

THE REASSURING QUALITY OF FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness is one of the most important qualities in a person's life.

We need to be able to believe what others say or promise to do, and they must be able to trust us as well.

Unfaithfulness is a form of deception or hypocrisy – It leads to feelings of disappointment and betrayal when we discover that our trust in someone has **been misplaced**.

As Christians, we should always strive to be faithful to God and to others.

Today I want to open up with sharing a little about Jacob.

- **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** are among the most significant people in the Old Testament.
- They were wealthy and powerful; yet each was **capable of lying, deceit, and selfishness**.
- They were **not** the perfect heroes we might expect; instead, they were just like us, trying to please God but **often falling short**.

Jacob's life had four stages:

1. **First stage** – Jacob lived up to his name which means “he grasps the heel” (*figuratively, “he deceives*). He deceived his twin Esau and grabbed his birthright and blessing before fleeing from home.
2. **Second stage** – Jacob experienced life from the other side being manipulated and deceived by Laban.
 - But there was a change, **Jacob would have** normally left Laban, however, he stayed for 6 years and waited for God's permission.
3. **Third Stage** – Where we are today – Jacob was in a new role as grabber. This time, by the Jordan River, **he grabbed on to God and wouldn't let go!**
 - He realized his dependence on God who had continued to bless him with faithfulness...
4. **Fourth stage** – Or his last stage was to be grabbed – **God achieved a firm hold on him**. Jacob was clearly unwilling to make a move **without God's approval**.

SERMON POINT -*When Jacob considered all that the Lord had done for him, he prayed,*

Gen. 32:9-10 *“God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, Lord, who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’ I am unworthy of all the favor and of all the faithfulness, which You have shown to Your servant”.*

Jacob’s relationship with God became essential to his life and his name was changed to Israel, **“he struggles with God.”**

Can you think of times when God has made Himself known to you?

- **God is always faithful**, but we must pay attention to Him.
- We should consider the many ways **He has proven Himself faithful in our life** and then respond in gratitude.

Scripture affirms God’s faithfulness

Deuteronomy 7:9 “Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, **the faithful God**, who keeps His covenant and **His faithfulness** to a thousand generations for those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

Psalm 33:4 “For the word of the Lord is right, And all His work is done in **faithfulness**.”

Psalm 36:5 “Your mercy, Lord, extends to the heavens, your **faithfulness** reaches to the skies.”

Psalm 119:90 “Your **faithfulness** continues throughout generations.”

Lamentations 3:22-23 “The Lord’s acts of mercy indeed do not end, for His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; great is Your **faithfulness**.”

2 Timothy 2:13 “If we are faithless, **He remains faithful**, for He cannot deny Himself.”

Although our faithfulness wavers, these scriptures affirm that **God is faithful** all the time.

- Even the sin of His children **will not** nullify it.
- The Lord is immutable (never changing), none of His attributes change.
- **That's why** we can be confident that He will keep all His promises.
- **His faithfulness** is a certainty we can rest upon.

Hebrews 13:5 - *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will **never leave you nor forsake you.**"*

The Holy Spirit works to express within us the qualities consistent with God's nature, and this includes **faithful-ness**.

- **We should be** who we claim to be and do what we commit to do.
- To give any other impression **is deception**.
- But **none of us** have the strength, fortitude, and faithfulness to live the Christian life apart from the enablement of the Holy Spirit who indwells us.
- Even Christ's disciples **couldn't do it**.

That's why Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were **Luke 24:49** - Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem ***"until you are endued with power from on high."***

If we have trusted Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord

- ***We have been sealed by the Holy Spirit,***
- ***Who empowers us to be faithful in every circumstance.***
- ***But if we fail and grieve the Spirit,***
- ***He convicts us of sin so we can repent and receive forgiveness.***
- ***He truly is our divine Enabler and Helper.***

God has promised to be **faithful** to us – **Four promises** that can enable us to face whatever challenges come our way because **we can count on the faithfulness of our God.**

1. He will always forgive us

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Forgiveness is only possible because Jesus paid our sin debt in full with His death on the cross.

- Now God can forgive us because **Christ's sacrifice** satisfied His justice.
- Those of us who have accepted Jesus can now come to God and **receive forgiveness – because - He is faithful** to keep this promise.

2. God's faithfulness limits the power of our temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 - "No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it".

- **If we will rely on this promise, we won't have to yield to temptation.**

God has established a limit and provided an escape so we can endure the enticement without falling.

3. We can have the peace of God

Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus".

- If we bring our anxieties to the Lord in prayer, **we can receive His peace** even in the midst of trying situations.
- It will guard our hearts and minds and **keep us from giving up hope or blaming and accusing God**.

4. The Holy Spirit limits the power of Satan in our lives

2 Thessalonians 3:3 - "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one".

Satan is under God's control and does not have freedom to do whatever he desires in our lives.

CLOSE: These four promises can enable us to face whatever challenges come our way because we can count on the faithfulness of our God.

- ***We may not understand our situation, but we can trust in the One who forgives our sins, limits our temptations, gives us peace in troubled times, and controls Satan's access to us.***
- ***Our confidence in the faithfulness of the Scripture is tested when we go through trials because they challenge our belief in who God is and what He has said.***
- ***These tests reveal our areas of weakness so that God can strengthen us to overcome them.***

His goal is that ***the fruit of the Spirit*** spoken of in –

Galatians 5:22-23 ***God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways.***

- ***This becomes a part of our character and is worked out in our lifestyles.***

When we walk in the Spirit, we'll have the following characteristics:

Devoted to God. He will be the only One we follow.

Loyal. We will be someone others can count on to do what we say we will.

Unwavering. Our reliability won't vary from day to day.

Steadfast. We'll be steady in our commitments and unshaken by changing circumstances.

Trustworthy. Others can believe us because we will always speak truth.

Dependable. People can rely on us to show up on time and accomplish what we undertake.

Obedient. Although we won't do it perfectly, our desire and aim will be to obey God.

Fruitful. Our lives will have a positive influence on others.

Faithful. We will be faithful to God and to others.

Can you think of a time where God has made himself known to you? **Faithfulness.**

What difference have these experiences made in your life? **His Faithfulness!**

Are you more like the young Jacob, **forcing God to track you down** in the desert of your own plans and mistakes?

Or are you like the older Jacob, **who presented his desires and plans to God** for his approval **before taking any action?**

PRAISE TEAM

How confident are you that you can trust the Lord in every circumstance?

In what ways has He demonstrated His faithfulness in your life?

How faithful are you to other people in your life?

How faithful are you to the Lord?