

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

LESSON – 11: THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

I. Our God is the essence of faithfulness - He is unchanging in His nature, true to His word, promises salvation to His people, and is eternally dependable in keeping His promises. He is worthy of eternal trust no matter how unlikely His promises seem. Nothing can prevent God from accomplishing all that he has promised his people through Jesus Christ; the reliability of God should be a great source of comfort and strength for God's people as they repeatedly fail and go through trials and suffering.

A. Biblical words for faithfulness

1. Old Testament

a. aman (Hb.) - *believe (have faith), to trust, to stand firm; the idea of certainty, firmness, dependability, trustworthiness; also, assurance, faithful, sure, established, trust; even used to describe one who carries and cares for someone like a parent or nurse.*

b. emuna (*emunah*, Hb.)- derived from the root word *aman* ; faith or faithfulness; trusted or trustworthy, steadied

c. chesed (*hesed*; Hb.)– loving-kindness, mercy, fidelity, faithfulness; *love in action, acts of devotion*

2. New Testament

a. pistis (Gk, noun) and *pisteuo* (Gk, verb) - faith, faithfulness; outside of Bible use, also used for trust and trustworthiness, loyalty, honesty, reliability, and confidence

b. chesed (*hesed*; Hb.)– seven different Greek words used to translate the Hebrew chesed in the NT Greek; usually used for mercy, but occasionally used to describe **faithfulness**

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B. Faith versus faithfulness – both arise from the same root word; we know that *pistis* means faith and tend to focus on the belief portion of the word. Yet, it is more than mere firm belief: it is belief leading to action. Faithfulness is the active representation and application of our faith. Faithfulness means to be full of faith in our Christian service, so that we put all our energy and ability into doing it well. God *expects* our faith, and constantly encourages us to grow in our *faithfulness*

C. Faithfulness versus stewardship – through scriptural examples, we see that stewardship is faithfulness, and faithfulness is obedience to God. God calls us to service, and all He expects from us as stewards is our best effort toward faithfulness. Faithful stewardship is obeying God by living this life for our future hope of eternity (1 Timothy 6:17-19) and by knowing His Word and living by it (Joshua 1:8).

II. Essential scriptures:

Luke 16:10-12 - If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it.

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

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

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1 Corinthians 1:9 - God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 - But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

2 Timothy 2:13 - if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Matthew 25:21 - “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

1 Corinthians 4:2 - Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

1 Peter 4:19 - So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - 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. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

Revelation 2:10 - Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.

Revelation 14:12 - This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

Deuteronomy 7:9 - 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 commandments.

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Proverbs 28:20 - A faithful person will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.

Lamentations 3:22-23 - Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

Psalms 89:8 - Who is like you, LORD God Almighty? You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

Psalms 91:4-6 - He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

Psalms 119:90 - Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.

Exodus 34:6 - 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...."

Psalms 40:10 - I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly.

Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

2 Corinthians 5:7 - For we live by faith, not by sight.

Joshua 23:14 - "Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

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Luke 11:13 - If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Psalms 34:9-10 - Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Matthew 6:31-34 - So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Philippians 4:19 - And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Psalms 84:11 - For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

III. A deeper study of faithfulness

A. Biblical lessons about faithfulness

1. Luke 16:10-12:

a. *Being faithful in the little things* - one that is faithful with ‘little things’ will be faithful in much.

b. *Being faithful in earthly wealth and possessions* - one that is faithful with money will be faithful with true riches (those things which last through eternity)

c. *Being faithful in that which belongs to others* – one who is faithful in things belonging to another will be faithful with his own things.

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2. Matthew 25:14-30:

a. *One must be faithful with what one has* – God only requires us to be faithful with what we have been given (no more or no less) for us to be pleasing to Him

b. *God faithfully watches the good things we do* (no matter how small) *and will never forget them* (Heb. 6:10)

c. *God rewards faithfulness* – faithful service brings the joy and eternal rest that only God can provide; God rewards the faithful with more opportunities for service so we can be with Him in His joyful presence

d. *To be unfaithful is to be both slothful and wicked* (self-serving and not God-serving); failure to serve God's purposes brings as much condemnation as active evil intent

3. Matthew 25:31-46:

a. God judges us by the faithfulness we show to *others*, not just within ourselves (our worship, biblical knowledge, joy, and piety)

b. Faithfulness should be an *automatic* behavior if we have love for God and others – our service is not *quid pro quo*

B. What does faithfulness look like in practice?

1. To ourselves:

*Regular study of the Bible, active prayer life, avoiding temptation when possible, showing respect for our bodies, actively working on and expecting spiritual growth, being appreciative of our blessings; being attentive to the needs and feelings of others; taking it seriously to be the best example we can be to others

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2. To our families:

*being spiritual leaders - caring for the family's spiritual needs; evangelizing your family; always being a good example in all situations; husbands and wives committed physically/ spiritually/ socially/ to one another; always looking out for the family's welfare and being a good family steward; showing active parenting (good listening, teaching spiritual principles daily, being consistent in disciplining and rewarding the children, making the effort to be present for family activities, & spending quality time); being an obedient child/ showing respect (without grumbling, regardless of the family situation)

3. To the church:

*Showing up for worship services; greeting members and visitors at services (instead of ignoring them or running out the door); visiting and calling the sick, the hospitalized, and shut-ins; *volunteering* to serve in worship (even if we don't want to or are afraid to); *actively* participating in worship (singing even if we have a poor voice, praying with the one leading in prayer, paying attention and not bothering others so as to interrupt their concentration in worship); volunteering in church programs and activities (even if we don't want to); offering to take food and other goods to members in need; praying every day for our brothers and sisters; praying for the elders and deacons; being willing to teach bible classes (even if we don't want to); reading/ studying regularly so we *are able to* teach and participate in classes (and participating, so as to

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encourage others to do so); offering transportation to those having trouble getting to services and other activities; finding, knowing, and honing our special talent(s,) so as to use it/them in service to the Lord; avoiding gossip and selfish criticism in the congregation; always remaining cheerful and helpful, regardless of our situation

4. To the community/ world:

*take our charge seriously: ***teach others how to live*** by our example, our words, and our actions; praying for our secular leaders (*all our leaders...*); being “good Samaritans”; obeying the laws of our land (*all laws*, including traffic laws – and not just when we want to or when it is convenient/ serves our purposes; not cheating the government, such as with tax laws; avoiding civil disobedience); being a good employee (not stealing from work or cheating with our time, not grumbling or complaining, avoiding gossip, avoiding berating the boss or co-workers); being a good neighbor (avoiding disputes and settling them quickly as possible if they happen, being friendly); general: being friendly, helpful, encouraging, being a good listener, being cheerful, not complaining to others, encouraging other to see Christ in your speech and behavior (remember Romans 12:18)