

FAITHFUL

INTRO:

As we've continued the series "Knowing God"; I am reminded of a statement: Knowing or understanding something about God is only knowledge, but knowing who God is comes from experiencing Him for ourselves. In this study we have shared different characteristics of God.

THE CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD WE WILL FOCUS ON TODAY IS:

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When something or someone is faithful it implies an unwavering commitment to a person or thing. It means that the relationship between that person or thing is constant or steadfast and attached with a promise. For something to be constant or steadfast means it remains in a state that does not change or vary. It is faithful; unwavering in love, and devotion. Faithfulness is not only one of the attributes of God, but one that is highly extolled in scripture. Faithful and Faithfulness occurs over 95 times in the old testament and 56 times in the new testament. **God is faithful and faithfulness is a part of who He is.**

How many of you truly know we serve a Faithful God?

Preparing for this message God guided me to the book of Lamentations.

Lamentation is when grief pours out. The root word

Definition Slide - Lament means an expression of sorrow and grief or a cry uttered when life falls a part. In the book of Lamentations Jeremiah writes these laments as he watches the intense suffering of God's people and the utter devastation of Jerusalem and the temple. At this time King Nebuchadnezzar had ordered an invasion of Jerusalem in response to Judah's rebellion against the Babylonians. The attack left the city desolate, destroying most of Jerusalem. This is why the book Lamentations begins with; **How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow is she, Who was great among the nations! The princess among the provinces has become a slave!**

Lamentations pictures a man of God puzzling over the results of evil and suffering in the world. In this he does not question God, but celebrates God's faithfulness and unfailing love. In chapter 3 the prophet **Jeremiah identifies himself with the chastened people**, and in agony and distress pours out his heart to the Lord in faith. He makes a statement of faith in the midst of darkness being reminded of a faithful God in a faithless time.

Lamentations 3:1-23 I am the man *who* has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.

2 He has led me and made *me* walk *In* darkness and not *in* light.

3 Surely He has turned His hand against me time and time again throughout the day.

4 He has aged my flesh and my skin, And broken my bones.

5 He has besieged me And surrounded *me* with bitterness and woe.
6 He has set me in dark places Like the dead of long ago.
7 He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy.
8 Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer.
9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked.
10 He *has been* to me a bear lying in wait, *Like* a lion in ambush.
11 He has turned aside my ways and torn me in pieces; He has made me desolate.
12 He has bent His bow And set me up as a target for the arrow.
13 He has caused the arrows of His quiver To pierce my loins.
14 I have become the ridicule of all my people— Their taunting song all the day.
15 He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood.
16 He has also broken my teeth with gravel, And covered me with ashes.
17 You have moved my soul far from peace; I have forgotten prosperity.
18 And I said, “My strength and my hope Have perished from the Lord.”
19 Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall.
20 My soul still remembers And sinks within me.

21 **Yet this I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.**

22

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.

23

*They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.*

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As you hear the affliction of Jerusalem and the many ways Jeremiah describes the once proud city in the scriptures and his cry and grief over the city. Can you stop and look inward at your own city. Once a proud city; is it now desolate? Is there any mourning of present or past sins that have caused destruction and devastation in your city? Are you like Jeremiah who in his prayer pictured himself captured in a besieged city.

Whenever we are engaged in a crisis or desolate time in our life, it becomes easy to lose faith in the one who is faithful and feel as though He has forgotten about us. **I'd aspire to be like Jeremiah and say**

21

Yet this I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.

To understand that God is faithful we must embrace three things:

1. God is Faithful Even in His Discipline

God is always faithful and righteous, even in His discipline. His discipline is the fruit of our own sin and rebellion. Our persistence in sin will call for God's discipline to be necessary in our life.

Hebrews 12:5-8(NLT) - Speaks of the Discipline of God

5 And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as His children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when He corrects you."

6

For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as His child."

7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as His own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? 8 If God doesn't discipline you as He does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really His children at all.

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One really important point in this is: **Don't give up when He corrects you!**

Discipline is employed by God as a last resort to restore His people to righteousness. Even when we waver His unswerving love remains as a place holder for us. We can be assured and confident that when we repent, God's discipline will be followed by compassion and restoration.

Jeremiah had almost given up hope, but God reminded him that His mercies are new every morning. **HEBREW - Mercies = covenant or steadfast love**

Refer Back: *For something to be constant or steadfast means it remains in a state that does not change or vary. It is faithful; unwavering in love, and devotion.*

You must notice that Jeremiah's discovery of God's goodness did not take place within a mountain top experience, but it was in a desolate pit of life.

Jeremiah remembered the covenant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He was reminded that **GOD IS FAITHFUL.**

It's difficult to understand God's faithfulness without understanding His immutability.

2. God is Immutable

Hebrews 6:17

17 God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind.

The substance of mortal things is ever changing, but God is not composed of any substance or material. He is spirit—pure, essential, and He is immutable.

Psalms 33:11 But the Lord's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken.

Psalm 33:11

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

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Our situations may change, but Jehovah remains.

- Health may fail, Yet He's still a healer
- Finances may fail, Yet He's still a provider
- Our safety could be at risk, Yet He's a protector
- If we're lost without Him, It is He who reaches down to sanctify us and make us Holy

Because of His unalterable ways we can always depend on Him, and He is worthy of our worship. He states this in the book of Psalms 89:34

Psalms 89:34

No, I will not break my covenant;
I will not take back a single word I said.

3. God is A Promise Keeper

God is faithful to keep His promises, which means you can trust that He will follow through in keeping His promises.

Deuteronomy 7:9

9 Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who **keeps His covenant for a thousand generations** and lavishes His unflinching love on those who love him and obey his commands.

We can always count on God even when the circumstances seem impossible. To know that you have a promise in Christ should birth a certain confidence on the inside. Some of our promises and dreams are aborted because we don't see how it will come to pass. This is where we began telling ourselves an unsought truth of, LORD I DO BELIEVE, but on the other end of that statement is a cry saying help me with my unbelief. **I recall a sermon from some years back entitled "I'm Seeing Things".** In

the message I embraced the fact that Faith does not alter the picture of the situation itself, but Faith changes your visual prescription in the spiritual in how you see it.. Therefore you look beyond the pit of life that is right before your face and see your mourning turn into to dancing. You see yourself spiritually clothed with joy!

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In other words you become like Jeremiah in the **21 Yet this I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.**

Think about Jacob's dream in the book of Genesis at Bethel. In the dream God reveals Himself to Jacob reminding him of the covenant He made with Abraham while promising Jacob that his offspring would possess the very land he was lying on.

Genesis 28:15

15 What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. **I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."**

Now I'm not sure how this impacts you, but it is certainly enough for me to shout about. For our God to say **I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you.**

Hebrews 10:23

23 Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

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CONCLUSION

If I was to have lived in the days of Paul, I would have aspired to hang out with him. It is because of what Paul says in Philippians 3:8-9 - **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God is by faith.

Lamentations 3:21-23

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