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Being Faithful, Even When It Isn't Easy

PSALM 89:1-8

Introduction

1. Over the last few weeks we have been looking at how we can be the hands of Jesus.
2. A little over a month ago I made the statement, "before we can be the hands of Jesus, we must have the heart of Jesus."
3. The heart of Jesus will only begin to develop in our lives as the Holy Spirit causes His fruit to grow within us.
4. There are nine traits to this fruit which the apostle Paul lists for us in Galatians 5:22-23.
5. So far, we have examined the first six: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and goodness.
 - a. The first three — love, joy & peace — are those graces which turn our thoughts toward God.
 - b. The second group of three — patience, kindness & goodness — direct our attention toward others.
 - c. The third group of graces refer more directly to ourselves — faithfulness, gentleness (meekness) & self-control.
6. It is the first grace in this third group that I would like for us to consider this morning — faithfulness.
7. When you or I say that someone is faithful, what are we saying about that person?
8. Are we not saying that person is reliable, trustworthy, dependable?
 - a. Such people are a breath of fresh air in our lives.

- b. We know they will stand by us when things are good and not so good.

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- 9. However, Solomon indicated that it is not always easy to find someone who is faithful and trustworthy (Proverbs 20:6).

“Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?
(Proverbs 20:6).

- 10. In Proverbs 25:19, Solomon compared our confidence in someone who is not trustworthy to “a bad tooth and an unsteady foot.”

“Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble” (Proverbs 25:19).

- a. We rely on our teeth to eat and our feet to walk, but if a tooth is bad we have trouble eating, and if our foot is unsteady, we have trouble walking.
 - b. In the same way, relying on a person who turns out to be untrustworthy can be extremely frustrating and discouraging.
- 11. So, the question is, where do we start with developing faithfulness in our lives?

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I. Our Faithfulness Must Begin With God's Faithfulness

A. TIME AND AGAIN, THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF GOD AS BEING FAITHFUL

- 1. In the plains of Moab, Moses reminded the Israelites that God is faithful.

“Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;” (Deuteronomy 7:9)

- 2. In Deuteronomy 32:4, in what is called “*The Song of Moses*,” Moses sang, “The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.”

3. Four times in our reading from Psalm 89, Ethan the Ezrahite wrote of the Lord's faithfulness:
 - a. "To all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth" (v. 1).
 - b. "In the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness" (v. 2).
 - c. "The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord, Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones" (v. 5).
 - d. "O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You" (v. 8).
4. It was the prophet Jeremiah, who, in his lament over the destruction of Jerusalem, said in Lamentations 3:22-23, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness" (ESV).
5. What does all this say to us about God's faithfulness:
 - a. God is faithful, even when we aren't.
 - b. He will always show up, even if we are absent.
 - c. He always keeps His promises.

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B. JESUS' FAITHFULNESS IS EQUALLY TRUSTWORTHY

1. He was faithful before God in His role as the one sent by God to save us.

"He was faithful to Him [God] who appointed Him, as Moses was in all His house" (Hebrews 3:2).
2. Jesus was faithful in carrying out the work which God had given Him:
 - a. "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. (John 4:34).
 - b. "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of

Him who sent Me" (John 6:38).

3. Because you and I were lost and unable to save ourselves, Christ left His Father's side, came to this earth as a man and faithfully died on the cross for our sins.
4. Even though His disciples forsook Him in the Garden of Gethsemane and at the cross, He still remained faithful to His mission on our behalf.

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II. The Faithfulness Which The Holy Spirit Seeks To Develop In Our Lives

A. AS PEOPLE OF FAITHFULNESS, WE . . .

1. "Swear to [our] own hurt and do not change" (*Psalm 15:4*).

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2. Keep our word (*Ecclesiastes 5:4*; *Matthew 5:37*).
 - a. "When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!" (*Ecclesiastes 5:4*)
 - b. "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil." (*Matthew 5:37*).

5b

3. Utilize the abilities and opportunities which God has given (*Matthew 25:21*).

"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little: I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (*Matthew 25:21, ESV*).

 - a. We do not bury them, as did the one talent man in Jesus' parable of the talents (*Matthew 25:14-30*).
 - b. Nor do we make excuses as to why we cannot do what God calls us to do, as did Moses at the burning bush (*Exodus 3-4*).

- c. Instead, we begin by showing ourselves faithful in the small things which God places before us.

5c

- 4. Are committed to our spouses and our children:
 - a. When the Pharisees came to Jesus asking Him if it was lawful for a man “to divorce his wife for any reason at all?” (Matthew 19:3), Jesus responded by going back to God’s original intention in the beginning.
 - b. “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”” (Matthew 19:4–6)
 - c. We hear to much these days about marriages of convenience and no-fault divorces.
 - d. All of us who have been married for any length of time can honestly say we have had good days and difficult days in our marriages over the years.
 - e. However, we can also tell those who are younger that good marriages require commitment, work and sacrifice. The concept of “divorce” does not exist for us.
 - f. When it comes to our children,
 - 1) We who are fathers are faithful to “bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4, HCSB).
 - 2) Those of you who are mothers show your faithfulness by loving and nurturing your children (Titus 2:4).
 - 3. Are there sacrifices you will need to make? Yes, but the rewards are worth it.
- 5. Show our faithfulness to God and His church.
 - a. Ask yourself, “If everyone were as faithful as I am, what kind of church

would this be?"

- b. How often would people be here during the week?
- c. How many teachers would we have for our Bible classes?
- d. Would the church be growing both numerically and spiritually?

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B. RESULTS IN A REWARD THAT IS OUT OF THIS WORLD

1. As the apostle Paul wrote the final letter of his life, the one we call 2 Timothy, he knew the end was near.
2. In 2 Timothy 4:6, Paul told Timothy, "I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come."
3. In verse 7, he recounted his life as it had been spent for Christ, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."
4. Then, in verse 8, he looked forward to the reward which he knew awaited him, "in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."
5. Beyond this short life, there is a life of great joy which continues throughout eternity:
 - a. "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17).
 - b. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9, NIV84).

Conclusion

1. Would you say that you are someone who is faithful?

2. Can those around you depend on you, can they trust you, are you reliable?
3. Would God consider you as someone who is faithful?
 - a. In 1 Corinthians 4:1, the apostle Paul spoke of himself and the other apostles as “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (ESV).
 - b. He then added in verse 2, “Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

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- c. To the Christians in Smyrna, our glorified Lord said, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).
4. Is this something to which you may look forward?
5. If not, is because you are not growing in your faithfulness?
6. If you need to seek God’s forgiveness and recommit your life to Him, we are here to pray with you and for you.
7. If you are not a Christian, then why not today make the decision to let Christ wash away your sins as you are immersed with Him in baptism, so that the Holy Spirit can begin developing His fruit within your life?