

Sermon outline and notes © Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor
Swift Creek Baptist Church (swiftcreek.church)
18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834
Sunday, August 27, 2017

Lamentations 3:22-23 “Our God Is True and Faithful”

Intro. Today it is my joy to share with you two very important attributes of God: His truth and His faithfulness. What a blessing it is to know that God always speaks the truth. He will never lie to you or break a promise. He is always faithful, loyal, and dependable. Our God is such a wonderful God.

Yet so many people are not true and faithful like God. You cannot count on them to tell you the truth. You cannot count on them to keep their commitments. You cannot rely upon their loyalty to you. They are fair weather friends who will let you down depending on their mood or circumstances.

Yet God is faithful and true. So we are going to learn more about these attributes as we go through the message together. Let me tell you why it is important to learn these attributes of God. To know God better is to trust Him more, to praise Him more, and to serve Him with the same kind of faithfulness that He has shown to you.

Now the first attribute of God that we will consider today is this:

I. OUR GOD IS TRUE

Jesus said in Jn. 17:3 that His Heavenly Father is “the only true God.” Likewise, Jeremiah 10:10 says that God is “the true God,” as does John the apostle (1 John 5:20). He is distinguished from all so-called gods, which are called vanity and lies (Psalm 96:5; 97:7; 115:4-8; Isaiah 44:9, 10).

Not only is God the true God, but He is also the source and ground of all truth. All truth, whether mathematical, scientific, musical, moral, or religious is grounded in God. There is no standard of truth outside of God, for He is the standard. Furthermore, truth in one field does not contradict truth in another field. Truth, whether in science or religion, harmonizes, for all truth is derived from Him, for He Himself *is* ultimate Truth. Deut. 32:4 says that God is “a God of truth” (so also in Isaiah 65:16). Truth is not arbitrary but inherent in His being. Therefore, since God is truth Hebrew 6:18 says, “...it is impossible for God to lie...”

Jesus Christ is the incarnation (John 1:14) of truth. John 1:17 says He was “full of grace and truth.” Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am ... the truth....” The word “truth” used here means truth of being, more than truth of expression. An apostle can say, “I speak the truth”; but he cannot say, “I am the truth.” In John 14:17 the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of truth.” All persons of the triune God share the same attribute of truth.

Since God is truth, He speaks only the truth. Jesus said in John 17:17, “Your word is truth.” His written Word is true and absolutely reliable, for 2 Timothy 3:16 says that Scripture is “God-breathed.” What He states concerning Himself, His laws, His methods, His desires, His promises, and His works is true. Whenever the word of man contradicts the Word of God, we should heed Romans 3:4, which says, “let God be true but every man a liar.” We should remember that man is capable of discovering facts but is incapable of interpreting those facts adequately apart from God.

Because God is truthful, the following should be true in our own lives:

A. We Should Have Faith in God - Our faith in a person is tied to their truthfulness as well as their abilities. God says in Ex. 34:6 that He is “abounding in ... truth.” The Hebrew word translated “truth” (*emeth*) conveys the idea of reliability, stability, truthfulness, and faithfulness. God is called a “Rock” several times in the Old Testament for this reason (Psa. 18:2; 18:31, 46; 28:1; 31:3, etc.). Our faith in God is well grounded.

Have you made a conscious decision to put your faith in God? He is worthy of your trust, for He is a God of truth. He is reliable.

Furthermore, since God is truth:

B. We Should Speak the Truth – The ninth of the 10 commandments says, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Ex. 20:16). Ephesians 4:15 says that we are to be “speaking the truth in love.” Ephesians 4:25 says, “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor.’” We should never lie or deceive people. We should always keep our promises.

Do you keep your word? Are you a person who consistently tells the truth? You should, for God expects us to be like Him and tell the truth.

Because God is true:

II. OUR GOD IS FAITHFUL

Isaiah 49:7 says, “the LORD ... is faithful...” 1 Corinthians 1:9 says, “God is faithful...” Five other times in the New Testament it says that God or the Lord “is faithful” (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; 1 Th. 5:24; 2 Th. 3:3; Heb. 10:23; 1 John 1:9). My opening text (Lam. 3:22-23) declares the faithfulness of God. Jeremiah says, “Through the LORD’S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” Hebrew scholars question the translation of v.22. One suggested translation is this, “The Lord’s mercies, truly they cease not, surely His compassions fail not.” You see, the Hebrew word translated “mercies” is *hesed* in Hebrew. It combines the concepts of love, faithfulness, kindness, and loyalty. It is the basic word that is used to describe a covenant relationship. Deuteronomy 7:9 calls God “the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy (*hesed*) for a thousand generations...” Indeed, Psa. 106:1 says, “For His mercy (*hesed*) endures forever.” Thus we are assured of the enduring character of God’s mercies. In fact, Isaiah 54:10 says, “‘For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness (*hesed*) shall not depart from you. Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,’ Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.” Do you get the picture of that never ending loyal love of God? God is indeed faithful.

Regarding His expressions of lovingkindness, v.23 says, “They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” God adapts His grace to the immediate needs of the hour. God gives to each of us new mercies.

So the fact that God is faithful means that we can count on God to be there for us no matter what happens. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful...” He is loyal to those who trust in Him. He is absolutely reliable, dependable and steadfast. In fact, one of the Hebrew words that is often associated with *hesed* is *emeth*, which means “firmness, faithfulness, truth; reliability.” Psa. 89:33 says, “Nevertheless My lovingkindness (*hesed*) I will not utterly take from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail.”

Note how the apostle Paul ties the faithfulness of God to His truthfulness. Romans 3:3-4, “For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar....” In Rev. 19:11 Jesus is called “Faithful and True.”

Last week I shared with you that our God never changes. That is one reason why he is always faithful. He is as faithful and dependable as the sunrise each day. God promised to provide Israel with food even in the wilderness. He was faithful to provide manna for their daily needs.

The Book of Psalms rings out with glad thanksgiving for the faithfulness of God. Psa. 36:5 says, “Your mercy (*hesed*), O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.” Psa. 92:2 says, “To declare Your lovingkindness (*hesed*) in the morning, And Your faithfulness every night.” Note the poetic parallelism between *hesed* and “faithfulness.” Psa. 100:5 says, “For the LORD is good; His mercy (*hesed*) is everlasting, and His truth [faithfulness] endures to all generations.” At least 11 times the Hebrew word (*hesed*) for faithful love or lovingkindness is in the same verse with the Hebrew word for faithfulness.

Since God is faithful, we should be faithful both to God and to others. Galatians 5:22 lists “faithfulness” as one of the fruits of the Spirit. 1 Cor. 4:2 says, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” It is required of spouses to be faithful. Indeed, the relationship of marriage should illustrate faithfulness. Hosea 2:20 says, “I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness....” Yes, when I perform a marriage ceremony, the vows include the following words, “for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health....” God expects parents to be faithful to their children. My children know that they can count on me to always be there for them. We should be faithful to our church family. I am so thankful for those of you who have shown faithfulness in God like fashion.

Because God is faithful and true:

A. God Keeps His Promises – Deut. 7:9 says, “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant....” Heb. 10:23 says, “... He who promised is faithful.” Titus 1:2 says, “in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.” In the midst of a promise of God’s help to overcome temptation, Paul said in 1 Cor. 10:13, “God is faithful.” He is true to His promises. You can count on God to do what He has promised. In fact, Hebrews 11:11 says that Abraham’s wife Sarah “judged Him faithful who had promised.” That’s because He is a covenant-keeping God. Our Christian faith rests upon God’s faithfulness to keep His promises.

There was a little Scottish lady who worked hard taking in washing in order to send her son to the university. When he came home for vacation, his mind was filled with doubts about God from the liberal teaching he had received. He did not want his mother to know about the change in his thinking. Meanwhile, she kept telling him how wonderful it was of God to save her and how she knew she was saved. Finally he could not listen to more of her talk and said, “Mother, you do not seem to realize how small you are in this universe. If you lost your soul, God would not miss it at all. It would not amount to anything.” She did not reply right away but kept putting dinner on the table. Finally she said, “I’ve been thinking about what you said. You are right. My little soul does not amount to much; I would not lose much and God would not lose much. But if He does not save me, He will lose more than I will. He promised that if I would trust Jesus He would save me. If He breaks His word, He will lose His reputation and mar His character.” Indeed, God keeps His Word. You can count on Him to keep His promises, and don’t

let anyone tell you otherwise.

Furthermore, because God is faithful and true:

B. We Have Peace - Only as we have complete assurance that He is faithful may we live in peace. The tempted, the anxious, the fearful, the discouraged may all find peace in the knowledge that our Heavenly Father is faithful. He will ever be true to His pledged word. For example, we have peace in knowing that our sins are forgiven. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

One of the trials we face in life is temptation. 1 Cor. 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. . . ." I can face temptation with peace and confidence, knowing that God has promised to help me, that he is faithful to His promises.

Then Psalm 36:7 says, "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings." God has promised to be our Shield and Protector. What peace we can have when we realize how trustworthy and faithful God is!

Finally, because God is faithful and true:

C. We Have a Sure Hope - Our hope of future blessedness rests upon God's faithfulness. Only as He is faithful will His covenants stand and His promises be honored. Romans 5:5 says, "Now hope does not disappoint. . .," that is our hope in God, who is faithful. Hebrews 10:23 says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." Only as we have complete assurance that He is faithful may we look forward with assurance to the life to come. For example, 1 Thess. 5:23-24 says, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."

My dad was brought to church as a child and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. God blessed him with a wife and three children. God faithfully provided for the needs of his family. God blessed him with a long life of 89 years. As the face death I was able to go to his bedside in the hospital. I witnessed the fact that He did not face death with fear but with faith and hope in eternal life. That's because God is true and faithful.

I expect to have the same confident hope as I face death someday. Hebrews 6:19 says, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. . .," because God is true and faithful.

Conclusion: Do you have a relationship with this God who is faithful and true? Don't you want to have peace and hope in this sin-cursed, troubled world? You can by putting your trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ. He is worthy of your trust, for He is true and faithful.

Sources: Louis Berkhof, "The Attributes of God" in Millard J. Erickson, Ed., *The Living God: Readings in Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973); Roy T. Edgemon, *The Doctrines Baptists Believe* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1999); Stephen F. Felker, *Basic Bible Doctrine* (Training Course); Everett F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), 211-212; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978 reprint); Robert B. Laurin, *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Lamentations*, Vol. 6 (Nashville: Broadman, 1971); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 4:23] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2012); H. D. M. Spence & Joseph S. Exell, ed., *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977); William Wilson Stevens, *Doctrines of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967); A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

(Lincoln, NE: Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1971). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

ABOUT THESE SERMON NOTES

© Dr. Stephen Felker. These notes may be used and even shared for personal study or ministry, but not for commercial purposes. The author credits the sources listed above and footnotes for much of the content. The “live” recording of this sermon will be more completely in the author’s own words. To obtain an audio recording of this message, you may listen free at www.sermonaudio.com/pastorFelker. A video of this sermon may be available at <http://swiftcreek.church/>. Dr. Felker’s email address is S+Felker&2@aol.com (remove signs).