**FAITHFULNESS (1)**

***LAMENTATION 3:22-23***

**INTRODUCTION** - Today I want to address a Bible subject that we all need to think about from time to time.  It is the subject of faithfulness.  We find it in God’s word as a characteristic of the righteous throughout time.  We find it as a characteristic of God Himself as well as His Son.  And if there is to be any hope of heaven for us when this life is over, we need it in our lives.  That having been said, what is faithfulness?  In our lessons today, we want to examine this subject in great detail

The purpose of our lesson this morning is to define this term and note some examples of faithfulness so that we might have a better understanding of what is expected in our lives.

**I.**  **What Is Faithfulness?**

a.        Defined in English - 1) Adhering firmly and devotedly, as to a person, cause, or idea; loyal.
2) Having or full of faith. 3) Worthy of trust or belief; reliable.  4) Consistent with truth or actuality: (American heritage Dictionary, Online version. © 2000)

b.       Defined in the original language

                       i.   From the Greek word *Pistos*, a verbal adjective (W.E. Vine).

                      ii.   It is akin to the word for faith (*pistis*) which means, a firm persuasion or trust.  It is interesting the relationship between these two.  Faith is the act, faithfulness is the result.

                     iii.   WS Dictionary, “Worthy of belief, trust or confidence”  It proceeds to describe the word as one that is “trustworthy…, faithful in duty to oneself and others, of true fidelity…firmness of faith”

c.        As we use the word in this study we are referring to a disposition in the Christian that not only obeys, but he has gained the trust and confidence of the one it is directed toward.  I say that because, as we will see in this lesson, faithfulness is a two-way street.  We are faithful to God and He is faithful to us.

d.       Faithfulness in God’s word

                     i.    **GAL. 5:22** - A fruit of the Spirit.  The Fruit of the Spirit is describes the one who walks in the Spirit of God and is led by Him (5:16, 18).  If the Spirit of God rules your life (i.e. – you submit to His will in all things), these are the types of attitudes and characteristics that will be manifest themselves and be prevalent in your life.

                    ii.     **1 TIM. 3:11** - Faithful in all things – This passage actually describes the character of the wives of deacons (and elders).  However it summarizes how true faithfulness is not something only present in certain areas, but throughout your life.  In other words, it helps describe who you are.

Perhaps one of the best ways for us to understand faithfulness is to examine God’s faithfulness toward us.  In His example we find a pattern that we should strive to imitate if we are to be counted faithful by Him.  After all we are called upon to strive to be like Him in this life.  The very idea of the word godliness is not that we become God, but that we strive to emulate His attitudes, values and character in our lives.  We are told  in **EPH.  4:24** - “and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”   The expression according to God means in His image or likeness, or “after God” as the KJV says.  Let us notice:

**II.** **The Faithfulness of God**

1. **He is the ultimate example of faithfulness.**

                     i.    **1 COR. 1:9** – Paul says by inspiration, “*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord*.”

                    ii.    Throughout the Bible we find examples of the faithfulness of God.  We see His faithfulness whenever He fulfills a promise, when He delivers his people and as He stands by those who belong to Him.
**DEUT. 7:9 -** "*Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;”*  Spoken toward the end of Moses’ life, he reminds Israel of their God.  He keeps His promises and always has.  They could look back to the examples of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and others and see how He had always kept His word.  There were some present who had witnessed the exodus from Egypt and saw God’s faithfulness in delivering them.  Moses seeks to impress upon them that He will ALWAYS be that way.
**HEB. 6:13-14** - When God speaks, He means what He says.  Hebrews speaks of the promise made to Abraham – God “swore by Himself” because He could swear by no greater…  Vs. 15 says, he obtained the promise.

                    iii.    David knew that His Lord was faithful.  We find that confidence throughout the psalms.  Often his requests to God were penned as if they had already been answered.  David could pray with that confidence BECAUSE of God’s faithfulness.
**PSA. 16:9-10**, “*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*”
**PSA 17:15**, “*As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness*.”
Such things could only be said because David knew God was faithful.
**PSA 9:10**, “*And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.”*
**PSA 36:5-6**, “*Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep;
O LORD, You preserve man and beast.”*
**PSA 89:1-2** - Finally, a psalm by Ethan, concerning the Covenant the Lord made with David begins by saying, “*I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; With my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.  For I have said, ‘Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.*’”

                    iv.   **1 COR. 10:13** – One passage that reveals His faithfulness in our lives. Here He says that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear.

                     v.   **1 JN. 1:9** – We have the promise that He is faithful to forgive us our sins if we confess them to Him.  Are we not grateful that He does not recon our sins the same way man does.

                   vi.    **1 THESS. 5:24**, “*He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*”  That is, He will do what He has promised.  In this verse we find the promise that awaits us when the Lord returns – He can and will preserve us.  Because of His faithfulness, we can know this.
**HEB. 10:23** says, “*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*”

b. **The faithfulness of Jesus –**

                    i**.    ISA 11:5** – The greatest example of faithfulness in a Man was Jesus, the Son of God.  It was prophesied concerning Him – “*Righteousness shall be His belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist*.”

                   ii.    **REV. 1:4-5** - “*Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth*.”  Notice how Jesus is referred to as “the faithful witness”.  God could count on Him.
We see His faithfulness in His willingness to die for our sins, in His total obedience to the Father, the way He lived His life upon the earth, and what He continues to do for us even now.

                 iii.      **HEB. 2:!7** - Because He died for us, He is NOW there for us.  Coming to this earth as a man, He is able to be a faithful High Priest on our behalf.

                 iv.      **HEB. 3:1-2** - speaks of Him being faithful in to God who appointed Him.

                  v.     2 TIM. 2:13 - ALWAYS faithful – Christ remains faithful always, even when we are faithless.

                 vi.     **HEB. 13:8** - It is because of His faithfulness that the Hebrews writer can say, “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.*”

1. **The faithfulness of His word –**

                  i.      Faithfulness is often associated with God’s word to us.

                 ii.      **TITUS 1:9** - describes the work of elders as including “holding fast the faithful word…”

                iii.      Faithful sayings – There are several passages that speak of “faithful sayings” in God’s word.  The idea of such is that these are sayings that can be counted upon always -
**1 TIM. 1:15** – Christ came to save sinners
**1 TIM. 3:1** – It is a faithful saying that to desire the office of a bishop is worthwhile
**1 TIM. 4:9** – Bodily exercise is not as profitable as exercising yourself to godliness.  Paul says that “is a faithful saying”

                iv.      **REV. 21:5, 22:6** - both speak of “faithful and true words”.  Concerning the book of revelation, assurance is given that these things WILL COME TO PASS.   What is said here is that you can count on that fact.

**CONCLUSION** –

We can clearly see the faithfulness of God and His Son.

Because He is faithful we have hope and assurance.  We have reason to obey Him and put our trust in Him.

Understanding the faithfulness of God, we can gain a fairly good understanding of what is involved in being faithful.