

A Faithful God, a Faithful People

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being faithful to God with our hearts, in our human commitments, and with our word, and highlights Jesus as the evidence of God's faithfulness.

Duration: 14:54

Scripture: Matthew 21:28

Topics: "Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of finding a faithful fellowship where one can rely on others. The preacher also highlights the call to be faithful to God with our words and actions. The sermon includes a parable of the two sons, illustrating the importance of repentance and obedience. The preacher reminds the audience that God, who has been merciful and faithful, calls each person to work in His vineyard. The sermon also emphasizes the need to be faithful in our earthly commitments, such as work and relationships, and to not waste anything but gather up the fragments.

Transcript

In order for us to keep our sanity and function at all in this world, there have to be at least a few things that we can really depend upon. How long would you be able to keep your head together if one morning you get up and for no reason at all, everybody in your house has stopped speaking to you. You know, you ask them a question and they look the other way, and you go to wash your face, turn on the tap, nothing comes out, hot or cold, but scalding steam.

Breakfast consists of warm orange juice, cold coffee, and waterlogged toast. You get out to your car to start off and go to work, it won't go. Somebody took your battery through the night.

So on your way to the bus stop, you hear a gun go off and you feel a sharp pain in your shoulder. And you flag down a police car to take you to the hospital, and the officers can't decide whether to take you to Detroit General or Ford. They finally make up their mind, they get you to a hospital, you're in the emergency room, and the nurse mistakes you for somebody else, and she's just about to give you a shot when the intern says, what are you trying to do, kill that patient? To your great relief, you discover that the wound in your shoulder is superficial, and they bandage you up and send you on your way, and you arrive at work about three hours late and explain to the boss what happened.

Don't give me that stuff, that's a bunch of lies, you're fired. Look, this is where the bullet came out. Ah, get out of here before I call security.

How many days could you go like that before you'd lose touch completely with reality? And yet this is exactly what's happening to the world in which we're living right now, the whole world. The whole world is beginning to enter into a day that's absolutely absurd, that makes no sense, in which one thing after another that we depended upon, that we thought was solid, begins to crumble right under our eyes. Money, government, our ideas of what's right and what's wrong, old friendships.

But the world, we can feel it, you know, we just sense. All these things that we had some confidence in, and we thought was going to last as long as we were here, it's crumbling right under our faces. Now granted, the world has had bad times before, plague and famine and pestilence and decimating wars and economic chaos have hit this world many times in the past.

But we have very good reason to believe that we are now at the early hour period of the most absurd day the world has ever seen. A day in which every single earthly thing that we put our confidence in begins to let us down. One change after another takes us by surprise.

So many prophecies are fulfilled, so many things happen so fast that exactly as our Lord said, men's hearts will begin to fail them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth. And right in the middle of all this, like a rock standing firm in the midst of a stormy sea, is one fact, which if we'll get hold of that thing and hang on to it, will help us to keep our minds clear. And the fact is that we have a faithful God who is right in the midst of all this confusion raising up a faithful people.

And you could almost say that the faithful people that God is now raising up is that rock in the middle of the ocean. I'm going to read just a couple of verses from John 6, 16. 6, 16.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea rose because of a strong wind.

When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea, drawing near to the boat. They were frightened, but he said to them, It is I, do not be afraid. Then they were glad to take him into the boat.

And immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. Now, too many of us still have the picture in our minds of a Jesus who adds that little extra something to our lives. You know, we have our families and our jobs and our little pleasures and our plans for summer vacation and our hopes and our dreams.

And then Jesus is supposed to come along like a friendly medicine man to bless it all so that it won't blow up in our face. But that's not what Jesus is. Jesus is the only solid thing we have.

And if we don't know that now, we're soon going to learn. He's the center that does not change or move. And he is the evidence and the only evidence there is that God is faithful.

The wind is blowing and the ocean is turning as if the devil himself were in there with a spoon just lifting it around. And our little boat is tossing and turning and rolling and ready to go down at any minute. And here comes Jesus walking on the water right through the storm as if it were nothing.

If you want to know that God is faithful, don't be looking at those crumbling foundations hoping that God will do something before the tower comes down. God never promised that the tower would not come down. Our little dream tower, civilization or society's little dream tower never promised that.

He only promised that when all the towers have come down, Jesus will still be there. And if we want to know that God is faithful, we look at Jesus. Jesus is the evidence that God is faithful because he is the yes to every promise God ever made.

God promised to send a deliverer who would be the hope of Jew and Gentile. He promised to give us a new heart. He promised to pour out his spirit upon all flesh.

He promised to send one who would be the suffering servant, the lamb, who would bear away the guilt of the human race. And every one of these promises and every other promise that God ever made begins to experience its fulfillment as Jesus hangs on that cross. Jesus is the evidence that God is faithful because he laid his life down when we were still in our sin.

He didn't say, wait a minute, Father. Let's wait and see if somebody comes along in this human race who's worth dying for. He'd still be waiting.

But he died for us, for the whole worthless lot of us while we were still doing our own thing. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus is the evidence that God is faithful because he came to us and manifested himself to us without our deserving it. Suddenly one day, there he comes. We're still busy doing our own thing, wrapped up in ourselves, sick and twisted with our pride, afflicted and guilty and unclean in our hearts.

And suddenly Jesus manifests himself to us in all his grace. Not because we deserved it. We didn't come to him.

He came to us long before we ever knew what it was to come to him. And if there's somebody in this room or there are some people in this room who have not experienced this yet, I'm telling you in the name of the Lord, you will. You will.

It might be while you're walking down the street or you might just wake up in the middle of the night or for reasons that you can't understand, you get up out of your chair and go and turn off the TV and listen to that voice that's speaking in your heart. Or you'll open the old dusty Bible and start to read it and it'll turn out to be a personal letter to you. Or some stranger will talk to you at the airport.

Or it might even happen before you leave this place today. But when it happens, you will know that Jesus has spoken to you. Touched your life with healing.

Jesus is the evidence that God is faithful. Because time and time again, he kept our feet from slipping over the edge. How many stupid things we've done since we were reborn.

And yet, those things which could have utterly destroyed us, you know, knocked out our light in five seconds, we were somehow held back from doing or from succeeding when we tried. It's as if Jesus reached out in utter faithfulness and grabbed us by our collar and lifted us back to safety. But Jesus didn't only come to manifest God's faithfulness He came to raise up a faithful people.

See, and if after he has manifested faithfulness again and again and again to us, we remain unfaithful, then all the faithfulness of our Lord in the world will never save us. There are all kinds of people who know their Bibles upside down and backwards. They can preach up a storm.

They can quote scripture until the cows come home. But they know, and God knows, that they're not serious. You know, they're not faithful.

When it comes to doing this, they're gone. Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his master places over his household to give them their portion of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he comes, will find soft doing. Jesus is raising up and calling now to us to be a people who are faithful to God with our hearts first.

Really with a heart. Faithful, you know, not like Cain or King Saul or Adam and Eve who went through the motions of worshipping God but their hearts were far away. But like Moses, Abraham, Jesus himself.

Faithful right down inside with our hearts. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Can we honestly say that our hearts are clean and unmixed and undivided right now? Undividedly set on obeying the Heavenly Father's will.

This is what our Lord is calling for as we come to receive his body and blood, his life poured out. Jesus is calling us to be faithful and this is something we often forget to God with material things. He who is faithful in very little is faithful also in much.

And he who is dishonest in very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been found faithful in the unrighteous mammon, money and things, who will entrust to you the true riches? If you've not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give to you that which is your own? See, and as things start to crumble all around us, we're tempted to think, oh, it doesn't matter what I do, it doesn't matter. What do I do with this and how I handle that? But this is not so.

God watches very carefully what we do with mammon. How we function in our jobs? Do we put in a good day's work? How we handle our paychecks? Whether we really are generous and thoughtful with our cars and our homes and the food that we have in our pantries and refrigerators. Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost, Jesus said.

He doesn't waste a thing. And as the world is just crumbling on all sides of us, Jesus is calling us to be faithful to God in our human commitments. Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the church, gave himself to her.

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as unto the Lord. Faithful to our husbands, our wives, our children, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our brothers and sisters in the flock. There will be at least one place a place, a fellowship, you know, some human beings who are really faithful, dependable.

You can rely on them. And finally, God, through his Son, is calling us to be faithful to him with our word. A man had two sons.

He went to the first and said, Son, go work in the vineyard today. And he answered and said, I will not go. But afterward, he repented and went.

Then he went to the second and said the same. I go, sir, he said. But he did not go.

Now, this God, who has been merciful, faithful to us beyond our comprehension, comes to each one of us and says to us right now, my child, I've adopted you. Through the blood of my Son, I've made you mine. And now I want you to go and work in my vineyard until I call you.

Be careful how you say, I go, sir. For he's not only a faithful God, but he's a God who will have nothing less than a faithful people. Let's wait upon him in prayer right now.

We confess, Heavenly Father, that you have been good to us beyond our desiring or deserving or knowing. Good to us down to this very second. And we pray that those things in our lives right now, which are standing in the way of your grace fully and freely flowing into us and through us and out of us again, may be dealt with by the Spirit before we leave.

And that those of us who are believers may be really quickened and straightened out and humbled and broken, dealt with in whatever way necessary, that we may be that faithful people. And Father, that those of us who are still seeking the kingdom may now with an active will throw to the side all those things that we've been clutching that have been keeping us from entering the door of the kingdom, which is wide open right now. We ask these things, Father, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

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