

Being Faithful in Hard Places¹

2 Peter 2:1-10a

Introduction:

Do you find it difficult to be faithful in hard places?

Places that make it difficult to be faithful or hard places might be in the company of worldly friends, in a wicked city, in a specific house, in an ornate residence, in a godless court, or in the face of persecution.

According to Psalm one, we should be aware, concerned, and cautious about where we walk, stand, and sit lest we find ourselves in hard places.

When we are in hard places, whether by our choices or the offerings of others, can we remain faithful?

How can a person remain faithful in such places?

Men have lived in hard places before and have been faithful.

I. Noah was faithful in a godless world (2 Peter 2:5).

What kind of civilization was the ancient world?

The sin of the ancient civilization is described in Genesis 6:5.

The wickedness of man was great on the earth.

The next line emphasizes how great the wickedness was, “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Every thought, plan, or scheme of man had evil purposes, all the time, never stopping.

Noah preached righteousness for many years, probably 50-70 years.

Preachers become discouraged today in considerably less time because of the response from hearers today, including the lack of response when needed.

Noah was faithful in a godless world because he did the thing required.

Noah did what he was instructed to do (build an ark) and preached righteousness (talked about righteousness).

II. Lot was faithful in a wicked city (2 Peter 2:6–8; Genesis 19).

Lot’s problem was a moral one.

The whole city was given over to wickedness.

The men of Sodom demanded that Lot hand over the two angels so they could sexually molest them (Genesis 19:4-11).

Lot’s righteous soul was vexed.

The things which Lot was exposed to in a wicked city tormented his soul “day after day by their lawless deeds” (2 Peter 2:8).

However, Lot lost influence and spiritual power over his family.

His sons-in-law could not tell if he was jesting or being for real with his warning to flee the city.

Two angels led Lot and his family by the hand and brought them outside the city because he hesitated (Genesis 19:16).

Destruction came upon the city of Sodom and other wicked cities of the plain.

¹ Burris Butler, [Sermon Outlines on Christian Living](#), Sermon Outline Series (Cincinnati, OH: Standard, 1962), 27–28.

Lot's wife "looked back and she became a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26).
Lot and his daughters were saved.

"No Christian can find his pleasure and profit in the world and at the same time bear effectual testimony against the world."²

Lot chose faithfulness to the Word of God which said, "Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city."

"When God destroyed the cities of the valley [He] remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived" (Genesis 19:29).

Lot tried to warn his sons-in-law, himself hesitating but heeding the warning given, and the LORD had compassion upon him (Genesis 19:16).

Lot was delivered from a wicked city because of his faithfulness.

III. Joseph remained faithful in an officer's house (Genesis 39:2, 9).

Joseph was a slave through no fault of his own.

He was faithful to his master, Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, and captain of the bodyguard (Genesis 39:1).

Joseph became a successful man because the LORD was with him.

"The LORD caused all that he did to prosper" (Genesis 39:3).

Joseph became Potiphar's personal servant, overseer of his house, in charge of all he owned.

Joseph, being "handsome in form and appearance" was attractive to his master's wife (Genesis 39:6 and 7).

Joseph was tempted when Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him.

To remain faithful, Joseph refused temptation saying in Genesis 39:8-9, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

Day after day, Potiphar's wife made advances toward Joseph (Genesis 39:10).

Because he refused, he was slandered when she falsely accused him of rape.

But Potiphar believed his wife and put Joseph in jail (Genesis 39:19 and 20).

Even in prison, Joseph was faithful to God (Genesis 39:21-41:13).

Eventually, he was made a ruler of Egypt because he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams (Genesis 41:14-46).

Though seriously tested, the grace of God enabled Joseph to overcome the enemy's assaults.

Joseph was loyal to God, so he did his best with God's help and patiently suffered disgrace, thus he remained faithful.

IV. David was faithful in a king's palace (1 Samuel 16:14-23).

David ministered faithfully to Saul.

When a tormenting spirit caused Saul to become depressed and fearful, his servants encouraged him to bring in a good musician who could soothe him with harp music.

² Keith Brooks, [Summarized Bible: Complete Summary of the Old Testament](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 8.

Saul agreed, and David was brought in.

David's music quickly brought relief to the troubled king.

Saul became angry and jealous, so he tried five times to kill David (1 Samuel 18:8-19:17).

David was faithful as:

A shepherd who killed a lion and a bear who threatened his sheep (1 Samuel 17:34-37).

The king's musician. "Whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him" (1 Samuel 16:23).

The friend of Jonathan who made a sacred vow to be loyal to each other, whatever the cost (1 Samuel 20:12-17).

The slayer of Goliath. He questioned why Goliath was allowed to insult Israel's army and volunteered to fight Goliath. He said "I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD's and He will give you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:45-47).

King of Israel. He made Israel a great political power (2 Samuel 5) and developed faithful religious practices (2 Samuel 6) receiving from God a line of perpetual succession in the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7).

David was recognized by those who called him to play for Saul as "a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who [was] a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor (a hero of power), a warrior, one prudent or wise in speech, and a handsome man; and the LORD is with him" (1 Samuel 16:18).

David was faithful because he used all of his skills and abilities to defend the enemies of Israel, to serve the LORD, and to bless the lives of others through his relationship with God.

V. Daniel remained faithful in a heathen court (Daniel 1:8).

As a young man, he was given the test of moral conviction.

He had to decide whether or not to defile himself with the king's rich foods.

He passed the test (Daniel 1:15 and 16).

As an old man, he received the test of worship.

The only conviction enemies could bring to bear was that he worshiped God (Daniel 6:5).

King Darius was tricked into signing a decree that imposed the death penalty upon anyone who prayed to any god except the king for 30 days.

Daniel continued his usual three-times-a-day prayers to God.

He was thrown into a den of lions for his faithful following of God's will.

Miserable King Darius said, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions" (Daniel 6:20).

From young to old, Daniel remained faithful in a heathen court.

Daniel 1:8 says, "Daniel made up his mind (set upon his heart) that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank."

Daniel was able to remain faithful because he made an early, conscious decision not to defile himself.

VI. Many early Christians were faithful throughout persecution.

Among these were Stephen (Acts 6 and 7), Peter and John (Acts 4), and Paul (Acts 14, 16, 17, 21, 23-26).

Though people of God are persecuted from time to time or for an entire season of life, Christians can be faithful.

Followers of God have been faithful even though tortured, mocked, scourged, arrested, imprisoned, stoned, sawn in two, and killed by the sword (Hebrews 11:35-38).

All of these were commended by God for their faith (Hebrews 11:39).

When Saul persecuted the church, “Those who had been scattered went about preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

Many early Christians were faithful in hard places.

Application:

A crying need of the church today is for believers with Christian convictions who have the courage of their convictions.

Believers who will do what God has instructed and preach or teach righteousness.

Believers who will warn the lost, have compassion upon the slow to obey, and be faithful to God’s commands.

Believers who will remain loyal in serious times of testing and temptation and take the way of escape to “be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Believers who will draw near to God and bless the lives of others through obedience to God.

Believers who will not defile themselves by compromising to fit in or prosper.

Believers who will be faithful in hard places and share the gospel everywhere.

Another need of the church today is for consecrated followers of Christ who will pray.

Pray for those living in hard places.

Pray for endurance.

Pray for the faith of all believers.

Conclusion:

Jesus said in Revelation 2:10, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

“Be faithful” carries the idea of proving yourself faithful.

The way to prove ourselves faithful is to be loyal to our Christian commitment, and never give up believing, trusting, or obeying Christ.

In Revelation 2:13, Jesus acknowledged those in Pergamos, “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”

Jesus knows if you dwell in hard places.

He knows if you are faithful to Him there.

Revelation 17:14 describes the victory of the faithful, saying, “...the Lamb will overcome...because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”

Being faithful in hard places may be difficult but it is not impossible.

Are you faithful to the LORD?