

DAY 1 - (week beginning Mon 22nd July 2019)

Read - Psalm 89:1-9

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. v1

*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with thee
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.*

Hymns & Psalms 66

God has many wonderful attributes, but one of the most important is that he is always faithful. He is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Listen to these amazing words from the book of Deuteronomy, written more than 2 600 years ago:

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God. He is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. Duet 9:5

You can depend on God. He is not one thing today and something else tomorrow. He does not suddenly get into bad moods and decide to take it out on people who upset him.

Someone, who has had the time to count these things, has said that there are over 8000 promises of God in Scripture. God always keeps his promises. God will never let you down.

I invite you to sing the words of the hymn above and think prayerfully about the words

DAY 2

Read - Hebrews 10:19-23

Let us hold unswervingly to the faith we profess, for he who promised is faithful. v23

I have come to believe that "faithfulness" is one of the most important characteristics of an authentic Christian life.

Just as God is faithful, and is not one thing today and another thing tomorrow, so we are called to remain steadfast and true. The Christian life is not a sprint, it is a marathon. We are challenged to remain faithful for the long haul. To hang in there in spite of everything.

Some of the words used to express faithfulness are fidelity, steadfastness, constancy, remaining loyal and devoted, perseverance, trustworthiness, commitment, dependability and reliability.

Think about these words, written to Christ-followers in the first century, who were being persecuted and suffering seriously for their faith:

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. Rev 2:10

Hopefully, for most of us it will never be as serious as that, but even so, we are called to be faithful and true as we live out our faith in our daily lives; at home, at work, on the sports field, or wherever we find ourselves. Staying steadfast and true to what we believe in the ordinary things of life, no matter what.

It is not so much success that God rewards but faithfulness in doing his will. Anonymous

DAY 3

Read - Galatians 5:22-26

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. v22

Faithfulness is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which is our focus during these weeks. This means that when God's Spirit comes alive in us, he produces in us the quality of faithfulness.

No one is able, purely in their own strength, to display all nine fruits of the Spirit without some help. We so often fail in these areas because of our weaknesses, and the sinful tendencies that are in us. The Holy Spirit works inside us to give us power, over and above our own power, to do these things.

One of the names of the Holy Spirit in Scripture is "the Comforter". In the original Latin this word literally means "strength with our strength". God's strength comes alongside our strength to help us produce these qualities in our character.

The Christian life is a power assisted life. We are not expected to live a life of faith simply in our own strength. We need help. Being a Christ-follower is so much more than just trying to be obedient to God's Laws, getting our lives straightened out, overcoming problems and sorting out our minds and thinking. The Christian life is about God coming to live inside us; God's Holy Spirit coming to dwell in us, in our hearts. So when we open ourselves to the Spirit of God, he helps us to be faithful as we live out our faith.

***Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light***

DAY 4

Read - Revelation 19:11-13

....there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. v11

Old Faithful, the geyser in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, is not the largest geyser, nor does it reach the greatest height. Nevertheless, it is one of the most often visited geysers in the world. Its popularity is mainly due to its regularity and dependability. You can count on old Faithful to always be on time.

Nothing in life can take the place of faithfulness and dependability. It is one of the greatest virtues. Brilliance, genius and competence are important, but they are all subservient to the quality of faithfulness. It is not those who are gifted and in the limelight who are the most valuable in this world. Rather it is those who do the simple and mundane things faithfully and well.

When Jesus told the parable of the talents, he said to those who had been given the five and the two talents, *“Well done good and faithful servant, you have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things!” (Mt 25:21)*

And it is not the size of the task or responsibility we have been given that counts. What is important is whether we have been faithful and true in carrying out the responsibility we have been entrusted with, reliably, and to the best of our ability.

***I cannot do great things for him
Who did so much for me
But I would like to show my love
Dear Jesus unto thee
Faithful even in little things
O Saviour may I be***

DAY 5

Read - Romans 5:1-11

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” v 3-5

One of the words for faithfulness is perseverance; hanging in there, even when times are tough.

There is no doubt that we grow more through the difficult times in our lives than we do from the good times. Our growth and strength comes from perseverance (or remaining faithful) through the tough things of life.

‘Suffering produces perseverance’, says Paul, and perseverance then *‘produces character’*. We become better people, stronger but also more empathetic and understanding towards others. And when our character is strengthened we find hope – hope in the future with God, but also hope in the present.

We begin to know that we can stand firm in difficult times because we have done so in the past. We know that we can depend on God to be with us through His Holy Spirit, no matter what life can throw at us.

We know our God is faithful! And that helps us to remain faithful. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

***No pain, no palm
No gall, no glory
No cross, no crown.
William Penn***

DAY 6

Read - John 15:5-11

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. v5

Jesus spoke often about perseverance and remaining faithful.

In the parable of the sower he taught that the seeds that fell on stony ground, and among the thorns and weeds, sprang up quickly but did not last long, or the life that was in them was choked, and they could not bear fruit. On the other hand, the seed that fell into good soil bore fruit, sixty and a hundred fold. This speaks about the importance of faithfulness if we want our lives to bear fruit for him.

He also told the parable of the vine and the branches, and he spoke about abiding in him. “To abide” means to live in, or stay connected with him. As I said, perseverance or faithfulness, is one of the most valuable characteristics of the Christian life. When we abide in Jesus, and stay connected, our faith will stay strong, and we will bear significant fruit for God’s Kingdom.

Aesop told a fable about a tortoise and a hare who had a race. The hare rushed off at great speed, but decided, because he was so far ahead, that he would have a rest under a tree, and he fell asleep. The tortoise plodded along at a steady pace, and won the race, because he simply kept on going.

So it is with the Christian life. When we stay faithful and persevere, even through trials and difficult times, we win the race and receive the crown of glory. We hear the voice of Jesus, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Lord, give me a faithful and steadfast heart.