

Sunday August 23, 2020
FAITHFUL TO THE END

We live in uncertain, perilous and risky times.

2 Timothy 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.

We can see hard times are coming and it is something that we have to prepare for. As God's people we need to prepare for what lies ahead. We can expect that there will be greater tests of our faith. This can sometimes shake our standing in what we believe.

PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT:

1 Cor 16:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FAITHFUL?

Faithful means to be steadfast or consistent in your commitment or affection. A faithful person is one who stands by someone and is committed and does not waver.

Being faithful to the end means to hold fast to your commitment, to continue believing, to keep sticking to the end in times of trials, difficulties or hardships. That is what proves real faithfulness.

We understand faithfulness because this is an attribute of God himself. Faithfulness is one of God's inherent attributes- He is eternally reliable, steadfast, and unwavering

He is called Faithful and True (Rev 19:11) and so God stands by us and is committed to us in His Son Jesus

Faithfulness is an essential part of who He is

Psalm 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.

Hebrews 13: 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Deuteronomy 7:9 Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

Being faithful to the Lord and his standards is a prime necessity for believers

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

God expects us to be faithful to Him

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

I. LESSON FROM THE ISRAELITES: HEBREWS 3

The chapter 3 of Hebrews has been divided 3 sections:

- A. Jesus' faithfulness Vs 1 - 6
- B. Lesson of unfaithfulness from the Israelites. Vs 7- 12
- C. A call for us to be faithful Vs 13 - 19

A. Jesus' faithfulness

Hebrews 3: 1- 6

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope [a]firm to the end.

Verse 1 is a call to all believers who belong to God and who have a heavenly calling. We are asked to consider / perceive/ grasp fully or to fasten our thoughts fully onto the way that Jesus was faithful to God the Father. We have an example to follow in Jesus.

Verse 2 tells us that both Moses and Jesus were faithful to God as those appointed to a specific task for God's house, referring to the people of God.

Verses 3 – 6 But Jesus was far superior than Moses because Moses only saw the glory of God but Jesus is the glory of God. The glory of Moses was only reflective of Jesus' glory. We are part of this House if we are faithful and hold fast onto the victorious hope we have in Jesus.

JESUS DEMONSTRATED PERFECT FAITHFULNESS IN GOD THE FATHER

We look to Jesus because He is faithful in His person as the apostle and High Priest of the faith we confess and also because He is faithful in His position because He rules over God's house because of His sacrifice

Application: Our responsibility, then, is to "hold fast," to stand firm, to endure to the end, through whatever assails us because we call upon Him who is faithful in who He is as well as what he accomplished through what he did.

B. Lesson of unfaithfulness from the Israelites

Be Faithful

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,

8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,

In the day of trial in the wilderness,

9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,

And saw My works forty years.

10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,

And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,

And they have not known My ways.'

11 So I swore in My wrath,

'They shall not enter My rest.

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

Through these verses we see a shift in the focus to the story of Israel's sin in the wilderness.

Psalm 95 has been quoted in this section as the retelling of Israel's rebellion and refusal to enter the promised land.

Numbers 14 gives us the background. The Israelites and Moses are on the border of the Promised Land and at the threshold of entering into that which God had reserved for them. Moses sent twelve spies into the land to survey it. Ten of the spies did not think that Israel could take the land. They did not believe that God would keep His promise to give them the land, even though He had already repeatedly told Israel that He would. These ten evil spies convinced the rest of Israel not to go into the Promised Land, and Israel rebelled against God and Moses.

They fell into unbelief and went astray from God which proved disastrous.

Verse 7 is introduced to us as the words of the Holy Spirit- the Spirit says HEAR MY VOICE AND DO NOT HARDEN as Israel did.

Verses 8 through 11 God recounts how the Israelites had trouble staying faithful to Him in the wilderness despite the many miracles and wonders they experienced from the hands of God. They hardened their hearts, they tested and tried God. God was angry with that generation because their hearts went astray and they had not followed the ways of God and this made God declare an oath that he wouldn't let that generation enter the Promised land. God's anger was kindled against that generation on account of their unbelief. They refused to trust God for the great things He had promised, and were unwilling to persist in trust.

Verse 12 adds another plea and a warning that calls upon us to beware of having evil hearts of unbelief/ faithlessness. It says that a heart of unbelief is the first step to falling away from the God.

THINGS THAT UNDERMINE OR DISTRACT FROM CONTINUING IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD

1. Unbelief and doubt

James 1: 7-8 he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Doubt hinders us from receiving God's best. Unbelief can ravage our faith and displease God.

2. Lack of thanksgiving and complaining

The Israelites complained about the lack of water, lack of food, they grumbled about their meat, they grumbled about their trials, they grumbled about God and Moses. Paul warns us in

1 Cor 10:9-11 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition,

3. **Paying heed to discouraging reports**

Discouraging reports are a normal part of everyday life. It dampens our trust in God in God and His infallible Word. It takes our eyes off from God's truth. The ten spies that were sent to check the promised land went on to paralyze the faith of the Israelites in the wilderness with their reports which led to the terrible end of many in that generation.

4. **Sin and disobedience**

Sin and disobedience chokes our faith and alienates us from God. The only way we show our faithfulness to God is to live in obedience to Him in everything.

Application: we have a story to learn from the Israelites on what hindered them from continuing in unfaithfulness. We are also called to be cautious to not have a heart of unfaithfulness- because that can prove to be serious to our walk with God.

C. **A call for us to be faithful**

Hebrews 3: 13—19

13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said:

**"Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."**

16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Verse 13- We are to encourage and, if need be, admonish our brothers and sisters so that they might not develop evil hearts. We are to keep each other focused upon God and not upon the toil and strife of this world. That's the beauty of having a family of God together- it keeps us staying and being faithful

Verse 14 It encourages us to continue to stay faithful to the end because if we do we share in all that Christ has for us!

Just as much as the beginning of the race that counts it matters how we do at the end of the race.

NOTE It is good for us to note that we do not run this race or finish it by our own strength.

1 Corinthians 1:8 "He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He is an ever-present to help us today and to bring us through to victory so that we can share in all that belongs to Christ.

GOD DELIGHTS TO WALK US INTO OUR SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE WHEN WE REMAIN FAITHFUL TO HIM AND HIS PROMISES

The last few verses ends with the same reminder again of a people who rebelled despite the deliverance they saw.

II. GROWING IN FAITHFULNESS

a. Out of our love for God

Our faithfulness to God comes about because of the love we have for Him.

Proverbs 3:3-4 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.4 So you will find favor and good success[a] in the sight of God and man.

This verse helps us see how both steadfast love and faithfulness go together because by this we find favor and high esteem in the sight of God as well as others

b. By immersing in His word

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Our faithfulness to God comes out of our faith in God and His word. Faith is belief in the person of Jesus Christ and His word. Faithfulness is living in accord with that truth.

c. The fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control

Faithfulness t is **created** within us when we **allow the Spirit to work** in us. The only way we can have such faith is by the **Holy Spirit's influence**. He **testifies** to the truth of God's faithfulness and **impels** us to seek God.

d. Being faithful to God is not a feeling, it is a choice.

When nothing seems to go according to plan, it's **easy to give up hope**. Our first inclination is often to doubt God and question Him.

Psalm 119:30 I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations.

The verse shows that David is **making a choice**: in his darkest moments, he can either choose to be faithful and obey God, or choose to make his own way in the world.

III. PROMISES OF BEING FAITHFUL TO THE END

a. Become partakers of Christ

Hebrews 3:14 For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. (we are made partakers of Christ)

The word partake means to be a sharer or a participant or a partner.

Being a partaker of Christ means that we experience every spiritual blessing in Christ because by grace and through faith we receive it as an allotment/ a portion

The spiritual benefits that have come to believers have come because of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

- Accepted in the beloved (Eph 1:6)
- We were brought to God (I Peter 3:18)

- What belongs to God belongs to us (1 Cor 3: 22-23)
- No longer slaves but children (Gal 4:7)
- We have his divine nature (2Pet 1:4)
- An inheritance that doesn't perish (1 Pet 1:4)
- Joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17)
- Righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21)

b. Richly blessed

Proverbs 28:20 A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished."

God blesses a life committed to faithfulness. Examples are seen in the way God rewarded Joshua and Caleb.

c. Dwell with God

Psalms 101:6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me

God seeks out those who are trustworthy and honest; in those he can confide in and He gives them a wondrous privilege of being in close communion with Him.

d. Acts on our behalf

2 Chronicles 16:9 – "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."

This was spoken by the prophet Hanani to King Asa of Judah and recorded as an instruction for us. Hanani comes with a rebuke and chastises King Asa for not relying on God like he had done in the past and the fallout of wars that came as a result of that unfaithfulness.

God is looking for people whose heart is fully His and are loyal to Him. If we are faithful to God, He will show Himself strong toward us in all we do.

e. Crown of life

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation (trial), for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him"

Jesus gives the crown of life to those who persevere in faith during temptation, tribulation, and persecution. The crown of life is a reward for a life well-lived. It is an honor that Jesus bestows upon those who endure the trials and temptations of this life.

IV. REMAINING FAITHFUL TO THE END

a. Give thanks

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Being thankful in a difficult situation can be a hard thing to do. To be thankful rather than to complain takes a conscious act of the will.

Often our response is with murmurs and complaints when hard times come our way like the Israelites,

Philippians 2: 13- 15 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

b. Rejoice in the Lord

Along with giving thanks, we also are instructed to rejoice in all things.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Thanking God is an act of the will, but rejoicing is a response of the spirit.

c. Faithfulness requires patience

Romans 8.25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience..

Periods of waiting can develop patience because patience is one of the strongest manifestations of faith.

In the book of Hebrews, the Bible talks about those who through faith and patience inherit the promise.

d. Take your faith boosters- The Word

Ephesians 6:17 describes the Word of God as “**the sword of the Spirit**”.

John 6.63 Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life”-

As you meditate on the truth of God’s Word, which is living and active you can learn to effectively battle the enemy of your soul, Satan, with the sword of the Spirit.

e. Call upon Him

Trials and hardships awakens in us the need of God. He desires to work powerfully through our lives; therefore we must learn to depend on Him. God alone is to become our source of strength, provision, protection, and direction.

Psalms 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

CONCLUSION;

Paul writes,

I Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord

The words Paul uses here give us a way we can think about faithfulness to God. To be steadfast and immovable - is that we are not tossed about like the waves in your thinking about God. Abounding in the work of the Lord means that we love God and continue to serve and trust him.

We need to keep the end in mind as we journey through life. Paul says that “in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” All that we do here and now in this life is not in vain because, one day, Christ will return to honor us with our rewards.

Our faith is shaken during tough times, but we continue to build up our trust, we cling to Christ because we are saved through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Saved through faith and called to be faithful to the end.

Life group study guide

Investigate God's word together

1. What have been some of the distractions or hindrances that keep us from being faithful to the Lord? How can we seek God's help to overcome and rise above these hindrances?
2. The story of the Israelites rebellion and unbelief helps us see the outcome of their sin. How can we learn from their errors and build ourselves in our faithfulness to God at tough and difficult periods in our lives?
3. Study and meditate on the promises that God has for those who are faithful to the end.
 - Being partakers of Christ
 - Richly blessed
 - Dwell with God
 - God acts on our behalf
 - God gives us the crown of life.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>