

God is...
God is Faithful
1 Corinthians 1:9; Psalm 111:5-9

When tragedy strikes, when you're in a crisis, what's the first question that comes to your mind, if you're honest? God, where are you? Why, God? In fact, many people have lost hope because of the pandemic. The suicide rate has gone up and crimes have gone up and people are feeling the economic pinch. But even without the pandemic we are victims of the problems that life brings to us on a personal level. So, we ask, God where are you? Have you forgotten me?

It's a question that even David asked God during his times of distress. In Psalm 13, he says in verse 1, "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" In fact, he says, "How long" four times in this Psalm. He wrote this Psalm during one of his darkest hours. He was being hunted in the mountains by Saul. Saul's jealousy had prompted him to make a vow to take the life of David. David fled for his life and while in the mountains, he wrote this Psalm. David felt abandoned by God. He felt God did not care about his plight.

Have you ever felt that way, too?

Perhaps, you have. I have. Every now and then a thought like that or a feeling like that hits me. I'm not a super-faith-filled Christian just because I'm a pastor. I'm just like you. I experience the ups and downs of life, too. My family experiences the highs and the valleys, too.

But you know what, I have learned to rely on what the Bible tells us clearly about God in 1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.". That's the title of my message today, "God is Faithful".

Today, we switch gears. For the past six weeks, we have talked about the attributes of God that he alone possesses. Like his self-existence, his sovereignty, his omnipotence, etc.

This morning, we'll start looking at his communicable attributes. These are his character traits that he shared with human beings, with us. So, the first one I thought we'll tackle is his attribute of being faithful or faithfulness.

What are the synonyms of "faithful"? Some of these are loyal, constant, true, devoted, true-blue, unswerving, steadfast, committed, unfailing, dependable, reliable, consistent. All these describe God but to put it simply, "God is faithful" means "He will not fail you." Ever. You can take it to the bank. Which is what we cannot say about people or things. Did your car ever fail you? If it's spanking brand new, maybe not. But you and I know it will. You can count on it. The same with your smartphone, whether that's Samsung S21 or iPhone 13X. Failure doesn't discriminate. They will certainly fail. Even your weighing scale. You've been using it for a long time, it never failed. Till you step on it one day, and you see it failed. "There must be something wrong with this scale." We make excuses when things fail. "My computer made a typo".

Things fail, people fail. People fail us. We fail others. We fail ourselves. It's hard to find faithfulness in this world. You'll be hard-pressed to find something or someone who never failed you. Unless you're Kuya Elvin to Ate Bebutte. Amen? And Kuya Elvin to the men in the church like yesterday, Amen? And he will be faithful to the men again next month, do I hear a double Amen? Kuya Elvin is going, "Oh, man!"

Speaking of Amen, the Lord Jesus is called the "Amen" in the Bible, right? You know why? Because he is faithful and true. Rev. 3:14 says, "These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation."

Amen, btw, is one of those words that is adopted universally by major languages in the world like English, German, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and, of course, Tagalog. I googled it and they're almost all said and spelled the same in all languages except Hindi. In Hindi, it is "tathaastu".

Amen is derived from the Hebrew word, "Amen" 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".

BTW, there's a Facebook post going around claiming that "amen" is derived from the ancient Egyptian god Amun Ra. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Experts and language scholars debunk this and say that it definitely is Hebrew, not Egyptian. Any similarity is mere coincidence.

Folks, never doubt God's faithfulness. If he seems away, he is really not. He watches you like he watches the sparrow. And you are worth more than a sparrow.
Lamentations

Now, let's go to Psalm 111 because I'd like us to see the faithfulness of God in display in verses 5-9 of this Psalm. We'll look at the ways in which God demonstrates his faithfulness from Psalm 111. These are examples of his faithfulness and why we can believe that he will never fail you and me.

First of all, 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 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."

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, "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?"

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, 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.

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 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 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’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 established forever and ever, enacted in 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,” as 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.

Psalms 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. But before I come to that, let me just say that now we're learning that God is truly faithful and he shows it to us in many ways, what does he expect of us?

Naturally, he expects us to be faithful, too. In the first place, he shared with us this attribute in order for us to practice it and put it in display. I know that's hard. I already said that it's hard to find faithfulness in this world. But we need to try. We need to grow.

How do we do that? The Holy Spirit will help us to develop faithfulness in our lives. Faithfulness is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, right? The Bible says that if you're a Christian you have the Holy Spirit in you and it is the Holy Spirit that's going to produce this kind of fruit in your life. "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness!" (Gal. 5:22) It's not your job. It's the Holy Spirit's job. Your job is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. You need to be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life so you can be faithful.

Who do we need to be faithful then? If you're married, be faithful to your spouse. Men, have only one woman in your life. Love your wife as the Bible says.

Don't go flirting or entertaining thoughts about other women. Someone told me before, "I think I made a mistake. Maybe she's not God's will for me." I told him, "If you're married to that woman, that is God's will". You just have to work out your problems together.

You need to be faithful to your children, too. Be the best father or mother to your children. Grow them in the Lord. Be a model for them. Make them say to others as they grow up, "My Dad is my superhero" "My mom is my supermodel". We have a lot of supermodel moms here, Amen?

You need to be faithful to your ministry. The question is, do you have a ministry? When God saved you, he didn't want you to be just on the sidelines and watch others play the game. You need to be in the game. That's how you grow as a Christian. A ministry doesn't have to be visible or be showy. I'm sure some of us here are doing ministry in your own little way. Like plugging the mics, adjusting the sound, folding the bulletins, picking up trash, calling people to ask how they're doing, cooking for others, etc. Every little thing you do contributes to the growth of the body of Christ. That's why God saved you and put you in this church. You can be a blessing to others. But the greater blessing is when you use the natural or spiritual gift that God has given you. Don't make it lie dormant. When you get to heaven, God will ask, "What did you do with your gift of teaching? What did you do with your gift of singing? What did you do with your gift of giving?" I hope you won't be tongue-tied when he asks that. God loves you, anyway, but I hope you can love him in return by serving him through your gifts. It's like when you love another person, you express that love through action.

And, finally, you know this is coming. You need to be faithful to God. It starts with practicing the spiritual disciplines of a Christian. Like reading the Bible, praying, fasting, coming to church and I'm glad you're here today, and a few more but we need to get to our last point.

So, God wants you to develop faithfulness in your life. As you develop this attribute and several more like love, and holiness, and goodness which are the remaining attributes in this series, what happens? You become like Christ!

The more these attributes are displayed in your life, the more you become like Christ who is God. That's the ultimate goal. You will not become a god but you'll become like God.

Ok, the last point. God shows his faithfulness 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." Everyone 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 sent his one and only 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."

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?

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, why don't you come to Jesus? If you can't remember a time in your life when you sincerely and consciously asked Jesus to come into your heart as your Lord and Savior then you really haven't come to Jesus. Maybe you were raised in a religious family, maybe you go to church religiously, maybe you followed all your religion's teachings, but being saved is not knowing about religion. Being saved is knowing what the Savior has done for you. As I say always, Christianity is a relationship not a religion.

Now, you may be a Christian already but you just want peace and comfort at this time. Why not come to the comforting arms of Jesus?