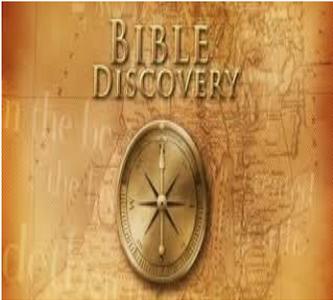


November 1, 2015

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

God is Faithful



When you meet our Heavenly Father during your readings of the Old Testament, what comes to mind, especially reading such books as Judges, 1 & 2 Chronicles, or 1 & 2 Kings? Is it a God of vengeance, a God of Law, or a God of anger? Is it a God filled with power – the creator of the whole universe in seven days, the One who conquered the Egyptians at the Red Sea as they chased after the Israelites? I wonder if you see the God Moses discovered when he made the rather amazing request to see for himself God's glory as we find at Exodus 33:18. If he'd had time to think about it or get our advice, he may have thought twice. God, in His kindness, though, called Moses to come up on Mount Sinai and experience just what he'd requested. Instead of thunder and lightning, instead of demonstrations of great power and authority he may have expected, Moses encountered what God desires each of us discover - the revelation of God's heart – filled with compassion and graciousness while retaining justice and righteousness. This is how it's described for us, *"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, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.'"* [Exodus 34:6] This is probably one of the most important passages in the Old Testament, revealing as it does God's own declaration of what He's like and how He promises to deal with His people. Right at the heart of all this stands God's assertion of His faithfulness. In fact, God's not just faithful – He abounds in faithfulness wrapped in His love. Never let the lies of Satan prevent you from receiving your Heavenly Father's great and never ending love.

One of my favorite verses comes from 1 Corinthians 10:13 assuring us of God's wonderful faithfulness as we're confronted by trials and temptations...

"No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; He'll never let you be pushed past your limit; He'll always be there to help you come through it." (The Message)

We trust such promises from God because of whom God is – *"God is not human, that He should lie, not a human being, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?"* [Numbers 23:19] I pray you know the answer to such questions.

But how far does God's faithfulness go?

Are there limits to it? Might I go beyond its reach or exhaust its resources? To think that the answer to such questions might be "yes" demonstrates we've not yet fully comprehended how big the God of the Bible, the Creator of the universe, the One who is our Heavenly Father truly is. Nowhere is this demonstrated with more certainty than through one of the world's most loved verses, John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* which shows the fulfilment of God's promises from the beginning of time and throughout all the ages.

The Apostle Paul who had been bent and determined to stamp out any record of Jesus and His early followers met the same promise on the road to Damascus. Talk about a changed man! Paul never lost sight of the great blessing that was poured out on his life that day and committed himself for the rest of his life in serving God for the

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[John 3:16]

gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus the Messiah. Because of Jesus, Paul could proclaim, “*God will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*” [vs. 8-9] Paul certainly knew what he was talking about.

My prayer is that you too have considered what Paul understood – that it’s not where you begin, it’s not how you start, but how you finish that is important. When Paul writes to the Romans saying “all have sinned” it’s recognition that none of us has a past we can bring to God with merit to be received at His throne. Not one of us deserves God’s love but through His great mercy He has chosen to pour out His compassion on all who will receive His son Jesus as Saviour. Turn from sin today and let Christ have His way in your heart. Perhaps today, you’re still hesitating to jump in with both feet to this Christianity thing – consider where you’ll be if you

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hesitate and the Lord returns while you’re making up your mind? Rather than hesitate, why not answer the call of God to enter into fellowship with Him through His Son, Jesus? You’ll find God can be taken at His word. You’ll find God is faithful. You’ll discover God isn’t just faithful but His faithfulness is great as Jeremiah tells us... “*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.*” [Lamentations 3:21-23] His faithfulness is not only great, it’s immeasurable – “*it reaches to the heavens*” [Psalm 36:5]; and is unshakable and enduring, filled with compassion and love for those who come to Him.

Still the skeptic?

You’re still wondering what proof have we God’s faithfulness is real. That God’s grace is sufficient, that Christ’s dying on the cross with His broken body and shed blood actually covered our sins. Thankfully it’s not left to what we think, not left to our emotions or our feelings or even to other people’s experiences. I don’t have to wake up each morning checking that I “feel” like I’m saved. In the midst of much evidence for our confidence, the New Testament tells us God has given one, great, unshakable proof that God is faithful – proof that no one can take away – we have the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It’s that resurrected Christ to which Paul refers as he gives thanks to God because it’s in Jesus we receive grace and it’s in Jesus our lives are enriched having Christ confirmed in our hearts. Mohammed is buried. The tomb of Buddha can be visited. The idols of worldly mystic religions are fashioned by human hands and sold in market places for our consumption. But our Lord Jesus Christ is alive! Yes, our Lord lives and works within us, moving us and preparing us, strengthening us for our service to God. Our God who is faithful has given us His Son so we would experience such a blessing.

We therefore are invited through the Son, Jesus to learn about God’s faithfulness in the nitty-gritty of life with all its troubles, it’s rough and tumble, proving it for ourselves. That’s what Abraham discovered long ago when God put him to the test, asking he sacrifice Isaac, his long-awaited, promised son and then miraculously intervening. [Genesis 22:1-8] It wasn’t Abraham’s son God wanted, but Abraham’s heart. Today do you hear God calling for you to open your heart and let Him come in?

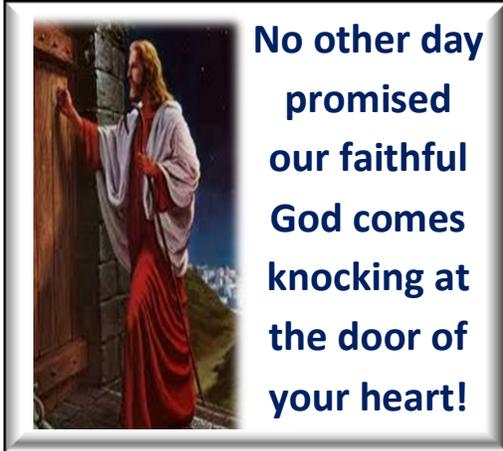
If there’s still hesitation, perhaps it’s because our understanding of God’s faithfulness needs a little sharpening like a dull knife in the drawer. Perhaps our experiences have been explained away, second guessed, filed down with doubt. If our view of God’s faithfulness lacks full acceptance, we need to be liberated like the beaches of Normandy 70 years ago. We need to look again and see God as a true friend – a friend who is always counted on to be there, the One who never lets you down, never lets you go. God’s faithfulness means He’s always with us and will never forget us.

So what will we bring as the appropriate response to our awesome faithful God? We begin by coming with thankful hearts and demonstrating our trust in the One who is trustworthy. The One whom God sent carrying the keys to the kingdom of Heaven, the One who set us free from our wayward living, the One who

We need to see God as a true friend who is always counted on to be there.

has given us life. If we would say yes to Jesus, if we would surrender to our Lord one hundred per cent and take the hands off the steering wheel of our life; if we would believe the testimony of God's Word, trust in the fact Jesus came to save sinners just like you and me – then we would *“lack no spiritual gift as we eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.”* [vs. 7] And yes, God intends that promise for today if we would trust in Him and accept His Son, Jesus.

I'm asking you to step forward in faith today as your testimony of Jesus having the central place in your life, residing on the throne of your heart, for no other day is promised in which our faithful God comes knocking at



the door of your heart. Don't let our experiences of imperfect human faithfulness colour how we relate to God. God is wholly separate from such experience. Christ has come to set us free from everything that hinders us having a true understanding and an uninhibited approach to our Heavenly Father through the gate of His Son, our Shepherd; and our faithful God's equipped us with His Holy Spirit to provide all the resource we need on a daily basis. Let Christ reign in your hearts today. Let the relevance of His redemptive gift of salvation be the recurring theme of your praise. Let faithfulness give you strength for living out in the world without being engulfed by it, letting faithfulness in Christ lead you to live as faithful people - faithful toward God; faithful towards the tasks He gives us; faithful

towards one another. Then and only then, as faithful people in response to our faithful God, will we find ourselves having *been enriched in every way – in all our speaking and in all our knowledge because the testimony we have received of Jesus, the Son of God and Saviour of our souls, has been confirmed in us too.* [vs. 5-6] If we don't live as His faithful people, we've probably not really understood or even received God's faithfulness towards us.

We began our reading today with Paul's greeting, *“Grace and peace to you from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* [vs. 3] Often this verse is neglected when our other verses are studied, but may I encourage you to find the faithfulness of God through His Son Jesus, understand He's indeed always faithful, that God is to be fully trusted at all times and in all situations. Having found the faithfulness on which to stand then and only then will you truly know and receive the grace and peace of our Heavenly Father who loves you.

We would love to hear from you and have you join us at **Mt Brydges Baptist Church.**

Blessings,

Pastor Dave