

## Canaan sermon on Faithfulness

1 Corinthians 4:2 “This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. <sup>2</sup> Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”

**ASK: What does it mean to be faithful?**

**Why do we need to be faithful?** “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” – Hebrews 9:27

**Matthew 25:21** – “His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”

This is an excellent verse about our reward (position) in heaven. Contrary to what many believe, not everyone will have the same position in heaven. We will be rewarded according to our faithfulness here on earth. We are saved by grace and grace alone, apart from anything we do (Ephesians 2:8-9), but position and reward is earned. This all will be determined at the judgment (bema) seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-4:2, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11, Romans 14:10-12). This is a judgment for believers only. Will we be found faithful?

This includes, and indeed begins with, being faithful in little things.

**Luke 16:10** – “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”

**Luke 16:11** – “If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”

The pattern here is that as we are faithful to God in the things he gives us to manage at first, He will increase our responsibility that we, remaining faithful, may also increase our rewards at His hand later.

So, I want to look first at the major areas in which God expects us to be faithful, and what we should be doing in each category to be found faithful in each of them.

First of all, we know from **Hebrews 11:6** that “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

The first thing God wants of us is for us to have faith. But what faith is that, exactly? The object of the faith and the means of expressing that faith are important to get right if we want to please God.

to believe in Jesus Christ

In the OT economy, faith meant: Micah 6:8 says “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly<sup>[a]</sup> with your God.”

Therefore, justice, mercy, walking with your God (i.e. obeying the Law) were the requirements in the days before Christ’s atonement.

Some OT examples of faithfulness? Joseph, Job, Abraham, David

However, we live in the New Testament, in the light of Jesus work on the cross. Our expression of faith is therefore somewhat different. Instead of looking forward to coming Messiah by living righteously and keeping the Law, we look back in time to the actualized coming of Messiah as the sacrifice for sins, and express our faith by trusting in Him for our salvation. How do we accomplish what God expects of us in this regard?

## **1. Have Saving Faith in Christ**

Romans road verses, Ephesians 2:8-9.

Romans 3:10-12 “As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;

<sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands;

there is no one who seeks God.

<sup>12</sup> All have turned away,

they have together become worthless;

there is no one who does good,

not even one.””

Romans 3:21-25 “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,<sup>[b]</sup> through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in<sup>[b]</sup> Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 10:8-15 “But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,”<sup>[c]</sup> that is, the message concerning faith that we

proclaim: <sup>9</sup> If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. <sup>11</sup> As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, <sup>13</sup> for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>14</sup> How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? <sup>15</sup> And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!””

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. “

Salvation is by faith then, given to anyone who calls out to God to be forgiven of their sins by trusting in Christ alone for their atonement and forgiveness. Ask God for forgiveness, believing in Christ as the fully sufficient sacrifice, and you will be saved. This is the first step toward being found faithful at His coming again in glory.

In addition to the requirement of salvation, there are other expectations put on us for our measure of faithfulness in God’s sight.

**2. Maintain a Devotional Life** John 15 (cite verses from your sermon on devotional life)

Vine and branches analogy to bear much fruit. – John 15:7 “ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you<sup>[b]</sup> will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

John 8: 31-32 says “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The Lord wants us to keep in touch with Him personally, through devoting time to Him, reading His inspired Word and studying it to know better Who He is and what He has said to us, what He has done for us, What He will do for us, what are His promises, etc. The more we know the Lord, the better we

can please His will, and the better friends we will be with Him. Our relationship is not just about satisfying a set of requirements, it is much more about maintaining a relationship with a divine Friend, who is also our Maker. Prayer is a major part of that, as we submit our will to God, praise and thank Him in prayer, give prayer on behalf of other believers or the lost. We bear fruit by staying close to the Vine who is our source of Life. This is the second step of being faithful to God.

### **3. Cooperation with God's Sanctification Process**

Closely related to the requirement to remain in fellowship with the Lord is our cooperation with His process of changing our spirits to be more holy, as He is holy. As we submit to the Holy Spirit, we can give up sins, choosing instead to please our God, and we can make not only habits in this way, but the Lord actually re-landscapes our spirits gradually to be more like Him and less like our old sinful nature. A slow reshaping of our being is what is in view with sanctification, so that our motives shift towards being like his, our perceptions and thoughts more naturally line up with His point of view and feelings, and we act more and more like God in the world, as His hands and feet on earth. This is essential for the world to see the truth of Christ's offer of salvation, as they see us changing into His image in front of them.

A "walk" in the Bible is often a metaphor for practical daily living. The Christian life is a journey, and we are to walk it—we are to make consistent forward progress. The biblical norm for all believers is that they walk in the Spirit: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" ([Galatians 5:25, KJV](#); cf. [Romans 8:14](#)). In other words, the Spirit gave us life in the new birth ([John 3:6](#)), and we must continue to live, day by day, in the Spirit.

To walk in the Spirit means that we yield to His control, we follow His lead, and we allow Him to exert His influence over us. To walk in the Spirit is the opposite of resisting Him or grieving Him ([Ephesians 4:30](#)).

### **4. Keep Pursuing the Great Commission**

**Matthew 28:18-20** "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.""

**Matthew 7:12** "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

Would you want someone to give up on you and let you live your way into Hell, ignorant of the need and offer for your salvation and reconciliation to God?

Then do to others as you would have them do to you, and so spread the truth of the gospel so others may have eternal life also.

## **5. Love the Brethren**

Christ also commands us to have especial love for those of the Body of Christ, meaning those who are among the redeemed on earth and are our brothers and sisters in this new life in Christ.

**In John 13:34-35, Jesus said:** “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

<sup>34</sup> “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

What this means practically is that we should have hospitality toward each other, we should forgive our brethren when they repent to us, we should materially help each other’s physical needs and not only offer encouraging words, we should pray for each other, and we should support each other in the work of the Lord

**James 2:16-17** “Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

In Acts the believers shared each other’s physical burdens and helped each other:

Acts 6:1-4 “About this time, when the number of disciples was continually increasing, the Greeks complained that in the daily distribution of food the Hebrew widows were being given preferential treatment. The twelve summoned the whole body of the disciples together and said, “It is not right that we should have to neglect preaching the Word of God in order to look after the accounts. You, our brothers, must look round and pick out from your number seven men of good reputation who are both practical and spiritually-minded and we will put them in charge of this matter. Then we shall devote ourselves whole-heartedly to prayer and the ministry of the Word.”

## **6. Use wealth to God’s glory**

This could include giving to the local church, as well as supporting missionaries and other means by which the good news of Jesus Christ’s saving work is spread in the world and his love is proven on earth, in witness to the truth of Christ’s offer and his ability to change the heart of man.

## **7. Stay in fellowship with church and use your spiritual gifts, given for service**

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,<sup>[a]</sup> and to still another the interpretation of tongues.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>11</sup>All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

and

1 Corinthians 14:26 “When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.”

## **8. Finally, Raise up a Godly Generation after You, in your Children**

Malachi 2:15 “Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring.”

**Summary: Faithfulness in the NT economy:** 1. saving faith, 2. “abide in me” + “bear much fruit” aka your devotional life with God (prayer + Bible reading/study) 3. sanctification cooperation, 4. great commission (go and make disciples...i.e. personally not by \$\$ proxy), 5. love the brethren (“a new commandment I give you, that you love one another”, 6. use your resources to glorify and serve God, 7. Stay in fellowship in a local body of believers AND use your spiritual gifting in the church or out in the world for God, 8. raise up a Godly generation after you

NT examples of faithfulness: Paul, Timothy, Peter, Onesimus, Onesiphorus, Lydia (hospitality to Paul on his mission trip), Eunice (for raising Timothy in the faith), Priscilla+ Aquila (helping in ministry/ evangelism)

What, then, is the result if we are faithful?

**1 Corinthians 3:10-15** “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones,

wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. <sup>14</sup> If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.”

**In Revelation 22:12 Jesus says:** ““Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.”

What does it take to hear “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” ? (examine the parable book on this)

Moses was “faithful in all God’s house,” Samuel also was a faithful servant of whom no failing is mentioned. What do they have in common?

Characteristics necessary to be faithful: belief, obedience, perseverance, courage,

Luke 12:42-44 “And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* master will make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of food <sup>in</sup> due season? <sup>43</sup> Blessed *is* that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup> Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.”

### **Luke 16:10-12**

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?”

### **Galatians 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

### **1 Corinthians 1:9**

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Psalms 31:23**

Love the LORD, all you his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.

**Exodus 34:6**

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

**Galatians 3:9**

So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

**Psalm 100:5**

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

**Hebrews 3:2**

Who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.