

Why I Am Faithful

Introduction. One of the cornerstone verses of the New Testament is Ephesians 2:8 when Paul said that we are saved by grace through faith. It is a summary of how God saves man from sin. "Faith" on the part of man is not a shallow word which only means to give mental assent to the truth of some fact, but is a comprehensive term with the biblical meaning of the conviction, confidence, and obedience of those who have embraced the gospel. This kind of faith makes it possible for someone to be a Christian.

Since the seed of the kingdom is the word of God (Luke 8:11), and since seed produces after its kind, the gospel will produce today what it produced 2,000 years ago. Once obedient, I have to fight a good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). The most consistent battle a church faces is the battle of faithfulness, but I need to know how to be faithful.

I. What It Means To Be Faithful

- A. Jesus wanted the church at Smyrna to be faithful (Revelation 2:10). "Until" is a preposition of time meaning up "to a point in time." The Christian is to be faithful up to the point of his death. In the context of the letter to Smyrna, it may also mean that one should be willing to die for his faith.
- B. To be faithful means that one is "trustworthy ... in duty (and) ... firmness in faith. It means that God and others can count on us to be what we are now in Christ and what we have committed ourselves to become. Faithfulness, then, is to live in harmony with the will of God (cp. 1 Samuel 3:9).

II. Why I Want To Be Faithful

- A. God is faithful.
 - 1. The Bible ascribes this trait to God several times (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 89:1-2, 5, 8; Lamentations 3:23; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 10:23).
 - 2. Although I have obeyed the gospel (Colossians 2:12), I am imperfect, but I believe the promise of a faithful God (1 John 1:9). I want to be faithful and not disappoint Him because faithfulness to Him is His will for me (1 John 5:2-3).
- B. It is the best way to live.
 - 1. Faithfulness to God is the best way to live because I enjoy spiritual life, abundant life, and eternal life.
 - a) My sin spiritually separates me from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Through accepting the work of Christ on the cross I am reconciled to God.

- b) Additionally, in Christ I enjoy abundant life (John 10:10). The way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15) so I learn a better life.
 - c) I will finally enjoy eternal life (Romans 6:23). This consists of the removal of everything bad and the everlasting existence of perfect bliss.
2. I have all of the finest blessings God offers His children as I live in faithfulness (Ephesians 1:3).
- C. I influence others for good.
1. As I live faithfully I am setting the right kind of example for my family, my friends, and my acquaintances (1 Timothy 4:12).
 2. I can be salt and light to those I meet (Matthew 5:13-16). Everywhere I go I can spread "the fragrance of Christ" as I live before others as a faithful child of God (2 Corinthians 2:14-16).
- D. I want to be involved in the kingdom.
1. God has given His people the privilege of being stewards (1 Corinthians 4:1). "Mysteries" refers to the plan and purpose of God that was hidden or unknown until revealed and "stewards" means literally "a house administrator" that was applied to apostles and ministers of the gospel.
 2. Those who teach a message that saves sinners and promotes the spiritual growth of Christians (Acts 20:32) are stewards of God's word and they must be faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2).
- E. I want to live in Heaven.
1. In John 10:27-29, the promise of Jesus is that His sheep are hearing, Jesus is knowing them, the sheep are following, Jesus is giving them eternal life, no one is snatching the sheep from the Father's hand, and the sheep are not perishing. The sheep are faithful, and in their faithfulness they are saved.
 2. When I remain faithful to my confession of Christ, He will confess me before His Father (Matthew 10:32; Revelation 3:5). Those whose names are in the book of life are saved (Revelation 21:22-27). Those whose names are not in the book of life are lost (Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; cp. 2 Peter 2:20-21).

III. How I Can Be Faithful

- A. I will acknowledge that there is a body of sacred truth.
1. The inbreathing of God into men enabled them to receive and communicate divine truth without error. The Holy Spirit guided the writers in a word for word selection of divine truth (1 Corinthians 2:7-13; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
 2. The Bible is "living and active" (Hebrews 4:12), but it is not "living" in the sense that it is to be changed to agree with cultures. I have

- to be attentive to what Jesus said through inspired men (1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 John 4:6).
- B. I will commit myself to be only a Christian.
 - 1. The pattern for the pre-denominational and non-denominational church that Jesus built is found in the New Testament (Hebrews 8:5).
 - 2. When this pattern is followed, this church exists today in every place on Earth where the word of God is faithfully practiced (2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9).
 - C. I will be an active member of a local congregation.
 - 1. Jesus established the universal church and is the only head of this church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). However, the New Testament church was planted in local congregations.
 - 2. Therefore, the New Testament speaks of the church at different places. When fully developed, the local church is organized with elders, deacons, and members (Philippians 1:1), and every faithful Christian will be an active part of a local church (Acts 9:26-28; Ephesians 4:16).
 - D. I will worship regularly with a congregation.
 - 1. Our worship is in "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). I will worship in "truth," doing only what is authorized by the New Testament, and "in spirit," sincerely from a heart devoted to God.
 - 2. The New Testament shows that the worship of the church included singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), prayer (Acts 2:42), teaching (Acts 5:42), the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), and giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). If I am to be faithful, I will grow close to God and brethren by not forsaking the assemblies of the church (Hebrews 10:25).
 - E. I will avoid the pitfalls that take me away from God.
 - 1. I want to be diligent to not teach any doctrine except what is revealed in scripture (1 Timothy 1:3-7). I want to conduct myself properly in the house of God (1 Timothy 3:14-15).
 - 2. I want to carefully follow the good doctrine of God (1 Timothy 4:6). I want to take heed to myself and to the doctrine of scripture (1 Timothy 4:16). I want to consent to wholesome words (1 Timothy 6:3-5). I want to guard what was committed to my trust (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

Conclusion. Paul addressed his letter to the Ephesians to "the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1). Seek to be among the faithful. If we know what faithfulness is; if we know why we should want to be faithful; and if we know how to be faithful; then we have a choice to make. Choose faithfulness!