

We come this week to faithfulness, and I want to consider it under three heads: faithfulness defined, displayed, and applied.

- I. Faithfulness Defined
- II. Faithfulness Displayed
- III. Faithfulness Applied

I. Faithfulness Defined

1. The Greek word rendered faithfulness is the generic word most often rendered faith—faith is a fruit of the Spirit.
2. And so, the first thing we need to address is the question—Why does only the KJV render the word faith, whereas every other modern translation renders it faithfulness?
3. The Greek word used here is *pistis*—and I tell you that not to impress you with my knowledge, but to say there is a Greek used in the NT for faithfulness and that is *pistos*.
4. The Greek word used here, *pistis*, is used nearly 250 times in the NT, and it's almost always translated faith (in every translation).
5. Why have the newer translations, here render it faithfulness, when in almost every other place, they render it faith?
6. Well, let me bring by saying, the two words are almost synonymous—we can almost say they are variations of the same word.
7. It's for this reason, while *pistis* is usually translated faith, it is at times translated faithful, and the same is true for *pistos* (while it's usually rendered faithful, it's at times rendered faith).
8. The reason for this confusion, is because the one necessarily includes the other—to be full of faith is to be faithful, and in order to be faithful, you must be full of faith.
9. Thus, by faithfulness is meant—the Spirit's work of filling us with faith to enable us to remain faithful.
10. (1) A faithful man is a believing man—that is, he is a man full of faith—faith in God, the Word, and Christ.
11. A faithful person knows their weakness and thus looks outside themselves to Christ for strength and help.
12. Remember, the grace of faith is in itself an empty grace—it only derives its strength from its object (God in Christ).
13. And so, a person who proves unfaithful, is someone who was never truly or savingly united to Christ.
14. Put another way—the reason every Christian will remain faithful, is because they remain united to Christ.
15. (2) A faithful man is a trustworthy man—that is—he is a dependable, reliable, loyal, and trustful person.
16. This is really what most people think, when they speak about faithfulness—being trustworthy and/or dependable.
17. Albert Barnes—"The word here may be used in the sense of fidelity, and may denote that the Christian will be a faithful man, a man faithful to his word and promises; a man who can be trusted or confided in."
18. Jerry Bridges—"The faithful person is one who is dependable, trustworthy, and loyal, who can be depended upon in all of his relationships, and who is absolutely honest and ethical in all of his affairs."
19. Okay, so, the Scripture says that God is faithful and it describes us as faithful, but there is a big difference.

20. God is faithful, in that, He's dependable, trustworthy, and loyal to Himself—this is who He is essentially.
21. Christians are faithful as they are continually given faith and strength by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
22. Actually, this is true of all the fruit—God is love essentially, whereas we are loving by the work of the Spirit (the same is true of joy, peace, patience, etc.).
23. Thus, while Scripture describes both God and Christians as faithful, they are faithful in very different ways.

II. Faithfulness Displayed

1. Now—before I come to particulars, let me say in general, faithfulness shows itself in every era of life.
2. Albert Barnes—"True religion makes a man faithful. The Christian is faithful as a man; faithful as a neighbor, friend, father, husband, son. He is faithful to his contracts; faithful to his promises. No man can be a Christian who is not thus faithful, and all pretensions to being under the influences of the Spirit when such fidelity does not exist, are deceitful and vain."
3. Faithfulness manifests or shows itself in being faithful to God, His word, and our individual callings.
4. (1) Faithful to God—this is where we must begin—everything we have, we have as stewards of God.
5. Lk.19:17—"And he said to him, Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities."
6. According to v11, our Savior taught this parable in order to correct the Jews false notion of His kingdom.
7. They had thought He came to establish an earthly kingdom, that would liberate them from the Romans.
8. They further thought, this kingdom would be established now, and not in fact, at His second coming.
9. (a) All men have a stewardship from God, v13—"So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, Do business till I come."
10. (b) God requires all stewards to be faithful, v15—"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."
11. (c) Faithfulness starts with smaller things, v17—"and he said to him, well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities."
12. Both servants were given cities to oversee—the first one 10 cities (v17), the second one 5 cities (v19).
13. The point being—because of their faithfulness in smaller things, they were entrusted with larger things.
14. Now—for our purposes, let me make an application—faithfulness starts with the smaller things of life.
15. For example, if you are a faithful employee, a wise employer will increase your responsibility and pay.
16. But this is my point, and reason I turned you to Luks 19—all faithfulness is ultimately rendered to God.
17. Christians recognize that ultimately, everything they have comes from God, and they are but stewards.
18. Physical possessions, spiritual gifts, relationships, jobs, education, it's all from God, and it's all for God.

19. (2) Faithful to His word—that is, we must be faithful to its true meaning, we must handle it with integrity.
20. Now—while this is necessary for all Christians, it's especially necessary for ministers of the New Covenant.
21. 1Cor.4:1-2—"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."
22. What an amazing passage, and a beautiful description of a minister—he is both a servant and steward.
23. A minister is a "servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God"—by "mysteries of God" is meant the gospel.
24. As stewards, ministers have been entrusted with the gospel as a treasure, and must prove themselves faithful.
25. Faithful to who or what? Well, faithful to Christ and faithful to His holy gospel over which they are stewards.
26. 2Tim.2:2—"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."
27. The word of God was to be "committed" that is "entrusted" to "faithful men"—that they may teach others.
28. The gospel is a treasure of eternal value, and thus Paul commands it be entrusted only to faithful men.
29. Men that will handle Scripture with integrity and reverence—men who will be able to teach others also.
30. (3) Faithful to our callings—that is—our callings as husbands, wives, church members, employees, and employers.
31. Husbands and wives must be faithful to their covenant vows—they swore before God and man, to love each other to death.
32. Church members are to be faithful to their local churches—faithful to commitments made in membership.
33. Employees need to have a sense of faithfulness to their employers, of working and prospering the business.
34. Thus, at the very core of the concept of faithfulness is fidelity or loyalty to one's word and/or promise.

III. Faithfulness Applied

1. Here, in closing, I want to make application of our subject, along four lines: examination, consolation, motivation, and imitation.
2. (1) By way of examination—by this I mean, if faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit, then we must ask ourselves, are we faithful people.
3. Let me start by saying, we live in a day when faithfulness is no longer treated with any measure of respect.
4. It used to be that God's people would be called "the faithful" because this so beautiful described them.
5. But we presently live in a culture, where faithfulness is not only esteemed, but at times ridiculed and mocked.
6. Faithfulness, trustfulness, and commitment—are no longer character traits, esteemed by this generation.
7. Fifty years ago, most people remained faithful to their spouses, jobs, country, and in many cases churches.

8. And brethren, I'm not even speaking about Christian people—there was at least a general commitment.
9. People were faithful to their promises and commitments—they showed up on time for work and were loyal to their employers.
10. But this isn't true anymore—people are no longer faithful to their word, and they are no longer loyal to their promises.
11. But you know brethren, while it's true we've witnessed an erosion of faithfulness in our day, man by nature isn't faithful.
12. Ps.12:1—"Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men."
13. Prov.20:6-7—"Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man? The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him (Ps.78:7-8)."
14. The "faithful man" is similar to the "virtuous wife"—they are both rare, and thus their worth is far above rubies.
15. A.W. Pink—"Unfaithfulness is one of the most outstanding sins of these evil days. In the business world, a man's word is, with rare exceptions, no longer his bond. In the social world, marital infidelity abounds on every hand, the sacred bonds of wedlock are broken with as little regard as discarding an old garment. In the ecclesiastical realm, thousands who have solemnly covenanted to preach the truth have no scruples about attacking and denying it."
16. And thus, while we are unfaithful by nature, we become faithful by grace—faithfulness describes all Christians.
17. Eph.1:1—"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus."
18. As I've said, our forefathers often referred to their congregations as "the faithful" which has Biblical roots.
19. Notice, "the saints are in Ephesus" are describes as "faithful in Christ Jesus"—they are the same people.
20. These are NOT two groups of people—they were saints, but then within that group there was the faithful.
21. No—every Christian in Ephesus was a saint and was faithful—they were "the faithful in Christ Jesus."
22. That is—they were in union with Christ, and because of that, they had His Spirit who worked in them the fruit of faithfulness.
23. Rev.17:14—"These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."
24. This is a description of every Christian—they are called, chosen, and faithful—He chose them from eternity, called them in time, and enables them to be faithful.
25. (2) By way of consolation—this takes back to something I've said before—what is fruit in us are perfections in God.
26. Our faithfulness is the result of God's faithfulness—Christians remain faithful because God remains faithful.
27. Throughout the OT and NT, He's described as a faithful God—faithful to His character and promises.
28. Now, remember what I've said before—God's faithfulness is different from ours, in that it's essential to Him.
29. Our faithfulness is dependent upon God's faithfulness—the one (His) ensures or guarantees the other (ours).
30. This brings me to a point that I want to spend some time on, and that is, the fact that God is Himself faithful.

31. (a) God is faithful to Himself—by this is meant, God can never act contrary to His divine perfections.
32. All unfaithfulness entails change of some sort—there's some sort of shift or turn within our character.
33. Thus God is faithful or trustworthy because He cannot change—He can never be anything other than Himself.
34. To use the language in 2Tim.2:13—"He cannot deny Himself"—He cannot be anything but what He is.
35. Lam.3:22-24—"Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. the LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I hope in Him."
36. How great is His faithfulness? Well, because God's attributes and essence are one, we can say, His faithfulness is as great as He is.
37. (b) God is faithful to His word—by this is meant, God can never act contrary to what He says in His word.
38. While we distinguish between God and His word, these can never be separated, as we learn about God from His word.
39. His word is trustworthy—because His word comes from Him, it's as loyal and faithful as God Himself.
40. Tit.1:9—"A bishop (overseer) must be able to hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."
41. 1Tim.1:15—"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am chief (1Tim.4:9)."
42. I mentioned this past Wednesday a man by the name of Andy Stanley (the son of Charles Stanley, an old Baptist pastor).
43. Sadly, Andy has lost his way and deviated from the path of his father, as he no longer believes the Bible is trustworthy.
44. It's Andy's conviction that Christians should no longer tether themselves to the trustworthiness of Scripture.
45. He claims instead, we are to tether ourselves to the historical resurrection of Christ, and not Scripture.
46. Why? Because Andy no longer believes Scripture is trustworthy—it started with creation and now it's moved to morality.
47. But here's the problem—if we are not able to trust Scripture about these things, then why would we trust it about the gospel?
48. (c) God is faithful to His people—by this is mean, God will always do for His people what He promised.
49. He will always and ever remain faithful or loyal to His covenant promises made in Christ on our behalf.
50. Deut.7:9—"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."
51. 1Cor.1:4-9—"I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus...eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."
52. 1Thess.5:23-24—"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it (2Thess.3:3; Heb.10:23)."

53. (3) By way of motivation—by this I mean, if faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit, then let us pursue the grace of faithfulness.
54. As I've said with the previous fruit, while they are the product of the Spirit, we are responsible to cultivate them.
55. Faithfulness is graciously rewarded by God—He gives us His Spirit, who works this fruit in us, and then He rewards us for it.
56. Matt.25:21—"His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord (Lk.16:10-11; Lk.19:17)."
57. Rev.2:10—"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *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."
58. Thus, I want to close this morning by answering this simple question—How are Christians to cultivate the grace of faithfulness?
59. Well, let me suggest one grand help to assist this endeavor—meditate upon the faithfulness of Christ.
60. We could look upon Christ's faithfulness from a couple perspectives—as a faithful Servant to His Father, a faithful Husband to His Bride, and a faithful Friend to His brethren.
61. (a) A faithful Servant to His Father—Christ came into this world to fulfill His covenant vows to His Father.
62. Heb.3:1-2—"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house (Heb.2:17)."
63. By "houses" are meant covenant people—Moses was a faithful servant over the old, and Christ is a faithful servant over the new.
64. Moses was God's faithful servant, who faithfully fulfilled all of his responsibilities as God's servant (Num.12:7).
65. But as faithful as Moses was, what is this in comparison to the Christ's faithfulness to His beloved Father.
66. As the Father's faithful Servant, Christ leads His people out of bondage, governs them through the wilderness, and makes intercession on their behalf.
67. In short, similar to Moses, Christ was faithful to all the obligations laid upon Him as the Servant of the Lord.
68. (b) A faithful Husband to His Bride—that is, He's faithful to His covenant vows He makes with His people.
69. He promises them in the waters of Baptism, to never leave nor forsake them, regardless how difficult they become.
70. He promises to provide for all their needs, temporal and eternal, and to protect them from all their enemies.
71. (c) A faithful Friend to His brethren, Prov.18:24—"There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother (27:6)."
72. He stays with them through thick and thin, helping, correcting, and encouraging them, just as a friend should.
73. Thus, Christ is the only perfectly faithful Servant, Husband, and Friend—He's trustworthy in all that He does.
74. And so, yes, we are to imitate Christ's faithfulness, but brethren, first and foremostly, we are to trust Christ's faithfulness.