

Faithfulness

December 4, 2022

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled Faithfulness. Thank you to Paul, Mike, Janet and Don for being part of the video. The Scripture reading is Second Chronicles 20:20-21.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning. Good day. Couple announcements as we get settled in here. Ed's choir. What's Ed's choir's name? [That's a great question. I don't know] From now on, it's Ed's Choir. November 25th, 7 p.m. at Mountainview in Grimsby and the- and the second at Stoney Creek Church of Christ, the 10th at First Baptist Church here in Beamsville. So, if you'd like to check out a choir, head to one of those. And Jack is back in the hospital as of Friday. Pray for his recovery and for Marie. And we also our thoughts and prayers are with the Flemings, Val passing away. December 4th here 2 p.m. Celebration of life. Check your bulletin to make sure that I said it right. As we begin our worship today, let's go to God in prayer.

Dear Lord, thank you for all you've given us and all of us with. Thank you for this time, Lord. We want to thank you for every moment, every breath, every, every day. It is a blessing, a gift from you. But more than that, you have given us to your son so that we may not just have life, but have life abundantly. Lord, as we seek this life abundantly, help us to look to you. Help us to worship you today. Help us to think of you, and to journey a little towards you. May we be blessed? I mean, we bless you in Jesus name. Amen.

Communion

Good morning. That time where we as a congregation gather together and we remember who Jesus is, what Jesus did, why He did it, and what we gain from that, from him giving and we receive to our eternal salvation. Because He died for the sins of the entire world. No. In view of all the recent events of the last few days and the passing of a pillar in the church one course. Well, I really didn't know Val until I actually placed membership for about 12, 13 years ago. And little by little she made an impact and changed my life in small ways. But she and she included me and I, and that's what the communion is all about. And we are all included in the salvation that God has for us because of Jesus.

One more I thought of Val for the last three days, because I know I was on for communion. I thought, what verse could I possibly show what Val meant to each one of us and to the congregation? I've got an thought for Hebrews 11. Early verses were says and by faith Abel offered a better sacrifice to God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. And though he's dead, his faith still speaks. And that little last phrase, though he has died, his faith still speaks and Val's probably speaking to us through her death for a long time. We have Val's family, and we know the lives that they live are godly lives and they make impact wherever they go. And so instructing them and nurse-- nursing them and bringing them up in the nature of the Lord and establishing her legacy of faith through them and in small ways.

Everywhere we go, even in the community around us, you can go. I'm sure the the library, everywhere that's got the name you know, the Flemings, Val had something to do with that and her loving husband

Art and so that, alone makes communion important because Val felt included through of love of Christ and she included others and she loved the legacy. And she got to speak through all of us. We're going to laugh at some of the things she did and said and we're going to cry at the some of. So she made an impact on our lives and uh, but it was really about Jesus Christ. And that's why we're all gathered together. And it's nice to be able to have people to pass on knowing that they are safe in the arms of God. And we're going to be there someday too. But we now have one more reason to get ourselves through the race. And we got one more person up there cheering for us there and I so are trying to remember and be thankful for what she's there. Be fine for for the people are part of our lives and got us to Jesus. I'm sure we all can think of one person, whether it be a parent, sibling or a friend. We're all here because of the Lord Jesus Christ. And somebody took the time to share with us and Jesus shared His blood for our sins on the cross for us. So at this time, let's go to God in prayer and be thankful and to remember.

Dear Heavenly Father, we're so grateful for the blessings that we have in Christ Jesus because of what He did and that you sent Him. And the powerful message that we have to give to the world and to instill in others because, well, his love is for everybody in the world. He died for everybody in the world and for God so loved the world. He gave us one and all. So and so. Father, we know that the the it's on us to pass on that good message and to do it cheerfully, to do it lovingly, knowing that such a price for, paid for us and we're, Father, help us be eternally grateful at this time in Christ's name. Amen.

Scripture Reading

The reading, this morning's reading, the second book of Chronicles Chapter 20. Just reading verses 20 and 21. Early in the morning, they left for the desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem have faith in the Lord, your God, and you will be upheld. Have faith in His prophets, and you will be successful. After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise Him for the for the splendor of His Holiness as they went out at the head of the armies saying, Give thanks to the Lord for His love endures forever.

Sermon

Good morning, everybody. So good to have you with us today. I just want to encourage you. We started last week and we met again today, 9:30 a.m.. Every Sunday morning, we're meeting here in the auditorium, studying seldom studied prophets. And some of those prophets are very interesting people. So we've met now for a couple of weeks. Just encourage you to come if you can. 930 Sunday mornings here in the auditorium.

So we're preaching a series right now on the Fruit of the Spirit. We've looked at love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness. But today we can look at faithfulness. And when thinking about faithfulness, there is a scripture that comes to mind. Can you think of one? There are so many. But in Revelation 2:10, be faithful unto death. Help me and you will receive the crown of life. Psalm 89 In verse one, I will sing of the Lord's great love forever with my mouth. I will make your faithfulness known to all generations. Have you ever stopped to consider the faithfulness of God? When we talk about faith or faithfulness, we usually talk about ourselves. How I could be more faithful, but think of the faithfulness of God, and that God pours out His faith into our faith. Meaning the more connection we have with God, the more we get to know Him. It's just like the one the person in your life whom you love. You get to know them and know them and know them. And sometimes, without even having

to say a word, you know what they're thinking. In this relationship, this faithfulness, God knows us inside and out. And He encourages us to know Him in the same way. So Psalm 89 one, I will sing of the Lord's great love forever with my mouth. I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. Thank you for your faith. It is not always easy, but the person of faith is a person who fully trusts God and that God will do what He said He will do in every situation. For each of us to increase our faith in him and the one who knows us better than we know ourselves. So yeah, I really believe that God has greater faith in us than we sometimes do for Him. And that's my encouragement for each one of us.

Corrie Ten Boom said In God's faithfulness lies eternal security. Faithfulness lets people know you are safe and that what you say is really what you believe. Faith is very much an action on our part. I guess I'm getting older, so sometimes I remember my now grown adult children as babies. Our last baby is now in her thirties, but I remember vividly and for some reason that just struck me over this past week and thinking about it, and I can remember it just so, so vividly. Almost 40 years ago, we were living in Sundridge. It was a hot summer night. And Carly, our baby, was quite young. And I said to Barb, I said, How 'bout you just sleep? Baby wakes up, I'll feed her. And it was one of those beautiful nights where I forget if it was 2:00, 3:00 in the morning, I don't know. But I remember sitting outside with Carly just as a baby, and she was hungry. She wanted to be fed. Looking up at the stars. And if you've been to Sundridge, you know the stars are incredible. And here was this baby who was hungry. And I warmed up the bottle and like we've all done, just fed the baby. And I remember this so vividly that after, I don't know, just a little while, she stopped feeding and she pulled the bottle out of her mouth. And she looked at me and she smiled. See, she knew that her mommy and daddy had faith in her. She knew that she was safe with Mommy and Daddy. That's how God wants us to feel about him. He knows us and it's not just reaching up to him. He intimately knows us and he encourages us our faithfulness for him.

So let's take a look at a couple of scriptures in James. Chapter 2:14 to 26. It says this. What good is it? My brothers, if a person claims to have faith but has no deeds, can such a faith save that person? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, go, I wish you well, keep warm and well-fed, but does nothing about his physical needs. What good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it's not accompanied by action, is dead. But some will say you have faith. I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds. And I'll show you my faith by what I do. You believe there is one God good for you. Even the demons believe that which is a powerful scripture. You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar, which is a story that I still can't quite comprehend what that would be like. You see that his faith and his actions were working together in his faith was made complete by what he did in the Scripture was fulfilled. That, says Abraham, believe God and it was credit to Him as righteousness. And He was called, This is so cool. God's friend, who's your best friend? God is a friend. He's a Lord. He's a savior. He's a creator. He's the one who created and gave us love and joy and peace and patience and goodness and faithfulness. God has faith in us. And there's so many interesting stories you see that person is justified by what he does, not by faith alone in the same way was not Ray have the prostitute consider righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction as the body without the spirit is dead. So faith without good works is dead.

I don't know John Dresser, but John said this faithfulness is love's loyalty. Faithfulness is love's loyalty. It is the quality of reliability. Trustworthiness which makes a person one on whom he can rely utterly

and whose word will stand. Philips translates the fruit as fidelity. William Barclay translates it as loyalty. Westcott wrote, A person is said to be faithful in the discharge of his or her duties, where the trait is looked at from within and outwards. At the same time, he is trustworthy in virtue of that faithfulness. It is the love that endures all things. It remains steadfast in time, in the midst of evil. The faithful person does not sidestep a situation or endeavor to escape to the easy path. Flee when threats come. So many people have gone through this, what, worldwide pandemic over the years with a snap. Not a problem at all. Stay healthy. Everything's good. So many have lost so many things. So many people have lost their health. So many people have perished. And young ones losing mommy and daddy and not knowing what to do or where to go. It's not been easy. Faithfulness is not always easy. Why do bad things happen to good people? But there are many good things as well. In the midst of difficulty, in the midst of war, in the midst of all kinds of upheavals, there are always people who are standing up, doing the work of the Lord, doing the work of God, encouraging one another, feeding help, feeding one another, educating one another, taking over children who have been lost and helping them to survive.

It's a remarkable story that even in difficult times, faith, faithfulness proves its worth. It's who God is, love, joy, peace, he's faithful. Moffet translates faithfulness as fidelity, describing it in careful regard and living with ultimate honesty. We can put our faith in that person as they have constantly demonstrated truth and trustworthiness, which is a staying power in spite of difficulties. Even when joy disappears. George MacDonald wrote many years ago in somewhat archaic language bear-- bear with me because I wanted to quote it exactly the way he did in the old King James language. Here's what he said. If we have faith and doubt, not if ye shall say onto this mountain, be thou removed and cast into the sea, it shall be done. Good people had been tempted to tempt the Lord their God upon the strength of this, saying happily for such, the assurance to which they would give the name of faith generally fails them. From time to time, faith is that which knowing the Lord's will goes and does it or not. Knowing it stands and waits. But to put God to the question in any other way than by saying What wilt thou have me do is an attempt to compel God to declare Himself or to hurry up with His work in reality. What does God want me to do? I can find no strong words enough to describe the import and the life of faithfulness. Lord, what would thou have me to do today and every day?

The Apostle Paul continually encouraged faithfulness when he says, but now a righteousness from God. Apart from the old law, has been made known to which the law and the prophets testify. This righteous sternness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ. To all who believe there is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified. Oh, this is so good. Justified, freely by His grace and it's like being the jail doors being opened and said, You're free forever or you're free. You're free. Faith If we can just have a smidgen of the amount of faith for God and people as God has for you and I, it would be a different life. And that's the encouragement for all of us now. How many years we've been Christians is to not just say, I have faith, sure, but does our faith grow? And if we haven't thought about faith very much may be a good thing to do. Even today is to spend some time talking to God. We know God. We believe in God, in sometimes we pray at dinner time or sometimes we pray. And before you go to bed or but just a dedicated time. And sometimes you don't have to say a word. I know it may sound strange and maybe some of you do this, but there are times when I like to sit down on a couch, closed my eyes and just say to myself. Hi, God, you're sitting right beside me. Let's talk. And I talk. And never heard his voice. But I feel his presence. How about you? God knows everything about us. Let's try to know more about him. His faithfulness to each one of us. And sometimes. Sometimes we can be angry with God. Why wouldn't you do something

about that? Why? Why would this. What about that? And I think that the first time we get to see God face to face, he's going to say, I know, I know. Let me share with you why. Let me tell you, this faithfulness of God is so incredible that He pours it out to us.

So Romans says, But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known to which the law and the prophets testified. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe there's no difference. For all I have sinned excuse me, and far short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ, God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement. And we we know what that's like. There are times when our children in the teenage years, sometimes they really blow it. Just like we in our teenage years are really blown it. And, you know, for many times our parents are disappointed. But at the same time, that hasn't stopped one iota of their love for us and their faithfulness to us. We've often learned faithfulness from our parents because of how often they've loved us, hugged us, kissed us, let us know. And even if they haven't done that, and even if they really aren't good at saying, I love you, we know. We know how much they've loved us, which is an encouragement for us to do the same to our children and to continue to grow. Because I still have that excuse me memory of that little baby on my lap. I can still remember her taking that bottle out and looking right into our eyes and just the smile. Why would I remember that? Because it's a unique moment that all of us have every day in certain situations. May not be that, but something else where we can see the faithfulness of God.

Okay, I'll finish up. An old poem written in the 1800s goes this way. Is your place a small place? If it is attended with care he sent you there is your place. A large place? Guard it with care. He set you there. Whatever your place. It is not yours alone. But who's who set you there? God's faithfulness to each one of us is profound. The words that need to be repeated. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am always with you. I chose you even before I created the world. Isn't that amazing? I knew the exact time and places in which you would live. God's faith in us. May we return the favor. When Paul was writing to the church at Corinth, toward the conclusion of the letter, Paul reminds them, Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be people of courage. Be strong. Do everything in love. And then from Hebrews, a book encouraging faith all the way through Hebrews. Just notice how often that word faith is used. It's being sure of what we hope for certain, of what we don't see. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance. The race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who is the pioneer and the Perfector of our faith.

Do you remember the old hymn that we used to sing? Faith is the victory. Remember the words? Encamped along the hills of light, ye Christian soldiers rise and press the battle ere the night shall veil the glowing skies against the foe in veils below. Let all our strength be hurled. Faith is the victory we know that overcomes the world. His banner over us is Love Our Sword. The Word of God. We tread the road the saints above with shouts of triumph trod. By faith, they like a whirlwind's breath swept on o'er every field. The faith by which they conquered death is still our shining shield. To him that overcomes the foe white raiment shall be given before the angels. He shall know his name confessed in heaven. Then onward from the hills of light. Our hearts with love aflame will vanquish all the hosts of night in Jesus' conquering name. And remember the last part. Faith is the victory. Faith is the victory. Oh, glorious victory that overcomes the world.

Andrew Gillies and I pictured this story and I'll share it with you. Last night, my little boy confessed to me some childish wrong and kneeling at my knee he prayed with tears. Dear God, make me a man like Daddy, wise and strong. I know you can't. Then while he slept, I knelt beside his bed. Confessed my sins and prayed with law about it. God make me a child like my little child. Here. Pure, guileless, trusting, deep with faith, sincere. As difficult as it may seem on occasion. May we be as faithful to God as God is faithful to us. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Thank you, Adam, Don and Mike. As I thought about how to close today, I think Psalm 100 is an appropriate psalm to close with today. This will be our our prayer, our declaration as we go through the week: Shout for joy to the Lord. All the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before Him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us. And we are his. We are his people. The sheep of his pasture enter the gates with Thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise His name for the Lord is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations. Be blessed.

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