

FAITHFULNESS

Int.

1. Aim: To show that God expects faithfulness from each of us because He is faithful.
2. Text - Mt. 25:21 "His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."
3. Definition of Faithfulness = literally means to be full of faith
4. The words "faith" and "faithfulness" are closely related.
 - a. One's faith in another is based on that person's demonstrated faithfulness
 - b. Faithfulness is the quality that makes a person reliable, dependable - in word and deed.
5. A better word than faithfulness to translate the Greek is our word dependability.
6. In the Parable of the Sower Jesus spoke of seed falling on rocky soil.
 - a. The seed which fell into that shallow layer of earth sprang up quickly, but then died because of lack of nourishment.
 - b. Lk. 8:13 "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."
 - c. The people represented in this figure are those who lack dependability, faithfulness, reliability. They may begin well, but simply cannot last over the long haul.
 - d. They lack the depth necessary to make them dependable. [unfaithful]
7. Faithfulness will be the great question on the day of judgment.

Discussion

I. GOD IS FAITHFUL

- A. One of the primary attributes for which God is to be praised is His faithfulness.
 - 1. God is always dependable.
 - 2. He makes His word good. He has the power to be faithful, and the desire.
 - 3. He always acts consistently with both holiness and love.

- B. The Bible links faithfulness in the lives of Christians to divine faithfulness.
 - 1. Heb. 10:23 "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"
 - 2. The reason a Christian is able to stand when life's difficulties come against him is that his faith is grounded in a God whose promises to him will always be honored.

- C. 1 Jn.1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - 1. The way to judge your relationship to God is not in terms of your feelings but by God's promises.
 - a. If you have the humility and will repent and confess the sin - God is faithful.
 - b. God is faithful and He forgives His children who walk before him with contrite hearts.
 - 2. Sometimes people cannot forgive themselves long after God has forgiven them.
 - a. The problem is not that they have not repented.
 - b. The problem is that they do not yet understand the reliability of God adequately enough to really trust Him.
 - c. God is faithful to forgive us

D. God is also faithful in keeping watch over His people.

1. Note the use of the word faithful in these two verses:

a. 1 Cor. 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is **faithful**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

b. 1 Pet. 4:19 "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a **faithful** Creator."

2. What is the message of divine faithfulness in times of trouble?

- a. In any trying situation which would put your hope in jeopardy, God is going to be there to take your part.
- b. True to His word God will never allow the heat to get higher than you can stand; there will always be a way of escape provided for you.
- c. So continue doing good, and be faithful to Him.
- d. He is being faithful to you.

E.because God is faithful He requires us to be Faithful !!!.....

II. FAITHFULNESS IS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

A. A characteristic of the unbeliever is fickleness. [unreliable]

1. He is unable to be consistent in spiritual things.
2. His inability to be dependable in what he knows to be right and holy relates directly to the sin of selfishness.

3. When one lives at a worldly level he is always looking for greener pastures.
 - a. Somebody else always has a situation which looks better than his, a love which seems more exciting than his, or possessions which appear more satisfying than his.
 - b. So, no matter what he attains, he always sees what somebody else has and is envious.
 4. Selfish people don't have the ability to be constant, to make commitments and see them through, to handle difficulties.
 5. There are just too many diversions along life's road which turn their heads away from primary purposes and trap them in life's snares.
- B. A Christian's movement toward maturity in Christ is measured by progress in dependability.
1. In relation to the local church, generous and consistent giving is an evidence of faithfulness; so is regular attendance at worship assemblies.
 - a. Too many are resting on baptism, one hour on Sunday. Minimum requirements, God's mercy.
 - b. Faithfulness involves dependable attendance
 2. However, participation in service 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.
 3. Being called on at awkward hours to serve others in difficult ways requires dependability.

4. Personal purity in daily living is even more difficult still.
 - a. Biting your tongue rather than firing back in anger.
 - b. Refraining from cursing when you work among people who do so frequently.
 - c. Learning to return good for evil.
 - d. Resisting the temptation to jump into a “greener pasture” when you've made a commitment to stay in this pasture - this marriage, the business deal, this job assignment.
 - e. The ability to carry through with responsibility is what faithfulness is about.

C. Paul spoke of his apostolic ministry in these words: 1 Cor. 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

1. Having been called to be an apostle and to be entrusted with divine revelation, his duty was to be dependable for the Lord's purposes.
 - a. What did that mean for him? Stoning, shipwreck, and beatings.
 - b. Long, lonely final hours in a dungeon cell. Death.
2. What does faithfulness mean for you and I?
 - a. Serving when no one appreciates the sacrifices we make to do so.
 - b. Living daily with the problems of our family and friends.
 - c. Staying with a marriage partner till death do us part.
 - d. Not letting go in the tough situations.
 - (1) 2 Tim. 2:1-3
 - (2) Be strengthened
 - (3) Commit truth to faithful men
 - (4) Suffer hardship as a good soldier

- D. Mt. 25:14-30 Parable of the Talents
1. Man with 5 talents and 2 talents -
 - a. Mt. 25: 21 & 23 Good and Faithful
 - b. They were dependable
 2. One talent man
 - a. v. 26 - Wicked and slothful
 - b. v. 30 Unprofitable
 - c. He was not faithful but unfaithful, not dependable

III. FAITHFUL FEW

- A. It is difficult to be faithful; Majority not faithful, always a few.
1. Most people dislike to be in the minority;
 2. Only the strong will remain there.
- B. Old Testament Examples.
1. Noah. Gen. 6:8, 12
 2. Sodom condemned because a few faithful could not be found. Gen. 18:23-30
- C. Children of Israel in the Wilderness. Caleb and Joshua out of all those who crossed the Red Sea. Num. 1:46; 603,550; Deut. 1:26-40
- D. New Testament Examples.
1. Purpose of God's selecting the Jews;
 - a. Few faithful. Rom. 3:10-18
 - b. But few accepted him. John 1:11-12; 6:66-68
 2. Jesus' trial; all forsook him, even Peter.
 3. Sardis had a few who remained faithful. Rev. 3:4

4. Only the faithful few will be rewarded. Matt. 24:12-13; Rev. 2:10
5. Mt. 7:21-24
6. Mt. 7:13-14 Wide gate or Strait gate -- few that find it

E. Many start but few stay

CONCLUSION

1. Christian lives are built around the principle of faithfulness.
2. Jesus said: Lk. 16:10-11 "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"
3. Dependability does not relate merely to attendance, worship, or giving.
 - a. It is a life-pervading quality that exhibits itself in everything a Christian does.
 - b. It is what makes him a better family member, a better employee, a better student.
4. Faithfulness, dependability, loyalty to Jesus - this is the key indicator of active submission to Him.
5. Having put your hand to the plow, don't look back or you become unfit for the kingdom of God. Luke 9:62
6. At the end be able to say with Paul "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" 2 Tim. 4:7
7. Almost anyone can start well; the real trick is to keep your eyes on the original goal, keep moving toward it, and finish the journey you have already begun.
8. Faithfulness is necessary and possible.
9. If the Lord should come today would He find you Faithful?

10. At the judgment the question will not be, "What have you accomplished?" It will be, "Have you been faithful?"
11. In living the Christian Life we are not asked to perform certain deeds or to give certain amounts, but rather to do our BEST !!!
12. Jesus said to the 5 Talent and the 2 Talent man: "Well Done thou good and faithful servant."

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