



Daily God Walk

Virtues Series

Faithfulness

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Paul T. Smith

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:

- (KJV) – King James Version
- (NKJV) – New King James Version
- (TLB) – The Living Bible
- (TM) – The Message

Features of the Daily God Walk

Daily God Walk Online

We are now offering internet access to the Daily God Walk. We are posting the Daily God Walk as an e-book and giving our readers an opportunity to register to receive it monthly. At present we are only offering it in a format for the computer, but we will soon have it available for mobile devices.

Small Group Study Guide for Daily God Walk

So many people are responding to the messages in our devotional that we are now offering a study guide for devotion. These study guide editions have a second page to the devotion which includes:

- ✓ a *Message* section that capsulizes the message of the devotion;
- ✓ an *Affirmation* section which provides a thought for meditation and prayer and that supports the message of the devotion;
- ✓ a *Reflection* section which gives thought provoking ideas and questions to use for personal growth and to use in small group discussions;
- ✓ Finally, there is a section titled *My Notes*. This section has blank lines for you to write down your ideas and questions.

Small Group Coaching Online

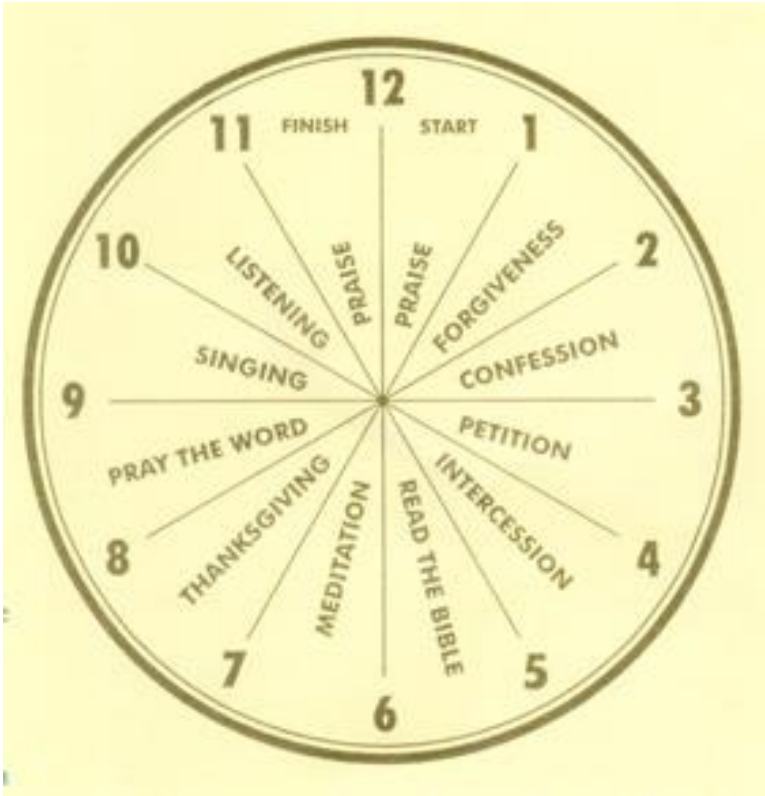
For many years a focus of our ministry has been small group meetings. We have found that spiritual growth takes place when small groups of believers gather to discuss the Scripture, pray together, share the issues of life and fellowship together.

That is our motivation for expanding our ministry to include small group coaching. If you lead a small group, sometimes called cell group, or if you would like to be a leader, I encourage you to check out our small group site:

www.dailygodwalk.org/small-groups.html

Prayer Clock

“Could you not pray with me for one hour” – Jesus



Praise and Adoration:

Matthew 6: - Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Psalm 8:1- O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.

"Father God you are holy and your name is holy. I worship and praise you from the time I get up in the morning until I go to bed at night, because you alone are worthy of praise.

Forgiveness:

Matthew 6:12 - Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Matthew 6:14-15 - If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive you

"Father, grant me a spirit of forgiveness that I might forgive those who have offended me."

Confession:

1John 1:9 - If we confess our sins; he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

"Lord, I have sinned. I ask you to forgive me for _____ And I will trust you to cleanse me from all unrighteousness."

Petition:

Matthew 6:11 - Give us today our daily bread.

Philippians 4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

"Lord, I bring you my needs today. I am trusting you for my daily sustenance. I am trusting you for my food, clothing, housing and transportation. I know that you are the provider and my source for all that I need."

Intercession:

2 Chronicles 30:18-20 - Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the Lord, who is good, pardon everyone who sets his heart on seeking God ~ the Lord, the God of his fathers ~ even if he is not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary." And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

Day One

Faithfulness Is A Fruit Of The Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit is... faithfulness... Against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. – Galatians 5:22-23

Steve was a good man, but he was also hooked on meth. He entered our program but he couldn't stay clean of drugs so we discharged him. Our policy was that when we put a person out they could come back in 30 days. Steve was put out four times. Then he became truly converted and began to live the Spirit life. That was many years ago and he is still faithful.

Faithfulness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. When we come to Christ the Holy Spirit is placed in us and as we learn to submit to his working in us we mature and begin to bear fruit. Our life may have been marked by wrong choices and inconsistencies, but when we yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in us he makes us faithful.

Many years ago as a young pastor my life was very inconsistent. I prayed little and spent very little time in God's word. Once I was praying about the inconsistencies in my life and the Holy Spirit impressed upon me the need to have a daily devotional life. I struggled with it for a while then I began to be consistent with prayer and Bible reading every morning.

As I developed consistency in visiting with the Lord every morning I began to notice that the rest of my life was taking on a new order as well. Finally I could see the fruit of faithfulness being produced in my life.

Living in the Spirit produces faithfulness to God's will for us. One of the things I have learned is that the Holy Spirit will only do in us what we allow him to do. If we are determined to live our way, he will let us, but he will have very little influence in our life.

The true test of our faithfulness is not in what we say we will do but in what we actually do in service to our Lord. Many have said, "I will go," but few have gone.

Prayer: Lord, it is not in my nature to be faithful to your way. I need the Holy Spirit working in me to produce the fruit of faithfulness. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Two

The Holy Spirit Enables Us To Be Faithful

If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel... continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness. – Colossians 1:23, 2:6-7

We who were once alienated from God, and were enemies in our mind because of our evil behavior, have now been reconciled to God through Christ (Colossians 1:21-22). And he is preparing us to be presented to God, holy and without blemish – if we continue in the faith. It seems that God's promises all hinge on, “if you continue.”

Over the years I have led literally hundreds of people in the sinner's prayer and all of them had good intentions. Unfortunately, we know which road is paved with good intentions. Most people want the benefits of being a Christian but don't understand the commitment that goes along with it.

We've all heard the argument that we are under grace so don't try to put us back under the law by requiring works from us. Folks who say, or think, such things don't understand the grace of God. We are indeed saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:9), but continuing in right relationship with God is determined by our own behaviors and lifestyle.

The message Paul wanted people to believe was that they could do nothing to earn right standing with God. They could gain that only through faith in Christ alone; but the other half of that message was that in order for a person to continue in right relationship with God they had to allow, and yes, pursue his Spirit for guidance and strength to live a life worthy of Christ.

You have received God's grace, but are you continuing in the faith? Remember that God promised Israel the land forever, but when they became unfaithful He took them from the land for a period of time.

God will not shelter us from being ensnared by sin and suffering the consequences of that if we are not willing to continue in right relationship with him.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace of faithfulness so that when I am tempted to do it my way I will surrender to your way. Amen.

Day Three

Be Faithful To Love The Brethren

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins... Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace.

- 1 Peter 4:9-10

I find it easy to love my natural brother. He is kind and considerate, and besides that he thinks I'm pretty neat. It's always easier to love those who love us in return, but there are some people that I know I should love, I try to love, but they are just a drain on my spirituality.

The verse today is calling us to use our gifts to serve our brothers so that we will be faithfully administering God's grace. What is God's grace? The Greek word translated grace is *charis*. *Charis* simply means gift, or favor. Thus we get the favor, or grace, or God.

To further understand grace we must also understand our position. First, we are all unworthy of God's favor, and the Bible tells us that. In Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace." All of us are unworthy, but his gift of favor is available to all.

When we are considering whether to love an "unworthy" brother we must remember how unworthy we are of the grace of God and how he shows us his love none the less. It is easier to love our brother, even those who do not return our love, when we can realize that God loves them in the same way he loves us.

When we faithfully love the brethren and use whatever gifting, or grace, that God has placed in us to serve them, then we release God's grace upon them. When we do that we are faithfully administering the grace of God.

Give yourself a grace check. Look inside yourself to see if you are being faithful to administer the grace of God to all or are choosing who to love and who to avoid. Loving and serving releases God's grace.

Prayer: Lord, I do need your grace so that I can love my brother as a faithful servant. Help me to faithfully administer grace. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Four

Faithful To The Faith

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel. – Philippians 1:27

There are some traditions that tell us Paul wrote this book to his beloved Philippians while imprisoned in Rome, chained between two guards. He didn't know whether he would ever see them again, but he longed to get the news that they were continuing in the faith and that they were standing firm in the Gospel that he had delivered to them.

Paul's concern was that the body of Christ would become fragmented. He knew that if they were not faithful to each other, and stand as one, they could easily become victims of the enemy who would deceive them one by one and lead them away from the faith that brought them freedom.

Being faithful to the faith requires a commitment that can only come through a deep personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Continuing in the faith also requires that we remain in fellowship with other believers. When we stand alone we are one voice in a wilderness, but when we stand together we are a mighty chorus proclaiming the glorious gospel of Jesus the Christ.

I can remember several times that I have been reading the Bible and all at once I saw something that I had never seen before. My new found revelation was leading me into a new doctrine. Then, I shared my ideas with my faithful friends who are committed to the gospel of Christ. They didn't see what I saw. In fact, they saw error in my revelation.

When my faithful brothers pointed out my error I had a choice. Do I stand with my brothers or do I follow down this trail that leads away from the simplicity of the gospel? Because I am committed to stand as one with my brothers and contend for the faith of the gospel, I was saved from error. There is safety in standing faithfully with the brethren.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the ability to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus the Christ, and to walk in unity with other believers. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Five

Hope Produces Faithfulness

We rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. – Romans 5:3-5

The fifth chapter of Romans has wonderful teaching on being justified by faith. It also teaches us that faith in Christ will take us to a place of suffering with Christ. It is of this suffering that Paul writes, “We rejoice in our sufferings because we know” what suffering produces.

Suffering gives us perseverance which builds character and gives us hope. And hope does not disappoint us because we know God has put his Spirit into our hearts and the fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. Can you see the correlation? Faith leads us to Christ; we share in his suffering; our faith enables us to stand fast which builds character; character then gives us hope for the future.

It is this hope for the future which gives us the motivation to be faithful. I have noticed that people who have no hope are not faithful to anything. They have no reason to persevere. Life for them is just suffering without the faith. Life for them is a series of sad events which lead to further loss of hope. How sad it is for people who do not believe in a power that is greater than themselves.

What is even more sad is to see people who have claimed a faith in Christ and who fall back when the going gets rough. Their faith is not strong enough to endure suffering and they surrender their hope for something less than adequate.

No one promised us that the road to heaven would be a path of ease, but we were promised that if we walk this path we will be given the ability to stand against anything that comes against us. Hope gives us the courage to faithfully endure the trials of this journey of faith.

Prayer: Lord, I am often frustrated with trials that seem so unnecessary. Grant me the faithfulness necessary to endure. Amen.

Day Six

Hope Is Our Motivation For Faithfulness

We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure... We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. - Hebrews 6:11, 19

I have counseled with people who have said this, “When I wake up in the morning I have no reason to get up. I have nothing left to live for.” There may have been times when you felt that way too. When we get to the point that we have no hope we do not have a reason to go on. Hope is our motivation for continuing in our journey of faith; hope motivates us to faithfulness.

Not too long ago when my heart was really sick and I needed physical healing there were times when I felt my work for God was over. My regular prayer as I went to sleep was, “Lord, it seems my work is done so just take me home.” I felt that my life was over.

Many of us have felt that way. We have lost something that was as important to us as our very life and we just didn’t feel like going any further. It may have been a spouse, a job, a child or a ministry, but we just didn’t see the use of continuing on. Then we are reminded of the purpose of our hope.

Paul is reminding us of the value of being diligent to the very end so that our hope is sure. All that we hope for must be based upon the promise of God and our faith in Christ as Lord. Anything else will leave us alone and hopeless. We are faithful because we are motivated by hope.

If our relationships are based upon faith in the promise of God we can rest assured that he will be faithful; I live not only for this life but for the life to come. If our work, or ministry, is based upon faith in the promises of God we can rest assured that whatever happens is according to his divine purpose.

We have learned that he is faithful and because we know that he is faithful we have placed our hope in his promise. It is this hope which becomes the anchor that holds us steady and gives us the courage to be faithful.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to stay focused on the promise and the hope that is in Christ my Lord. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Seven

Faithfulness Is The Ability To Serve One Master

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. – Matthew 6:24

Jesus is posing a problem in this passage that has been common among people since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. The dilemma all of us face is this; will I trust my own resources or will I trust God?

The word translated “money” in the NIV is translated “mammon” in the KJV. The word actually means, “something that is trusted in.” The common idea is money, that is, trusting in money in place of God, but the actual meaning is much broader than just money. Anything that takes the place of trusting God is mammon.

In the original sin Adam and Eve disobeyed because they desired to set themselves up as the primary authority for their lives. They wanted to be in charge of their own destiny so God let them be in charge, but they couldn’t go their own way and stay in his garden.

God is gracious and will let us go our own way, but we cannot do that and expect him to open the gates of heaven and pour out upon us his blessing. His blessing is reserved for those who have decided that he is Lord and have arranged their life around that truth.

Far too many believers have not come to the place where they trust the Lord with all their heart and because of that they waver between trusting God and trusting their own ability. In that context mammon is their own will and their sinful nature. We can’t trust our own abilities and trust God at the same time.

We know that is what Jesus was teaching because he begins the next verse with, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.” He concludes this segment with verse 33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.” Do you trust mammon or God?

Prayer: Lord, help me to be single minded and not to waver between trusting you and trusting my own resources. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Eight

God Is Faithful To His Covenant

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 commands. – Deuteronomy 7:9

In this time of wavering loyalties, short lived promises and fading hope, there is one who can be trusted to be faithful. There is no end the love of God. His love, which drove him to covenant with anyone who would believe in him, extends to every generation that will serve him.

No one expresses the faithfulness of God better than Carol Cymbala in the song she wrote for the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, *He's Been Faithful*:

Through Every Pain, Every Tear, There's A God Who's Been
Faithful To Me..

When My Strength Was All Gone , When My Heart Had No Song,
Still In Love He's Proved Faithful To Me.

Every Word He's Promised Is True;

What I Thought Was Impossible I've Seen My God Do;
He's Been Faithful, Faithful To me..

Sometimes in our zeal to promote the faith of Christianity we forget that the whole purpose of God revealing himself to man was to express his love. Some seem to think that God holds a grudge against mankind and puts multiple roadblocks in place to restrict man's ability to reach him. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It was Man's choice to follow his own way in disobedience to God that caused him to be separated from God. From the very beginning of this separation God has desired to show his love to man, but man continues to insist upon living his own way. God has realized our inability to remain faithful to him so he sent Christ to be the answer to our unfaithfulness.

When we come to Christ God places his Spirit within us and we are enabled to live faithful to him. God made a covenant of love with man that exists forever and all he asks of us is that we live a life committed to serving him.

Prayer: I thank you Lord for being faithful to me; now grant me the grace to be faithful to you. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Nine

God Is Faithful To His Promises

Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he has promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave. May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us. – 1 Kings 8:56

Even the best of friends will sometimes fall short of being faithful. Many times I have had people promise me something and they were fully intending to follow through, but something went wrong and they just weren't able to do what they said they would do. The failure of a friend is always disappointing.

Proverbs speaks of a friend that is closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24) and that friend is the Lord God. Yes, even a brother may fail at times, but our Lord will never fail.

This passage was written on the occasion of the dedication of Solomon's Temple. Solomon was reminding the people that God was faithful to his promises. 1 Kings 8-9 and 2 Chronicles 3-7 record the events surrounding the dedication of the temple. These chapters record Solomon's speech to the people, his prayer to the Lord and the Lord's response to his prayer.

God had told Israel, through Moses, that there would be a time when they turned away from him, and when they did there would be consequences. He also told them that when they repented and turned from their ways He would turn back to them and again bless them. Solomon was reminding the people, and God, of those warnings of consequence of sin and of God's promise to forgive and restore.

God's response to Solomon's prayer: "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land, or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). God is faithful .

Prayer: Lord, your promise is that when we have sinned and then come to repentance you will forgive us and heal us of our sin. I thank you in Jesus name.

Day Ten

The Lord's Faithfulness Is A Refreshing Drink

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. – Psalm 89:1-2

There is a river in California called the Yuba River. Once on a vacation we camped along the Yuba way up in the Sierras. It was there, along beside the road that we came to the source of this mighty river. Very cold and fresh water was flowing out the granite wall that was along beside the road. It wasn't a river there, it was just a spring coming out the side of the mountain.

I have never heard of that spring, which was the beginning of a mighty river, never running dry. It is always there and the water is always fresh. Along the way there are other springs that join the river along with other small creeks and rivers. Finally the Yuba joins the Sacramento River on its' way to the ocean. Before it reaches the Pacific Ocean it is a mighty river hundreds of yards across, and it began as a spring coming out of the side of a mountain.

Such are the blessings of the Lord that the psalmist is writing about in this passage. God's love and blessing forever flow from the mountain that is called Christ. It is always a cool and refreshing drink when we taste of his goodness.

As we journey with him his blessings, which seem small at first, are added to daily until they become a mighty river of grace that flows from the heart of God. When we think of his goodness and mercy we are inspired as the psalmist to sing of the Lord's great love forever.

There are times when I long to walk beside the cool waters of the Yuba River and to be refreshed by the cool sweet taste, but there is no longing like that which takes my soul in search of the cool and refreshing grace of God which flows abundantly from the throne of the Most high.

Let us drink – his grace is free, his love is everlasting and he is faithful.

Prayer: Lord, your everlasting love never fails to refresh my weary soul in every trying time. Thank you, In Jesus name, for your faithfulness.

Day Eleven

He Is Faithful To Believers

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.

- 1 Corinthians 1:9

“God, who has called you into fellowship with his son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.” God is faithful, but his faithfulness is to our eternal hope. The scriptures clearly teach that we will have trials and troubles in this life, but for those whose trust is placed in God through Christ there is an eternal reward.

At the end of a funeral service I conducted some time ago, as the family was moving past the casket, a brother of the deceased moved close to me and quietly spoke into my ear, “We do not grieve as those who have no hope.” There were a number of brothers in the family and apparently they were not people of faith, except the deceased and the brother who spoke quietly of the hope he had in Christ.

“He will keep you strong to the end.” Our hope is not in escaping the challenges of this life, but our hope is in what lies beyond this life. We know that in ourselves we do not have the ability to live worthy of Christ, but in the righteousness that we are given through faith we are made worthy.

We know that God requires a lot from those who would enter his eternal kingdom. Yes, he asks even more than any of us can give. That is why he gave us Christ. Jesus did what none of us could do so that we could be blameless on that day. Because our lives are hidden in Christ we will be presented to God with his righteousness and his alone.

Remember the nightly prayer of children? It would do us all good to recite that prayer when we go to bed at night. “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray they Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake I pray the Lord my soul to take.” Rest assured that he will, because our God is faithful.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the hope that we have in Christ and I ask you for the faith to stand strong in Christ. I know that I cannot stand before you blameless in my own strength, Grant me grace. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twelve

He Is Faithful To Those Who Suffer For Him

Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ... So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful creator and continue to do good. - 1 Peter 4:19

There seems to be a trend among believers today to look at any suffering as the result of being out of the will of God. If a tragedy strikes we want to ask, "What did I do to deserve this?" If we become sick we begin to examine our life to see if we have any unrepented sin. If we are not prospering it must be that we are not living in faith. Such is the mindset of many today.

What does the scripture teach on this subject? Job told us that man lives but a few days and they are filled with trouble (Job 14:1). In his writings Paul often refers to the needs of believers who are living in famine and persecution. What does he say of those sufferings? He writes, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18).

I do not know anyone who has lived in the faith for very long who could not tell stories of trials and struggles in their life, but those same people will tell us that through it all God is faithful.

Pastor Anna, a mighty woman of faith, served God for many years under very strenuous circumstances. Her husband died when her children were young and she was not only left to raise her children alone but she was also called to be a traveling evangelist. She answered that call at a great price.

Then, in the prime of her ministry, a cancer developed in her brain. She could no longer minister, and finally the Lord received her home. Many of us did not understand God's will in this matter, but we do know this one thing: Our creator is faithful. Our hope is not in this life but it is in our faithful creator.

Prayer: Lord, It isn't always easy to trust you in the midst of trial and suffering. Grant me the grace to look beyond my fears and tears and trust your faithfulness. Help me so see that my present suffering is not worthy to be compared with eternal glory. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Thirteen

God Is Faithful To Protect Us

Pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. – 2 Thessalonians 3:3

There is a school of thought in America that we are becoming a pagan culture and that we will soon come under severe persecution as Christians. That may be true, but there is another side of this issue.

The early church was birthed into an established religious culture that was not prepared to accept change. The religion of Judaism was expecting a Christ, but Jesus did not fit the description of the Christ they expected. They were not ready for change and they rejected the Christ.

The religious community persecuted believers in Jesus as the Christ and as a result the church spread to other regions of the world. As Believers fled Judea and the persecution there they went to other countries and began to preach Christ to people who knew nothing about Judaism or their Messiah.

The Christian faith flourished in this world where only idolatry, intellectualism, and paganism were the dominant influences. What was it that gave this new religion such influence? Everywhere Christ was preached people were healed, delivered and born again.

There is no better place for the gospel to be preached with power and wisdom than in a world with an empty place where faith should be. You and I must not fear those whose motivation is to destroy the faith because the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in them. There are evil people who are out to destroy faith in God, but God is faithful and he will protect us.

The Christian faith is spreading rapidly among people groups who are not already schooled in Christian thought. People who have been influenced by demonism, idolatry and yes, intellectualism are being won in great numbers when they see the power of God demonstrated and lives changed.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the courage to proclaim your gospel with power and the faith to trust you to be faithful to protect me from the evil one. Amen.

Day Fourteen

Christ Is A Faithful High Priest

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in services to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. – Hebrews 2:17

We know the story, we've heard it since we were children. Adam and Eve sinned and were put out of the Garden, away from the presence of God. Since that time man has been separated from God and has been trying, by his own means, to reconnect with the creator.

Every religion that man has practiced has reconnecting with God as its basic purpose. There is only one religion, however, that shows the extent to which God is willing to go to facilitate man being reconciled to himself.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life.” Christ is at the very center of all that God has ever done on this earth. All of the dealings that God has had with man since the beginning of time have pointed toward Christ. All of the dealings God has had with man since Christ have pointed back to him.

Why is Christ the centerpiece of history? Why do we in the western world measure time as being “before Christ” (BC) and “In the year of our Lord “ (AD)? It is because we have learned that all things, both before his birth and after his life on earth, point to him. Christ came to reconcile man to God.

The Apostle Paul writes, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Christ ever remains a high priest making intercession for our sins. It is the love and mercy of God that draws him to faithfully bring us into reconciliation with himself through faith in Christ who is our faithful high priest.

Christ, the eternal intercessor, calls us to faith and repentance so that we can be reconciled to God.

Prayer: Lord, I am convinced that I cannot become reconciled to you in my own efforts. Thank you Christ the faithful intercessor. In Jesus name, amen.

Faithfully Serve The Lord

It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him .

- Deuteronomy 13:4

Deuteronomy is a book of promises and warnings. The Ten Commandments are repeated in Deuteronomy as well as instructions about loving God and our neighbor. Also there is warning about listening to those who would claim to be a prophet but who preach another god.

Our verse today is taken from a passage that is warning about false prophets who would lead Israel to follow other gods. Israel is warned that they are to follow the Lord God and him alone. They are admonished to obey the commands of God and to “hold fast to him.”

We are faced with the same challenges today as Israel faced thousands of years ago. There are still people trying to convince us that our way of life and faith is outdated and that there is a new and better way to live. We are encouraged to abandon the restrictions of an oppressive religion and be free to express ourselves.

Unfortunately, Israel was not faithful to follow the Lord and him alone. Their history records many times that as a nation they turned to serving other gods. The gods they invented to follow allowed and promoted lifestyles that were contradictory to what the Lord had commanded.

Things aren't much different today than it was then. Many in the church have traded the commands of the Lord for license to live as they choose without restriction because, after all, we are under grace now.

The Lord knew how difficult it would be to hold on to him in the face of the temptations we would have and that is why he said to “hold fast to him.” The Hebrew word translated “hold fast” is *daw-bak*. It means to pursue hard and be joined to. Being faithful to God in this time of compromise and easy living is not easy but we must pursue him hard and be joined with him,.

Prayer: Lord, It isn't easy serving when the world calls so me to follow the way of folly. Grant me grace to be faithful to you. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Sixteen

Faithfulness Is Single-Minded Service

If any lack wisdom, he should ask of God...But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man... is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. – James 1:5-8

I have a friend who pursues life with gusto. When he has a goal he goes for it with all that he has, for a few days. Then he sees a flaw in his plan so he revises it and again goes after it with abandon, for a few days. In just a little while he revises his plan again and goes after the new and revised plan with passion. Everyone around him stands scratching their head wondering what in the world he is doing, but it is perfectly clear to him, for a few days anyway.

Most of us know someone who is that way. They are good people, but their plans change so often that they rarely achieve anything lasting or notable. James calls this kind of person double-minded. Their relationships are rocky at best, their walk with God is hot and cold and their service to others is sporadic.

James is trying to tell us that single-minded service requires wisdom and we must seek God for his wisdom. When we have God's wisdom the winds of new ideas won't shake us. We will be committed to the task before us and we will not look at the waves which rage around us. Our hope is anchored in God and as we faithfully pursue his wisdom we are faithful to follow his direction without turning to the left or to the right.

I have noticed that some people appear to be double-minded, but in reality they are just desperately trying to find the one thing they can identify as God's will for their life.. For those people I have some simple instructions; just be faithful to do what you know to do and God will honor your faithfulness by giving you clear direction when your faithfulness and his plan intersect.

When our purpose is to do his will we will seek his wisdom and once he has revealed himself we will hold to that wisdom without wavering, without doubt, and without changing it.

Prayer: Father, grant me the grace to be single-minded in my pursuit of you. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Seventeen

Rewards Of Faithful Service

If you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today – to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul – then I will send rain on your land in its season... so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

– Deuteronomy 11:13-15

All that God asks from us is that we are faithful to love him. He knows that if we love him with all of our heart and soul we will be faithful to obey his commands. When we are faithful to love him in that way then he is faithful to adjust the circumstances of our life for our ultimate benefit.

People who stand outside the faith question God asking, “What kind of God is it that demands people to love him and serve him according to his rigid demands?” The question itself shows a lack of understanding the purposes of God.

First of all, God is simply saying that you can choose between what you as a fallible finite being can accomplish and what the I Am who is infinitely infallible can achieve. And, besides that, the laws of God are not harsh and without meaning in our daily walk.

Any structured society has rules of conduct that govern our relationships and behaviors. Every community has laws regarding sanitation; God has laws of sanitation. Communities have laws governing property rights; God has laws governing property rights. Communities have laws governing personal rights; God has laws governing personal rights. So what is the difference?

Society’s laws simply say that if you obey we will leave you alone; God’s law says that if you obey I will move heaven and earth to bless you. The best that society can do is allow you to enjoy the fruit of your labor – God says I will multiply the fruit of your labor. I don’t know about you, but as for me I’ll take God’s law.

Prayer: Father, I thank you for your law that brings us to your grace. Grant me the grace to serve you faithfully. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Eighteen

The Lord Shows Himself To Faithful Servants

If you love me, you will obey what I command... Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and show myself to him. – John 14:15, 21

I have learned by experience that those who fight the commands of God do not know God. In fact, they are at war against God trying to make their own will divine and themselves the god of their own creation. The result is that their god is so limited in scope that they cannot know the true God.

Without faith it is impossible to come to God (Hebrews 11:6) therefore, God will not reveal himself to those who do not believe. That sounds like a catch 22 doesn't it? This conundrum of facts serves to reinforce what Paul tells us about how faith is acquired in his book to the Roman believers.

Romans 10 tells us that hearing precedes believing (“how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard”) and believing (accepting the truth) precedes faith (an active commitment to the truth). When we have heard the truth about Christ and have accepted what he has taught we are ready to receive the revelation that leads to salvation.

As we gain experience with God and his Christ, our faith and love for him matures. It is this growing love that moves him to reveal himself to us more fully. One song writer penned these words, “I keep falling in love with him over and over again.” As he shows himself to us we have a growing appreciation of his loveliness.

It is not impossible for an unbeliever to develop faith in God, but they must be willing to listen in order to hear his word of faith. All too often the greatest hindrance to unbelievers gaining faith is their own preconceived ideas that they are not willing to reexamine. A person must be willing to hear the words of Christ so that the power of those words can be released to them and faith can grow up in them.

Prayer: Thank you for showing yourself to me. Grant me the grace to live in obedience to your will and to walk in your love. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Nineteen

Blessing A Faithful Servant

He went on to tell them a parable, because... they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He said, "A man of noble birth went to a far country... He called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas, "Put this money to work," he said, "until I come back."
- Luke 19:11-27

This man was willing to make quite an investment in his servants. Just to give a little perspective, a mina was about 3 months wages. He was actually putting in the hands of each of these ten servants nearly 3 years of wages. Compare that to what you would earn in three years.

His purpose for investing in these servants was so that he would receive a healthy profit when he returned from his journey. This nobleman was a shrewd business man and expected his servants to exhibit the same business acumen, and most of them did.

The nobleman was not only shrewd in business, but he valued faithful servants and was not afraid to reward those who did well. Upon his return he called the servants to give an account of the money he had invested in them. As they gave their reports he rewarded each one according to their ability. One had gained 10 more minas and he was given the governorship of 10 cities. Another had gained 5 minas and he was given responsibility to rule 5 cities.

Jesus was telling this parable because the people were expecting that he would institute God's kingdom on earth at that time. The message he was trying to convey to them was that he was going to go away and while he was away he expected those that he had invested in to be faithful to his investment.

His message was, "Don't wait for my return before you get to work. Work now and honor the investment I have made in you." God has placed in every believer gifts of service for the purpose of benefitting the kingdom and we are expected to use those gifts.

Not all of the servants received a reward. There was one who was banned from the kingdom because he was not responsible to the gift. Think about it.

Prayer: Lord, help me to see that you have called me to serve on a long term basis. Help me to render faithful service until you return. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty

A Faithful God Expects Faithful Servants

Men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. – 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

God has placed a sacred trust in the hands of those who believe in the name of Jesus the Christ. The plan of God from the beginning was to send the Christ into the world to provide an opportunity for mankind to be reconciled to him. The hope of God for the world was in the work of the Son of God and his hope for the world today is in those who are called the body of Christ.

God's hope for the world is a sacred trust. Through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of the Christ we gain access to heavens abundant supply and our primary responsibility to that blessing is that we are to be messengers of this hope. We are God's ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5).

I once heard a pastor make a very brave statement. He said something to the effect that God's primary purpose is not our happiness; his primary purpose is to reconcile the world unto himself. Unfortunately, far too many believers today are in the faith because they want the blessing, but they are not willing to accept the responsibility that comes with the message.

Do you remember the story of the three servants in Matthew 25? Two of the servants worked diligently and invested their master's money in ways that produced a healthy return. The third servant was only thinking about himself and out of fear hid the money the master had invested in him.

When the master of these servants returned he blessed those servants who had been faithful, but punished the one who did nothing with his money. He was given a sacred trust yet he did not think about what the master expected of him; he only thought about himself. Paul makes this point in just a few words; "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

Have you been faithful to the investment God has made in you?

Prayer: Lord, sometimes I am motivated by the blessing rather than the responsibility. Help me to be faithful to this sacred trust. In Jesus name, amen

Day Twenty One

Faithfully Guard What You Have Received

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you. – 1Timothy 6:20-21

Paul had invested much in Timothy. As a young man Timothy traveled with him on his missionary journeys. As he matured Paul gave him increasing responsibilities. At the time Paul writes this letter he is in prison and it is believed that Timothy is the lead elder of Ephesus. Paul is writing what he knew might be his final instructions to his son in the gospel, Timothy.

The heart of a father writes, “guard what has been entrusted to your care.” In that time, just as today, there were many who had ideas of what was truth and what should be taught. Paul knew how ineffective it would be to keep trying to convince teachers of false teaching so he warns Timothy to just stay away from them.

I have watched leaders get so involved in “fighting for the cause” that the cause itself has been neglected. Our message is simply reconciling people to God through faith in Christ and the finished work of Calvary. When we get involved in the current controversies and turn our passion toward defending against the straw men that the enemy of the faith put before us we lose something.

The only way we can faithfully guard what has been given to us is to declare the righteousness of God through faith in Christ with the power of the Holy Spirit producing signs and wonders which confirm the truth. The truth is proven by the Holy Spirit not our ability to argue a point.

Continue in faith and guard the truth with a passion. We not only guard the truth by being careful ourselves but we also must remember that we must disciple and mentor faithful believers and teach them to passionately guard the truth with their lives.

Prayer: Father, all too often I get caught up trying to convince others rather than simply declare the truth with the power of the Holy Spirit. Grant me the wisdom and grace to just preach and practice the truth. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty Two

Abraham – A Man Of Faith

The scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: All nations will be blessed through you. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham the man of faith. – Galatians 3:8-9

Abram was living in the land of his father, minding his own business, when God interrupted his life by calling him out from his family and away to a land he had never seen before. From that time Abram's life was marked by a faithful pursuit of the God who had promised him a future.

What is the standard by which we measure a man? We tend to measure a man by his achievements, or lack thereof; God measures a man by his faithfulness. Abram, who was later renamed Abraham by God, is considered the father of the faithful.

When God changed Abram to Abraham he also changed the man. Abram means exalted father and represents a position of honor, but Abraham means father of a multitude and speaks to the progeny who would follow.

God promised Abraham, the father of the faithful, that he would be the father of many nations and that has come to pass. The three major religions of the world, Christianity, Judaism and Islam all trace their roots to Abraham.

Did Abraham ever fail God? Yes, on more than one occasion Abraham fell victim to human reason and did things that proved his humanity, but he never surrendered his hope and kept pushing toward the promise of God.

Those of us who believe in the God of Abraham are also blessed with the same promises. Even if we have failures along the way we will see the fulfillment of God's promises if we remain faithful to follow him. God's faithfulness secures our hope and our faithfulness assures God of our sincerity.

Prayer: Lord, you don't have to change my name, just change my heart so that I will be faithful to you. I know that you are faithful, now grant me the grace of being able to reflect your faithfulness in my life. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty Three

Moses - A Faithful Servant Of God

Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. – Hebrews 3:5-6

Moses was a man among men, yet he was called the meekest man on earth. How do we reconcile those two statements? How can one be a “man's man” and still be meek, or humble? Have you heard the advertising slogan, “Real men eat quiche”? A real man will do what he sees as the right thing to do regardless of what others think about it.

True humility and meekness is identified as being committed to a principle that is greater than yourself. When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and called him to lead Israel out of Egypt he became committed to the call of God. From that day Moses continued steadfast in the call to lead Israel out of Egypt.

God is looking for that same kind of commitment today. He is looking for men and women who will hear the call of God to lead his people and respond. In fact, he is calling people beyond being committed to his purposes, he is calling people to be his dwelling place.

Moses was faithful to the house of God, but God is calling us to be his house. Moses was looking for a place to plant the house of God, but through Christ the house of God is now the body of believers who are inhabited by the very Spirit of God.

Do you get the picture? If we will walk in humility, and be faithful to the hope of which we boast, then we are not just the keepers of the house of God – we are the house of God.

God calls us to the same level of commitment as Moses had and he enables us to walk in that meekness as we are submitted to the work of the Holy Spirit who inhabits us.

We are the house of God – we must be committed and faithful to God's purposes for his house.

Prayer: Lord, help me to understand that as your house I am to be faithful to the call you have placed in me. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty Four

King David - A Faithful Man With Faults

I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not done evil by turning from my God. All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. - 2 Samuel 22:22-23

God himself declared that David was a man after his heart (Acts 13:22), but frankly, I have a hard time with that. Remember It was David who had one of his captains killed so he could have the man's wife and cover his sin.

A man who would commit adultery with another man's wife and then have the man killed when he found out the woman was pregnant with his child doesn't sound like the poster boy for those who are after the heart of God, yet, God saw something else in David.

God saw the David who fell on his face when confronted with his sin and cried out to God for forgiveness and restoration. Psalm 32 describes the agony of his soul while his sin was hidden and Psalm 51 describes his journey of repentance when his sin was revealed.

It was not the heart of hidden sin that God applauded, but the heart of contrition and repentance that got the attention of God. None of us can stand before God and say, "I am pure, I have not sinned," and there are far too few of us who will stand before God and declare, "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge" (Psalm 51:4).

Yes, David sinned horribly, but his repentance was deep and thorough. We have many examples of men who have been caught in sin and said "I'm sorry," but they have not shown the kind of brokenness that David showed.

David could say, "I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not done evil by turning from my God" because he had allowed the Holy Spirit to shape him into a man after God's heart.

You and I have sinned, that's for sure, but God doesn't evaluate us on whether we have sinned, but rather on how we respond to the reproof of the Holy Spirit. I pray for the kind of spirit David had.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to not just say, "I'm sorry," but to be truly repentant over my sin. I want to be a man after your heart. I ask for this grace in the lovely name of Jesus. Amen.

Day Twenty Five

Elijah - A Faithful Prophet

Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him"... Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left." - 1 Kings 18:26

Can't you just see Elijah, the prophet of God, standing on a hill in front of the people, beard blowing in the wind, clothes a bit dirty from being on Mount Carmel on his face crying out to God, waving his staff and crying out, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." What a picture.

If there was ever a time when prophets like Elijah were needed it is certainly today. The message of salvation from the ravishes of sin and the world system which promotes self gratification has been so watered down that many believe they can have the world and Christ too. We need an Elijah who will cry out, "You can't have them both - you must decide which side of that divide you will stand upon."

Even if we have to stand alone, and many times that is the case, we still must stand. On one occasion the prophet Isaiah declared, "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all" (Isaiah 7:9). That was never more true than today.

The world is telling us that preaching against sin is hate speech and if we don't accept every lifestyle that is promoted then we are guilty of hate crimes. Unfortunately, far too many believers are listening to the rhetoric being spewed out by those influenced by the world system and out of fear, or in some cases compromise, they are being quiet about sin.

A famous quote by President Franklin Roosevelt is, "All that is needed for evil to prevail is for good men to remain silent." To paraphrase that statement, "All that is needed for sin to prevail in the church is for spiritual leaders to remain silent."

God, gives us Elijah's who will stand against the world system.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I confess to being guilty of being silent while others promote a compromise message. Grant me grace to stand against evil and declare the righteousness of God. In Jesus name.

Day Twenty Six

Joshua Makes a Faithful Choice

Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord... Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

- Joshua 24:14-15

There were only two men who were above the age of 20 when they left Egypt that finally crossed over Jordan into the promised land. They were Joshua and Caleb, two faithful servants of the Lord who followed Moses without complaint.

It was Joshua and Caleb who were among the 12 sent to explore the promised land. Joshua and Caleb were the only ones who declared they could take the land. The others trembled in fear at the thought of attacking a well entrenched people. Joshua chose to believe God would give them the victory.

It was 40 years before Joshua, who succeeded Moses as leader of the people, would lead Israel across the Jordan into the land of promise. 40 years of faithful service as he watched the people fall into one pitfall of sin after another, yet he remained faithful to his call.

In our reading Joshua is now an old man. He was about 80 when he led Israel across the Jordan and he had led Israel in conquering the land for about 30 years. Now at about 110 years of age he is making his last call to Israel to abandon serving other gods and choose the LORD God and him alone to serve.

Today God is looking for men and women who will stand against the tide of compromise and declare the one and only way to be at peace with God and call the people to make a choice: Will you serve the gods of this world system or will you serve the LORD God?

Will you be numbered among those who will say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"?

From the time Joshua crossed out of Egypt into the Journey of faith which led him into 40 years of wilderness wandering, Joshua had set his mind to be a faithful servant and that's all God asks of you.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to be faithful to your call and to choose to serve you faithfully every day. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty Seven

Jehoshaphat Makes a Wise Choice

Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea... Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. - 2 Chronicles 20:1-3

Several kings had joined together and formed a vast army to attack Jerusalem. When Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, heard the news he was alarmed. However, his alarm did not throw him into a panic, instead, he turned to prayer.

Jehoshaphat had established a record of being faithful to God and trusting him. The prophet Jehu had commended him for ridding the land of Asherah poles (symbols of idolatrous worship) and for setting his heart on seeking God (chapter 19:3).

He had also gone out among the people all across the land leading back to faithful worship of the Lord God. He appointed judges in the cities and charged them, "Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery" (chapter 19:7).

He appointed priests in Jerusalem to administer the Law of the Lord and gave them this order: "You must serve faithfully and wholeheartedly in the fear of the Lord" (chapter 19:9).

His pattern of faithfulness prepared him for this major challenge and he made the right choice. Without hesitation he turned to the Lord. Previous kings had relied on their own abilities, or had formed alliances with other kings, but Jehoshaphat had learned to trust God.

Jehoshaphat has shown us that in the times of difficulties in our life, if we will trust the Lord he will come through. And, all of those difficult times we face are preparing us for the times of greatest trial. When we have trusted God in the small stuff it is much easier to trust him in the big stuff.

Oh yes, Jehoshaphat got an answer to his prayer. God said, "You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you."

Trust Him and He will come through for you too.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to trust you. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty Eight

Peter Becomes A Rock Of Faithfulness

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.

- Matthew 16:16-17

It was not difficult for Jesus to convince Simon to follow him. As he was walking by he simply said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" and Simon left his nets to follow Jesus.

That was Simon. Impulsive and quick to make decisions which would greatly affect his life. It was his impetuous nature which caused him to draw his knife and make an attempt on the life of the soldier who came to take Jesus away. And it was his impetuous nature which caused him to deny Christ just a few hours later.

Impulsive and impetuous by nature, Simon was certainly not a good candidate to be called Peter, a rock. His nature was to be a reed easily shaken in the wind, easily moved by the moment, how would he ever become a rock?

When Jesus gave him a new name he was making a prophetic statement of who he would become in the future. A very significant event would take place which would forever change Simon, the reed shaken in the wind, to Peter, the rock.

What was this life changing event? It was the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon him and the others who had gathered that day. His life was forever changed by the power of God. On that day he stood before the ones who had crucified the Christ and boldly declared their sin.

The thing which changed Peter from being a fickle follower to a faithful follower of the Christ was the empowering gift of the Holy Spirit.

If you have been struggling with inconsistency in your walk I encourage you to prepare your heart to receive a filling of the Holy Spirit. Your life will be forever changed.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, come and fill me now. Grant me your strength and the power to be faithful in my journey of faith. In Jesus name.

Day Twenty Nine

Paul - Faithfully Suffering For Christ

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- Philippians 3:10-11

There was no greater witness to the gospel of Christ in the first century than the Apostle Paul. He lived by this motto: I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

Paul was responsible for carrying the gospel throughout the region we now call the Middle East, Asia and Europe. In three missionary journeys he introduced the message of Christ to much of the world outside of Jerusalem and Judea.

Was it all glorious? Was he hailed as the great messenger? No, far from it. 2 Corinthians 11 chronicles much of the hardship and persecution he endured while preaching the gospel of Christ to a world filled with tradition and idolatry.

The record shows that he was beaten with the whip five times, beaten with rods, stoned and shipwrecked three times. He was in danger in the city, in the country, from rivers, from bandits, at sea and on and on the record goes (2 Corinthians 11).

What was his attitude in the middle of all this? "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

Faithful is a word that describes Apostle Paul, but that word alone is not enough. He was not just faithful but he was zealous to serve and welcomed the suffering he endured that he might win some to Christ.

I am challenged by the suffering Paul endured. He was faithful to preach the gospel even when he knew that preaching would cause him to receive great persecution.

God is calling us to the same kind of faithfulness. We have the story of Paul as an example and a pattern to follow. Follow it.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to weigh the cost of the gospel against the sacrifice of my own desires but to serve faithfully and zealously. Amen.

Day Thirty

Faithfully Hold To The Hope And Encourage Others

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. - Hebrews 10: 23

There is a tendency for us to become weary of holding tightly to the faith and the lifestyle promoted by God's word. Sometimes we just get tired of holding on when others whose lives are not in line with Scripture seem to be doing so much better than we are.

Have you ever got to feeling that way? I have. When I start to feel that way I find that the remedy is to get around other believers who can share a good testimony and encourage me in the faith.

Something happens when two or more believers gather to share the goodness of the Lord. There is a synergy which takes place. Synergy is the effect of combining the efforts of two or more which produces a result greater than the total of each individual effort.

For the believer synergy is what happens when two or more who are committed to being faithful to the faith come together to talk about the Lord. If I have committed to be faithful, and you have committed to be faithful, then when we come together our combined commitment is stronger than if we are just trying to stand alone.

There have been times when I have been a little down and I visited a faithful older saint and that older saint would just lift me out of the doldrums by the witness of their testimony.

What is the message here? The only way we can remain faithful and hold unswervingly to the hope we have been given in Christ is to gain strength through fellowship with other believers. It is when we come together for fellowship that we spur one another on to love and good works.

I confess that I am weak in this house of flesh and I need you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, to share your strength with me so that I will be faithful to the hope that we have in Christ.

Oh yes, you can come to me for encouragement too.

Prayer: Lord, I want to hold faithfully to the promise and the hope you have given me. Grant me the grace to reach out to others to both be encouraged and to encourage. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Thirty One

The Reward Of A Faithful Servant

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness. - Matthew 25:21

This verse was excerpted from the parable Jesus told of the man who gave three of his employees varying amounts of responsibility and funds to care for while he would be gone for a long time. He expected these employees to use the funds he gave them wisely and gain a profit for him.

Two of his employees did just that. They made wise investments, worked hard and doubled what they had been given. To both of those faithful servants he invited to share in his wealth. But, there was one employee who didn't do anything with the funds he had been given.

It is interesting that the employee who was not considered faithful didn't do anything bad, he just didn't do anything good. He was given a responsibility and it scared him. In the parable Jesus has him saying, "I was afraid." He didn't waste the money, he didn't spend it on himself, he just hid it because he was afraid.

I know many believers who have held to the faith and have not wavered, but they have not done anything with the gifting that God has placed in them. The words I hear so often are, "I just can't do that," and, "I'm afraid if I try that I will fail." So, they just don't do anything but "hold on to the faith."

In the parable Jesus has some choice words for the unproductive servant. "You wicked, lazy servant... you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers... Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Faithfulness is more than just holding on, it is being active in the business of the kingdom. I encourage you not to be driven by your fear but to be moved with commitment to the progress of the kingdom of our God.

Only the faithful receive the reward.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to not only be faithful to hold on to you, but to be faithful to serve in your kingdom. Grant me the grace to overcome my fears and invest what you have invested in me. Amen.

Tips On Leading A Small Group

One of the purposes of the Study Guide Edition of the Daily God Walk is to provide a tool for leading small groups.

At the end of each day's devotion there are four additional sections: Principle, Affirmation, Reflection, and My Thoughts. below is an explanation of how to use each of them in a small group discussion.

Principle: This is a principle pulled out of the devotion for the day. Ask the group to express how they can see this principle in the devotion then use that to kick off the discussion.

Affirmation: The affirmation is an example of how we can begin to internalize the principle of the devotion. We can repeat the affirmation in a prayer making it personal. We can also just repeat it throughout the day while giving thought to the principle.

Reflection: These statements and questions are designed to help guide discussion and make application of the devotion in the daily life of the participant.

My Thoughts: This section is just blank lines. Encourage your group to "Journal" their thoughts on the devotion each day. By writing out the thoughts that come from the devotion and the discussion on the devotion the individuals will find that their walk of faith is enhanced.

My experience is that we usually only make it through one or two of the daily devotions at one group setting, but it is good to encourage the group to work through the principle, affirmation, reflection and my thoughts section for each daily devotion at home.

For more information on using the Daily God Walk Study Guide Edition for small groups, go online at:

www.nhmresources.org Or: www.dailygodwalk.org

We value your comments on the Daily God Walk. It would be a blessing if you sent us an email with your comments about our program. Email us at: paul@nhmresources.org