

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 25:15-23**.
- B. The 7th attribute of the fruit of the Spirit is that of faithfulness.
- C. The KJV says "faith" but the word here has reference to fidelity rather than the act of believing only.
- D. To begin, a 3-fold definition of faithfulness. Faithfulness is:
 - 1. Being reliable and trustworthy.
 - 2. Using talents, abilities, and opportunities that make us capable.
 - 3. Stability in relationships.
- E. To close the lesson I will discuss what faithfulness is not and some hindrances to being faithful.

I. FAITHFULNESS IS BEING RELIABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY.

- A. The Bible tells us that God, JC and the word of God are all trustworthy:
 - 1. God is trustworthy (1Cor. 10:13; 2Cor. 1:18; 1Th. 5:24).
(1Cor 10:13) No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.
(2Cor 1:18) But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no.
(1Th 5:24) Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.
 - 2. JC is trustworthy (Heb. 2:17; Rev. 3:14; 19:11).
(Heb 2:17) Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
(Rev 3:14) "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:
(Rev 19:11) And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.
 - 3. The word of God is trustworthy (1Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2Tim. 2:11; Ti. 1:9; 3:8; Rev. 21:5; 22:6).
(1Tim 1:15) It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.
(1Tim 3:1; 4:9; 2Tim 2:11) It is a trustworthy statement:
(Ti 1:9) holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.
(Ti 3:8) This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.
(Rev 21:5) And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."
(Rev 22:6) And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place.
- B. Therefore, when a Xian is striving to be faithful, he will become a reliable and trustworthy person (1Cor. 4:1-2).
Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. **2** In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

II. FAITHFULNESS IS USING OUR TALENTS, ABILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

- A. We have record in the NT of men and women who were considered to be faithful Xians:
 - 1. Tychicus was a faithful servant (Col. 4:7).
As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.
 - 2. Tychicus is mentioned again for being a faithful minister (Eph. 6:21).
But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

3. Timothy is known as a beloved and faithful child in the Lord (1Cor. 4:17).
For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.
4. Paul was considered faithful by X (1Tim. 1:12).
I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service;
- B. The last verse above is very important because JC is the judge of all men and is the only one who pronounces if someone is faithful or not. Men do not have this right.
- C. The terms “saint” and “faithful” are used by Paul in Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 1:1, 4; Col. 1:2).
(Eph 1:1) Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: **4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love
(Col 1:2) to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.
- D. In all these cases these men were considered faithful by using their abilities and talents wisely.
- E. The parable of the talents is one great way to illustrate this point about faithfulness being the wise and proper use of one’s talents, abilities and opportunities (Mt. 25:21, 23).
“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’ ... **23** “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’
- F. The “talents” in this story are opportunities that have been given people who have various degrees of ability to handle them. Our job is to take the opportunities God gives us, and with the talents and abilities we have make the most of them. This is faithfulness.

III. FAITHFULNESS IS **STABILITY IN RELATIONSHIPS**.

- A. Our relationship with God, fellow man, and self needs to be solid and stable. A fair-weather follower of Jesus, a fair-weather friend, etc., make for unfaithful relationships.
- B. Revelation 2:10 shows that a stable relationship with God results in eternal life.
‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- C. Even under great persecution, John writes that Xians are the called, chosen and faithful (Rev. 17:14).
“These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”
 1. To be called is to be converted by the gospel.
 2. To be chosen is to be one of God’s people.
 3. To be faithful is to be stable in that relationship in the midst of trial
- D. The employer--employee relationship is important (we spend a lot of time there). The NT speaks to this and tells us to be faithful at all times (Mt. 24:45; Eph. 6:5-7).
(Mt 24:45) “Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?”
(Eph 6:5-7) Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; **6** not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. **7** With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,
- E. When a Xian is faithful he/she cannot be upset easily, no one can “rock the boat” and spill the Xian overboard. Faithfulness is having a life built on the bedrock of Jesus, which is solid and sure.

IV. FAITHFULNESS IS NOT...

- A. Faithfulness is not:
 1. Perfection.
Faithfulness is not sinless-ness. This is a great misconception.

2. Just attending worship services.
Faithfulness is not measured by the number of worship services attended (see Lk. 9:23).
 3. Just baptizing people or being benevolent.
Extremism contains very little truth.
 4. Piling up as many works as possible.
Salvation is by grace not works.
- B. Some hindrances to faithfulness:
1. Immaturity. Although not having to be permanent, this is a problem.
 2. Irresponsibility. This is a great detriment to faithfulness.
 3. Being irrational. These people have trouble being faithful.
 4. Extremism. Those who drift off into extremes have trouble being faithful.
 5. Vanity and deceitfulness. These qualities say one thing but are another.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Remember, being faithful is a growth process, like that of the entire Xian life.
- B. One does not come forth from baptism and be immediately faithful in every area of their life.
- C. Identifying the things the cause us to sin and not be faithful in our relationships need to be worked on.
- D. We need to learn to look for opportunities to serve with our talents, and realize that trials test our stableness and trustworthiness.
- E. When a Xian can say he is doing the best he can today, and hopes to become even better tomorrow, he may not be sinless but he can be faithful.
- F. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.