God is Faithful

Final in the series: Giving Thanks for God’s Character – Nov 2019

# Scripture: Psalm 36:5-9; 89:1-8,14-16

# **Key Thought: The Psalms teach us four key lessons about God’s** faithfulness

# Introduction

In 1995 I had the privilege with my family of visiting Old Faithful Geyser in Yellowstone National Park. Why is it the most famous geyser. It is not the biggest, nor the tallest. But it is famous because it does its thing on schedule and you can depend on it to squirt water and steam into the air at regular intervals. Hence the name- Old Faithful.

Today our subject is the faithfulness of God. Notice the poetic superlatives for God’s faithfulness in the two Psalms for today.

* + 1. Ps 36:5 reaches to the skies
		2. Ps 89:2 established in heaven itself
		3. Ps 89:5 God’s faithfulness is praised in heaven too.
		4. Ps 89:8 “your faithfulness surrounds you”
		5. Ps 89:14 love and faithfulness go before you” - Picture a royal procession with courtiers or people of honor preceding the King. Here in the psalm, the courtiers -those going ahead of God - are pictured as two of God’s great characteristics-love and faithfulness.

**Four lessons about the faithfulness of God.**

# God’s faithfulness means He is totally dependable.

## The Hebrew keyword

Today we are studying another Hebrew keyword from the Psalms (“Emunah”).

It is the same root word from which our modern word AMEN meaning “so be it” or “may it certainly be true” is derived.

Then original use of the word in the Bible is when Aaron and Hur held up Moses hands. The text says, “his hands remained steady till sunset” that is they stayed firmly in place. The army could depend upon the hands of Moses holding the rod up so they could fight under God’s blessing. (Ex. 17:12)

## God’s character

So, we can infer that when the term is used in the OT of God it refers to God’s total reliability - his complete dependability.

The meaning of faithfulness is Illustrated later in Ps 89 as the writer explains God’s faithfulness to his promise to David (vv. 33-37).

* + - 1. Faithfulness means God will continue his love toward David’s line v. 33
			2. God will not violate his covenant v. 34
			3. It means he will keep his word v. 34
			4. It reminds is that God word is reliable v.35
			5. In fact, the coming of Jesus and the spiritual kingdom he established is the ultimate demonstration of the faithfulness of God to the promises made to David - promises that David’s line of kingship would be eternal.

There is an interesting comparison passage in Psalm 119

Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.
Your faithfulness continues through all generations;
you established the earth, and it endures. Ps 119:89-90 NIV

Notice how in the Psalm, the faithfulness of God is in between two other things that endure. God’s Word endures and the earth endures. God’s faithfulness is dependable, firm, unchanging like those things.

## Our response

* + - 1. Rejoice in God’s faithfulness
			2. Depend upon his faithfulness

Let’s say we face a situation where we have a financial need. It is worrying us to death. We’re being careful with our spending; we’re looking for ways to increase earnings; we’ve prayed about it; but we still have a need. And now it is bothering our sleep. . . Now you remember that God has said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.” Depend on that - more accurately, depend on the one who is faithful to his promises!

* + - 1. Ill. (#2004 in 7700) An elderly saint was dying. As he lay suffering he confided to his pastor, “Oh pastor, for years I’ve relied upon the promises of God, but now in the hour of death I can’t remember a single one to comfort me.” The pastor sensed that the enemy was trying to disturb the old Christian’s faith so he replied gently, “My brother, do you think that God will forget any of his promises?” The dying man’s face lit up again with the certainly of faith in the faithfulness of God. “No, no he won’t! Praise the Lord. Now I can fall asleep in Jesus and trust God...”

## We are not depending on our piety but on God’s faithfulness

Friends, our faith is not in our piety, but in the faithfulness of God.

God’s faithfulness does not depend upon our faithfulness!

If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. 2 Tim 2:13 NIV

Piety and devotion comfort us, enlarge us and direct us, but we depend upon God’s faithfulness.

# God’s faithfulness is intertwined with his love.

## Love and faithfulness go together

Another thing we want to note this morning is the close relationship between the faithfulness of God and the love of God.

Both the word for God’s covenant love (Hesed) and the word for faithfulness (emunah) occur 7 times in Psalm 89 - 5 times in the same verses - 1,2,24,33,49 plus v. 14 where a synonym (emeth) is translated faithfulness (NIV) and appears with the word love.

Because God is faithful, his love can be depended upon. Because God is loving His faithfulness is filled with kindness. So, His love is a faithful love and his faithfulness is a loving faithfulness.

 “All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.” Psalm 25:10

## Our love and faithfulness are related too.

Think about our marriages

Our love for spouse helps us be faithful. If it’s not faithful love we have, it’s not really the kind of love we should have.

Looking at it from the other side, our faithfulness to our promises to our spouse makes our love dependable and lasting and secure.

So in marriage, faithfulness and love go hand in hand.

# God’s faithfulness gives us confidence in His help.

The third thing to affirm as we study God’s faithfulness is that thinking about the faithfulness of God affirms our faith.

## Gifts from God because of his faithfulness in Psalm 36

* + - 1. He preserves us. Ps 36:6
			2. He is our refuge. Ps 36:7
			3. He provides a “river of delights.” Ps 36:8
			4. He is the fountain of life. Ps 36:9
			5. He is our light. Ps 36:9
			6. The summary is in Ps 89:15 where we are told,

“Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.” Ps 89:15

## NT assurances about the faithfulness of God

* + - 1. God’s faithfulness means he can keep us strong I Cor 1:8,9

He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Cor 1:8-9 NRSV

* + - 1. God’s faithfulness will provide a way through temptation I Cor 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.
1 Cor 10:13 NIV

* + - 1. God’s faithfulness can keep us ready for Christ’s coming I Thess. 5:23,24

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. 1 Thess 5:23, 24 NRSV

* + - 1. God’s faithfulness assures us of his protection II Thess 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. 2 Thess 3:3 NIV

## When we think of the faithfulness of God, all the promises of God are made more valuable

 “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ.”
 II Cor. 1:20

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Luke 11:9

A quote from the great preacher C. H. Spurgeon “Far above all comprehension is the truth and faithfulness of God. He never fails, nor forgets, nor falters, nor forfeits his word.” (Treasury of David Vol. 1 p. 159)

# God’s faithfulness inspires *us* to be faithful.

## God asks me to be faithful

* + - 1. Prov. 20:6 - faithful person is rare find

Many claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful person who can find?
Prov 20:6 NIV

* + - 1. Matt. 23:23 – When Jesus is upbraiding the Pharisees for neglecting the important things, he mentions three important things – justice, mercy, and faithfulness. That should send a strong message to us as to how important God considers faithfulness to be.
			2. Matt 25:21,23 - In the parable of the talents, Jesus told about rewards at the Judgement seat, the Master says to the approved servants, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
			3. Jesus’ instruction to the churches then located in what is now Turkey - given in Revelation 2:10 “Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

## What does faithfulness look like in us?

* + - 1. Integrity - keeping our word - not bending to convenience against principle.

Congressman Brooks Hays, who refused to sign the “Southern Manifesto” resisting school integration, was defeated in his Little Rock, Arkansas district in the next election. His son telephoned him after the defeat, “Dad, I’m prouder of you in this defeat than I ever was in your victories.”

* + - 1. Can be depended upon to carry out our assignments

Tribute to Willard (LI-FR-FA)

* + - 1. Perseverance -
				1. Heb. 11:27 says that Moses - “persevered because he saw Him who is invisible.”

Story of Sharon Marshall - (LI-FR-FA)

# Conclusion

## What does it mean to you that God is faithful?

Are there some situations in your life, in your service to God that you have been trying to handle on your own. Worrying, fretting, making yourself literally sick - as if God were not faithful? Christians do worry – too much!

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil 4:6-7 NIV

In these moments ask God to give you faith in the God who is faithful.

## How are you doing in faithfulness?

* + - Faithfulness in your Christian testimony?
		- Faithfulness in your marriage.
		- Faithfulness to your word?
		- Faithfulness to your tasks at work - at church - in the community?
		- Faithfulness to persevere.

Remember, faithfulness is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) so God will help us to be faithful. In these closing moments, ask God to inspire you to faithfulness like his in just that area of your life.