October 30th
THE GOD WHO IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE

"*"When you father children and children's children, and have grown old in the land, and you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.*" **DEUTERONOMY 4:25-31**

I'm going to ask you a question, and I need you to be honest with yourself when you answer. What's the difference between the God of the Older Testament and the God of the New Testament? Okay…that's an obvious one because we know that there is one Lord. However, how would you compare God's actions towards sin in the Older Testament with God's actions towards sin in the New Testament? That one might be a little tougher. Think about it for a few minutes. How does God treat sin in the Older Testament and how does He treat sin in the New Testament? If you're thinking of how most people look at God's actions, most would claim that the God of the Old Testament is one of wrath and judgment, while the God of the New Testament is One of love and grace. Indeed, at first glance it can seem that way. However, look closer and you'll see that God doesn't change with His wrath on sin and His mercy and grace in either Testament. Let's read Deuteronomy 4 to confirm this point.

Actually, if you read the blessings and curses from Deuteronomy's passages, you'll find that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He must judge sin because He is holy. This is a message that is communicated in both Old and New Testaments. Not convinced? Read again Deuteronomy 4 and compare with John 3:36: "…By doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess…". John 3:36 states, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." The wrath of God is clear in both passages, even as John 3 holds the famous statement of believing on Jesus. God holds His people accountable. Would we want it any other way? How could we worship a God that doesn't hold people responsible for their actions? Could we worship a God like that? A notion of that kind of God seems small and wimpy to me. He's more domesticated than God in that mode. Thankfully, God is just AND loving. You see, God isn't made up of parts like we are. Even as we are made in God's image, we have human limits. We exist within the confines of time and have emotions that don't always mix. But God isn't like us in His perfect attributes. Experts call this God's incommunicable attributes. God doesn't share those with humanity.

Let's not stop at the wrath of God on sin. You can also see even in this passage in Deuteronomy the faithful love of God. He holds to His promise that He gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Did you notice that when you read this passage? Look again to be reminded and filled with awe: "…When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice. For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them. Did you catch that? Even as Israel (and we) will trade worshiping God for worshiping idols, God will remain faithful to His covenant that He promised! God's promise is unconditional! You see, God hasn't changed who He is or how He relates to His people across the Old and New Testaments. God remains faithful when we turn to Him. Does this bring you hope, men? No matter how much you fail and drift away from

your God, He's one step away from hearing you and restoring you to full fellowship with Him. That's the Hebrews' God, and that's your God! Praise God that He is faithful to His covenant promise. It's the covenant promise that assures you that Jesus has forgiven your sin. It's based upon His promise, not your ability to keep the promise. Will you find encouragement in this truth today?

Spend some time thanking our God for His faithful love to you. Ask Him to help you trust that He continues to love you through thick and thin.

For Further Reading: Psalm 136