

GOD!  
Message 21  
Scripture: Psalm 89:1-29

INTRO: Our message this morning is on God's faithfulness. The passage of Scripture we had read for us this morning, Psalm 89 speaks of His faithfulness over and over again. If I might sum it up in a word for us as humans, it would be this: You can count on God! You could not always count on me. I might not always be able to count on you, but you and I can both always count on God. God is faithful!

I think it was God's great mercy; His great compassion for man's lost condition that caused Him to act on man's pitiable condition. And His love said, "There is something I can do about that and remain unchanged in My character, but it will be an awful price I'll have to pay, but for man, I am willing to pay it because of My great love for Him. And then, all by grace, God Almighty sent His only, and beloved Son into the world. And He came to His own and His own received Him not but said, "Let us kill Him that the inheritance may be ours."

And now we fallen human beings can come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find help in time of need. And here on this throne we find that great and awesome God, and He is incredibly faithful. You can count on Him. With Him there is certainty and assurance. You never need to question what He has said, and you never need to wonder if He will keep His Word. If He has said something once, it is enough.

All around us we see change and decay. But God never changes because He is faithful. He is the Almighty who is a God of wisdom and love and grace and mercy, but all the while He is a God of truth and justice and righteousness. You can count on Him. He has never yet changed and He will not change. His earliest recorded words were recorded some 3500 years ago and have needed no correction and no changes. I say it again, you can count on the God of the Bible!

So our subject this morning is God's faithfulness.

9. Faithfulness

We quite often sing the song, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." But have you ever stopped and thought, "Just what does that mean?" In the Bible this word finds its meaning in the Hebrew OT and it is the word 'aman'. The TWOT begins its treatment of this word like this: "This very important concept in biblical doctrine gives clear evidence of the biblical meaning of 'faith' in contradistinction to the many popular concepts of the term. At the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty. And this is borne out by the NT definition of faith found in Hebrews 11:1. The basic root idea is firmness or certainty."

Deut: 7:9-10 "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face."

In these verses we find somewhat of what is meant by God being faithful. He keeps His agreements. He will keep them to a thousand generations. God never backs out of an agreement. Now let me just mention here that the word translated 'mercy' here is not the same as that which we dealt with in the last message. This word is the word 'chesed' I mentioned in the last message, a word probably closer to the word agapee love.

By the way, let me mention here that I was questioned after the message on love whether God ever loves man with 'philia' love. I thought not and we checked it out. I learned some very interesting things. First, the root of the word 'to kiss' is philia love. Judas betrayed Jesus with this word that speaks of this kind of love. And second, God loves His Son Jesus with philia love (Jn. 5:20). And third, God loves believers with philia love because they love His Son with philia love and because they believe on Him (John 16:27).

Now back to faithfulness. Let me make an interesting note on this concept here as well. Have you ever wondered why we say 'amen' at the end of our prayers? It does not mean that the prayer has been concluded, though it is usually said at the end. To quote TWOT again they say, "The word expresses a certain affirmation in response to what has been said" (I.52). So we might render it as our response which says, "That is true!" or "I heartily agree with that!" or "Truly spoken!"

Now if you have read the OKJV it records Jesus as saying, "Verily, verily, I say to you..." That is 'Ameen, Ameen, I say to you...' or we would say, "Amen, Amen I say to you..." We might render it, "Truly, truly, I say to you..." What it means is that what I am about to say you can be certain of. So the NKJV translates that as, "Assuredly, I say to you..." ESV says, "Truly, truly I say to you..." Weymouth says, "I tell you in solemn truth..."

So the root of the word 'faithful' is also the root of the word 'amen'. It expresses certainty about which there can be no doubt. Listen to the words bearing the root of this word: Aman = confirm; support; uphold; be established; faithful; to be certain; to believe in. Omen = faithfulness: Ameen = verily, truly. Emun = faithful, trusting. Omna, verily, truly. Amana, faith, support, sure. Ummam, verily, indeed. Emet, firmness, truth.

It is interesting that the root of the word translated 'faithful' is also the root of the word 'to believe' in the OT. That which you believe is something you are firmly persuaded to be true. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are firmly persuaded that what the Scriptures say of Him is true. All of this comes from the root word of which the word 'faithfulness' comes from as well. The same holds true in the NT.

When Moses was to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt he said, "Well, when I go tell them that I am to deliver them, who will I say sent

me?" And God said, "Tell them, 'I Am that I Am' sent you." Then Moses said, "But what if they will not listen to me?" And God told him to throw his rod on the ground and it became a snake, and Moses turned and ran. Then God told him to pick it up and it became a rod again. Then in Exodus 4:5 God said, "That is what you will do in order that they may believe that I am the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and that I have sent you."

Now the word translated 'to believe' is the word 'aman'. God said He would do this in order that the people would be persuaded to believe Him. Then the Lord said, he was to put his hand in his bosom and take it out and it was leprous. That's like saying it was full of cancer in our day. And when Moses did that the second time, it was healed. And so in Exodus 4:8 God says, "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign." Well, Moses did that, and in Exodus 4:31 it says the people believed Moses. Now that is the root of the word 'faithful'. God can be trusted. You can count on Him!

Now if God is faithful, and we certainly hold that He is, then that, along with the doctrine of His immutability gives us a stability that is incredibly comforting. We humans change, oh how we change. But God cannot change for the better and He will never change for the worse. He cannot change for the worse, because then He would no longer be immutable, and He would no longer be faithful. If God could change in one thing, we could never count on Him again. But He is faithful.

We teachers and preachers of the Word of God must ever make sure that we present God in biblical light. When we react against error on one hand, we may end up bringing about an error on the other hand. There was a time when the Church centered its teaching on the justice of God until people were afraid of Him and stayed away. A.W. Tozer says, "We rather tremble when we think of

how the Church went through this period, when about all she talked about was the justice of God. God was looked upon as a tyrant and the universe as a kind of totalitarian state, with God at the top, ruling with a rod of iron. If we think only of the justice of God, that's the concept we'll get."

"Then", he says, "over on the other side, as a reaction from that, came the time when we only thought about God as being love. 'God is love' (1 John 4:16) is our main text now. We no longer have a god of terror, but a sentimental, spineless god—the god of the Christian Scientist. God is love and love is god and all is love and all is god and god is all. Pretty soon we haven't got a thing left. It's like the cotton candy that you buy at the circus—all you have is this sweetness and nothing but sweetness. We've magnified the love of God without remembering that God is just."

So he says that when we make God only love, we get the Christian Scientist. If we make Him all good, then we get the modernist and the liberal. If we make Him all grace, as he says the gospel churches have done over the past 50 years (which is now much more) then we have a god who cannot see moral distinctions, and that is where the Church is today.

But, you see, it is not God that changed. It was man that changed how he saw God and man lives and acts in direct accordance with how he sees God. Turn with me to Genesis 8 (read Genesis 8:20-22).

Today we are warned about the danger of over populating the earth. But we should rather be warned about not populating the earth. When God made man He told him to fill the earth. But we are worried that we will over fill the earth and it will not be able to sustain us. But God is faithful. He has told us what to do. We need to be about doing it.

Then we are made fearful that man might destroy himself with the atomic bomb or some other bomb.

But you may rest assured that that will not happen. Then we are told to watch the o-zone. We are burning up the o-zone and we are in danger of destruction. But God said as long as the earth remains, so will the seasons. So He instructed man right after these verses again to fill the earth.

You see, we do not need to be worried about such worldly thinking. The astronomers study the stars and they find scary things like the stars they call 'black holes'. And so, sometimes they pull this scary thing out from under the rug and study it but then, back under the rug it goes. It is too scary to dwell on. What if we should all be sucked into one of these.

So, when we do not fear God, we have all kinds of other fears. When we learn to fear God, He relieves us of all these earthly fears. God is faithful. You can count on His Word. But then the Lord goes beyond that, and like to Abraham of old, He shows us that which does lie before us. And we can rest assured %100 that what He has promised will come to pass.

Now the fact that God is faithful can be shown to be true without reading the Bible. Romans 1:20 says, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." God's faithfulness is one of those invisible attributes we can understand from creation.

Lamentations 3:22-23 says that, "*It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*" Why are we not consumed? Because He is faithful to His very own being. Because of His love and because of His mercy. Because He is a God who cares and is merciful and loving, and these attributes do not change, therefore we are not consumed. Should God be able to change, we would never be safe.

For example, on day two of creation, God created the firmament. On this day, He mixed the gases around our planet so that we could exist on earth physically alive. Let me quote from the series of messages I did on Genesis 1-3, "In our present atmosphere, scientists find that the constant gases, the gases that don't change, in our present atmosphere are nitrogen, 78.084%. Oxygen, 20.946%, and then the more minor gases, argon, neon, helium, methane, krypton, hydrogen, nitrous oxide and (trina?). Now these are constant gases and they are there. What God did on day two as I understand it, from the things He had made already He mixed these gases and put the laws in place that would keep these gases within a certain distance of the other heavens, and would keep them in a place where man could exist. You see, all God would have to do is change these gases and we're gone. No more existence. We're dependent on Him to keep these things mixed right all the time...

"Well, there are minor gases as well. Gases which change. Gases that are higher at some times than others. They are called the variable gases. And the amount changes from time to time and place to place. And so we have rain and don't have rain, which is affected by these things. Let me give you some of these. There is water vapor, 7%. Carbon dioxide, .01% - .1%; then the ozone which is .01% and then sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. Now these are all necessary in order for us to exist and I suggest that what God did on day two, He made the firmament. He made this place livable. He mixed up all of this so it would be conducive to our respiratory system."

You see, it is God's faithfulness in the firmament that keeps us from perishing each moment. If those gases should change to any degree, we would cease to live. So in the firmament itself we clearly see God's faithfulness demonstrated.

Then take the sun and the rest of the planets. They are set in place and they remain constant. For example the sun is 93 million miles away.

Scientists say it is 27 million degrees fahrenheit. Now if it should move a little closer to the earth, we would die of heat. If it should move a little further away, we would die of cold. If God's faithfulness should cease for a little, we would all perish.

But God's faithfulness is also demonstrated to us in theology. So let me remind us of one of the greatest matters of comfort with regard to God's faithfulness. We read Deuteronomy 7:9-10 earlier which says in part, "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments..." Because God is faithful, He is a covenant or agreement keeping God.

You and I, as Christians, live under a covenant. God has made an agreement with us, and we have made an agreement with Him. It is called the New Covenant. We call it the New Testament. You see, there is an Old Covenant and there is a New Covenant. We have entered the New. God's part of the covenant was to pay the price for our deliverance, the sprinkling of the blood, the death of His only Son. And in the New agreement the requirement of sinful man is that we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who delivers us from our sins.

Therefore, 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." With regard to our salvation, we can fully depend on Him to keep His covenant or agreement with us.

I wonder, are you a discouraged Christian? Have you let the Lord down? Are you backslidden? Has the spiritual life cooled down for you? Take heart this morning. I want you to listen carefully to these words of Scripture found in 2 Timothy 2:13: "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny Himself."

Now in Greek as in Hebrew, the words faithful and to believe have the same root. So the NKJV translates this verse like this: "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." So maybe we have slipped and fallen. Or we have slacked off and now we have grown spiritually cold. That is faithless. That is unbelieving. But, the incredible news is that God remains faithful. So, if we confess our sins, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness!" And maybe you say, "But how can He take me back again?" How? He is faithful to His agreements! You can count on Him!

Tozer, when he preached on the faithfulness of God spoke of 1 Corinthians 10:14 which 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, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

I wonder what you bear today? Let me repeat Tozer's story. He says, "There are also some dear women who love God with all their heart, but are married to slobs-men who refuse to be anything else but carnal, vulgar and more or less not what their wives hoped for. These women think, 'There's nobody stuck the way I am.'"

Then he writes, "I knew a godly, praying woman whose husband, God bless him, was a drunkard. His stomach wouldn't hold down his food, so he used to come home with his clothes dirty clear to his feet. I'm afraid I know what I would have done to him, but she didn't. She prayed and cleaned him off and put him to bed. When he woke up the next morning with a hangover, he'd promise her anything, but then he'd go out again with the boys and come home swaying from side to side, covered with filth. And she'd go through the same thing all over again. She prayed for years for that man. I don't know how the poor woman ever endured it. But she prayed on. She was one of those happy Christians, a little wisp of a woman.

"One day her drunken husband came to church, came down front, got down on his knees and bawled like a drunkard bawls—half self-pity, half something else. But God saved him. He became a model Christian and lived for God for some years afterward. And she walked around just as proud of him as eagle that had hatched another. She'd brought him to God - hatched that fellow out by prayer and patience.

"I suppose there were times when she heard him snoring in the corner in his drunken sleep and wished she'd never met him. And I suppose there were times when she used to pity herself and say, 'God, how do You expect me to hang on?' But God whispered in her heart, 'Temptations are common to all, but I'm faithful, I won't let you down.' The result was that not only did he get converted, but also a lot of the members of the family."

CONCL: And how do we conclude a message on God's faithfulness? Like this: You can count on God! You can always count on God!

We can understand from creation itself that God is faithful. I went in a little airplane last week and looked all over the town of La Crete and the Peace River up to the bridge at the Fort and I the pilot and I talked about the wonder of aerodynamics. And I said, "Do you know why we can dare to fly? It's because God is faithful." You see, when you learn the laws of aerodynamics they remain the same. If God changed things around a little when you are up there, everything would change so it would no longer be safe to fly."

From this we can learn that we can trust God in His Word. When He says, "If you confess your sins, I am faithful and just to forgive you your sins" then He means exactly that and He will not change His mind between now and when we reap the benefits eternally for trusting Him.

I wonder if you have taken care of some sin and you are still in doubt if God has really forgiven it? You can trust God. You can count on Him. Trust God, you can never do better, than to trust Him. Truly truly, God is faithful, amen and amen.

