

Day of Prayer
September, 18, 1996

Theme: The Faithfulness of God.

Scripture: 1 John 1, especially verse 9.

We have seen today that God has been faithful in calling us into the fellowship of His Son. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:9. We have seen that God is faithful in placing limits upon our trials, limiting them to what we are able to bear. 1 Cor. 10:13. And we have just seen in Psalm 92:1, 2 special instructions concerning God's lovingkindness, and His faithfulness.

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:

2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

The Scriptures are full of evidence of the faithfulness of God. God has never been anything but faithful to any of us individually, and we have certainly seen His faithfulness to us as a church.

What does it mean that He is faithful? The dictionary suggests three interpretations which apply to God in His relationship with us, His people. I have adapted the definitions to fit our relationship with God.

1) He firmly stands behind all of His purposes, every promise, and every covenant. He is unfailingly true to His Word.

2) He never ceases to love us, and all of His actions are the result of His unchanging love for us. His love for us is an everlasting love. Romans 8:28 is an illustration of this.

3) He is worthy of our absolute trust and complete confidence. He will never fail us; He will never forsake us.

On the contrary, we often break our promises to Him. Our love fluctuates. We are more devoted to the Lord some days than we are on other days. And we often fail the Lord. We are too often unfaithful, but the Lord is always faithful.

The one time in any of our lives when we might expect the Lord to have nothing more to do with us, is when we sin. Until a child of God understands the teaching of the Word of God, this can be very disturbing, and often is. But the Word in 1 John 1:9 teaches us that even here "He is faithful and just," in this case, "to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." However, we need to notice what the Apostle John in this passage had to say about our sinning.

In this chapter the Apostle John tells us that “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (v. 5). Sin, on the other hand, is darkness, and so it is anything that is contrary to what God is. He is righteous; sin, as in 1:9 is unrighteousness.

In confessing our sins we are acknowledging at least three things:

- 1) That we are solely the ones who are responsible for our sins. It is not our parents, not our friends with whom we have sinned, not our environment. We are responsible.
- 2) That sin has brought guilt upon us, guilt for which, again, we are responsible to God.
- 3) That sin has defiled us. It has made us unclean in God’s sight, and has disqualified us for fellowship with God. And so we need cleansing.

When we confess our sins to God, not only does He show His faithfulness to us, but in forgiving and cleansing us He shows His righteousness. And yet His faithfulness and justice here refer to God’s relationship with Christ, but we are the beneficiaries of it. We have no claim upon God except through Christ. *Forgiveness* indicates that we are released from our guilt, and *cleansing* means the defilement of our sin has been taken away, and fellowship has been restored.

Christ died for our sins. This was the price of our redemption. But it is also by the death of Christ that our fellowship with the Lord is maintained, and restored when necessary. The Lord’s Supper is to remind us of this glorious truth. And so tonight, as we observe the Lord’s Supper, we are showing forth, as Psalm 92 says, God’s “faithfulness” tonight. And even when we are not observing the Lord’s Supper, we still have many reasons “to shew forth” God’s “lovingkindness in the morning, and” His “faithfulness every night.” Let this be in our hearts as we observe the Lord’s Supper tonight.

But before we observe the Lord’s Supper, Dr. Lockwood will lead us in another song.