

Great Is Thy Faithfulness!

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[0 : 00] This morning we're going to be focusing on several scripture passages but our main passage is really out of Lamentations chapter 3 all the verses will be on the screen however if you'd like to follow along open your Bibles to Lamentations chapter 3 we'll be looking at passages or verses 21 through 23 and focusing on the subject of greatest thy faithfulness.

You know all of my life I've heard the expression of God's faithfulness. We read it in scripture of God's faithfulness and we sing songs like we sang this morning of great is thy faithfulness. However do we understand what we mean by that? Do we understand what the Bible means by God's faithfulness?

Do we understand what we mean when we sing it? And when we say it. For if we don't begin with a proper understanding of what the Bible means by God's faithfulness and we have a misunderstanding of what it really means then we can easily begin to doubt God's faithfulness. And question God's faithfulness. When we enter into dark days of our lives. When we go through difficult days, hard days, struggles.

[1 : 31] We can begin to question whether God really is faithful. When we go through pain and suffering or grief or struggles, conflict.

In those days where we have more questions than we have answers. And where God seems to be distant. And maybe God even seems to be silent.

If we understand his faithfulness to mean that we will never have anything bad to happen into our lives. If we understand God's faithfulness to mean that he'll shield us and protect us from difficulties or the storms of life.

If we understand our lives and pain and suffering. Then we will indeed question God's faithfulness when we encounter those very things. And we'll ask questions like why does God allow so much pain and suffering to take place in the world?

Or why does God allow pain and suffering to take place in the lives of his children? For those of us who are old enough to remember 9-11.

[2 : 48] Not the telephone number kids. But the date. 2001. For those of us who remember when those planes flew into the twin towers.

That plane crashed into the Pentagon. And into the Pennsylvania field. Remember what everybody was asking?

Remember? Where is God? Where is God? People fled or flooded into churches.

But then they were also asking where is God in all of this? Why would God allow this to happen?

And yet the scriptures boldly proclaim.

In Lamentations 3.23. You'll see on the screen there. Great is your faithfulness. So. How do we reconcile these two realities?

[3 : 53] A world full of suffering. And yet at the same time. And yet at the same time. The scriptures declare that God is faithful. This morning I want us to look in the scriptures.

And see what the scriptures mean. By God's faithfulness. And I don't think we can exhaustively do a study on what it means. But I want to hit some of the major highlights of what it means.

For God to be faithful. And what God's faithfulness means. And I want us to see that God's faithfulness is not contradicted by suffering.

But rather God's faithfulness is revealed through it. It's proven in it. It's magnified because of suffering.

So let's go to the Lord in prayer before we begin looking at this. Father we just come to you today. And we thank you Lord for your great faithfulness. We thank you and praise you.

[4 : 55] For who you are and all that you have done. And I pray today as we come before you. We come before your word that you'll speak to us.

You'll speak to each of our hearts. Open our eyes that we might see. And every one of us in a different place in life. Different situation. Different circumstances going on.

And I pray that you take your word today. And speak to us. Draw us close. And near to you. And help us to leave this place today.

Believing in the faithfulness of God. And understanding what that means. And walking closer to you. And determined. To walk closer and near to you throughout this new year.

And we thank you for that. And we praise you Lord in Jesus name. Amen. The first thing I want us to look at this morning. Is that God's faithfulness does not mean.

[5 : 54] A life without trouble. Maybe the best way to define God's faithfulness. Is to look at what it's not. And it's not a life without trouble.

One of the greatest misunderstandings of the Christian life today. And maybe at least in the United States. Is that being a Christian does not mean. That we're going to live a trouble free life.

You know I've heard people say. Come to Jesus and all your problems will disappear. You know God's going to take care of everything in your life. Everything's going to vanish. You know God's just going to solve all your problems.

And then once we've been a Christian for any length of time. You know that's not true. And if you came to Christ believing that. You may turn away and walk away from Christ.

Because you think wow I was deceived. Because that's not true. As a matter of fact Jesus tells us in John 16.33. Very clearly in this world you will have tribulation.

[6 : 54] He tells us. Be prepared for it. Know it. You will go through hardships. You will go through difficulties.

You will be persecuted for being a Christian. But you will also go through pain. You will go through suffering. You will go through difficulties in this life.

Being a Christian does not mean. And God's faithfulness does not mean. That we will go through life without hardships and difficulties. And Jesus doesn't say there that maybe you'll have tribulation.

He doesn't say possibly have tribulation. He doesn't say some of you will have tribulation. He says you will have tribulation.

You know pain and difficulties. Are not a sign that God has abandoned you either. It's not a sign that God has forgotten you. You know we live in a fallen world.

[7 : 56] We live in a world that is marked by sickness and disease. Broken relationships. Financial strain. Disappointment.

And grief. And God never promised a life without struggles. But one thing he did promise.

In Hebrews 13 5. He said I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we understand one of God's ways of being faithful.

Is that in the midst of the storm. In the midst of the struggles. In the midst of the pain. In the midst of the grief. The heartache. God is with you.

And he says I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. You may be going through difficulties and hardships in your life. And you may be wondering why is God allowing me to go through these things.

[9 : 01] But you can know for certain. That God has not abandoned you. That he is with you. And that he is always there.

In that Pennsylvania field. In that Pennsylvania field. Or in New York City. When those towers came crashing down. Or in Washington D.C.

God was there. We can't understand necessarily why God allowed it to happen. Except there is evil in this world. But God was there. But God was there.

There. With the survivors. With the families who lost loved ones. The people who were traumatized. By the events of that day.

And God was with us. Jesus also told his followers. In Matthew 28. When he tells us to go out into all the world.

[9 : 56] And take the gospel. He also promises. I will always be with you. To the very end of the age. He's promised that he'll be with us. And we can know that he is faithful.

That he will always be with us. When he's silent. When he's quiet. When we don't see it. We can know that his word is faithful. God's faithfulness is not the absence of trouble.

It is his presence in the struggle. You know just the other night. We saw the year 2025. Go into the history books.

And the year 2026. Entered. Onto the scene right. For some of us that was a great thing. 2025 was not a good year.

For some of us. We had a great 2025. And we're looking forward to 2026. For me. I celebrate 2025.

[10:59] Disappearing. And being gone forever. I never want to see it again. Because for me. 2025 was the hardest year of my life. There were some good things.

But overall. 2025. Was the very most difficult year. Of my life. We went through some tremendous struggles.

As a family. One of my daughters. Went through a divorce. Without going into a lot of details. Some of you understand that.

It's a lot of pain. A lot of suffering. A lot of hardship. I've got two grandchildren. That are wrapped up in that. And it's just been difficult.

And continues to be. And throughout the year. I have prayed. And I've asked God. To work. And to move. And I've asked God.

[11:57] To change situation. And circumstances. And to move in ways. That we can't even imagine. And to heal. And for weeks.

For months now. I haven't seen God do anything. I haven't heard God respond. I haven't sensed God's presence. In the midst of that.

I haven't. And I was getting very angry. And I know. I'm a pastor. I'm not supposed to get mad at God. Right? But I was. This is the humanity of me.

I was mad. And one morning. I was getting ready for church. A weekday. Coming to church. And I was angry.

And I was letting God know it. I was like. Why will you not. Listen to me. Why will you not. Hear me.

[12:57] Why will you not. Respond to me. God. Why will you not move. Why will you not change. These situations. Circumstances. Why won't you heal.

And I heard God speak. Very clearly to me. Not in an audible voice. And not inwardly. Either. But in a way. That I've never had him speak before.

And never again. Not yet. Not yet. Not yet. But I heard God speak to me. And I heard God say. I have not turned a deaf ear to you.

Well that got my attention. And it changed a whole lot. For me. I. Still. Am going through.

The repercussions. Of a divorce. My grandchildren. Are still. Dealing. With. Situations. My daughter. Still.

[14:00] Still. Healing. And I still haven't seen God do what I've asked. Or what I want. But it has changed everything. Because.

I know God is there in the midst of it. God's hearing my prayers. And God is working. Doing what only he can do. Even though I don't see it. Even though I don't feel it.

Even though I don't know what he's doing. I can trust God. And know. That he's got it. Under his control. And he's dealing with it. And that's how we have to know.

That God is faithful. And one day. We'll be able to look back. And we'll be able to see. How God has worked.

To do all of this. Because I also heard God tell me. That he is rebuilding my family. And I'll just have to wait. Until he does it in his way.

[14:57] And I'm getting ahead of me on my sermon. But you'll hear the rest of it in a minute. We'll have to wait. And to see how God worked. To accomplish. More than we can ever rebuild.

In our own power. In our own strength. The next thing is. God's faithfulness means. He always acts according to his character.

When scripture says God is faithful. It means that. He always. Tells the truth. I've got a pretty quick list here.

He always tells the truth. He always does what is right. He never breaks a promise. He never contradicts his word.

And God never changes. Numbers 23 19 says. God is not a man that he should lie. Has he said.

[15 : 56] And will he not do it. Or has he spoken. And will he not fulfill it. You know we change all the time. Don't we. Our emotions change.

I raised three daughters. Believe me. I know emotions change. I got one daughter here. Sorry. Our emotions change.

Our circumstances change. Our world is changing around us faster than we care for it to. It's scary. It changes so fast.

But you know what doesn't change? The one thing that we can hold on to. And we can believe in. And we can find stability in. What is that? God. God.

God. God never changes. God never changes. And because his character is unchanging. His faithfulness. His faithfulness is unchanging.

[16 : 54] If God said he will be with you. Then he will. If God said he forgives the repentant. He does. If God said he's working all things for good.

He is. Even when we don't understand what he's doing. He remains faithful. Even when life is chaotic.

He is faithful. So we can find stability. We can find hope. We can find trust. And knowing that God is unchanging. And that we know he is faithful.

God's faithfulness is also seen most clearly in suffering. We don't like that do we? But it's true. The book of Lamentations written by a man sitting in the ashes of a destroyed city.

Jerusalem is gone. The temple is destroyed. The people are starving. There is death and despair everywhere.

[17 : 56] And right there in the middle of unthinkable loss. Jeremiah writes this. But this I call to mind.

And therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end.

They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. Jeremiah doesn't say that God is faithful because everything is picture perfect in his life.

He says God is faithful while everything was falling apart. Faithfulness is not proven when circumstances are easy.

Faithfulness is proven when circumstances are hard. When they are difficult. When they are overwhelming. And when they are beyond sometimes our ability to cope.

[18 : 58] When the diagnosis comes back. When the relationship ends. When the job is lost. When the future seems uncertain.

Moments like that is when God whispers into our darkness. And he says. I am still here.

I have not turned a deaf ear to you. God's faithfulness also means he keeps every promise in his way.

And in his time. God keeps his promises but often not in the way we want. The way we expect. Or in the timing that we want.

Abraham waited 25 years for Isaac to be born. David waited 15 years to become king after he was anointed to be king.

[20 : 02] Israel. They were slaves in Egypt for how many years? 400 years. We were getting ready to celebrate. A new birthday of the United States this year.

They were making a big deal out of it the other night. Anybody remember what's our birth date this year? 250. Think about the history of the United States.

And we're only 250 years old. And Israel spent. How many years? As slaves. 400 years.

Waiting for God. To bring them out of Egypt. And deliver them. Waiting doesn't mean that God has forgotten about us. Or even changed his mind. We've just become very impatient people.

We want everything instantaneous. We want things rapidly. The other day I ordered something on Amazon. And the worst thing happened.

[21 : 06] It couldn't be delivered in two days. I was like. It's like one of these people that had. To send it. And it took like five or six days to get there.

I was like. I can't believe this. What is the world coming to? What is the world coming to? We want everything instantly. We go to fast food restaurants.

And it takes ten minutes to get your food. And you want to scream and yell. And tell people off. Because we want things immediately. God doesn't work that way.

Does he? Sometimes he makes us wait. I love the story of Joseph. The story of Joseph of the Old Testament.

And to look and see. He gave him the dreams. And yet he went through a lot of difficulties. A lot of hardships. A lot of pain. A lot of suffering.

[22 : 03] Imprisonments. False accusations. Separation from family. Separation from his homeland. And a long time before God fulfilled what he was doing in his life.

But he had to prepare him. He had to get him ready for what he was doing in him. And that couldn't be done overnight. You know waiting doesn't mean that God's forgotten about us.

It means God is working on something that's bigger than what we can see. Or that we may not even be able to understand. Romans 8.28 says that God is working for good.

For those who love the Lord. It doesn't say that everything we go through is good. Some things we go through are because we made sinful decisions. Or that we disobeyed.

Or we just did dumb things. It says that God is working to bring good out of those things though. Look at Joseph.

[23 : 10] His brothers acted sinful selling him into slavery. It was their bitterness and their jealousy and their hatred that caused them to sell him into slavery.

But somehow God was working in the midst of all that to bring about good. And that's what we sometimes have a hard time comprehending and understanding.

The suffering though sometimes God is using to bring about his purposes and his will. And we don't like it. We don't want to suffer. We don't want to go through it. But God is faithful to bring good out of it.

God's promises are certain because they rest on his character and not ours. And this is why Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2.13.

If we are faithless, he remains faithful. You know there are two ways that we can view life. Through the lens of your circumstances.

[24 : 11] Or through the lens of God's character. If we judge God by our circumstances, we're going to doubt his faithfulness.

Because there's going to be a lot of times we don't understand what's going on and why we're going through it. But if we judge our circumstances by God's character, we will see his faithfulness everywhere.

We may not understand our struggle, but God is faithful. We may not see the purpose of what we're going through, but God is faithful.

We may be waiting, grieving, wrestling, but trust that God is faithful. He was faithful yesterday.

He's faithful today. And he will be faithful forever. You know, we don't know what the year 2026 holds for each of us.

[25 : 14] But we can march into the new year with certainty to know that God is faithful. And that he holds our future.

He holds this year in his hands. And that we can give our lives fully and completely to him. And trusting that he's got it all under control.

No matter what's going on in the world. And if you watch the news, it'll keep you worried. But turn the news off and trust God. Read your Bible more than you watch the news.

And trust the Lord that he's got it under control. He's got it completely in his hands. And his will, his purposes are being unfolded right before our eyes every day.

Even if we don't understand it. There's one more area that we know God is faithful. God is faithful that if we come to him.

[26 : 16] And we repent of our sins. And ask him to forgive us of our sins. He will forgive us. If we've never done that. If we've never done that before.

And we've never asked him into our lives to be our Lord and Savior. We can come to him today. Confess that we're a sinner. And ask him to forgive us of our sins.

And to enter into our lives to be our Lord. 1 John 1, 9 says he will be faithful to forgive us of our sin. And he will receive us into the kingdom of God.

If you've never done that today. What a great way to start off a new year. By trusting Jesus Christ to come into your life. To forgive you. Whatever sin you've committed in the past.

It does not matter. He will be faithful to forgive you. To cleanse you. Make you whiter than snow. And to receive you into the family of God.

[27 : 24] And to give you a new life in this upcoming year. I would encourage you to do that today. I'm going to ask Brian and the musicians to come.

Lead us in this time of invitation. You can respond during this time. And I'd love to pray with you. Maybe there are other things in your life. Maybe you want to come and pray at the altar. And just ask the Lord to be with you in this upcoming year. Maybe there are things you're praying about. Feel free to use this time for that. Or if there's things you would have me to pray with you about.

Feel free to do that during this time.