

The Gathering Church

Dan's message 8/2/26

Knowing God as He is (Week 8) - Faithfulness

Admiring vs mirroring
Great I AM
The Faithful Amen
Emulate His Attributes
Stand in Awe
Armor of God
Test of Faith
Mirror God's Faithfulness

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." AW Tozar

What comes to your mind with you think about the word: Faithful or faithfulness? Who comes into your mind? Who is the most faithful person you have ever known? And why would you use the word faithful to describe them?

Deuteronomy 32:4 *"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; **A God of faithfulness** and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.*

Truthful, righteous, just and upright.

You know what came into my mind. The "**Old Faithful**".

Anybody had a chance to travel out to Yellowstone and see the Old Faithful (the most famous Geyser in the world)?

Why is it called Old Faithful? Because every 60 to 110 minutes it erupts for anywhere to 1 to 5 minutes.

It is consistent. It is reliable. People for generations have gathered around the geyser convinced it will erupt. Because the **Old Geyser is faithful**.

Deuteronomy points us to a better Rock than old faithful. **El Emunah**, which translated means "**God of faithfulness**" or "**God of Fidelity**."

Deuteronomy 7:9 *"Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, **the faithful God**, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;"*

Isaiah 65:16 *"Because he who is blessed in the earth will be blessed by the **God of truth**; And he who swears in the earth, will swear by the **God of truth**;"*

Elohei Amen - is connected to the attribute of faithfulness because Amen comes from the same word **Emunah**.

[Side note: **Amen** and **Emunah** (faithfulness) come from the same root word: this is true, it is trustworthy, it is faithful, it is steadfast. So, when we close a prayer with the word Amen, the same word that Jesus teaches his Disciples to pray, we are saying this prayer "May this prayer rests on the God who is Faithful".]

Revelations 3:14 (alluding to Jesus). **14** *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: saith **The Amen**, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God;"*

Jesus is being referred here, and He is he being referred to as **The Amen**.

2 Corinthians 1:20 *20 For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are **yes**; therefore also through Him is our **Amen** to the glory of God through us.*

All His promises are “**Yes & Amen**”. They are faithful and true.

Hebrews 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is **faithful**;*

Revelation 19:11 *“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called **Faithful and True**, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.”*

Lamentations 3:22-23 *“The Lord’s lovingkindnesses, indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

To paint one of the clearest pictures of God’s faithfulness to His children and specifically the nation of Israel, look no further than the book of Hosea. The story of Hosea the prophet and his adulterous wife Gomer is a picture of God’s fidelity to his people who continuously wonder away from him and are unfaithful to Him.

- God tells Hosea to marry Gomer (she is described as a wife or woman of Harlotry/ a “lady of the night.”)
- Gomer is time and time again, unfaithful to Hosea.
- She leaves her husband and pursues other men.
- She eventually ends up enslaved and unable to rescue herself.
- God tells Hosea to not give up on her but to go after her, redeem her, and bring her home (Hosea 3:1–3).

Hosea had every right to leave and walk away but God said no, (stay faithful to what I have told you to do).

Hosea 3:1 *Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.”*

God is asking Hosea to stand as a “living testimony” of faithfulness and fidelity to his wife regardless of his wife’s infidelity towards him. God is putting His love and faithfulness on display through the life of his prophet Hosea.

There are a couple aspects of God’s Faithfulness highlighted in this story:

1. **Our God is a God of covenantal Faithfulness.** Once He has promised he doesn’t reverse course. No matter what we decide or do He continues to stay faithful to us.
2. **God’s faithfulness is constantly in pursuit mode toward us.** (Song) *“He is jealous for me, loves like a hurricane, I am a tree. Bending beneath the weight of his wind and mercy. When all of a sudden I am unaware of these I am unaware of these afflictions Eclipsed by glory and I realize just how beautiful you are and how Great your affections are for me.”*

Hosea didn’t wait for Gomer to come back to Him. **He pursued her like God pursues us.** It’s a jealous love. “I am going to get her back.”

3. **Because of God's faithfulness He is willing to pay the price to get us back.**

Hosea 3:2-3 "So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver and a homer and a half of barley. **3** Then I said to her, "You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; so I will also be toward you."

Some biblical scholars suggest that Hosea didn't have enough silver to buy her back, so he needed to spend extra which was the barley. This points us toward God's faithfulness, by sending His son to the earth to die a sinners death for us. He paid the ultimate price of His son to redeem and pay for our harlotry, our adultery and our waywardness.

4. **God's faithfulness is not just about mercy being given (*not giving us what we deserve*) but about restorative grace (Giving us what we don't deserve)** We sing in worship "*Your grace is enough, heaven reaching down to us, your grace is enough for me.*" He lavished his grace upon us. Gomer wasn't just forgiven but she was restored to Hosea as his wife. The prodigal son was not just forgiven. But he was given back his status as a son of the father. He got a robe and a ring, and party was given in His honor. The older brother speaks to the lavishness of the gift of grace bestowed upon the younger when He is in disbelief as to how much his brother got after playing the harlot.

Because of whom God is, He is **The Faithful Amen**. He longs for restoration of relationship not only forgiveness but restored communion with His children. We hear this in the high priestly prayer:

John 17 "*That they may be one as you and I are one. That you may know you as I know you. . . .*"

Hosea's story is a typology. It is a foreshadowing of the story of Jesus. And one day scripture tells us that Jesus will present his bride (the church) in glory at the consummation of the age. **No matter how ugly it gets in the church between now and then, keep this in mind... God's faithfulness is big enough to get us there. Amen**

Admiring greatness is one thing. To Mirror greatness is quite another.

During the summer one of the things I like watching is the Tour de France. (It's a 21 day bike tour around France). I **admire** the guys that ride in the Tour De France. For 21 days they ride their bikes for several hours each day over incredibly difficult terrain. I **admire** their commitment to the sport and their dedication to being an incredible athlete.

And it's also about this time of the year that I see more people out on the streets with their road bikes, biker shorts and helmets. And I often think, when I see them riding in this really hot weather we have in July, why do we see more people out on the road at the same time as the Tour is going on?

Could it be they have been inspired by watching the tour? I think so.

You see, I can admire the attributes of a great rider like Greg Lemond, Lance Armstrong and Tade Podgać, from the comforts of my coach and airconditioned house, but it is a whole other thing to try to go out and be like them.

What would I have to do to be like them? I would have to get up and train and ride and buffet my body so that I could ride like them. And even then I would fall terribly short.

Admiring the greatness of an athlete is one thing, but mirroring greatness is quite another thing altogether.

As we have been going through this series I have been asking the question, does my life reflect the attributes of God or am I just learning all this stuff to admire who God is. Do I want to **Emulate His Attributes**, or do I just know how to talk about Him?

If we only admire Who God is and choose not to emulate these; we might miss one of the biggest points of the study of God.

If my life doesn't change to reflect who He is, then I am only resting in the comfort of His attributes; feeling the security of being under His watch-care. I actually believe the reverence and awe of that is a place we need to go. I want to learn how to rest first in who He is first; not first in who I am.

But the Christian life requires more than knowledge and resting; knowing God necessitates me taking the steps to try to mirror who He is to others. His desire of us is to put who He is on display in our relational world. To be the be the sweet aroma of his fragrance of Him in every place.

***2 Corinthians 2:14-17.** But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. **15** For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;*

Are you just an admirer of God? That's a good starting place. In fact maybe the best starting place. "We **Stand in Awe** of who He is." But this isn't the ending place, where am I getting on the bicycle and doing the hard work of Mirroring his presence; allowing Him to manifest through me the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place I go.

I have heard it explained to be like the wake of a boat. Where we go we leave a wake. Do we leave a wake that is easy for others to follow or do we make a wake that is nowhere near the reflection of who God would be?

There is a reason faithfulness shows up in the Fruits of the Spirit. Although God is faithful in His essence, we have to put on faithfulness through the Spirit's work in us.

***Galatians 5:22-25** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, **faithfulness**, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*

If Fruits flow out of who God is, they work together in perfect harmony in His essence. Our flesh desires what our flesh desires. We wage war each day against the evil desires.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

*Ephesians 6:13-17 **14**Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, **15**and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; **16**in addition to all, taking up THE SHIELD OF FAITH with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17**And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, which is the word of God.*

We must pick up the Armor of God: The helmet of salvation, the breastplate of Righteousness, the shield of faith, the shoes of the readiness of the Gospel of peace and the sword of the spirit (which is the word of God). And we have to learn to walk by the spirit, choosing to use the weapons of warfare not against each other. We are not fighting each other. We are fighting the enemy and all the evil forces of the spiritual places, in the unseen places that want to see you walk in the flesh. But because of the spirit we have been born again. Freed from slavery, alive by faith to reflect who we are in Christ. We don't have to play small; we don't have to live small. We have a big God who is by our side. He has given us something to fight with. Are we choosing to act towards each other in way that brings His aroma into the atmosphere around us.

How do we know He has equipped us to walk in the Spirit. Well scripture says,

1 John 4:4 ...greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.

I haven't been given a spirit of slavery or fear, I have been given a conquering Spirit and I have to move in who He says that I am, not in how I feel I am. Listen, if I moved in what I feel about myself, I would have never dared to plant this church. This church was something God was up to and I had to walk in faith and in the fruits of the spirit.

So this week I had two encounters that were memorable and I could feel the Spirit involved in making them happen. As I share these stories don't lose sight of why I am sharing.

How do we walk in faithfulness in response to a God who has been faithful to us?

How do we mirror His attributes and not just admire Him?

My answer, and why I share these stories, is we have to put on the **Armor of God** and walk in His spirit practicing His presence in our daily lives.

These two stories have dynamically opposite sides of life. One a friend of mine who had days to live and was on Hospice, the other, a young pregnant mom.

My high school friend texted me to tell me his dad was in hospice, and if I wanted to see him, I needed to come today. It was Monday, so in the afternoon I came to his bedside. What a sacred moment that was in each of our lives. I believe heaven almost touches earth when it's our time to go. As I sat there beside him and talked to him and shared stories and reminisced. I then prayed and sang over Him and reminded him of what we have in the **Hope of Eternity. God was all over it.** It wasn't easy but it's what I have been made for: to be part of the "goodbye party" here on earth; handing over loved ones to the welcoming party on the other side. What do you say? How do you put words to what is happening? Only through the Spirit's power does this occur.

2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

On the other side of things there is a young teacher at the school I work for who is days away from giving birth to her first child. I went to get paint for my classroom and while in my car I was thinking about this young pregnant woman who must be anxious and I thought, “man we have missed an opportunity as a staff to just pray over her and ask God to just bring peace to her anxious mind and heart.” So in the car, I kind of said (not out loud, but just in my thought), “if I see her again I will pray over her.” That had to be a God thought. A Spirit dropping. And here is my **Test of Faith**. I am I going to be faithful to the calling I have as a minister of the gospel (and each one of us have that title. That’s not a professional clergy thing; we are the PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS) or am I going to shrink back.

During the week of planning teachers are hit and miss when it comes to where they are and what they are doing. So, the first thing I do when I go back on campus after dropping the paint in my room is I go to turn the receipt in for what I purchased. After some small talk with the office staff, guess who comes walking through the office? Yep, it was the expectant mother and quickly that impression came back to me, and I just asked her if I could pray over her. So we gathered around her and prayed. And the Spirit was all over it. Again, *“A sweet aroma of God to those who believe.”*

Are we going to just admire God’s faithfulness or are we going to live it out?

Where in my life am I failing to **Mirror God Faithfulness**?

Where in my life am I walking in infidelity? Anytime we choose to sin we are not living in faith: choosing not to display faithfulness as a fruit of the spirit.

Aren’t you grateful for a faithful God. Who stands by His commitments to His children regardless of all the ways we mess up and choose to walk away from His best for our lives.

