

# FOUR FAITHFUL SAYINGS

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I TIMOTHY 1:15 • TV462A

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by

**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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### **1Timothy 1:15**

*“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”*

If this message I preach to you today is a blessing, and you want to hear it again, you may write to the address given at the close of the message and we will send you a copy on a cassette tape. Ask for this title: “**FOUR FAITHFUL SAYINGS**”.

In the epistles written by the apostle Paul, he uses this term at least four times. He says, “*This is a faithful saying,*” he makes this statement four times in the Books of Timothy and the Book of Titus. When he says “This is a faithful saying,” he means that what I am about to write to you and what I am going to say to you is faithful, and it is certain. It is sure, and it is a faithful saying, it is trustworthy, it is dependable, it is from God and it can be perfectly relied upon. Now, let us see how important it is.

As far as I know, no other writer in Holy Scriptures uses this phrase over and over again like Paul. He uses this phrase four times, “*This is a faithful saying,*” this is certain, and this is sure. You need to sit up and take notice, because this is from God and you can trust it and you can depend upon it and you can be sure that it is true.

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Now, you who believe the gospel and love the gospel of Christ; I believe that if you listen carefully to this message, God will give you a deeper understanding of the foundation of salvation, the very root and foundation of redemption. He will give you a better understanding of what the essence of salvation really is. The very substance of it, the heart of it, and I believe He will give you an understanding of what we call “perseverance” or “continuing in the faith”.

What is this perseverance or continuing in the faith? I believe also that in this message, you will be given some understanding of the fruit of salvation, the results of salvation, what follows the redemption of the soul.

Now, let’s look at these four faithful sayings, will you look at them with me? Paul says, “This is certain, this is trustworthy, this is from God, this is dependable and you can count on this, what I’m about to tell you is mighty important; it’s worthy of acceptance by all; it is so important.” Now, here are the four faithful sayings: If you want to take some notes, write these things down and look up the scriptures later. Over in **First Timothy chapter 1:15**, Paul says (and this is the first time he uses this phrase), He says, “*This is a faithful saying and this is worthy of all acceptance; (this is worthy of the acceptance of all men), that Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.*” Now, that’s the very foundation and root of salvation; this is where you start. This is a true saying, this is trustworthy and dependable, you can bank on it and you can count on it, that Jesus Christ came into this world, “*He who inhabited heaven came to this earth.*” He, who reigns and sits on a throne in glory, came to this earth; He visited this earth for the purpose of saving sinners, of whom I am the chief.

Now, who came? It was Christ Jesus, Christ the God man. Christ Jesus is the Christ and the Messiah. He’s the Son of David, He’s that Prophet, Priest and King. He’s that Prophet of whom Moses wrote. He’s that Priest of which Melchisedec was a type. He is that King in which David is a type; He’s that Prophet, Priest and King. He’s the Lord of glory; He is the Christ, the Messiah and He is Jesus, the Saviour.

The angel appeared to Joseph and said to him, “*Joseph don’t be afraid to take Mary to be your wife because that Holy thing which is conceived in her is the Son of God and she will bring forth a son and you call His name Jesus; (that will be His name, Jesus of Nazareth) He will save His people from their sins.*” Now, this is a fulfillment the angel said of what Isaiah the prophet said, when he wrote, “*Behold a virgin shall be with child and bring forth a son, and His name will be Emanuel (God with us),*” God in human flesh! As I said, He who inhabits the heavens now walks the earth. He, who sits on a throne in glory, now inhabits human flesh. Who came? Christ, God the Messiah, the Redeemer, Christ Jesus, son of Mary, the carpenter, in the flesh, “*bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. A child is born; a Son is given. The name of that Son is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,*” but, His name is Jesus, Christ Jesus the Lord, Jesus Christ. That is who He is!

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Now, what did He do? He came into this world. He actually was “*In this world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.*” The scripture says in **John**, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and all things were made by Him, without Him was not anything made.*” That Word was made flesh and literally, actually dwelt among us for 33 ½ years. God walked this earth in a body. Almighty God who made the world, walked in the world. Almighty God, who created all things, lived among men. He came into this world. “*In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.*” He who made woman was made of a woman. He was “*made under the law,*” under His law in subjection to His own law. The law was born of Him and made of Him and now He’s under it, in subjection to it, sent down here in the flesh to honor it and obey it, “*That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*” He came into this world!

You didn’t come into this world. He’s the only one whoever descended. He who ascended is the one who descended. He’s the only one who ever descended into this world. The rest of us are products of this earth. We’re born of the flesh, but He came from heaven and inhabited a body. He said, “*A body thou has prepared me;*” I was before the body and I came and inhabited this body. You were made simultaneously with the body, when the seed was fertilized in your mother’s womb; that is when you started, you, your life and your body. “*Jesus Christ is from everlasting to everlasting*” and He came into this world. Who came? Christ Jesus! Where did He come? He came into this world. Why did He come? He came to save.

What does the word “save” mean? Do you know what it means? People say they have been “saved.” Are you “saved?” “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*” What does he mean by the word “saved”? It means to deliver. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He came down to Nazareth and spoke to those people in His own home town, the Messiah, the Christ, the one who came to save, He told why He came. He gave a summary of His mission. He read from **Isaiah 61**, He said, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, He hath anointed Me, He hath sent Me into the world to preach good news to the poor,*”(to those in poverty, not just poverty of body and flesh and materialism, but spirit). “*He sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted. He sent Me to set the captive free.*” He sent Me to open the prison, to deliver them that are bound, to deliver them, to free them, to set them free, the blind, to set them free from darkness and those in prison to set them free.

How are we in prison? How are we bound? I’ll tell you; we are bound by the law. We have broken God’s law and we are in prison. It’s just like these men who killed a man recently; they are in jail without bond; they are in prison. The law has them and the law has captured them. The law is holding them and keeping them until justice executes them. Do you see that? They are prisoners; they are captives. The only way for them to be delivered is to be found “not guilty”; that’s the only way for the captives to be set free from a just and honorable law and true justice, it is for him to be declared “not guilty”, and “justified”.

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We're here, held captive by God's law; we're guilty. We're held guilty until justice will say unto us, "*Cast him into hell, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" Christ came into this world in the flesh, as a man to deliver us, to set the prisoner free, to set the captive free Himself, to go into the jail and into the prison and under the curse of the law, and under the bondage of the law to take our place and to obey that law and to allow justice to kill him.

If you have murdered someone and they are going to put you into the electric chair, if someone will come and sit in that chair for you; you say that's impossible because I am the guilty one. The Law has to kill me, that's right, but Christ became guilty, He took our sin. It was such that He as God could literally, as our representative, be numbered with the transgressors and take our guilt as if it was His. "*He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" He came and went to jail and set me free! He came under the captivity of the law and set me free. He came under the bondage of the curse and the bondage of justice and judgment and set us free. He came to save! That is what "saved" means, to deliver, to set the captive free.

Now, what kind of sinners did He come to save? Who came? This is certain and this is sure; you can depend on this; this is trustworthy; this is God's Word that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners. What kind of sinners? Paul said, "*Of which I am the chief.*" He came to save the chief of sinners, the greatest of sinners, the blackest of sinners, the worst of sinners. Somebody said, "No half-way sinner needs to apply for God's mercy because God's mercy is for the chief of sinners." This tribe of believers is the only tribe where everybody is a chief, "*the chief of sinners.*"

One time our Lord was eating with some Publicans and sinners, some notorious people, some well-known sinners. There were some religious fellows that got upset because they didn't think they were sinners; they didn't feel their guilt and their sins; they felt like they were holy and righteous and they saw the Lord eating with these sinners, and they said to the disciples, "Why does your Master eat with people like that? What does He associate with people like that? Why does your Master have anything to do with these kind of people, these sinners?" Our Lord knew their thoughts and He looked at them and He said, "*The well do not need a Doctor.*" People who need a Doctor are sick people. Now, you go learn what that means. Jesus Christ came into this world; "*I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*" That's why I'm come, to call sinners.

Are you a sinner? I'm a sinner, a genuine sinner. A sinner is someone who has transgressed God's Law. "*To offend in one point is to be guilty of the whole law.*" Somebody said, "Well, I'm not a bad sinner;" well, there's no other kind. "Well, you know there are some things I haven't done," no there isn't. "*To offend in one point of the law is to be guilty of the whole law.*" (A sinner is a sinner is a sinner). "*He came to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.*" Oh, that you and I might be able by the Spirit of God to see ourselves as God sees us, to see our sins as God sees us. God despises sin; God must punish sin; "*God will not clear the guilty. Now, this is a faithful saying.*" Do you see how

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important that is? “*Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, (to deliver them, to set them free), of whom I am the chief.*”

William Jay came to visit John Newton one time and said, “Mr. Newton, have you heard the news?” Newton said, “No, what news is that?” “Have you heard the news? The Lord has saved Mr. So and So, that notorious sinner, down in Bath County.” Mr. Newton said, “I’m so glad, I rejoice, I’m grateful to God for saving him.” Mr. Jay said, “I’ll tell you this, since the Lord saved that man, I’ll never despair of anybody else.” John Newton looked at William Jay and said, “My brother, since the Lord saved me, I’ve never despaired of anyone else; I’m the chief of sinners.” Are you? “*He came to save sinners of whom I am the chief.*”

All right, now look at the second faithful saying in **First Timothy 4: 8-9**, listen to this, “*For bodily exercise profiteth little: (or for a little time) but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.*” He says it again with the same emphasis that he placed upon that other faithful saying, “*This is a faithful saying,*” (this is trustworthy, this is true; this is dependable; rest on it, and listen to it).

What is he talking about? You have to read the preceding verses. You’ll find that Paul is speaking about the exercises and functions of the body in religious exercises and in forms of worship. He’s talking about things, such as fasting; He’s talking about things, such as kneeling; He’s talking about things as sustaining from certain foods; He’s talking about things such as kneeling, keeping of days, whatever men and women do in bodily functions and exercises for the sake of religious acceptance or gain or duty. Now, some of these bodily exercises are good, such as kneeling, lying prostrate before God, bowing our heads, bowing our hearts in commitment and consecration before God. Here’s what He’s saying, anything having to do with bodily exercise, such as fasting, kneeling or bowing or lying prostrate before God or doing without something or keeping a certain day; these things profit little. Here’s what profitable, a true and sincere heart of faith and Godliness before the Lord.

Let me show you an example: Two men went to the temple to pray (our Lord Jesus gave this illustration). One was a very religious man; he was a Pharisee, so he was dressed a certain way. He had a certain garb on that designated him as a religious man. His phylacteries were brought; he had the robes of religion; he had all the things that would indicate and designate him as a religious man, with outward form and bodily exercise. He probably had a scroll, because they liked to stand on the street corners and read the scriptures and pray to be seen of men. He went into the temple to pray, to exercise religion. He went into the temple; he went all the way down to the altar, and he stood at the altar, and lifted his eyes and his hands to heaven (lifting holy hands), he said, “*I fast, I tithe, I give alms.*” All of this is bodily exercise; all of it is an outward show to impress somebody, man, God, himself or somebody. Our Lord said that it counted for nothing!

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Another man was praying at the same time. He didn't stand down at the front; he didn't lift his hands; he didn't even lift his eyes to heaven; he smote on his breast. He didn't talk about tithing or fasting or giving alms or any of these things (fasting is good in its place; giving alms is great in its place). But this Publican didn't mention any of those things. He smote on his breast and he cried, "*Oh God!*" His trouble was in his heart, he was striking upon his heart, and that's where his consecration was, and that is where his prayer was, and that is where his plea came from, "*Be merciful to me a sinner!*" Our Lord said, "*He went home justified.*"

Bodily exercise, whatever it may be, (the apostle is not discounting nor am I discounting fasting); we're not discounting kneeling; we're not discounting bowing or falling prostrate before God Almighty on your face, and crying to God, but my friend, godliness is a state of the heart, a condition of the heart. Godliness is not in outward form. Godliness is profitable for life now and for life to come. That's where God looks, not on the outward countenance, but on the heart.

Don't put on a show for God; He looks on the heart. Don't put on a show for men and expect God to accept it because He knows every thought of our heart and He knows it's phony, phony, phony!

You know, I heard a story one time about a martyr, way back when Bloody Mary was the Queen of England. There was a man that was about to be killed for his faith; they were going to cut his head off. The man who was in charge of the execution put his head down and felt sorry for this man, and he kind of reached down to comfort him a little bit and patted him on the head, before they were going to chop his head off. He said, "Sir, is your head comfortable?" The man looked up at him, (the believer), and said, "The comfort of the head amounts to nothing, it's the condition of the heart." Let me tell you something, that is what I am trying to say; bodily exercise and form, ceremony and all these things that men do, don't profit much, but godliness, that is where it is!

Here's the **third** one: **Second Timothy Chapter 2:11-13**, "*It is a faithful saying: (this is sure, certain, trustworthy and dependable; it's from God), for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*" He won't deny Himself. What's He talking about? Well, this is the truth; this is a faithful saying, "*If we be dead with Christ, we live with Christ.*"

You know, in the natural realm, death means "The End". In the Spiritual realm, death means "The Beginning." When Christ came down here to this earth and died on the cross, we died in Him and we were buried with Him and we arose in Him and ascended, and we are seated on the right hand of God in Him. If we died with Him on that cross, if He's our Lord and Redeemer and we died with Him, then we live! He said, "*Because I live, you live!*" We live before God. If we suffer with Him, we'll reign with Him.

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What does it mean to suffer with Christ? Well, it's (identification). When a believer comes to know the gospel and to really believe the gospel, he confesses that gospel; he confesses Christ. He says, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*"

Then, he takes his place with Christ. He's willing to bear the reproach and he's willing to take the yoke of Christ. He's willing to be counted, he's willing to be identified, he's willing to suffer whatever harassment or persecution comes or whatever reproach comes because of that gospel. Christ said, "*Marvel not my brethren, if the world hateth you; it hateth Me before it hated you.*" That's identification, and that is suffering with Christ. If we be dead with Him, we live and if we suffer with Him, we will reign, and if we deny Him, He'll deny us.

What does it mean if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful? That means just this, that no one has perfect faith. You don't, I don't and no one else does. Our faith gets mighty low sometimes. It gets mighty frail sometimes; it lapses. Sometimes we have to say, "Do I believe at all?" You know, that Centurion said, "*Lord I believe, help my unbelief.*" I'll tell you, when our faith hits the lowest point, or the weakest point, right down to the doubting point and faith fails and we have to say, "I don't know if I believe it or not;" He still remains faithful. He still loves us, redeems us and keeps us. He'll never deny Himself and we are one with Him. Do you see that? This is a true saying, and trustworthy. If you be dead with Christ, you live. If you suffer with Christ, you reign with Him. If you deny Him, He will deny you. If you fail and don't believe and have these low points of faith, "*He still remains faithful;*" He cannot deny Himself, and we're in Him.

All right, here's the last one, **Titus 3:8**, "*This is a faithful saying too, and these things I will that you constantly affirm that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*" That's the results of faith, that's the fruit of faith. I'm going to talk about that next week, "The Fruit of Faith." The root of faith is believing on Christ, the fruit of faith is walking in His footsteps.

Here's what the Poet said:

Lord, speak to me that I may speak,  
As thou has sought me, let me seek.  
Lead me Lord that I may lead,  
Feed me Lord that I may feed.  
Strengthen me Lord that I may stand,  
And stretch out a loving hand.  
Teach me Lord that I may teach,  
Reach me Lord that I may reach.  
Fill my heart to overflow,  
Thy love to tell, thy praise to show.  
Oh, use me, thy praise, joy and glory to share,  
Just as you will, when and where.

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These are four faithful sayings!