

GOD SHOWS HIS FAITHFULNESS

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

God is faithful to keep His word, demonstrated most of all in the fulfillment of His promise to provide Christ Jesus.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGES:**

Psalm 51; Lamentations 3; Matthew 1–2

+ **SETTING:**

When Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt, God led the way and won the victory because God is always faithful to His people—He keeps His promises. We can see this truth throughout the Bible and throughout history. What He says is true, and what He says He will do, He will do. The Bible consists of stories of God's faithfulness even when things looked bleak. Though at times God's people thought He had abandoned them, God was still there. He is always there working on behalf of His people, ultimately so the Savior, the Messiah, will restore His people from their brokenness.

DAY 1

READ:

Lamentations 3

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Lamentations 3:19-24

NOTES



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #16: GOD IS FAITHFUL

God's faithfulness means He keeps His word and always fulfills His promises (1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:13; 1 Pet. 4:19). God's faithfulness is demonstrated in His fulfillment of the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostle Paul linked the attribute of "faithful" to God's coming through on His word: "He who calls you is faithful; he will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). We reflect God by keeping the promises we make to Him and to others.

Sometimes life doesn't turn out the way we planned it. With a disobedient child, a disagreement with your spouse, a job loss, or the loss of a loved one, it's easy to fall into despair. In the midst of the pain, you wonder, "Can I cry out to God about these things? Can I share with Him my sadness, even while knowing 'Rejoice!' is a command in Scripture?"

The answer is yes! God wants to hear our cries, our laments, our tears. He already knows how we feel anyway. He wants to walk alongside us in our sorrow because He is the only One who can offer us true hope, not just wishful thinking or pure speculation. Because God is faithful, One who does what He says He will do, we can know that our hope is assured (Heb. 10:23).

Like the writer of Lamentations, we can cry out to God in our anguish. We can be transparent before Him with our emotions. As believers, we must have hope in God in the midst of our afflictions because He is God and we are not (Lam. 3:21). He is in control and we need to let go of control. He is faithful even when we are faithless (2 Tim. 2:13). He writes the story and we await the conclusion that always ends in His victory and glory and our good.

Our despair when life hits hard reminds us that we live in a broken world wrecked by sin and the Fall. But we can take comfort in knowing we are not left alone in our brokenness. God provided Jesus to save us from sin and death and the brokenness of this world. In Christ we will always have hope (1 Pet. 5:10).

How do you normally view God when you're struggling and things aren't going your way? How do you view Him now after reading the Lamentations passage?

DAY 2

READ:

Matthew 1–2

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 2:1-8

NOTES

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” is one of my favorite Christmas carols because it reminds me how little and insignificant Bethlehem was. Yes, Bethlehem was the birthplace of David, but other than that, it was a small town with nothing else to its name. It was insignificant, but God chose it to be the birthplace of His Son. As we remember David’s “little” birthplace, we also remember that David himself was insignificant when chosen to be king. He was the youngest and smallest of his brothers and was just a mere shepherd. The prophet Samuel imagined that one of David’s older brothers, who looked the part, would be chosen. But God had different plans (1 Sam. 16).

For God, nothing is insignificant. Anything could be used by Him for His purposes. And often He uses the simple, the small, and the weak to remind us that bigger isn’t always better. Even the underdog can fulfill God’s purposes. Through His choices, especially the confusing ones, God shows us that He is in control of all events and is faithful to accomplish His purposes and plans, even with little resources and insurmountable odds.

We see this truth in the Christmas story. A young couple? A somewhat scandalous situation? A Roman census? An innkeeper? A manger? A couple years later, astrologers from the East? A supernatural star? Such a haphazard assortment of characters and events, yet all used to accomplish God’s provision of a Savior. Add into that story a murderous king and religious leaders who were supposed to be the good guys and it would be easy to think the story could end up disastrous. But it doesn’t. It’s fulfilled. It’s accomplished. God is writing the story and He is faithful to fulfill His promises. And “the hopes and fears of all the years” were met in Christ for God’s glory and our good.

How can God use you, not in spite of but because of your weakness, for His purposes?

DAY 3

READ:

Matthew 2

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 2:9-12

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Come, Thou long-expected
Jesus, Born to set Thy people
free; From our fears and sins
release us; Let us find our rest
in Thee. Israel's strength and
consolation, Hope of all the
earth Thou art; Dear desire
of ev'ry nation, Joy of ev'ry
longing heart."¹

—Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

As a teenager, I loved following my favorite bands. I bought the posters and T-shirts and blasted their music wherever I went so others could share my joy. If I saw band members in person, I would be in awe and tell them how much I loved their band. My life was consumed by them. You could almost say I worshiped them.

We all worship something because God created us to worship. But we tend to worship things that are unworthy of our worship—for example, money, power, relationships, and stability. Yet we have a God who is the only One worthy of our worship.

When the wise men first met Jesus, they saw the toddler King, and though their knowledge was incomplete, they were compelled to worship Him, offering Him their treasure without any expectations. He was just a child; what could He give them? What could He offer? Nothing, they thought, but they worshiped Him anyway. Little did they know that He would secure everything for them: life, salvation, and freedom from sin, guilt, and shame.

Sometimes in our worship, we have ulterior motives. We pray, praise, and obey because we think God will answer our prayers the way we want. We're hoping for comfort, success, and the good life as defined by the world, not by God. In this, our worship is skewed. We've only worshiped Him to get something for ourselves.

But faced with Jesus, we should desire to worship Him just for who He is because Jesus is God. He is holy, faithful, good, just, and perfect. He deserves our all, and though we don't deserve anything, He gives us His all. God's greatest gift to us was Himself in Jesus, in His life and His death. We need to be in awe. We need to have our lives consumed by Him. We need to be wise men and women who worship Jesus in spirit and truth.

What are some ways you can worship our faithful God without any expectations?

DAY 4

READ:

Psalm 51

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Psalm 51:1-2

NOTES

For a time, my family lived overseas, and more often than we liked, the kids in school came home with lice. The stigma overseas was little to none compared to perceptions in the United States, so it wasn't a big deal socially. However, the washing and cleaning involved, from their bodies to their clothes to their sheets, were overwhelming. We had to clean and disinfect everything. If not, we could have an infestation.

God is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness when we repent. But when we don't repent, sins tend to multiply. And yet, God still is faithful to forgive when we come to Him.

King David loved God, but he also was a sinner. In fact, he was among the worst kind according to most social standards: he was an adulterer and a murderer. How can that be? He ruled Israel and was chosen and beloved by God. But he was also human, and he let one sin lead to the next. In Psalm 51, however, we see his heart, his sorrow, his crying out to God for forgiveness. He asked for cleansing and washing from God because he knew only God could forgive sin. And he knew God would forgive him because of His steadfast love and mercies.

When we look at ourselves and others, it would be easy to judge and say God can't or won't forgive a certain sin. But God is beyond our understanding and desires to forgive all who come to Him with a repentant heart. God can create a clean heart and renew a right spirit in anyone (v. 10). He desires to make all things new and clean again. We just need to let Him do it.

What sins do you need to repent of? Pray through Psalm 51 right now.

DAY 5

READ:

Isaiah 53

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Isaiah 53:5-12

NOTES

One day our six year old got in trouble for disobeying. We told him to sit in the time-out chair in the corner of the room, and with his arms crossed, he hesitantly went over and plopped himself in the chair. Out came his eight-year-old brother who saw “little brother” in the corner. With his compassionate heart, he went up to his brother and said, “Don’t worry. I can sit in the chair for you. I can sit for your sins.” Of course, we didn’t let him. We wanted the six year old to understand discipline and the consequences for disobedience.

Sometimes we don’t understand how God could be merciful, just, and fair all at the same time. Shouldn’t adulterers be condemned? Shouldn’t murderers remain unforgiven? But if we let ourselves go to the logical conclusion, we might answer ourselves with some more personal questions: Shouldn’t prideful people be condemned? Shouldn’t those who are not perfect remain unforgiven?

All of us have sinned because of the Fall. Yet from that first sin in the garden of Eden, God has been faithful to promise to bring a Deliverer, a Ruler, a Savior to forgive us for our sins and restore our relationship with Him. Isaiah prophesied about a coming Messiah, a Savior who would sacrifice Himself for His people. He would be pierced, crushed, punished, and wounded for our sins (v. 5). In His faithfulness, God sacrifices all to fulfill His promise—He sacrificed His Son. This is how God is fair, or rather, God is beyond fair. He is merciful.

There may be people in your life whom you deem unforgivable. Perhaps a family member who stole money, or a pastor who lacked integrity, or a friend who betrayed you. Seeing them as God sees them will help you forgive. We are all sinners in need of a Savior. We are all sinners in need of forgiveness. And in His faithfulness, God forgives.

Who do you need to forgive? With whom can you share about God’s faithfulness to forgive?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"God is faithful in disciplining His people. He is faithful in what He withholds, no less than in what He gives. He is faithful in sending sorrow as well as in giving joy. The faithfulness of God is a truth to be confessed by us not only when we are at ease, but also when we are smarting under the sharpest rebuke."²

-A. W. Pink (1886-1952)

POINT 1: God is faithful to love the afflicted (Lam. 3:19-24).

No matter the reason for our afflictions, we can trust God, both with our _____ and the _____ that He is always there.

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #16: GOD IS FAITHFUL

God's faithfulness means He keeps His _____ and always fulfills His _____ (1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:13; 1 Pet. 4:19). God's faithfulness is demonstrated in His fulfillment of the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostle Paul linked the attribute of "faithful" to God's coming through on His word: "He who calls you is faithful; he will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). We _____ God by keeping the promises we make to Him and to others.



What are some ways you have seen God's faithful love in your life when you were struggling?

POINT 2: God is faithful to provide the Messiah (Matt. 2:1-12).

God uses events that seem _____ and even _____ to accomplish His purposes and fulfill His promises, as seen clearly in God's provision of the Messiah for _____ who come and _____ Him.



What are some ways we can worship the Messiah?

POINT 3: God is faithful to forgive the repentant (Ps. 51:1-2).

God's faithful love _____ us to come to Him in _____ to find forgiveness for our sin.

? What does it mean to have a repentant heart?

Ultimately, God's forgiveness of sin, even David's adultery and murder in the Old Testament, is accomplished through the _____ of Jesus Christ on the cross, _____ for our sin in our place.

? Knowing that God is faithful to fulfill His promises and faithful to forgive us when we repent, how should we live?

MY RESPONSE

Because the Lord is faithful in all of His ways, we seek to live likewise, striving to be faithful to God so that others might come to trust in Him as well.

- **HEAD:** How have you been influenced as a witness to God's faithfulness in Scripture, in your life, and in the lives of others?
- **HEART:** What sins do you need to repent of and confess today, knowing that God is faithful to forgive?
- **HANDS:** What are some ways your group/church can be God's hands and feet in showing His faithfulness to those in need in your community so that they may come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior?

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"The glory of God's faithfulness is that no sin of man has ever made Him unfaithful."³

-Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)