

Fruit of the Spirit - 7, Faithfulness

11-30-16

FaithFULL

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Gifts For Eternity: Giving Catalog. Hand to a family/friends. Why give to someone outside a mall or grocery store when you have no clue who or what you're giving to?
- B. Slide3 Welcoming Team: Hostesses/Greeters on Wed nights. Since you are already coming, come a little early, what a great way to serve and make others feel welcome.
- C. Slide4 Women's Christmas: This Saturday. What a great way ladies to start the month/season with such a festive gathering.
- D. Slide5a Justice Matters: Sun Jan.29. Why? Exploring the **Risk Factors** that lead to human trafficking & sexual exploitation. Want to help at the conf? sign up Sun.
- E. Slide5b Prayer: Lord, may Your *Living Water* soak down into the depths of our soul. Down to our roots as we just **Serve You. Honor You. Believe on You. & Follow You** & your example in Your Son Jesus.

II. Slide6 Intro: Fruit of the Spirit - 7, Faithfulness

- A. Slide7a How would you define Faithfulness in a picture? During the funeral for US Navy SEAL, Petty Officer Jon Tumilson, who was killed in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan Aug 2011, his dog *Hawkeye* is shown lying next to his casket on the floor.
- B. Slide7b John Galbraith (Famous Economist), in his autobiography, *A Life in Our Times*, illustrates the devotion of Emily Gloria Wilson, his family's housekeeper: It had been a wearying day, and I asked Emily to hold all telephone calls while I had a nap. Shortly thereafter the phone rang. **Lyndon Johnson** was calling from the White House. "Get me Ken Galbraith. This is Lyndon Johnson." "He is sleeping, Mr. President. He said not to disturb him." "Well, wake him up. I want to talk to him." "No, Mr. President. I work for him, not you." - When I called the President back, he could scarcely control his pleasure. "Tell that woman I want her here in the White House." Reader's Digest, December, 1981

1. That's Faithfulness :)

- C. These **fruits/virtues/attitudes/character traits** are to characterize the Christian life.
 - 1. If we are **filled** w/the Spirit, we will exhibit the **fruit of the Spirit**. *[fruit filling]*
 - 2. These are not superficial character adjustments that happen over night.

a) They involve a reshaping of the innermost dispositions of the heart, which is a lifelong process of sanctification by the spirit.

D. Slide8 1st 3 were *Inner Attitudes* that are sourced in **God**.

E. 2nd 3 were *Relational Qualities* that are expressed to **others**.

F. 3rd 3 are *Personal Qualities* that guide **individual** conduct.

III. Slide9 **WHAT IS FAITHFULNESS?**

A. Slide10a **Faithfulness** (*pistis*) is the quality which renders a person trustworthy or reliable, like the faithful servant in Luke 16:10-12.

1. *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 11 And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? 12 And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?

2. "Faithfulness is only **rarely** demonstrated in martyrdom; it is **usually** displayed in the little tasks of life that tend to wear us down. The little things like committee meetings, cranky neighbors, or irritations from the children. In relation to a local church, generous and consistent **giving** is an evidence of faithfulness. So is regular **attendance** at worship assemblies.

Participation in ministries is an even better indicator, because that is more demanding than putting money in a plate or reserving a fixed time to assemble for worship. Being called on *at awkward hours to serve others in difficult ways* requires **dependability**." (Shelly 126-27)

B. Slide10b **Faithfulness** (*pistis*) means "the state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed, faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment" (BDAG).

C. He seems to speak of something other than saving faith, which is available to anyone.

1. The faith he speaks of is meant to benefit the Church **and** pertains in some way to God's miraculous work through that person.

D. Slide10c **Faithful** - as a designation of Christians, means **full of faith** (*faithFULL*), **trustful**, and not simply *trustworthy*.

- E. **Slide10d Faithful** - implies unswerving adherence to a *person or thing* or *to the oath or promise by which* a tie was contracted. [*full of faith*, trustful, and not simply trustworthy]
- F. Let's go back to the root...*faith*.
- G. Some **Atheists** like to throw around the quote...*Christianity is the belief that some cosmic Jewish zombie, can make you Live forever; if you symbolically Eat his flesh, and telepathically Tell him that you accept him As your master, so he can Remove an evil force from your soul, That is present in humanity, because A rib-woman was convinced, by a Talking snake with legs, to eat from a magical tree.* Makes perfect sense.
- H. Christianity is a **faith** that is based on a **body of knowledge revealed by God**.
1. **Slide11 Faith is not a blind leap** into darkness, **but a trust in God** that moves us **out of darkness into light**.
 2. **Faith is simple, but not simplistic.**
 3. **Faith is not credulity** [A tendency to believe too readily/gullible]. It is based on **sound reason and historical evidence**.
 4. **Faith provides the substance** for our **future hope**.
 5. **Faith involves trusting** in what is **not seen**.
 6. **Faith means** more than believing **in** God; it means **believing** God.¹

IV. **Slide12 HOW DO WE DISPLAY FAITHFULNESS?** *consistency & steadfastness.*

A. **Human Faithfulness** *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*

1. **Faith** and **faithfulness** are *both logically & linguistically one* in the OT & NT.
 - a) That is, the major words for **faith** in both Testaments imply the concept of *faithfulness*.
 - b) **Slide13** * *This indicates that faith is more than momentary assent to the truth of God. It is commitment to that truth, and it manifests itself in continued obedience.*
2. Abraham's life in this regard is instructive.
 - a) **He assented to, relied upon, and acted in** conformity to the revealed Word of God.
 - b) **He received God's revelation as true** (*i.e.*, demonstrating faith).
 - c) **His subsequent actions proved his faithfulness:**

¹ Essential Truths of the Christian Faith, R.C.Sproul

(1) He left home and country, and settled in a strange land.

(2) He offered up his son Isaac as God commanded:

(a) His willingness to sacrifice his only son is an unparalleled expression of **faithfulness** in the OT.

(b) It is no surprise, therefore, that Abraham is commended for his steadfastness **and** is set forth in the NT as one whose behavior should be **imitated** by Christians (Gal 3:6-9; Heb 11:8-10).

B. **Slide14** Faithfulness, then, must not be viewed as an isolated act. **Rather** it is an **attitude** that should characterize **the entire life** of those who say they have faith in God.

C. **So Christians, like the Israelites, are to Respond to God in faithfulness.**

1. **Trustworthy servants** must prove themselves to be **faithful** (1 Cor. 4:2).

2. **Epaphrus & Tychicus** are identified as **faithful** ministers of Christ (Col.1:7; 4:7).

3. **Paul** remains **faithful** to God in spite of tremendous pressures (1 Tim.1:12).

4. **Timothy** is to select teachers who will exhibit **faithfulness**.

5. The Spirit of God enables **Christians** to remain **faithful** to both God **and** other believers (Gal. 5:22).

D. **Slide15 ABRAHAM'S EXAMPLE** (Heb.11:1-3) *he got 19 of the verses in Heb.11*

E. **Faith is...the evidence of things not seen - For we walk by faith, not by sight.** 2Cor.5:7

1. Some see **faith** **contrasted** by **sight**, **or** **contrasted** with **empirical evidence** (something based on experiment **or** experience).

a) We have a saying, *Seeing is...what?...believing.*

2. Don't see **faith** as the **opposite** of **sight**, **or** in **contrast** to it. *Then what's he saying here?*

a) It is dealing with **future** issues. What we have seen in the **past** gives us faith to believe in the **future**, though we *haven't seen it*.

b) **Example: How visible was God to the children of Israel?** God showed Himself visible through: the 10 plagues, the parting of the red Sea, the drowning of Pharaoh's men, the manna, earth opening, the shining face of Moses, etc.

c) **Now**, all that happened **yesterday...now** here's what's going to happen **tomorrow...**
"You will possess the land, it will be flowing with milk & honey, it will be your inheritance, etc."

(1) I know you **saw** **giants** **but** have **giant faith**.

(2) **Could any Jew see tomorrow, look into the future? Can you?**

d) **So, true biblical faith is believing what has *already been shown in the past*; which causes us to have faith in His **future** promises, **though** we *haven't seen them yet*.** [my quote]

F. (3) **Not made of things which were visible** (i.e. to the naked eye)

1. We have **atoms, electrons, energy, particle physics**, & different **waves** that we **Slide16 cannot see** w/the naked eye. **Like...Cosmic Rays - Gamma Ray – X-Ray – Ultraviolet – **Visible** – Infrared – Radar – Radio - Broadcast Band**

2. The OT writers knew the worlds were framed by simply **His spoken Word...**

a) Ps.33:6-9 **The Lord merely spoke, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word, and all the stars were born. 7 He assigned the sea its boundaries and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs. 8 Let the whole world fear the Lord, and let everyone stand in awe of him. 9 For when he spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command.**

3. **Faith is learning to live by **insight** rather than by **sight**.**

G. **Slide17 Faith is confidence in God** that leads to **obedience to God**, as seen in rest of ch11.

1. To illustrate true faith, the writer points to some Old & NT believers, showing how they trusted God to: **bless, provide, protect, lead, conquer, & give life...** even in the most dire circumstances.

H. **Christians, like the Israelites, are to **respond** to God in faithfulness.**

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I. **Slide18** In 1883 the Marines adopted the motto *Semper Fidelis* Latin for **forever faithful**.

J. We as Christians are not called to be **successful**, we are called to be **faithful**.

1. Matter of fact **Faithfulness** is Required & Rewarded:

a) **It's Required** - *It is required of a steward to be found faithful.*

b) **It's Rewarded** - *Well done thou good & faithful servant.*

K. Lam.3:22,23 *Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your **faithfulness**.*