



Light from the Word

Rewards of Faithfulness

“A faithful man shall abound with blessings...”
Prov. 28:20

The Scriptures describe faithfulness as an unwavering performance of our duties and vows unto God based on a firmly held belief in Him and His Son, Jesus Christ: *“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised;)”* (Heb. 10:23). Being faithful requires commitment and dedication as a vital part of a personal and lifelong relationship between Christ and the believer. At a time when many of His disciples were leaving Him, Christ asked the twelve, *“Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”* (John 6:67-69). A steadfast faith in Christ enabled the Apostle Paul to endure sufferings: *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for 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). Both Peter and Paul were able to make these beautiful expressions of faith and commitment because their belief in Christ went beyond this life to the eternal reward in heaven awaiting the faithful.

An important characteristic of faithfulness includes taking seriously the covenant which we made with God at the time of our baptism. God promises *“To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham”* (Luke 1:72-73). We in turn will *“serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life”* ((Luke 1:74-75). God's reward to us for keeping our part of this covenant is to possess the *“hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began”* (Titus 1:2).

A steadfast faith in God enables us to withstand Satan's temptations, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world”* (1 Peter 5:8-9). *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God”* (1 John 5:4-5). Leading an overcoming life against the temptations of Satan has eternal benefits: *“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him”* (James 1:12).

Another important aspect of faithfulness to God as well as to others is to *“Set a watch. O Lord before my mouth:”* (Psalm 141:3). This includes being truthful at all times and avoiding gossip, as well as giving and taking sound advice. *“A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies”* and *“A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter”* (Proverbs 14:5; 11:13). Lying goes beyond not telling the truth. It includes being inconsistent in what we say and how we live, as it relates to our relationship with others and especially with God. *“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen* (1 John 4:20). *“Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son”* (1 John 2:22). Lying is a very serious sin which if left unchecked, will cause us to forfeit our salvation (Rev.21:8). Gossip can destroy friendships, and the wounds it causes are slow to heal (Proverbs 17:9; 18:8). Giving

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Rewards...

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and taking sound advice will bring rewards already in this life. As an illustration, Abigail's wise counsel was instrumental in calming David's rage against her husband Nabal. Through exercising restraint, his victory over self was greater than wreaking a bloody vengeance upon his enemies. *"And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand"* (1 Sam. 25:32-33).

Faithfulness and good works substantiate one another when the believer exercises an active and sincere love for others (1 Cor. 13:2-3). The Apostles James and John challenge us to "show our faith" by our good works to both "brethren and to strangers" (James 2:15-17; 3 John 1:5). Jesus expands this list to even include our enemies, and that we should do so without expecting an earthly reward. *"But love your enemies, and do good, and*

lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35). It is reward enough that we glorify our Father: *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16).

Doing kindness unto others out of a sincere love for them has the added benefit of helping us maintain our sense of priority and true purpose in life. For example in the parable of the rich fool, we learn that his real sin was not his possession of riches, but rather his presumptive and selfish attitudes towards them (Luke 12:16-21).

Though we might prefer to avoid them, afflictions and persecutions also bring rewards and blessings when faithfully borne by God's children. Indeed, Paul's counsel to Timothy was, *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (2 Tim. 3:12). While facing deep trials, many believers have experienced a wonderful nearness to God: *"When thou passest through the waters, I will*

be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43:2). God's grace is sufficient that we *"Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* (Rev.2:10). By so doing we have fellowship with Christ's sufferings and will bring glory to God (1 Peter 4:12-14).

Faithfulness to God necessarily extends over a wide area of the believer's life, but God asks very little of us in comparison to the promised reward, *"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities"* (Luke 19:17). Indeed, Jesus tells us *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."* (Luke 16:10). By God's grace may we abide true and faithful to life's end that *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Phil 1:6).

So Send I You

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these also doeth the Son likewise." And, again in Acts 1, our Lord clarified this for the early church

in verse 8 in saying, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost

part of the earth."

This declaration to the early church about the source of their power and the command to witness is an encouragement to us. As

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