

7/28/2019

“God’s Promise of Faithfulness”

Scripture: Psalm 119:89-90; Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

Series: Standing on God’s Promises

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: We all have the opportunity to be in relationship with the One God of all. And the Bible, God’s inspired word, promises us and assures us that God is faithful.

I’d like to start with a bit of humor today.

A church member went to the grocery store one afternoon to pick up some fish.

Looking at some good sized fresh fish, the man said to the salesperson, “Just toss them to me.”

The clerk looked strangely at the man and asked, “Can’t I just wrap them up for you?”

“No,” the customer replied. “If anyone from church asks me if I caught any fish lately, I can truthfully tell them, ‘Yes. I caught four big ones.’” ☺

If I were to ask you what top three qualities or characteristics you looked for in a friend or marriage partner, one of those three would almost universally be honesty or truthfulness.

Another, which I want to talk about today, is related. That is faithfulness.

† **We want to know that those we place our deepest trust in will be faithful to us.**

It is with those persons that we share our inmost feelings, our hopes and dreams, our joys and sorrows, our aspirations and disappointments. It is those persons that we need to count on when times are difficult. It is those persons who will be with us and for us when others seem to disappear. It is those persons who stand by our side when trouble surrounds us, who will keep their word.

Similarly, we hope that our parents and other family would be faithful in loving us unconditionally, even if they don’t always agree or understand us. And sometimes that faithfulness means guidance as well as encouragement.

There are some people in this world who do not feel so blessed as to have family, friends, spouses or other relationships that fall into that category.

Yet there is One who is faithful.

Speaking of “Faithfulness,” Sharon B. Capron of Oklahoma writes (The Upper Room, 10/2/18):

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” - Lamentations 3:22-23 (NRSV)

“Every morning I watch as the sky begins to lighten. When I can see the sun’s brilliant rays skimming across the pasture, I know it is time to open the barn. The peacocks scream from their high roost in the trees, alerting the birds in the barn that I am coming. The geese honk impatiently for their liberty. They do not know that I am protecting them from the coyotes and bobcats, our nighttime predators. They do not understand that everything I do at the barn is for their sake. But I am faithful anyway.

“As I open the barn door, the birds burst forth, tumbling over each other to be first at the water trough. They plunge their heads deep under the water’s surface, causing the water to wash over them as they tremble with glee. I take great pleasure in faithfully caring for the birds.

“In a similar way, God faithfully cares for us. God protects us whether we understand or not, whether we credit our Creator or not. God never wearies of the task, and God never oversleeps or becomes ill. God takes pleasure in us. God is faithful.”

Yes, it is good to know that we can place our deepest trust in the One who is always faithful to us.

† **God desires us to be in a loving and faithful relationship with God.**

The good news is that we all have the opportunity to be in relationship with the One God of all. And the bible, God’s inspired word, promises us and assures us that God is faithful.

Deuteronomy 7:9 says, ***“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.”***

These words imply a mutual or covenant relationship of being faithful to God as well.

Yet, even when we have turned our backs on God, have been unfaithful, and suffer the consequences of our unfaithfulness, if we turn back to God, and call upon God’s name, God will hear and respond with love and mercy.

(Deuteronomy 4:31) ***“For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath.”***

Psalm 105:8 says, *“He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations.”* And 119:89-90, *“Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations . . .”*

Through the prophet Isaiah (54:10) God declared, *“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed . . .”*

† **God’s promise and faithfulness should give us hope, peace and strength . . . something to reflect on, rejoice in, and respond to.**

As the prophet Isaiah proclaimed (25:1), *“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.”*

Do you see and acknowledge God’s faithfulness, the marvelous things God has done in your life or those you love? Perhaps these were things which were planned long ago by God, just now coming to fulfillment. . . the birth of a child, a graduation, getting your first job, getting a promotion, getting engaged or married, buying your first or new home.

Or maybe God’s faithfulness has come in the way of a new spiritual insight or growth.

Maybe that faithfulness has come in the form of your salvation by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

What better friend and confidant could anyone have than Jesus himself! What greater assurance of life beyond death than that of our risen Savior and Lord! What greater peace than that which comes from the Prince of Peace! What greater joy! What greater hope! What greater life than that in Jesus Christ!

Remember the Apostle Paul’s words to the Corinthians (1:9). They are words for us as well, *“God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.”*

And what greater strength for living in this world than the Holy Spirit of God! For God is faithful to strengthen us and guide us in every time of need. Even in times of greatest temptation to sin, God is with us and within us.

As Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth (1 Cor. 10:13 NRSV), *“No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you*

may be able to endure it.”

So, keep in mind that faithfulness should always work both ways in a relationship.

Let us be faithful to God, as God is faithful to you and me.

Remember God’s promise of faithfulness and rejoice. Stand firm, celebrate and share what God has done, and is doing, in your life. Give thanks for God in Jesus – our savior, teacher, Lord and friend!

+ + +

Questions for Reflection . . .

How does faithfulness rank as a quality you seek in a close relationship?

Do you see and acknowledge God’s faithfulness, the marvelous things God has done in your life or those you love?

In what ways do desire to be more faithful in your relationship with God? With others? How have you sought God’s help?