

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor Rolly Estabillo
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Key Verse: Psalms 111

“God is Faithful in Many Ways”

What is faithfulness? The dictionary defines it as loyalty. And loyalty carries with it the idea of being trustworthy, steadfast, reliable, and dependable. A faithful person is unchanging, immovable, rock-solid in his character. Now, I'd like you to think of someone you know on this earth who is faithful through and through. Someone who never lied, someone who never broke a promise, someone who always kept an appointment, someone who can be depended on 100% of the time. Did you come up with someone? I know that's difficult, if not impossible.

You see, we all know that faithfulness is a trait that is most desirable but at the same time lacking in all of us. We all want to be faithful but we always fall short. “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak” (Mt. 26:41). Aren't we all like that at times? We don't want to lie, but we do it anyway. We don't want to break our promise, but we do it anyway. We want to be reliable, but we fail too in this regard.

We live in a world of broken promises. People don't follow up with their commitments. Like a man who leaves his wife for another woman; a dad who doesn't show up in his son's important game because of too much work; a company that has to recall a product; politicians who squander the people's money; countries who pursue war despite pronouncements of peace. The list goes on.

And we all know about this famous comedian who has been plagued with sex scandal for more than a year. Prior to this, he was pictured as a loyal and respectable family man. Upon learning of his indiscretions, one news commentator asked, "Is there anyone out there who is what he claims to be?"

That's a thought-provoking question. "Is there anyone out there who is what he claims to be?" I'd like to suggest one name you can trust – Jesus Christ.

In John 14:6 he says, "*I am the truth.*" In John 18:37 he tells Pilate, "*I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.*"

The Bible contains several words for truth, the most important one being the Hebrew word Amen, which means to be trustworthy or sure that others can lean upon it. Amen, btw, is one of those words that is adopted universally by major languages in the world like English, German, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and, even Tagalog. Amen is derived from the root "Aman" which means to be firm or solid in the sense of permanency or faithfulness. It connotes stability, firmness, or certainty. Every time we say amen we are really saying, "It is certain" or "Yes, it is absolutely true."

Therefore, to say "God is true" is the same as saying "God is faithful." In fact, the Bible calls Jesus "...the Amen, the faithful and true witness". (Rev. 3:14) Here's a simple definition of God's faithfulness. *God's faithfulness means that because he is the truth, everything he says and does is certain.* That means he is 100% reliable 100% of the time. *He does not fail, forget, falter, change or disappoint.* He says what he means and means what he says and therefore does everything he says he will do. We could not say this about any person on earth. Only God is faithful through and through.

This morning I'd like to share with you five ways in which God shows his faithfulness. Of course, there are so many other ways but I can only talk about five in the time we have this morning. I hope to encourage some of us who may going through some challenges in life and are having difficulty in believing that God could help them.

In the passage we just read, the psalmist is rejoicing because of God's faithfulness. He remembers the great works of the Lord (verse 2).

He remembers the Lord's glorious and majestic deeds (verse 3). And he remembers also that the Lord is gracious and compassionate (verse 4). He actually begins by saying 'Praise the Lord' which is Hallelujah in Hebrew. Praise the Lord is often abbreviated PTL. There was a time that another acronym became popular. This was PTLA. Do you know what it means? Do you know how it came about?

The story goes that a Bible teacher, Frances Gardner-Hunter, who is a woman and known for her saying 'Praise the Lord' often, climbed up the stage after being introduced. Suddenly, she slipped and fell on the floor. After picking herself up and fixing her hair, she said with a big smile, "Praise the Lord, anyway!" In fact, she wrote a book with that title.

Now, going back to verse 1, the psalmist says that he will extol or praise the Lord in the assembly. The psalmist here must truly be feeling so joyful because he is moved to testify about God's goodness in front of people.

Now, do we praise the Lord not only in good times but in bad times as well? Are we thanking the Lord when the storms of life come upon us? Are we praising the Lord anyway? If that's hard for us to do, the rest of the message I hope will remind us that God is always beside us no matter what, and we'll begin to praise the Lord no matter what.

So, let me give you the first way in which God shows his faithfulness. God shows his faithfulness through

I. His Provision

The first part of verse 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 exactly 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, God knows what's going on. He sees you and watches over you. As a parent would not let his child go hungry, so God 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.*"

God, of course, provides not only food, but also money, shelter, clothes, and even a car. He is the great provider, you see. I remember the story of a friend of mine in Australia, who is also a pastor. He said that while he was still in Bible school, he went to Canada to visit an uncle. During that time, he was in need of a car because he was traveling a lot to minister to people in Sydney and the surrounding suburbs. He rode the bus and train but a car, of course, would be a big help. But during his time in Canada, he never spoke to his uncle about his need. Not a single word to his uncle. When he came back to Australia, he was surprised when his uncle called him a few days later to tell him that he was buying a car for him. God is so faithful. He answers the prayers of his people.

Next week I'm going to Canada to see his uncle. And I'm not going to tell him about my need. What do I need? I need the iPad Pro. That's a want, btw, not a need.

Let us turn to Matthew 6 and listen to what the Lord Jesus has to say about God's faithfulness in providing for our needs.

Beginning in verse 25, we read...

Now, let's go to the second way that God shows his faithfulness. This is 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 you, 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!

When I was in Australia in 1991, God spoke to my heart and told me to attend the Discipleship Training School in Hawaii for missionary training.

So, I obeyed the Lord, I quit my job, I sold my belongings, bought my plane ticket, and told my friends and church that I was leaving. There was one problem, however. I didn't have tuition which cost around \$2000.

But I believed that God would provide because Genesis 22:14 says, "The Lord will provide." Weeks passed but money did not come. During that time, I was being attacked by the enemy in my mind. Strangely, the words "God does not love you" kept running in my mind. I was feeling depressed but I always reminded myself of God's promise in Jeremiah 31:3, "*I have loved you with an everlasting love.*" In the end, God kept his promise to provide because the money for my tuition came the night before I was to leave.

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. If you're going through a difficult time now, God's grace is strong. This is his promise, "*My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.*" (2 Cor. 12:9-10). And in Isaiah 40:31, we read another promise, "*Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*"

The third way in which God shows his faithfulness is through

III. His Protection

Verse 6 reads, "*He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other 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. He protected 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 protect you and will fight your battles for you. In John 16:33, Jesus says, *“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.”*

Let me tell you a story of God’s protection.

It was Christmas Eve 1875 and Ira Sankey was traveling on a Delaware River steamboat when he was recognized by some of the passengers. His picture had been in the newspaper because he was the song leader for the famous evangelist D.L. Moody. They asked him to sing one of his own hymns, but Sankey demurred, saying that he preferred to sing William B. Bradbury's hymn, "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us." As he sang, one of the stanzas began, "We are Thine; do Thou befriend us. Be the Guardian of our way."

When he finished, a man stepped from the shadows and asked, "Did you ever serve in the Union Army?"

"Yes," Mr. Sankey answered, "in the spring of 1860."

"Can you remember if you were doing picket duty on a bright, moonlit night in 1862?"

"Yes," Mr. Sankey answered, very much surprised.

Then, the man said, "So did I, but I was serving in the Confederate army. When I saw you standing at your post, I thought to myself, 'That fellow will never get away alive.' I raised my musket and took aim. I was standing in the shadow, completely concealed, while the full light of the moon was falling upon you.

At that instant, just as a moment ago, you raised your eyes to heaven and began to sing...'Let him sing his song to the end,' I said to myself, 'I can shoot him afterwards. He's my victim at all events, and my bullet cannot miss him.'

But the song you sang then was the song you sang just now. I heard the words perfectly: 'We are Thine; do Thou befriend us. Be the Guardian of our way.' Those words stirred up many memories. I began to think of my childhood and my God-fearing mother. She had many times sung that song to me. When you had finished your song, it was impossible for me to take aim again. I thought, 'The Lord who is able to save that man from certain death must surely be great and mighty.' And my arm of its own accord dropped limp at my side."

And Ira Sankey went on to become the faithful companion and song leader of D.L. Moody as he preached revival in the States and England.

Let's go now to the fourth way that God 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 steadfast forever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness.*"

The New Living Translation renders these verses as, "All he does is just and good, all his commandments are trustworthy. They are forever true, to be obeyed faithfully and with integrity."

Commandment is another word for precept. The Hebrew word used is Dabar which means to lead, to guide, to drive as flocks to pasture.

From this we can see that God gives us his commandments for our own good. He is the good Shepherd who leads us 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.

During the Reformation, Geneva was a decadent city. It was corrupt, crime-infested and totally unruly. As a last resort, the leaders of the city, despite their initial aversion to the idea, invited John Calvin, the French theologian and reformer, to try his plans for the city. Calvin went and he began by teaching the Bible to people everywhere he can find them. Slowly, changes began to occur in people’s lives. And gradually, the city was transformed until it eventually became one of the model cities of Europe.

So we see that God’s commandments are tried and true. They have a life-changing effect on people. 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 God shows his faithfulness. And this is through

V. His Precious Son

Verse 9 says, *“He provided redemption for his people; he ordained 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 to 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 sent his one and only son, his first-born son to earth to die for our sins. Jesus paid for our sins by his own blood—his was a perfect sacrifice. God wasn’t obliged to do that. But because he loves us so much and doesn’t want anyone of us to go to hell, that he sent his only son Jesus. John 3:16 says, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

This is the high point of God’s faithfulness. He sacrificed his own Son for us so that we can be forgiven of our sins. The Bible says, *“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”* (Heb. 9:22)

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. And 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?

But, my friend, even while here on earth you can experience the joy and comfort that Jesus gives. You may have a hard time coping with life's difficulties. You may be wondering whether there's any sense in life at all. You may be at the end of your rope. But I say to you, my friend, at the end of the rope is Jesus.

Let go of the rope and Jesus will hold you. Sometimes, we cling too tightly on the rope. We trust the rope more than we trust Jesus. Jesus asks you to just relax and turn over all your cares to him. Don't depend on your own strength to overcome your difficulties. As human beings, our strength is not enough. Only God's strength is more than enough. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28-30, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am humble and gentle in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*"

This morning, I would like you to come to Jesus, if you haven't done so in your life. Give to him your fears, your worries, your anxieties, your hurts, your guilts, your uncertainties. He can give you direction. He will give you life. Forgiveness and eternal life are yours if only you will trust Jesus to take over your life and run it for you. You've been running it but you're not getting anywhere. Friend, Jesus is faithful, he is the great Amen! He is faithful in so many ways and this morning he wants you to prove that to yourself. Just come to him. Just as you are.

You may be a Christian already but you just want peace and comfort at this time. Why not come to Jesus as well? He will give you the peace and comfort you need at this moment. Come to Jesus.