in this verse. The Greek word is more than that. It is to believe so strongly that it translates into consistent actions.

I have said and heard others tell me, "I just can't seem to walk in the victory." We just seem to go in cycles of getting on fire and then letting the world and the flesh dominate our life. Perhaps you've prayed for the power of the Holy Spirit to walk in victory and it just doesn't seem to be happening. Don't give up. Don't stop seeking. Cry out all the more (Luke 11:13). God is faithful!

I have one more verse to share with you from 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. ²³ *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ²⁴ *He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.* You can't, but He will. Keep calling out. Keep listening. Keep yielding. He will sanctify us completely. He will preserve our whole spirit, soul, and body blameless at the coming of Jesus. How can we be sure of that? It's because the One who called us is faithful; He will surely do it! Amen?

Questions

Commented [PW23]: John 20:27 (ESV)

²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

Commented [PW24]: Luke 11:13 (ESV)

¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

- 1 What are some translations for *emet* ?
- 2 Where is it first used and why?
- 3 What are some of the other Hebrew words for "faithful" and their expanded meaning?
- 4 What are some descriptions of God's faithfulness?
- 5 When is His faithfulness painful?
- 6 When did Jesus rely on God's faithfulness?
- 7 What is Jesus called in Revelation?
- 8 How did Jesus show faithfulness?
- 9 How are we supposed to show faithfulness?
- 10 What will God be faithful to do in us?