

**“Faithfulness”  
Galatians 5:22-23  
February 26, 2012**

<sup>22</sup>By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

**“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”**

Found in Hebrews 11:1, these words provide a definition of the word.

Faithfulness is the act of being reliant on our faith. What is the source of faith for Christians? Faith is a gift from God. God whose very nature is faithfulness gives us the gift of faith that we may be faithful.

Faithfulness is firm devotion to God, loyalty to friends, and dependability to carry out responsibilities. Faithfulness is something that all believers should display to the world in which we live.

Today, many are unfaithful. With unfaithfulness so present in our world today, faithfulness is desperately needed. That task falls upon us who are believers. If we who are of God fail to be faithful, then how can anyone else be expected to be faithful.

Where does faithfulness begin? It begins with God. For us who are Christians, our faithfulness begins with Christ.

Let’s go to Scripture. Isaiah provides many glimpses into Christ, His mission, and His ministry. In Isaiah 11:5, the prophet says, **“Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.”**

We’ve already established God’s faithfulness. Isaiah tells us that the Son, Jesus Christ, shall also be faithful. It is important to remember that the words that Isaiah used to speak of the coming Messiah were written 700 years before Jesus’ birth.

Notice that Isaiah described Jesus as both righteous and faithful. Righteousness is being in right relationship with God. Faithfulness is about being able to depend on God.

How do we know that Christ was both righteous and faithful? We know His faithfulness because of the cross. It was Jesus's willingness to do God's will regardless of the cost that affirms His faithfulness. How did that faithfulness come to pass? It came to pass because of Jesus' relationship to God. Christ was perfect and without sin. Christ sacrificed Himself to give you and me a chance to be in right relationship with God. Faithfulness led Jesus to the cross. Righteousness establishes that Jesus' sacrifice was not in vain.

In Revelation 19:11, John speaks of the returning Christ. John writes, **“Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.”**

Do you understand what John is saying? He is saying that Jesus rides the white horse. I grew up watching westerns like Gunsmoke and Bonanza. The good guys rode white horses and white hats. Jesus is that kind of hero. He will come riding in to save the day. He is able to save the day because of His faithfulness.

There is one more aspect of Jesus' faithfulness that we need to consider. In Hebrews 3:6, we read those words, **“Christ, however, was faithful over God's house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope.”**

The writer of Hebrews is again affirming Jesus' faithfulness. That faithfulness is directed toward God. If you will notice, however, the verse also speaks to our need to hold firm. In other words, Jesus's faithfulness helps our faithfulness.

We've seen Jesus' faithfulness. Now let's talk about our need for faithfulness. Again, faithfulness is being dependable, loyal, and full of trust.

In Proverbs 3:3, we find these words. **“Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.”**

The writer of Proverbs understood the importance of faithfulness. Not only does he use the word faithfulness, but he also speaks of loyalty which goes hand in hand with faithfulness.

How important is it to be faithful and loyal? The writer of Proverbs says that we should hold them around our neck and write them on our hearts.

Jesus brought home the importance of being faithful. In Matthew 23:23, Jesus said, **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.”**

These words are spoken in judgment of the Pharisees and their hyper obedience to the minutia of Law. Jesus is saying that instead of worrying so much about the Law, the Pharisees should have been concerned about the more important aspects of the Law. What is so much more important? Jesus said that justice, mercy, and faithfulness are what really matters.

All of us have heard of the need to be attuned to the main thing. Jesus is saying that one of the main things is faithfulness. As we have learned over the last few weeks, however, we must live out the fruit of the Holy Spirit. That fruit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness.

**How are you doing in terms of showing these fruits to the world? Are you making progress in living the kind of life which the fruit calls upon us to live?**

**I know it is hard. In fact, I find myself doing well in one area, but not so well in another. It almost seems that when I concentrate on one fruit that I have success in that area. Another area, however, seems to slide. It is apparent that living out the fruit of the Holy Spirit is difficult.**

**I want to close with a reminder of the importance of our faithfulness. The first part of the Book of Revelation involves messages to the Seven Churches of Asia. You may remember that I did a series on those messages around this time last year.**

**The Message to the Church at Smyrna is found in Revelation 2. It has something to say about faithfulness. John writes, “**Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**”**

**Being faithful will lead us to a wonderful reward. That reward is the “Crown of Life.” How can we hope for anything more than that?**

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