

The Faithfulness of God

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[0 : 0 0] will begin. God's faithfulness. That's what we'll be talking about today. So a tried and true aspect of God's character. Millions of believers have experienced personally, and it's an attribute that's very precious, highly esteemed, and our portion of times of trouble. God's faithfulness will be what we consider today. So we'll look at what the Bible means when it says God is faithful, three expressions of God's faithfulness, and then conclude with application. And we'll have some discussion together. So we began this series with the insight from A.W. Tozer who said the most important thing about you is what comes into your mind when you think about God. High views of God produce high worship. Low views of God produce shallow worship.

Low views of God are figments of our imagination. their idolatry. What the Bible writers understood about God was a shield to them in times of trouble. It was a sword in the fight, in the battle of faith. It is a foundation which you build your life upon, the wellspring of joy, a bright fire that comforts us on a cold night. Sound doctrine, right thinking about God does that for the Christian. It produces devotion. It produces doxology.

And I tend to think sound doctrine, what this whole series has been about, are like pieces of wood that you stack together to create a fire. But the spirit produces the flame.

You put both these two things together, sound doctrine and the spirit, and it produces a roaring, blazing fire in the soul. Without the spirit, we're merely pieces of dry wood. We're dead. No power. There's no life. So with that, let's pray for the spirit's help before we dive in. Father in heaven, we pray for your help this morning. We pray that God's faithfulness, your faithfulness, Lord, would be the anchor that would ground us in the raging storms. We pray it would be a precious truth that we would come back to time and time again.

Praise in Jesus' name. So before we dive in to God's faithfulness, what is the opposite of faithfulness? What's the opposite of faithfulness? Usually when you give a definition, you can't use the word in the definition, right? So you can't say unfaithfulness.

[2 : 2 9] Right, right. When you say unfaithfulness, what comes to mind? Unfaithfulness. I would say one word would be separation. Okay.

Also one of those words where I feel like no one really, like, you never really think about the definition, right? You just know what it is. But unfaithfulness or, again, lack of faithfulness, I would say, you know, a loss of trust.

Leads to a loss of trust, yeah. Someone you can't trust if they're unfaithful. Yeah. Disloyalty. Mm-hmm. Betrayal. Betrayal, disloyalty. Yes. Yes.

Comes to mind wishy-washy. Someone who says they're going to do something, but they never actually do it. Lukewarmness.

Lukewarmness, yes. Yeah, so what, and the opposite of that, what is faithfulness? And the faithfulness in the Bible is called steadfast love, right? The Hebrew word is hesed, which occurs 250 times in the Old Testament.

[3 : 4 4] And hesed refers to an unwavering commitment. Just this idea of loyalty, right? It's a, do you say, who said loyalty? You say loyalty? Yeah. A solemn oath that cannot be broken.

Unwavering in a commitment to do something. Promising something and being absolutely reliable. So we can say a faithful friend is someone who sticks closer than a brother, right? Proverbs.

Someone who is reliable. Someone who you can depend upon each day. And Louis Burkhoﬀ, in his systematic theology, would describe God's faithfulness as follows. He is ever mindful of his covenant and fulfills all the promises which he has made to his people. He continues, this is the utmost practical significance of the people of God. Paraphrasing Burkhoﬀ, he says, it is the ground of our confidence, the foundation of our hope, the cause of our rejoicing, our comfort when we are conscious of our own failures and shortcomings. Amen. God's faithfulness is lifted up in the scripture in many places. He can be trusted. He can be relied upon.

He's unwavering in his commitment to his people. Five verses. Let us hold fast to our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10. Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Your faithfulness continues through all generations. Moses proclaims the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him to a thousand generations. God's signature line. The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, abounding in steadfast love. Welcome, friends. We're talking about God's faithfulness.

[5 : 38] And perhaps the highest proclamation of God's faithfulness, great is your faithfulness. In Lamentations 3. The late David Powelson, a biblical counselor, frequently pointed out that the last phrase was the most used line in the Bible.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. And Powelson would say, if God thinks it's worth repeating that his steadfast love lasts forever, then it's worth our repeating it too.

God's faithfulness goes the second mile. But then it goes the third mile, and it goes the fourth mile. And then you realize it never ends. God's faithfulness continues and follows us, his people, throughout our lives.

And each day is an opportunity to experience that mercy. So, are there examples in nature that remind you of God's faithfulness?

Examples in nature that remind you of his faithfulness. Yes.

[6 : 52] The sunrise. We always have oxygen to breathe. I've been lost in the woods, and I was grateful for Polaris one time.

What is Polaris? Polaris is the North Star. Oh. That's a great example. Yes. Yeah. Yes.

He's a North Star. Amen. He is as reliable as the sun coming up each morning. I don't remember where I heard this, or even how accurate it is, but there's some crazy statistics about, like, just where the Earth is positioned in relation to the sun, if it was even, like, 1% further or closer, life wouldn't happen.

And if the tilt of the axis were off just a little bit, and everything would cease to be, and just wind and waves and tides, and just all of it somehow working together, quite improbably, but not so hard to believe, we consider who put it together.

Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm. I remember Jeff Stevens opened up, uh, uh, on Sunday, this is maybe a year or two ago, we were talking about, uh, I think one of his kids had, like, bruised, you know, an elbow or something like that, and, you know, he just kind of talked about, like, how we don't have to worry about, like, the skin naturally just taking care of that, right?

[8 : 32] The blood clots, you know, for most people, obviously, right? The blood clots, the skin reforms, um, and I still remember that. Mm-hmm. You know, we don't, we don't have to think about it. It just happens.

Yeah. Yeah. Um, the point that I wanted to bring home in the class last week, which I think I forgot to mention, is that, um, uh, you know, just how secure we are when we move towards the Lord, enter into his presence, you know, he's, he's like, uh, a bird that shows great, faithful, regular love for, uh, his, his offspring, you know, whenever they move close, uh, wrapped into God's presence and protection.

Hmm. Yes. It's a great, it's a great image. God caring for his little chicklets as a mother would.

I think for me, I, I always picture like the, the, the breakers, the waves always coming in, never ending on the beach. When I'm on the beach, I see that. I just always reminds me of God's faithfulness.

It just never ends. Always coming in. And God's faithfulness is that for us. Is he not? As sure as the season's changing, as sure as the spring coming in the winter, like God is always faithful.

[10 : 03] He's always reliable. He is always, can be relied upon in every season of life. And I looked up some hymns that talked about God's faithfulness. And here are just a few. There can be a lot more.

Great is thy faithfulness. How firm a foundation. It is well with my soul. He will hold me fast. The solid rock, amazing grace. And I'm just kind of skimming the surface there.

But all these hymns, I think we, what we find precious about them is it reminds us of God's unwavering goodness towards us. And what an encouragement these hymns have been to the people of God, reminding us that he is the solid rock, an anchor in the raging seas.

We sang this at our wedding, the solid rock. His oath, his covenant, his blood support me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope in this day.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand. And he is the solid rock in the flood, in the storm. And so for our time today, we intuitively understand what God's faithfulness is.

[11 : 17] We'll look at three expressions of God's faithfulness in the scripture. So three expressions, and then we'll conclude with some application in our lives.

First, God is faithful to keep his covenant promises. And this is the context of God's faithfulness. It has been said the two certainties in life are death and taxes.

The other certainty is God always, he always keeps his promises. And these promises often take the form of covenants. So a covenant is a solemn promise.

This is when you pinky promise when you're a child. You know, a pinky promise, I'm going to do it. And when you're older, you enter into other kinds of covenants. You enter into the solemn covenant of marriage through marriage vows, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, for sickness and in health.

A church covenant. You promise to love and give gifts of love and service. We break our vows, but God never breaks his. And God made a solemn covenant with Abraham in chapter 12.

[12 : 28] So if you turn there, Genesis 12, verses 1 to 3. Would somebody mind reading that for us? Genesis chapter 12, verses 1 to 3.

Thank you. Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country and your kindred, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you, and make the name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you, I will curse.

And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Amen. Amen. So the context, God calls Abraham out of the land of Ur and promises him blessing.

And three things in the Abrahamic covenant. First is land in verse 1. Numerous offspring in verse 2. And then finally, verse 3, this offspring would be the source of blessing to all nations through one of the seed that would come from Abraham.

[13 : 33] And later on in Genesis 15, God would tell Abraham that this, his offspring would be as numerous as the stars of heaven. And this is an eternal blessing.

Forgiven, accepted, sanctified, glorified, joy in the presence of God. And in Genesis 12, he's restoring what was lost in the garden. God recreates the world.

Remember that promised seed that Genesis 3.15, he will crush the head of the serpent. That offspring is going to come through Abraham's line and recreate what was lost.

in the garden. And Abraham would be the progenitor of that offspring. And then in chapter 15, it says Abraham believed God's promise and the Lord counts him, reckons him as a righteous man.

As Romans 4 would tell us, because of his faith in that promise, he is accounted as righteous. He lived his homeland, his family, everything he knew and followed God to an unknown land because he knew God was reliable.

[14 : 43] But yet, he believed God, but he still seeks assurance. Ten years passes since Genesis 12.

He is 75 years old and he's still childless. He is doubting. So Abraham is doubting.

He's wavering. God, you promised me ten years ago that I would have an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, yet I don't even have a child. He's getting older and he's in an age where it is almost impossible to have children.

Where is this promised seed that you promised to bless the nations? And Abraham asked God in Genesis 15, Oh Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it?

God, I need something more. God, I need something to assure me that this promise, you will keep it. And God, in his grace, answers that request.

[15 : 53] Hebrews 6, verse 17, speaking about Abraham here, says, So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath.

He guaranteed it with an oath. God solemnly swears an oath of allegiance to fulfill his promise to Abraham. I mean, he didn't have to do that, right? He could have just said, Abraham, stop asking so many questions.

Do what I tell you to do and stop and just trust me. God, you're so wavering in your faith. What's wrong with you? But God doesn't do that, right?

He cares for Abraham's assurance and he cares that you and I have unshakable hope as well. And if you're in Christ, God is committed to working for you.

He has made promises in the scripture. And if you turn there to Genesis 15, this oath that God takes is in the form of a solemn ceremony in Genesis 15, verse 7 to 21.

[17 : 06] Morning. A curious ceremony takes place to seal that solemn promise, a solemn oath that God takes.

Genesis 15. And covenants in the ancient Near East were sometimes ratified through a ceremony in which animals were cut up and the pieces were arranged on the ground.

And that's what's happening in Genesis 15, verses 9 to 10. Abraham is called to take a heifer, a goat, a ram, and some birds and cut them up. The word for covenant means to cut the covenants here.

So he's cutting them up in that ancient Near Eastern ceremony. And the two parties would walk between the pieces stigma, a similar fate would befall either of them if either of them broke their part of the agreement.

They would be torn apart like the animals on the ground. But something very interesting happens in verse 12. A deep sleep fell on Abraham.

[18 : 07] So God puts Abraham to sleep and it was only God who walks through the animal pieces in a figure of a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch.

So God takes Abraham's place in that ceremony. That's a dramatic moment in the scripture. What is this ceremony intending to communicate?

Why would God put Abraham to sleep and then walk through the pieces? The pieces. Good morning.

Striking. God not only takes He not only walks for Himself He also walks through for Abraham.

Is it a foreshadowing of what Jesus would do this? Yes. Yes. In what way? If you elaborate a little more on that.

[19 : 25] I'm not sure but some of it is that in a covenant to promise to do something it is not assured that humans that promise to do something are going to be pure and the process of that commitment that God walks in our place and carries us in some substitutional way then there's an assurance that that covenant will be maintained.

Yeah. I'll just bumble a little one. Hey, I'm following. Amen, brother. Chris, help. Olivia. So Tyler, I thought that this was when God makes the covenant with Abraham for land.

No? Yeah, it's Yeah, I know. The 15 is a ceremony for the covenant he originally makes in 12. Chapter 12. And in chapter 12 he promises land offspring and that numerous offspring and that this offspring would bless the entire world.

So this offspring is sealing the promise that God makes earlier which includes land. And in this, in 15 he says you're going to have an offspring from your own body you know, not the servant in your house but and could somebody read is like verse 8 or so to follow up on the living question where after Abraham sees the stars you know, God says you're offering them to be as numerous as the stars and Abraham believes God and it's counted to him as righteousness.

But then I think he asks another question but I can't remember what it is. How can I know I will gain possession of it? What was that?

[21 : 41] How can I know I will gain possession of it? So it is about the land. Yeah. Is that right? It's about the promise.

Like how can I know it's the land but it's also the offspring because he doesn't have the offspring he doesn't have Isaac yet and he's seeking assurance and God is he solemnly seals that promise through this covenant and God is saying I will keep my end of the deal and Abraham if you fail on your side I will take on myself the curse of breaking the covenant.

Right? So it's a unilateral covenant that God I am going to do it on both of our sides and that's a driving engine that keeps the narrative moving forward in the Bible.

Will God keep that promise? I mean consider God will keep his side and we know that but how can he really bless them when his people rebel against him?

Right? God must judge the wicked because he is righteous but he made a promise surely if he is faithful he must keep it but how? In Proverbs it says those who justify the wicked are an abomination to God so God promises to bless them eternally bless them but yet they are rebellious and God doesn't just seal our assurance with oath and covenants but with blood and the blood as we said is foreshadowing the blood of his own son taking the curse upon himself to show his faithfulness he would engrave the names in the palms of his hands I love this hymn from Joseph Hart view him prostrate in the garden on the ground your maker lies on the bloody tree behold him sinner will not this suffice to the incarnate God ascended plead the merits of his blood venture on him venture holy let no other trust intrude that's a hymn come you sinners poor and needy but we see that God is willing to keep that promise where the maker would take on flesh and prostrate himself on the ground in order to keep his promises and the covenants we did a study last year about all the different covenants and how they relate to each other but the covenants are like the steel structure of the skyscraper that keep it from collapsing into judgments in the same way

[24:17] God's faithfulness to those promises his covenants keep the plan of redemption from collapsing into judgments and there's a real drama in the doctrine of God's faithfulness consider the exodus exodus makes this point that the people left Egypt but they took Egypt with them in their hearts the covenant that God made with Moses was broken before the ink was even dry is God really going to be faithful to an adulterous idolatrous spouse and you can read about that in the book of Hosea but God there's there's there's a tension there right there's a tension how is God going to keep that promise and I think there's two ways this is often misunderstood of God's faithfulness I think in our selfie culture we might be tempted to think yeah God is faithful because of me I'm worth it right you know he makes promises and he must keep them because he made it with me and that's the flavor if you turn on the TV or some radio station everything God does is because

I'm so worth it right but listen to how Jeremiah pleads for mercy for God to keep his covenant promises Jeremiah 14 verse 21 do not spurn us for your namesake do not dishonor your glorious throne remember and do not break your covenant with us so that Jeremiah doesn't say keep the covenant because we're so awesome he's pleading for mercy using God's own name do not dishonor your own throne God by breaking your promise what a great way to pray pleading the promises back to God and if you struggle in your prayer life consider following Jeremiah's example and take some promises from the Bible and pleading them back to God saying God you have promised and pray that and God keeps his promises but there's a second way this gets twisted and James

Montgomery Boyce a pastor for many years at 10th Presbyterian in Philadelphia tells a story of a young man who had recently committed to Christ he had been involved in sexual sin and he desperately wanted to straighten his life out to experience the true blessings of Christianity unable to shake it he made a white knuckle commitment that he would stop having sex with his girlfriends and maybe that would bring about the true blessings that he expected from being a Christian but it didn't work he actually stopped fornicating having sex but his life was still dry it didn't work he actually he thought he had done a great deal in his minds he sacrificed for God but God had not responded appropriately to him God you have not kept your part of the bargain in his heart he began to accuse God God I have been faithful yet you have been unfaithful to me God you are unjust the fault is at your feet in his heart he thought maybe God is like the wizard of oz you pull the curtain back and you find that

God really isn't that great after all God you say you're faithful but you really only half heartily love your people if you read the minor prophets this is exactly the kind of heart situation you'll find the people of Israel had especially Malachi does that describe you so let me ask this question what about God's faithfulness does this person misunderstand how would you counsel this person who can I sacrifice for God but God's not doing anything for me what does this person need to hear well first it's not it's not a sacrifice to stop saying you can't claim that that is something that you can just give to God because he expects it and requires it already and that's there's a lot more to it than that but that's the starting point you can't expect God to be grateful for you you're not doing any doing him any favors simply by doing what he commands yeah

I'll probably think that what the person wanted from God is not necessarily what God wants for him and then also the timing of it God has his own timing and it's not immediate necessarily Abraham waited decades yes mm-hmm like a transactional like I'm doing something so I'm getting something in return yeah yeah you see that and look in Malachi when the people tell God we've done our sacrifices

[29 : 46] God we've we've tithed yet you are unjust in how you treated us and those people you know one of the problems is they're self-righteous right and they needed to repent immediately and I and I think yeah that that there's there's idolatry there their motivations for why they're sacrificing in the first place they're not really living as God as their ultimate treasure and that leads us to our second point so the first point was God is faithful to keep his promises but the second point God is faithful to afflict his people now this is counterintuitive TV preachers will tell you otherwise but this is not our best life now first comes the cross and then the crown we are not exempt from trials and troubles he is the

God of the valleys as well as the hills and we know that right Psalm 23 God is faithful through afflictions not apart from afflictions you know God is even faithful in causing the affliction in the first place he knocks us down so you think about the context of the book of Lamentations we quoted chapter 3 verse 21 is that great verse great is thy faithfulness but in the context there are just teardrops all over the pages of that book it's a sorrowful book full of anguish and the author recognizes that God was behind it all the writer in chapter 1 before chapter 3 would say in verse 4 the Lord has afflicted Jerusalem for the multitude of her transgressions verse 11 if there is any sorrow like my sorrow which was brought upon me which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger verse 17 he has carried out his word which he commanded long ago he has thrown down without pity the Lord has commanded against Jacob that his neighbors should be his foes but in verse 18 in chapter 1 is very important the writer says the Lord is in the right for I have rebelled against his word so he acknowledges that whatever we're getting we deserve

God is not unjust in 1st Samuel Eli the priest was a wicked man because it says he knew his sons were evil and did nothing to stop them he never disciplined them he never afflicted them in faithfulness but God is not like that he chastises and afflicts those whom he loves Psalm 119 verse 75 I know O Lord that your rules are righteous and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me in faithfulness you have afflicted me so the psalmist knew the afflictions were not they're not happened by chance but because in God's wisdom he wanted them to be so the psalmist knew there is a purpose behind it all he saw divine providence in his afflictions well to what end Psalm 119 would say it is good for me that I was afflicted why that I might learn your statutes before I was afflicted I went astray but now I have kept your word Thomas

Watson in his body of divinity says the trials and sufferings of the godly are to refine and purify them God's furnace is in Zion is it any injustice in God to put his gold into the furnace to purify it is any injustice in God by afflicting his people to make them partakers of his holiness what more proclaims God's faithfulness than to take such a course with them as God imposes causes for his people are for their good now granted our definition of good and God's definition of good might not be the same but in God's economy the weaker we are the more we rely on him there's truth in this statement God is all you need when God is all you have and sometimes God will knock us down when all we have is God for us to realize God Job 5 verse 17 blessed is the one whom

God reproves therefore do not despise the discipline of the almighty and I love to hear a time in your life when in your weakness God demonstrated his faithfulness to you weakness sets the stage for God's faithfulness to really display itself there was a time in my life when backpacking became an idol for me and I was in the middle of a trip with the family out of Colorado and the high point of my trip was on Long's Peak the highest peak in Lucky Mount National Park and things were not working out for that to happen and you know

[35 : 18] I pushed God aside and put backpacking on a terrible weak point in my life and God got my attention in my weakness and said look Matt what you are doing here and I didn't climb Long's Peak but my appreciation of the Lord got wonderfully renewed to that miserable experience that's a great example thank you brother my first year of teaching and subsequent being let go from teaching was a very low point and then that really drove me into seeking

God specifically in my church at the time and it brought about a lot of blessings by being brought low and by relying on God's people because I was not strong or wise enough to understand the context of what I was doing here for long I guess I can share a little bit I've always wanted to sing but then I had a lot of health problems and a lot of family issues I just couldn't for a really long time 10-15 years but God has really shown himself to be faithful to me throughout this healing process it's a journey so I'm still on the line up but I think to me that's one of the biggest signs of the faith almost to me we thank

God for it thank you anybody else share I wanted to do like a really like awful like friendship friend group like five situations like two years ago and that sort of exploded and that sort of led me like shame brokenness so I feel like spiritual group in a lot of ways but that was also like when I started songwriting and like learning how to play guitar and God brought me some tune and just playing the town with my guitar in the morning and that's the biggest part of my life couple years ago during

COVID 2020 that is I remember you know I mean look for it changed all of our worlds obviously and you know work and personal I was I was struggling with work I just I wasn't happy and you might remember the story but a couple people came to me internally and said hey you should talk to this guy long story kind of short we were doing like you know kind of an interview if you will virtually obviously and I missed his call he missed my call we were playing back and forth and finally I finally got him on video and he closes his book and he goes oh sorry it's like 6 o'clock at the end or whatever he goes sorry you just caught me preparing for a lesson tonight I thought it was work related and I was like oh do you want me to call you back he goes oh no it's all good I just run a Ben's Bible study almost funny looking back to just be like you know it's so trivial also right like here I am struggling and annoyed and frustrated with work and all of a sudden

God's just laughing just saying you don't think I have like your best you know plan already laid out right I'm going to guide you to a Christian man who's going to lead you and I'm on his team ever since and it's just like so funny just grateful every day yeah I when I was younger I was changing careers and I needed to take courses and I was living I moved to New York City and after a year I was broke I needed to work and a buddy called me I used to be a volunteer leader in Young Life he called me up and he says he's got a problem he's someone to come up and be a good boss for a month up at Saranac and I couldn't do it I was broke I needed to find some work and so I asked the guys that I lived with what do you think just to get some counsel and there were four guys three of them didn't know the Lord and they said no you can't do it and this one

[40 : 56] Catholic guy said well you should go and so how often do I actually go out on a way for the war not all the time but this time I did so I went up there for a month as a volunteer thing and during that time I met my wife and we were married for a year and four kids 40 years and we're blessed with 40 years together because for once behind me you trusted the Lord so I think about all the times where I didn't all the gifts that were left behind in some sense so it's an encouragement to trust the Father yeah God is faithful yes where would we be right if he hadn't knocked us down in order to show more of himself to us and we all recognize that we can see this backwards looking backwards in our lives but it is hard to see that when it's going on at the moment and that's just what principle that you have to look backwards to see

God's faithfulness his providence in your life and he is faithful to his covenant promises he is faithful in afflicting us and the last expression of God's faithfulness is he is faithful to preserve and save his people in our distress we can be confident that God will preserve us preserving grace in our affliction he doesn't merely save us afflict us and then just stand back waiting to see if we're going to collapse under the weight of it all right let's see if this person has enough strength to keep trusting Christ in the affliction Jude 24 right now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time and now and forever more amen Philippians 1 verse 6 and I'm sure of this that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ

God can keep you from stumbling he is strong enough to preserve you in your affliction God is strong enough to finish the good work he has started in you he gives preserving grace he preserves his own my second favorite book of the bible is pilgrim's progress so I probably quote pilgrim's progress half the time if I'm teaching John Bunyan illustrates this so well in his classic the truth in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9 though Paul had the thorn in the side he prayed three times for the Lord to remove it and God told Paul my grace is sufficient for you my power is made perfect in weakness and Paul says therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness so the power of Christ may rest upon me if you haven't read it the central character in the book is a person named Christian and he meets a helper named Interpreter an interpreter's job is to teach

Christians truth that he will need for the journey of faith an interpreter shows Christian a fire that is burning against a wall and how someone was standing by the fire trying to put it out by throwing water on it but strangely the fire did not go out not only did it not go out but it burned brighter and hotter and Christian asked interpreter what does this mean interpreter explain the fire is the work of grace that God produces in our hearts the grace of trust in Christ and our love for him but the devil is constantly trying to put out this fire by pouring on it the water of temptations worries and trials then interpreter wanted to show Christian how the fire not only kept burning but kept burning higher hotter and higher so he took Christian around the back of a wall and behind the wall he saw a man who had a jar of oil in his hand which he poured continually into the fire and Christian asked what does this mean interpreter answered this is Christ who continually with the oil of his grace maintains the work already begun in the heart despite the devil's best efforts this person is gracious to preserve the soul of his people this man is behind the wall to maintain the fire of grace in the soul to teach you that is hard for the tempted to show how this work of grace is maintained so Bunyan puts the man behind the wall so he can't actually see what's going on why is the fire burning hotter and it's hard to see that in our trials and temptations is it not the fact the spirit is just giving us power in our weakness and

Paul understood that and it's hard to see but he is with us in our afflictions and the flame will not go out he is faithful to give preserving grace there's so many great wonderful scripture passages he carries us through the water he will be with us through the rivers they will not overflow he is faithful to preserve us knowing God's faithfulness prevents us from forsaking Christ in our affliction so he is faithful to keep his covenant promises he is faithful to afflict us and he is faithful to preserve us until the ends let's jump to some application how does God's faithfulness help us in our anxiety when we are anxious about what tomorrow may bring what are some of the passages in scripture that talks about God's faithfulness in our anxiety you're apenas but you're like you're kind of here today

[47 : 31] Mm-hmm.

Yes. If God is faithful to feed these birds, He will give you what you need. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

I think of Philippians 4, 6, and 7, where it says, Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, present your request to God.

With thanksgiving. Thank you. I forgot what comes next. The peace of God which passes overstanding but guard your heart in your mind, Christ Jesus.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So when we're anxious, we should go to God in prayer. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Psalm 119 is very precious to me.

[48 : 38] And, you know, just God hemming you in before and behind. Knowing every moment of your life before it began.

His presence filling the whole universe. So that wherever you are, if you think you are too low or too high for God, you know who's already there. But it ends with, Search me about it.

Know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts or cares. Like anxious thoughts. Mm-hmm. And see if there's any grievous or offensive way in leaving the everlasting way. It kind of reminds me that God's afflictions are meant to change something in me rather than so often we want to change or we want God to change the circumstances around us.

Especially when, you know, sometimes our afflictions involve injustice. Yeah. Mm-hmm. But God also tells us to commit justice to him.

And usually that means waiting. Maybe, like, till eternity. And we're not really okay with that. That's, how could we be?

[49 : 49] Unless Christ bore every injustice on himself. And so then we just have to say, Okay, well that's something I need to change.

I need to be more like Christ, committing my injustices or even just my effects, my suffering. Sometimes suffering is meaningless. So that's, it comes seemingly out of nowhere by no human hand.

You know, natural disaster or a health problem. And so something in me needs changing. I need more trust, more strength, more faith in God.

That he loves me. Mm-hmm. That he cares for me. And that this is for me good. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

That's good work, brother. Thank you. Mm-hmm. Yes. I want to close with a story.

[50 : 56] And this is a story of Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield. In other words, he's known as B.B. Warfield. And some called him a brilliant theologian, a champion of confessional Christianity during his time at Princeton, a defender of the faith.

But before all these things, the people who knew him the best would say he was a faithful husband. And many know Warfield was a world-renowned theologian for almost 34 years until he died in 1921.

And he wrote famous books about the doctrine of the Trinity and the authority of Scripture. Some would say he was a formidable foe with his pen. But most people don't know what happened early in his life at age 25.

He married Annie Pierce Kenheed. And they took a honeymoon to Germany. And during a fierce storm while walking in the mountains, Annie was struck by lightning, permanently paralyzing her.

There was severe trauma to her nervous system, and she never recovered. And her health got worse as time went on. So imagine for a moment, just pause, you make your wedding vows.

[52 : 08] Then on your honeymoon, your spouse is permanently disfigured in a car accident, a paraplegic as a result. What do you do in that moment?

You made your vows. You promised that you'd be with that person. Well, this is the situation that Warfield faced. Writing about what gave him strength, he talked about God's faithfulness.

Romans 8, 28. He wrote about the providence of God in his life. The government of God ruling over all things, his controlling hands. He governs all so nothing but good can befall those whom he seeks to do good.

And he took comfort that even in our deepest groanings, too deep for words, the Spirit intercedes for us according to the gracious will of God. And Warfield knew in his heart that God was faithful to him, unwavering in his commitment to do him good.

He knew Jeremiah 32, verse 1, was true in his life. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness with all my heart and with all my soul.

[53 : 19] Remembering God's faithfulness to him reassured him in the presence. And because he knew that God was faithful to him, he in turn was faithful for 39 years to Annie.

And he seldom left the home for more than a couple hours during all those years in marriage. He was a faithful husband, imitating the faithful Savior he knew so well.

And this is the, this is what is going to allow us to endure in our trials, to know that God's steadfast love endures forever, even in our afflictions.

Christ is going to be with us, and he is faithful to us to the end. So let me pray and thank the Lord.

Father, thank you that you are faithful to us. Lord, thank you that your, your faithfulness reaches to the, as high as the skies, endures to all generations. Great is your faithfulness to your people.

[54 : 23] Oh, Lord, we do pray that's, in our afflictions, in our trials, our troubles, that we would, with faith, look to you and trust in your, your, your, your providence in our lives.

Help us to, to hope against hope, to look to Christ and to see that he will not leave us, nor forsake us in our troubles. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. Thank you, friends. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you all. There's one more class next week, God's glory.

And then, that's the end of our attributes of God class. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.