

Faithful and True:
Relying on the Character of Jesus
Rev. 19:11

Good morning! Belated Happy Valentine's! I hope you're all still in a mood for love even though Valentine's Day is past already. This is still Valentine's weekend anyway.

Let me tell you a story about an elderly couple one Valentine's Day. Abe was 100 and Sarah was 90. Abe wanted to express his love to his wife. He thought the best way to do it was just to say how much he appreciated her. And so, over dinner, he leaned over to her and said, "Sarah, you are tried and true."

His wife didn't look up. Actually, she was hard of hearing. So, Abe repeated his words, this time a little bit louder, "Sarah, you're tried and true."

This time, Sarah looked up but with a quizzical look on her face. So, Abe said it one more time, at the top of his lungs, "Sarah, you're tried and true."

Finally, Sarah heard him and shot back, "I'm tired of you, too."

Folks, people may get tired of you but there's someone who will always be faithful and true to you. That is Jesus. Even when everyone leaves you, someone will always stay with you. Jesus.

We're on the fifth part of our series on "Who is Jesus?" We're looking at the titles of Jesus that tell us who Jesus really is. We learned that Jesus is the Word of God, he is the Light of the World, he is the Alpha and the Omega, and he is the Good Shepherd.

Today, we're going to look another title which we see in the book of Revelation. Please turn to Revelation, the last book of the Bible. I want us to read together Rev. 19:11, "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True." (Rev. 19:11)

John, the writer of Revelation saw a vision. It is the vision of a horse rider and a name or title was given to him, which is Faithful and True. This vision is a prophecy of the end times when Jesus comes back to earth with his army of angels as a conquering hero. That's the symbolism of the white horse. In the ancient world, a king who conquered an opposing army rode a white horse in the victory or triumphal parade.

Before Jesus died on a cross, he rode a donkey, a peaceful symbol, but in this verse, he rides a horse which is a symbol of war and power. If you read the following verses from 12 to 21, you will see that Jesus leads an army of angels to wage war against the devil and his minions.

Let's look at it beginning verse 19: "Then I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. The beast was captured, along with the false prophet who had performed signs on its behalf. By these signs the false prophet had deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped its image. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. The rest were killed by the sword that belonged to the rider on the horse and that came from his mouth, and all the birds gorged themselves with their flesh."

Now, I'm not going to do an exposition of the last days like who is the beast and the false prophet, which I'm reserving for a future series, but what I want you to see is the import of this passage for every believer. What we obviously see here is that in the end Jesus will emerge victorious and be hailed as the King of King and Lord of Lords. In fact, that title appears in this same passage in verse 16.

And for us living in the here and now, it also means that whatever you're going through, Jesus has already conquered for you. In fact, that's what he assured his disciples in **John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may**

have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Jesus overcomes for us because he is Faithful and True. Faithful and True are two words that are interchangeable. When applied to Jesus, they mean that Jesus is faithful to his people. In other words, he adheres firmly and devotedly to his followers. And he is true to his promises and character. In other words, he will never break any promise he makes, and he will always stay faithful. The Bible says, “If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” (2 Tim. 2:13)

So, this tells us that you need not be afraid, whatever trouble you’re in, or whatever trouble is out there, you may be having financial troubles, health troubles, family troubles, office troubles, even church troubles, you can have peace in the midst of all these troubles because the conquering hero, Jesus, is with you. Amen? Even when the coronavirus is currently troubling the world, you can have peace because Jesus is in control. Amen? But wash your hands always, ok?

Now, how is Jesus faithful and true to us? Let me count the ways. For this, let us turn to Psalm 111. In this passage, we see how Jesus, who undeniably is our God, show his faithfulness to us in five ways. What are these?

I. His Provision

Psalm 111:5 reads, “He provides food for those who fear him.”

This verse may actually refer to the time that God miraculously fed the Israelites with manna in the desert. And he fed them not only for one day, but for forty years! Day in and day out, God never failed to drop down manna from heaven. God knew what they needed. And God provided faithfully.

Are you worried at the moment where your next meal will come from? Are you worried that because your salary is not enough or that because you don’t have a job that your family might miss a meal? Let me tell you one truth, Jesus knows

what's going on. He sees you and watches over you. As a parent would not let his child go hungry, so Jesus would not let a child of his have an empty stomach. If he fed the Israelites for forty years, couldn't he do the same thing for you? King David believed that God always provides when he said in **Psalm 37:25, "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread."**

Let us turn to Matthew 6 and listen to what the Lord Jesus says.

Beginning in verse 25, we read, and please open your Bibles to Matthew 6:25-27, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

So, Jesus is faithful through his provision. Second, he is faithful through

II. His promises

The second part of verse 5 reads, **"He remembers his covenant forever."** The word covenant here comes from the Hebrew 'Berith.' This word means to reach across, like a crossbar. God's covenant or promise is like a strong cross bar across the heavens reaching from eternity to eternity, all the while protecting man under it. The covenant here in verse 5 refers particularly to the covenant that God made with Abraham. God promised Abraham when he called him out of his country that he will make him the father of all nations. And that from his seed will come the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though it seemed impossible for Abraham's wife Sarah to bear a child in her old age, God fulfilled his promise.

God is the great promise-keeper. He never breaks a promise. We can depend on his promises for they are absolutely reliable. A promise from God is a statement we can depend on with absolute confidence. Someone said, "God's promises will

not break if you lean on them.” 1 Samuel 15:29 declares, “He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not man, that he should change his mind.”

God is not fickle-minded like many of us. He is committed to his commitments. When he said he will never leave you nor forsake, that’s what he means exactly. He’ll stand by you in whatever circumstances. Sometimes we may feel that he isn’t there. But he is there even though we may not see him. The important thing is that we don’t depend on our feelings. But on the facts of the Bible!

The Bible is full of promises for us to claim. Let us hold on to his promises because they will help us to cope with life’s difficulties.

Jesus is faithful and true because he provides, he keeps his promises. He is also faithful because of

III. His protection

Verse 6 reads, “He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations.”

As the Lord led the Israelites through the wilderness, he showed them that he cared for them like a hen does with her chicks by protecting them from their enemies all around them. The Israelites were just a tiny nation with no organized army and yet they defeated nations bigger than them like the Amorites, the Moabites, the Midianites, and the Ammonites. But, of course, it was the Lord fighting for them. They had no strength or power to boast of.

They were like ants in the land of giants. Yet, the impossible happened because as the Lord says in Zechariah 4:6, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.”

And so the Lord showed the power of his works to Israel and to the nations around them. But the best part came when God gave the land of Canaan to them

through the leadership of Joshua. This happened when God instructed them to go around the walls of Jericho for seven days. On the seventh day, they shouted and the walls fell down. It was easy after that. Nation after nation came under the sword of Israel.

Do you feel afraid at the moment? Do you have anxieties about the future? Are you in a very tight situation that you think there's no hope anymore? My friend, Jesus says that he will give you his peace in the midst of troubles. He says in **John 14:27**, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Let's go now to the fourth way Jesus shows his faithfulness. And this is through

IV. His Precepts

Verses 7 and 8 say, "The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness." Precepts mean commandments. The Hebrew word used is Dabar which means to lead, to guide, to drive as flocks to pasture. David says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul." From this we can see that God gives us his commandments for our own good. So that we may walk on the straight and narrow way. So that we may find joy and comfort in our journey.

"We all like sheep have gone astray," Isaiah says. So, we need God to direct our paths. And he does this through his word. He loves us so much that he doesn't want any of us to go astray. The precepts we found in his word are there as signposts for us to follow so that we may not lose our way.

The Ten Commandments are there, for example, to show us how we can honor God, our parents, and our neighbors. In the New Testament, we find some

more instructions from the Lord Jesus and some of his apostles about how we should conduct our lives.

Psalm 19: 8 says, “The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”

Finally, we come to the fifth way in which Jesus shows his faithfulness. And this is through

V. His Perfect Sacrifice

Verse 9 says, “He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!”

This verse is talking about the time that God redeemed his chosen people, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt. This story is told in the Old Testament in the book of Exodus. There, we see how the Lord bought his people from captivity by the death of the first-born sons of Egypt.

In the New Testament, God has also provided redemption not only for the Israelites but for the whole world as well. The New Living Translation renders verse 9 as “He has paid a full ransom for his people.”

Ransom means “to free from captivity by paying a price.” Every one of us is a slave of sin and are condemned to die. We cannot save ourselves because we are the prisoners, we are the ones that need to be ransomed. Therefore, God came in the person of Jesus Christ to die for our sins. He paid for our sins by his own blood—his was a perfect sacrifice.

He wasn’t obligated to do that. But because he loves us so much and doesn’t want anyone of us to go to hell, he came to save us.

This is the high point of Jesus’ faithfulness. He sacrificed his own life for us so that we can be forgiven of our sins. The Bible says, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

Then, on the third day, the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead. And he ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us in heaven. His resurrection signifies that he has conquered death forever. That those who will follow him will also conquer death forever. They will never die. They will be with Jesus in heaven for all eternity. No more tears, as they say. Isn't that a wonderful prospect? That is why Jesus is your conquering hero, the white horse rider who is faithful and true to you. Always.

Now, the big question is: If Jesus is always faithful to me, am I faithful to him? We know that he will always be faithful even though we are unfaithful, but does that really help us? Do we go on sinning just because we know he will forgive us? Do we disregard reading the Bible, praying, coming to church, forgiving others, loving others just because Jesus will give us a pass? You see, becoming a Christian doesn't mean having a license to sin, having a license to do what we want in life. There is a price. And we must be willing to pay the price. And mind you, Jesus will not give us a pass. There's a consequence to our unfaithfulness. I found that out when I was young.

Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23) What does it mean to take up his cross daily? What does it mean to follow Jesus? What then is the picture of faithfulness to Jesus?

Now, being faithful to Jesus doesn't mean becoming a great evangelist like Billy Graham or serving him overseas like Hudson Taylor or building a big church like Rick Warren. Being faithful to Jesus means

1. Making him #1 in my life.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:37-38, "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and

follow me is not worthy of me.” I guess there’s no doubt about it that Jesus is telling us that he must be our no. 1 priority. He must take first place in our lives.

As we have already established in this series, Jesus is God. He is God of the Old Testament. He is God of the New Testament. And because of that he deserves to have first place in our lives.

I have shared with you before the story of Nabeel Qureshi, the former Muslim who became a Christian and then became a staunch defender of Christianity. It took him 4 years before he decided to turn over his life to Jesus. As a Muslim, it wasn’t easy for him. Although intellectually he knew that Jesus is God, he couldn’t easily surrender his life. But he did. Let me share with you his experience in his own words.

So, if you’re not yet a Christian, and you’re like tottering and couldn’t make a decision to follow Christ I hope that spoke to you.

But many of us here are Christians already. So we say to ourselves, Jesus is my #1 already. Question is, is he always #1? Is he still #1? You know what I’m talking about. Because our lips may profess, but our hearts may digress. The worries of life, the materialism of this world, the temptations of the flesh may have taken the place of Jesus in our hearts. Our affections are no longer toward him but toward the world and the flesh. I hope we can really say that Jesus is our first love and that love has not waned.

How do you know that Jesus is still your #1? Jesus is #1 in your life, when all your activities would naturally center around him, your aspirations, your goals, your desires, your interests. You would spend more time with him than with the TV or internet or anything that would preoccupy your mind other than him. You would like to please him more than anyone else. That’s why it is important it is important to always commune with him through his Word, the Bible, and prayer. Do we read the Bible every day? How is your prayer life?

Being faithful to Jesus means making him #1 in my life. It also means

2. Giving him control over my entire life.

This is something that's hard for us to do. Because we are all control-freaks. At home, we fight over the remote control. On the road, we drive like Nascar drivers like me. But the Bible tells us to offer every part of our being to God. I like the Message paraphrase of Romans 12 where it says, *"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life--your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life--and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him."*

As Christians, God has called us to a higher standard. We shouldn't live the way the world does. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:1, *"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."* The way to do that is to give him control over our entire lives. Then, and only then, we can say that we're faithful to him.

Now, giving him control over our lives is easier said than done. As we give him control, the enemy is also at work trying to gain control of us. And that is the problem. The devil is working overtime. If you're a Christian, you can expect attacks from the enemy. He doesn't want you to grow. He doesn't want you to be effective in God's kingdom. The Bible says in 1 Peter 5:8, *"Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack."* He attacks us through discouragements and deceptions.

But folks, you need not be afraid. Because the Bible says, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31 NIV) Just give control of your entire life to God and he will take care of you. And finally, being faithful to Jesus means

3. Doing the task he has assigned you.

So, wherever you are and whatever you may be doing, whether it's big or small, whether it's visible or not, you can be faithful. Like setting up chairs on Sunday morning, cooking food for our fellowship meal, picking up people,

teaching our kids, practicing songs, playing an instrument, printing the bulletin, folding the bulletin, and the list goes on. God has given each of us a gift that we must use for the building up of his church and for his glory. Peter says, *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”* And the Bible says about God in Psalm 25:18, *“To the faithful you show yourself faithful.”* It means God will give you the grace and power to carry out the task he has assigned you.

Folks, in the end, what I want to say is this. Jesus is faithful and true to each of us always. And, in return, let us be faithful and true to Jesus always. He deserves nothing less.