

Faithful one

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[0 : 00] We have two readings this morning. Our first reading is from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy.

And we're reading some verses from chapter 7 of that book. And we will then read the first nine verses of 1 Corinthians. So, beginning with Deuteronomy chapter 7.

And at verse 6. God speaking to his people. For you are a people holy to your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people.

His treasured possession. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples. For you are the fewest of all peoples.

But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand. And redeemed you from the land of slavery.

[1 : 05] From the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God. He is the faithful God. Keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him.

And keep his commandments. But those who hate him, he will repay to their face by destruction. He will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him.

Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today. And in Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

First letter, 1 Corinthians. And reading from the first verse of chapter 1. Paul.

I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way.

[2 : 33] With all kinds of speech and with all knowledge. God thus confirming our testimony about Christ within you. Therefore, you do not lack any spiritual gift.

As you eagerly await for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end. So that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful. God is faithful. Who has called you into fellowship with his Son. Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Amen. Can I read again? The last of our New Testament reading.

1 Corinthians chapter 1. 1 Corinthians chapter 1. And verse 8. He will keep you strong to the end.

[3 : 39] God is faithful. So that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful.

Who called you into fellowship with his Son. Jesus Christ our Lord. God is faithful.

He keeps faith. He's true to his word. He never breaks his promises.

He is utterly dependable. For his mercies I endure. Ever faithful.

Ever sure. We live in a world where unfaithfulness is everywhere. Leaders of political parties make promises that they break at will.

[4 : 52] People who sell goods. Write them up as being something other than they are.

A person's word is seldom his bond. Our government tragically promised a few years back that it would give 7% of its cross.

income to poor countries. Only for that promise to be broken. We could go on. We could speak of marital infidelity.

We could speak of many times when friends of ours have broken their promise to us.

And all this is so different from God. We are unfaithful to friends, to family, to husbands, to wives, to dependents.

[6 : 06] But God is faithfulness itself. Jesus is given the name in revelation of being faithful and true.

And God says to us, I, the Lord, do not change. And I want us to focus with you this morning on the faithfulness of God and what it means for us.

To home in on this truth that God says his faithfulness reaches to the clouds. And to thank him that he is, as it were, clothed in faithfulness.

It says in the scripture that he's put faithfulness on like a belt. And faithfulness is such a part of his character that if he were to break promises, it would be him breaking apart his very own character. And he expresses his faithfulness to his people by coming and what he calls making a covenant with them. And that means he enters into a bond with them.

[7 : 32] And that bond is such that he says, If I break that bond, then you can have my life.

It's as serious as that. His covenant with us simply cannot be broken.

And though we are faithless, he remains faithful because he cannot deny himself.

That's the wonder of our faithful God. And we read those words in verse 9.

God is faithful. And his covenant is unbreakable. Now I want to go with you by seeing two areas in which God's faithful in all his ways.

[8 : 45] The first is that he's faithful as a judge. You'll notice that the arena in which he says he's faithful is, it's going to be on that day.

Verse 7, that you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end so that you'll be blameless on that day.

Now, the revelation of Jesus Christ spoken of there, which will happen on a particular day, it will take place on the great day, the final day, the day of judgment.

because on that day, Jesus Christ will come to judge the whole of the creation, the every single human being.

Because we will all appear before his judgment seat on that day. And we will all give account of what we've done in our bodies in this life.

[10 : 08] And it will be a solemn day, a day when the books of our lives will be opened, and God will assess us. That will happen at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And the question for everyone to ask is, where are we going to hide on that day? Where can we possibly go to for our shame and our blame to be removed before the holiness of God?

There is nowhere that human beings can conjure up to take away their great guilt.

And God, you see, is faithful. That's the point we make. He's faithful in that He wasn't kidding us when He said that there would be a judgment on the final day.

He wasn't saying something that was just a kind of trivial thing. You know how parents will say to their kids, last warning.

[11 : 44] And often the child knows that the last warning has been said umpteen times, and there's more last warnings to come. And the warnings the children don't take seriously.

Well, with God, there's no warning that He gives us that we can't take seriously. The revelation of Jesus Christ on that day will be the revelation of Jesus Christ, the judge.

Now I want to come to the second way in which God is faithful.

Not only as a judge, but as a deliverer. What we call a savior. And that's why He says in verse 8, He 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. There you have it that Paul is telling these Christians at Corinth who have believed in Jesus that they will be kept blameless on that day of judgment.

[13 : 34] Now that's an extraordinary thing to say because if you read through the letter, you'll find that these Corinthians were a church of division and strife.

People quarreling with one another. There was an incestuous sexual relationship in the church which was not being dealt with.

There were two parties that were going to the civil law courts taking a litigation out against each other.

And there was greed being evident at Holy Communion with people, some of them showing their richness and excluding the poor members of the church.

Blameless. You say, how can such a church be called to be blameless? Christians, yes, believers, okay, but blameless, how could that be?

[14 : 47] Well, the answer is given in the text. They had been called into fellowship with His Son.

and that is the truth about Christians, that they have been called by God and have been brought into fellowship with His Son.

And it's as if when they are brought to faith in Christ that they are enveloped by Jesus. as many of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, he says.

It's as if they've been clothed in a garment, a borrowed garment, a borrowed piece of clothing. and it's the righteous clothing of Jesus.

And they put Him on so that what God sees is the totally obedient life of His Son Jesus.

[15 : 54] And it covers the believer. And it's borrowed not just for a short while, but for a lifetime and for eternity.

And on the day of judgment, the child of God continues to be covered in the obedience and the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

And it's that that makes us weak, unreliable, unsteady, failing Christians to be blameless.

It's that borrowed obedience of Jesus that makes us acceptable to God.

There are two things that I additionally draw your attention to. First of all, it came about by a calling. Now, sometimes parents will call their child and the child ignores totally what's said and the child just merrily goes on its way.

[17 : 26] When God calls in this special sense, it's as if with all His divine authority and power, He summons us.

And if you're a Christian this morning, you were called by God and He drew you in with that divine summons.

Do you remember the story of the wedding party and the host who was finding that some guests hadn't arrived? And so, He sends people out and says, go in to the lanes and the highways and pull them in.

Bring them in. and He calls them by that summons that is so powerful. And that's what happened when you became a Christian, if that's who you are today, that He called you.

And the second thing I draw your attention to is that He called you into fellowship with His Son. And becoming a Christian, it's as if you become a shareholder with Jesus.

[18 : 44] You share in all the treasures that He has. And the Father looks on you with the same love that He looks on His Son.

And there's this sharing. Remember how Jesus says to the church in Revelation, look, I'm standing at your door and I knock.

And if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I come in to Him and sup with Him and He with me.

And when you come to Jesus, you come into that sharing with Christ. and that's what holds you blameless for the great day.

And God is faithful to keep you. I want to ask every one of you, have you been called?

[20 : 03] Have you experienced this come to me, says the Lord? Have you come turning from your old way of life?

have you turned to Him and entered into that bond of fellowship with Jesus which will never be broken?

Have you? Please don't put it off any longer. Turn to Him and find life so that your blameworthy condition so full of guilt will be turned into a blameless life because you are covered in Christ.

Don't put it off a day longer. Now I want to speak to Christians today finally that seeing God as our deliverer and saviour we see Him as our protector.

The greatest danger that any of us have faced is the danger of coming on the final day into the judgment of Jesus without any answer to his condemnation.

[21 : 49] And we've seen already that that is covered by fellowship with his son. But there are lesser dangers that you and I are facing this week every day.

And I want you to see that the faithful God is faithful in looking after you in these lesser dangers.

The steadfast love of God never fails. His mercies to us are new every morning. And as you go out into this week I want you to go out depending on the faithfulness of God to look after you.

Well first of all he will look after you if you're dying. Now we're all getting one day nearer to death every day but to those who are scared of dying and the last two years have perhaps made us more scared of dying than we were before.

Well go to this truth and remind yourself that God is faithful and as it says here that you will be blameless and that he will keep you strong to the end.

[23 : 26] He will keep you strong through that last enemy. God is faithful. That's what it's saying.

So that he's reminding us that in his faithfulness nothing will separate you child of God from his love.

Not the things that are happening now, not any illness that you have, not life nor death, not anything else in all creation because God keeps his promise.

Death and dying need not terrify us. Second thing we could point to is that he is faithful in persecution.

being despised for our beliefs, being ridiculed for being a Christian. Well, Peter said, let those who suffer according to God's will commit themselves to a faithful creator and he will stand with you if you're being mocked at work or cast aside in promotion prospects in your job or being ridiculed in your family.

[25 : 04] God is faithful. Or then we could go to severe temptations and to remind ourselves that in these God is faithful.

God is faithful, it says later on in this book, this letter, who will not let you be tempted above what you're able to bear. God is faithful and he stands with us in our trials and he helps us to keep going because he's our guardian.

He will keep you strong to the end, the verse says. Are you aware at the moment in these days of being constantly assaulted by the tempter on one particular front?

Well, cast yourselves on the Lord and say to him, God, you promised. Faithful God, help me to battle through.

And then the final application of this. God is faithful, child of mine, he says. God is faithful in his delays.

[26 : 32] Now, this is really important. Sometimes we say to God, do you have to take so long in answering my prayers.

How long, Father? How long will it be before you rid me of this burden? And he comes to us and says, I never change.

I cannot lie. I am always powerful to carry out what I promise. I'm the faithful God.

And I keep you in fellowship. You know, Abraham and Sarah so many times asked God and saying, but you promised.

and what a delay they had. But we need to keep remembering God is faithful who called you into fellowship with his son.

[28 : 02] And his timing is always perfect. God well, may you be enabled to keep going this week with a faithful God and to rejoice in the fact that he never changes his mind.

Let us pray. dear father, we thank you that we, though we are often faithless, you remain faithful because you cannot deny yourself.

And we lean and depend on this great promise this morning that you will keep us blameless at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Help us, Lord, to rejoice in that glorious truth. Amen.