**FAITHFULNESS (2)**

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

**INTRODUCTION** – Last Lord’s Day we began studying the subject of faithfulness by first defining the term and then noticing the faithfulness of God to us.  Today we want to notice some ways to apply this to our lives.  We are going to examine some of the characteristics of faithfulness and note examples of these characteristics in godly examples.
Let it be noted that in virtually every example in the entire Bible, we have examples of faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

**III.**                 **What faithfulness involves**

**a.**        Being trustworthy (dependable) –can God count on you?

                           **i.**      This word is probably the closest to faithfulness because it demonstrates a proven character.  All other characteristics that we will notice make us trustworthy.
To be trustworthy means you are reliable and can be counted upon at all times.  It is a PROVEN character trait that is a mark of maturity.  It is not something you gain overnight – but in time it manifests itself.

                           **ii.**      **MATT. 24:45-47** "*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?  Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.”*
Jesus often made reference to the servant relationship and noted the importance of faithfulness. What made them pleasing was the fact that they were trustworthy.

                           **iii.**      **MATT. 25:21, 23** - In the parable of the talents we often emphasize the wicked and lazy servant.  But note what was said to the other two, “*Well done good and faithful servant…”*  Notice that both of these servants proved themselves and as a result they were to be placed in positions of greater responsibility.
IF you want God to use you more and to give your life more spiritual meaning, it MUST begin with being faithful to Him in what He has given you.
NOTE what was said to the unfaithful servant in **vs. 29-30** – even what he had would be taken away from Him.

                           **iv.      DAN. 6:1-4** - Daniel was faithful – Even in captivity, he proved himself trustworthy.  So much so that he was put in charge and made other captives jealous.
Trying to find a charge against Daniel, the other governors and satraps could find NOTHING of which to accuse him, “because he was faithful.”
How hard would someone have to look in our lives to find some fault they could us against us?
Faithfulness seeks to eliminate those charges.

                           **v.**      **ACTS 6:1-3** – When a work needed to be done in Jerusalem, the apostles called for men with proven character to do the work.  They wanted men of “good reputation” meaning they were trustworthy to do the work and they were faithful.

                           **vi.**      **1 COR. 4:2** – stewards are to be found faithful.  In that context Paul is talking about US.  We are to be “good and faithful servants”

                           **vii.**      The gospel has been entrusted to “faithful men” to take to the lost.  **2 TIM. 2:2** - Can God count on us to ensure that His word is preserved?

                           **viii.**      **1 COR. 4:17** – often when Paul had a task to be done, he would send men that he could count on.  In this text, he refers to Timothy as “my beloved and faithful son in the Lord.”

                           **ix.**      **ACT 20:20, 27** - And of course Paul himself proved to be faithful to God and the brethren.  As he speaks to the Ephesians elders, he notes that he had done all he could do.  **1 TIM. 1:12** – He notes that God had counted him faithful, putting him in the ministry.  Faithfulness is a trait every minister of the gospel needs.

b.       Obedience –

                           i.      Faithfulness is seen in being busy doing what we are commanded to do.  Lip service will NEVER accomplish faithfulness

                           ii.      **MATT. 25:21** “well done good and faithful servant…” we find servants who were not only trustworthy but they obeyed and did whatever they were commanded to do.

                           iii.      **HEB. 3:5** – Moses was a faithful in all his house –  Not only could he be counted upon, but he obeyed.

                           iv.      **HEB. 5:8-9** - You can look at every example of faithfulness thus far and you find obedience accompanying their trustworthiness.  Obedience is what proves our faithfulness. I.E. – **HEB. 11** – Abel, Noah, Abraham

c.        Loyalty –

                           i.      **PROV. 17:17** - Loyalty means one who is always there and behind you.  He is not a fair-weather friend, but a friend at all times.

                           ii.      We see this trait in Daniel.  In fact we see it to the point that others became jealous.  You might say, he made everyone else “look bad”.  Think about that today.  Society almost expects you to be less than loyal – workers will tell you to “slow down”

**ECCL. 9:10** - All that the Christian does must be “with all your might”

**COL. 3:23** – “heartily, as to the Lord.”

                           iii.      **GEN. 39:22-23** - Joseph is a great example of loyalty.  As Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce him, he refused.  He noted in **39:8-9** that he was trusted with everything his master had.  He knew that affair would be disloyal to both Potiphar and God.  He was unwilling to sell himself.
He was loyal first to God and then to his master, even if it meant he would be wronged. Joseph later in prison, he showed the same loyalty.,

                           iv.      **JOB 1:21**- Job also demonstrated this loyalty.  Even after losing everything he praised God.  Later when his wife told him to “curse God and die, he refused - **2:9-10**.  All this because of loyalty.

d.       Faith –

                           i.      A part of being faithful is the fact that you DO trust God and believe Him.  We mentioned earlier that the word faithfulness is akin to the word faith.  IF we don’t have faith in God we are going to let Him down more often.  The heart is not going to be where it ought to be.

                           ii.      **HEB. 11:8** - Abraham is an example of a faithful faith. Hebrews says that by faith, he went wherever God asked him to go.  **Vs. 17-19** tells us that when he was tested he offered up “his only begotten son”, Isaac, trusting that God could raise him back from the dead.

**GAL. 3:9 -**   “Believing Abraham” is the same Greek word from which we have derived many of our texts today dealing with faithfulness.  The point being Abraham believed God and therefore obeyed him.  This in turn made him faithful in God’s eyes.
**Vs. 6** quotes **GEN. 15:6** which says, “*Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*”

                           iii.      You may obey someone’s commands without faith, but if you do you are not faithful.

e.        Endurance –

                           i.      Our salvation will depend on whether or not we die faithful. It is something we CAN lose.  Faithfulness means we don’t give up or quit.

                           ii.     **MATT. 24:13** - It is the one who endures to the end that will be saved.

                          iii**.      1 COR. 15:58** - Summarizes faithfulness – steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord

                           iv.      **REV. 17:14** – those with the Lord who overcome the devil

                          v.      **REV. 2:10** - To the persecuted church in Smyrna, the angel of the Lord encouraged endurance, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”

**IV.**                **Other faithful men.**

a.        As I conclude this lesson I want to notice some unnamed and lesser known men in the Bible – men who proved themselves useful to Paul and the Lord’s work.  Why?  Because they were faithful.  And in the case of some of them, it is the only thing we know about them.  Men like:

                           i.      Tychicus - **EPH. 6:21** – “a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.”

                           ii.      Epaphras - **COL.1:7** – “a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf”

                           iii.      Onesimus – **COL. 4:9** – “a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you”

                           iv.      Sylvanus - **1 PETER 5:12** – it was through him that Peter wrote that letter, his “faithful brother as I consider him”

                           v.      Gaius - **3 JN. 5** – “Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers”

                           vi.      Antipas – **REV. 2:13** - A faithful martyr of the Lord.

b.   **EPH. 1:1** - Paul in writing some of his letters addressed them to, “saints” – “faithful in Christ Jesus”
**COL. 1:2** – “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ.”
Paul treasured faithfulness in the churches he dealt with.
If Paul were writing to us, what would he say about us?

**CONCLUSION** –

Can you see the importance of faithfulness in your life?

Can it be said of you as Paul said, **1 TIM. 1:12** - “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,”

Have you proven yourself faithful to God, your brethren and to yourself?

If there is need for change in your life, why not commit to that change today?