

Faithfulness

by Adaeze – student at Cadder Church

We are continuing with the Fruit of the Spirit, the attributes which we should all possess as we live in accord with each other through the Spirit of God.

Today the Spirit of God will speak to our hearts by teaching us about faithfulness.

Numbers 23:19 says,

God is not human, that he should lie,

not a human being, that he should change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?

This verse spells out God's absolute faithfulness to us.

I thought of every act of faithfulness to start this sermon and found none more worthy than to start with God's Faithfulness, so here we are, reminded of a God that never lies nor fails to fulfil his promises. His faithfulness has nothing to do with what we do or did not do. We can only be faithful because God is faithful, and His spirit dwells within us.

Faithfulness is challenging yet very important, and it is not about deserving. It is not what people merit or deserve, instead it is a decision of self-commitment unto others, that one must carry through regardless of how the journey pans out. It is a challenging trait to possess.

Faithfulness comes from a place of trust and loyalty. It holds marriages, relationships, families together; it binds a Nation together, keeps the world together. It is very easy to give up, and difficult to try to remain faithful - we always have good excuses for failing to be faithful. It could be because the other person does not deserve it, or the government is irresponsible, or it will cost us a fortune and so on. But we are children of God; we must be faithful because we have a faithful God.

Faithfulness encompasses all the Fruit of the Spirit John has spoken to us about since we started this series.

Being Faithful starts with being faithful to God, we can only be reliable when we have a relationship with God, and His spirit dwells in us. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadows of the Almighty. How do we know that we are abiding under the

shadow of the Almighty? When we start manifesting **Proverbs 3:3 which says "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart"**, Is when we lean on the word of God and are prayerful. The Spirit of God guides us to the truth and teaches us how to live filled with love and faithfulness.

Our Bible verse today is from Matthew 25: 14-30. Jesus told the Parable of the Five Talents, or Gold, in some versions. The other servants knew that their master was a "mean and wicked" man, harvesting where he does not sow and gathering where he has not scattered seeds, yet the servants went immediately and put their talents to work and gained double what they received. They did not hoard their abilities like the other servant; it did not matter how much each servant received or how bad their master was; they were faithful.

Ruth, in our Old Testament reading (Ruth1:15-18), left her people, her gods, her comfort and familiar ground and returned to Israel with Naomi. It was a time like this, with a world clouded with hopelessness and uncertainty, yet she, a foreigner from a tribe known to be incestuous by Israelites, without a husband to protect her, and a very young woman - still she was faithful to Naomi in the face of adversity. She allowed God to work in her life by being loyal and dedicated to Naomi. When we are reliable, our Faithful Father takes care of our needs, although sometimes we might not see or feel God taking care of our needs, even in our faithfulness; nonetheless we should continue to live a life of faithfulness.

David and Jonathan were good friends and swore to be friends with each other in the name of the Lord (1Samuel 20:42). Jonathan, even though the expected heir to the throne of Israel through his father Saul, could visibly see that throne going to David. Jonathan still protected David and was never jealous of him. Sometimes we are David in a relationship, and sometimes we are Jonathan. When we are Jonathan, we must endeavour to be loyal and faithful, even if it seems we will not benefit from our faithfulness.

We must have the ability to leave our fear, and face tasks given to us, exploring new challenges and trusting God. We must not let anything get in our way, like the unfaithful servant in our gospel reading did. He allowed laziness, contempt and fear keep him from being faithful. Unfaithfulness in our lives shows that we cannot be trusted by our family, friends, colleagues and organisation, or even our Nation, to discharge duties given to us or protect vulnerable ones among us.

We cannot be faithful without the Grace of God or the Spirit of God dwelling within us. Take a minute, think of a time you joyfully stood faithfully beside a friend that did not deserve it, or continued with a promise, knowing that the friend or family member would not appreciate it; or when you have followed up on a promise made to that unfaithful lying spouse or abusive child. Oh! lest I forget, even faithful to one's self: those diets you skipped, bed time, gym membership paid but not followed up, etc.

We can only achieve faithfulness by committing our day to God. Wake up each morning before your day starts, tell Daddy, *it is your day please take charge*. Whether you are just staying home, or dashing down to the shopping mall, or going to work, or unable to get up as quickly as you would want to because of illness, each day is a new day to renew our faithfulness as God renews His faithfulness in our lives. We must trust our lives into the hands of our faithful God. That way we will learn faithfulness from a faithful God.

Throughout my time as a Family Pastor, people spoke in confidence to me. It is my duty, and an obligation, to keep our discussions confidential. I must demonstrate faithfulness in all I do. Can I do this without the grace of God? No! Daily I ask God for the grace, peace, love, patience and strength to serve him faithfully by serving his people faithfully. I bring with me my prayer for the grace for faithfulness, as I serve here in Cadder Church.

This pandemic period is a challenging time, and we all need to be faithful to everyone around us. We must wear our masks to protect others, and we must wash our hands and keep 2 metres distance. It is difficult to spend Christmas without our families and friends, but if things get out of hand and the government places more stringent rules regarding visits, we must obey them.

Yes, we are all not very happy with the government or the authorities, but the rules are there to protect everyone, especially the vulnerable. So, we must be faithful in our commitment to obey the law of the land, our obligation to protect the vulnerable, and community at large, to the end, by God's grace.

I pray that, as we continue to read our Bible and commune through prayer daily with the Lord of Faithfulness, he will guide our heart and lead us to do his will by being faithful; through Christ our Lord, Amen.