

## **God Is Faithful When No One Else Is**

Romans 3:1-4; 1 Corinthians 10:13

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It is rare to find those who are faithful in this world. Solomon asks, “A faithful man who can find” (Proverbs 20:6). And though rare, Jesus yet calls all who believe in Him to be faithful unto death and they shall receive the crown of eternal life (Revelation 2:10). Faithful to whom? Faithful to what? The Christian is one who is faithful to the unchangeable God of the Bible and to His revealed truth. The non-Christian is one who is faithful also—faithful to a changeable SELF and one’s own truth. When truth becomes personalized and subjective (“your truth”) rather than universal and objective (“the truth”), truth becomes whatever you want it to be from day to day (no matter how wrong or foolish it may be). If a male identifies as a female, that is that person’s truth (even if it’s a lie).

When being true to yourself becomes the standard of faithfulness, nothing is dependable or reliable anymore because your pleasures and desires are constantly changing. Your marriage is not working out? No problem, get a divorce—be true and faithful to yourself (not to God and His Word). When it’s difficult to maintain your Christian testimony at work with all of the temptations that surround you? No problem—be true and faithful to yourself and join them in their drunken parties, their vile humor, and their sexual immorality. It’s difficult to spend daily time in communion with Christ? No problem—be true to yourself and make time for whatever you desire rather than what God commands.

A Christian is one who is faithful to Jesus and His unchangeable truth found in Scripture (Numbers 23:19). Here alone is a firm foundation of rock that is unshakeable. Build your life upon the everlasting God who is ever faithful and true—never changes and who cannot lie. Without God’s faithfulness, there is nothing in this world that is certain and dependable. The main points today are: (1) The Unchangeable Faithfulness of God (Romans 3:1-4); (2) A Biblical Illustration of God’s Faithfulness.

### **I. The Unchangeable Faithfulness of God (Romans 3:1-4).**

A. God alone is absolutely faithful. He never contradicts Himself or compromises His truth. He is trustworthy and reliable. He is ever faithful to do all that He has said He would do: Deuteronomy 7:9 (faithful in fulfilling His promises); Lamentations 3:22-23 (faithful in the midst of judgment); 1 Corinthians 10:13 (faithful in temptation). Without God’s faithfulness to keep His promises, nothing will make sense in this world. You will live in fear, unbelief, and confusion. But because God is faithful, you can trust Him in whatever you are facing.

B. Paul states in Romans 3:1-4 that even the unbelief and unfaithfulness of Israel (with whom God had engaged Himself in a gracious covenant), even Israel’s idolatry, rebellion, abominations, and unbelief in God will not make God unfaithful to His Word.

1. Paul begins with questions that might arise in the minds of his readers in Romans 3:1. Paul had just finished discussing the Old Testament sign of God’s gracious covenant—circumcision (Romans 2). Circumcision was a sign and seal of the gospel in Christ (Romans 4:11). But circumcision proved not to be a blessing to the Jews but a curse, for they did not believe the gospel preached to them (Hebrews 4:2). Circumcision actually aggravated their sin of unbelief because they had heard the gospel and had received the outward sign of God’s promise of salvation and yet they did not trust in the Lord to save them from their sin and grant to them eternal life (like so many today who receive baptism and hear the gospel, but continue in their unbelief).

2. So if circumcision did not benefit the greater part of the Jews in leading them to trust in

Christ, what was the benefit of being a Jew or of receiving circumcision (Romans 3:1)? Paul responds it was a great advantage (Romans 3:2). The chief benefit which God entrusted to the Jews were His oracles—God’s revelation through His inspired prophets (which were committed to writing in the Scriptures). But what did they do with circumcision and the Scripture given to them? Did they turn in faith to the Lord? No, they justified themselves as being good people because God had given them these blessed gifts. “God would not have given these good gifts to wicked people. We must be good people.” They were desperately wrong. God gave them circumcision (and gives us baptism) because we are all sinners and need the removal of sin through Jesus Christ. God gave them His Word (and gives us His Word) because we are all blind and cannot see His salvation unless He reveals it to us. Don’t be like the Jews of old who received these great blessings from the Lord, and yet did not trust in the faithful God who gave them.

3. But now a question is raised about the faithfulness of God (Romans 3:3). Is God unfaithful to the Jews because they did not believe the “oracles of God” (revelation) which pointed God’s people to Jesus Christ and faith in Him for the pardon of sin? Has God not kept His Word to the Jews? Absolutely not Paul declares in Romans 3:4. For God’s salvation was never promised to those who merely hear the gospel, merely receive circumcision (baptism), or mere attend worship. God’s salvation (the forgiveness of sin and everlasting life) was promised to those who receive Christ by faith alone and evidence that faith by their love and obedience to God’s commandments—not those who merely profess to be a believer. God is ever faithful to save all who come to Him beating their chests and crying out to Him, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” Even to a criminal who died alongside Him and believed in Christ, Jesus said, “Today, shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus is absolutely faithful to keep and preserve your soul’s salvation when you receive Him by faith and commit your life to Him (2 Timothy 1:12). And God’s faithfulness to His promise to save Israel as a nation will be fully realized in the future when Jesus will graciously and powerfully draw this apostate nation unto Himself and grant them faith to lay hold of Christ (Romans 11:25-27). God is not yet finished with Israel. Never stop praying for loved ones who have fallen away from Christ.

4. In whatever trial you face, this absolute and unchangeable truth will carry you through: God is faithful. Though every man prove to be a liar and to be unfaithful, God is faithful. We will fail one another in various ways, but Jesus will never fail you. It is impossible.

## **II. A Biblical Illustration of God’s Faithfulness—Hosea.**

A. Here we see a living, breathing illustration of God’s faithfulness. Hosea, God’s prophet, was commanded by God to marry a harlot, named Gomer (Hosea 1:2). Hosea obeyed the Lord and was a loving husband in caring for her needs (spiritually and materially). And yet unfaithful Gomer returned to her former lovers and begat children by them while yet married to Hosea. The third child is named by Hosea, *Lo-ammi* (not my people—you are not my children—you are the offspring of my wife’s lovers, Hosea 1:9).

1. Gomer leaves Hosea to be with her lovers and becomes destitute and dependent upon whatever she can receive from her lovers. She is then abandoned by even her lovers and finds herself upon the slave block—filthy, penniless, unpitied, unwanted, and brought to shame and degradation.

2. But then the Lord commands Hosea to do that which is beyond comprehension: go and purchase unfaithful Gomer from the slave market (Hosea 3:1a). It would have been very natural for family and friends to have sought to dissuade him from buying Gomer unto himself (“she’s unfaithful”; “she will only bring you more heartache and pain”; “she doesn’t deserve another chance after having spat upon you and your kindness to her”).

3. How could Hosea show such faithful love to one who had been so unfaithful? The answer is given in Hosea 3:1b (not according to the love of man, but according to the love of God). Hosea defies the depths of mere human love and in faithfulness to an unfaithful and shameful bride, Hosea purchases to himself his wife out of the slave market of sin and shame (Hosea 3:2-3).

B. God was not inflicting the pain of an unfaithful and adulterous wife upon Hosea in order to be cruel to Hosea. This was a re-enactment of the faithfulness of God in spite of the unfaithfulness of Israel. We do not sin that grace may abound, but His faithfulness is not changed by our unfaithfulness.

1. God (Jesus) had joined Himself in matrimonial covenant to the nation of Israel to be a faithful God to them and for them to be His faithful people. The Lord loved His people and gave to them such blessings as no nation had ever been given: His gracious covenant, wondrous promises (both spiritual and material), good commandments by which to walk in faithful obedience to the Lord, holy ordinances to encourage their faith in turning to Christ (circumcision, Passover and other feasts), and the temple as the place of God's gracious presence wherein was the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat (Amos 3:2).

2. God was a faithful husband to Israel, but Israel turned from Him to one god after another. In return for His faithfulness, Israel throughout her history gave to her Heavenly Husband time and time again unfaithfulness. Israel would not be faithful to her loving and faithful Husband, and she was sold into slavery and bondage to nations and to the gods they served. And yet the Lord delivered her from her bondage and returned her to her land to trust Him, to love Him, to obey Him, and to worship Him according to His commandments.

C. Jesus Christ is our faithful Hosea (in Hebrew, Hosea=salvation).

1. We were all like Gomer by nature, guilty of spiritual harlotry with our own gods whom we served: our lusts and pleasures, our addictions, approval before man, our dreams. We even turned the good gifts from God into idols we loved more than God who gave them to us. We were dead to the God who created us and dead to His salvation. We lived to please ourselves. We did not want Christ as Savior and Lord.

2. But our Hosea, Jesus Christ, left the glories of His Father in heaven, and became flesh and dwelt among us to call out His bride unto Himself, and He paid the price with His own life in suffering the just condemnation we deserved in order to redeem His bride from that slave market of sin unto Himself and to be a faithful Husband and Lover to His redeemed Church. He wooed and effectually called us to Himself in giving us faith when there was no faith in Him within us; in giving us love when there was no love for Him within us; and in giving us faithfulness when only unfaithfulness lived and reigned within us.

3. And after all the great faithfulness of our Hosea to us, we are still prone to wander, prone to leave our Heavenly Hosea, Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us by His own precious blood. And yet despite our unfaithfulness, Jesus in His great faithfulness seeks us out and draws us back unto Himself. Flee not away from Jesus. Run, run, run as fast as you can to Him and receive by faith Him who is ever faithful.

4. Whatever your pain, heartache, or trial—no matter how unfaithful others have been to you—come to Him who is ever faithful, who is absolutely reliable, who can only be faithful to you. It is the faithfulness of God that upholds you that you perish not in the fiery trials that you face. Though He faithfully disciplines His own, He will also take you up in His arms to succor and heal the strokes that His faithful love has brought into your life.

5. Let His faithfulness heal your unfaithfulness today. Cast away all of your vain excuses and lying rationalizations. Come to the God who is faithful. He will in faithfulness to His promise receive you (1 John 1:9). Amen.

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