



Light from the Word

The Faithful Church Is Committed

“O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.” (Psalms 108:1)

A commitment is an obligation or a pledge that we make to a person, a cause, or an organization. It evokes the concept of placing in trust, as Paul related to Timothy, *“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”* (2 Tim. 1:12).

In our society, commitment seems to be conditional, based on how one feels at the moment. If one does not “feel” like enduring, it becomes easy to justify breaking a commitment. This may impact employers, employees, friendships, churches, families, and even marriages.

The marriage relationship is the oldest example of human commitment, beginning with Adam and Eve. Jesus’ instruction to those who were married was direct and clear, *“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”* (Matt. 19:6). In light of this biblical imperative to be committed, Paul further commanded, *“Husbands, love your wives ... and wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.”* (Eph. 5: 25, 22). Commitment and love are commands. Genuine commitment leads to genuine love.

This truth is directly opposed to the deception so rampant in our society. The world seems to think that one “falls in love” and then commitments are kept as long as the “feeling” lasts or “self” is benefited by the relationship. In reality, commitment is the foundation upon which genuine love is built.

Life requires commitment. Commitment to Jesus keeps us from going back to a life of sin after we are born again of water and of spirit. However, just as we can physically become sick and die, it is possible for a converted person to become sin-sick and die. Failure

to thrive spiritually can be from a lack of nutrition, lack of care and nurturing, or any number of other reasons.

Commitment means that nothing will deter us from following Christ, even if it involves suffering, shame and humility, time, or expense. It doesn’t matter if it requires difficult, unrecognized or unrewarded work. A committed soul devotes whatever resources are needed to remain faithful until the end and places one’s personal pride aside completely.

Jesus answered those who excused their lack of commitment by saying: *“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 9:62).

Our Father in heaven and our Lord Jesus are the best examples of commitment. From the beginning, God has been committed to the redemption of His creation. He led the Israelites out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land. Their redemption closely demonstrated God’s plan for mankind through Jesus and shows us His faithfulness in spite of the unfaithfulness of His people. God does not turn aside from his commitments. *“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;”* (Deut. 7:9).

Jesus’ commitment is perhaps both simpler and more difficult for us to understand. Simple, in that we can grasp laying down our life for someone else. Difficult, because we do not understand what it would mean to be forsaken of God. Jesus’ commitment to us came *“while we were yet in our sins”*. He laid down his life *before* we turned to Him. Commitment precedes gratification and may

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even precede love. Perhaps it is inextricably linked to love. We cannot say we love if we are not committed to maintaining that love, and we cannot say we are truly committed if we do not have love.

*“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and **we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.** But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.”* (1 John 3:14-19)

Just as commitment and love are interwoven, so also is submission necessary to fulfill commitment’s pledge. It is inevitable in any human relationship—and perhaps most keenly felt in the church—that there will be times when we do not

see eye-to-eye. When we are faced with the test of commitment, we will be blessed when we find the humility and grace to prefer our brother above ourselves; yielding our preferences and “rights” to him for the well-being of the whole and the preservation of commitment’s bond. *“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;”* (Rom. 12:10). *“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth (good).”* (1 Cor. 10:24).

The faithful church draws on the graciousness of God to find strength to be committed. That commitment is first to the Lord as Head, then to the church as His body – inseparable from the Lord. Just as Jesus was committed to the cross for our sakes – while we were yet in our sins, the faithful church is committed to one another in spite of imperfections. The faithful church is committed to endure to the end. The faithful church overcomes by the blood of the Lamb and loves not her own life. The faithful church is not overcome with evil, but overcomes evil with good. Just as commitment is the linchpin of marriage, the faithful church commits, “...for better or worse, richer or poor, sickness or health ... until death do us part.”

Let’s set our faces, surrender our hearts, and commit our spirit

to be faithful in all things.

“For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.” Isaiah 50:7

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.***

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. - Hebrews 12:1-2