

Worshipping a Faithful God

Lamentations 3:22–23

Because God Is Faithful, We Can Have C_____ When We Pray

In Psalm 143:1, the psalmist prays, “Hear my prayer, O Lord. Give ear to my supplications. In Your faithfulness, answer me, and in Your righteousness.” His words reflect his knowledge that God was faithful to answer prayers in the past. So he asks God to be faithful now. God tells us to call upon Him (Psalm 50:15; 91:15; Jeremiah 29:12) because He is faithful to hear and answer our prayers. Because He is faithful, we pray with confidence.

Because God Is Faithful, We Can C_____ Evil and Temptation

Second Thessalonians 3:3 says, “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.” Pray the Lord’s Prayer, “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13a), and God will answer, “I am faithful. I will guard your steps.” Or trust in 1 Corinthians 10:13, “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.”

When we face temptation, we must remember that God is faithful. He has promised to keep us from the evil one by providing a way of escape in every case. He is always faithful to provide a way of escape. God’s name and character are at stake.

When we think of God’s faithfulness, we might think of what we aren’t in light of what He is. That is, we think of our own unfaithfulness when we think of God’s faithfulness. Second Timothy 2:13 says, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” No one who has been unfaithful should forget that God remains faithful even when we are not. If we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

There is no limit to the forgiveness and faithfulness of God. We think there must be because there is with us. We get tired of forgiving and being faithful, but God does not. He remains faithful even when we do not.

Because God Is Faithful, We Can P_____ Him

In his book, *Reflections on the Psalms*, C.S. Lewis says this about praise:

“The most obvious fact about praise, whether of God or of anything, had escaped me all of my life. I thought of it in terms of compliment or approval, or giving honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. The world rings with praise—readers praising their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game, even praises of weather, dishes, actors, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, and once in a while, even the praise of a politician. I had not recalled how the humblest and at the same time most balanced minds praise most, while the cranks and the misfits and the malcontents praise least. I had not noticed, either, that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us in joining them to praise it. ‘Isn’t she lovely?’ ‘Wasn’t it glorious?’ ‘Didn’t you think it was magnificent?’ The psalmists, in telling everyone to praise God, are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses what we feel, but it completes the actual enjoyment itself.”

David Jeremiah, *Knowing the God You Worship: Study Guide* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004).

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Praise is the consummation of enjoyment. When we really enjoyed a person, thing, or event, the experience remains incomplete until we offer up our praise. When the psalmist enjoins his readers to praise God with him, he is saying, “Isn’t God great? I just want to lift up His praise. Would you praise Him with me? Isn’t He lovely? Wasn’t that magnificent? Isn’t this incredible?” And there is no facet of God’s nature that is lifted up for praise in Psalms more than His faithfulness: Psalm 89:1; Psalm 89:5; Psalm 89:8

Read through the psalms and underline every time you are encouraged or exhorted to praise God for one of His attributes—especially His faithfulness. And then enter into that praise in your own devotional time. Until we praise Him, the loop remains unclosed, our complete enjoyment of God unfulfilled.

Because God Is Faithful, We Can Have C_____ When We Are Afraid

Lamentations has one of the key verses on God’s faithfulness in all the Bible. To understand this verse, we have to understand the book of Lamentations; some have called it the “weepings” of Jeremiah, or Jeremiah’s funeral poem.

Jeremiah was a prophet of God whose ministry took place when the city of Jerusalem was besieged by, and ultimately destroyed by, the Babylonians. It must have been horrible for a godly prophet to watch the city of God be destroyed in judgment for the sins of the people. Lamentations was written in the tears of the prophet as he lamented the devastation of God’s chosen city and her people.

Jerusalem had been under siege for eighteen months. People were dying of starvation and thirst, the normal result of ancient warfare sieges on a city: cut off their supplies and wait until the people die or are too weak to defend themselves. It got so bad in Jerusalem that people were killing and eating their own children to stay alive (Lamentations 4:10). Lamentations 1:1–2 record Jeremiah’s words as he looks out over the devastated city of Jerusalem.

Understandably, Jeremiah reacted angrily toward God for what He had allowed to happen to Jerusalem. But ultimately his lament became personal: “Why have you allowed this to happen to me?” Note his words in 1:12, and verse 16.

Lamentations 3 contains dramatic and detailed descriptions of how Jeremiah felt about the situation in which he found himself. But wait—how did he get from the pessimism of verse 20 to the hope of verse 21? Something entered his mind as he wrote, something that gave him hope. And what he remembered is found in verses 22–23.

Jeremiah remembered God’s faithfulness and it gave him hope! It was from these verses that the hymn writer, Thomas Chisholm, took his inspiration for the hymn *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*.

But what could Jeremiah see? Nothing with his eyes except a completely destroyed city and a devastated people. But he could see, with the eyes of faith, God’s faithfulness. If the only time we declare the faithfulness of God is when we understand and see what He is doing, then we won’t say it as often as we should. Many times in life we will see with our physical eyes only that which appears to confound our perception of who God is. But eyes of faith see not the circumstances but the faithfulness of God.

Life is filled with challenges seen and unseen. Like Jeremiah, the only way we will be able to get through them is if we depend on the faithfulness of God. His faithfulness becomes a source of courage to all who trust in Him. We need to do what Jeremiah did: recall ... remember ... reckon ... recollect ... reprise the faithfulness of God and how He has delivered His people, including us, in the past.

Jim and Carol Cymbala started a church in the middle of Brooklyn, New York—and experienced numerous trials in the process. Their daughter experienced some deep difficulties, after which Carol was diagnosed with cancer. She told me David Jeremiah, *Knowing the God You Worship: Study Guide* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004).

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how, during that time, she was on her face before God crying out, asking Him how He could have done all these things to them in light of their having given themselves to Him. What kind of reward was that? She said God spoke to her heart and said, “Carol, haven’t I been faithful to you?” And from that experience she wrote a beautiful worship song where she says, “Looking back I can recall His mercy and His love.”

You may not write a worship song that gets published, but your remembrance of God’s faithfulness in your life will be good reason to have a new song in your heart.

A LITTLE HOMEWORK

1. What does it mean to you to be faithful? Write a definition, using examples of faithfulness.

a. Read the following verses:

[Deuteronomy 7:9](#)

[1 Kings 8:54–56](#)

[Psalm 36:5–6](#)

[Psalm 119:89–90](#)

2. Because God is faithful, we can have confidence when we pray. Read the following verses:

[Psalm 143:1–2](#)

[James 5:16](#)

[1 Peter 3:12](#)

a. What is the interplay between righteousness and prayer?

b. If in God’s sight “no one living is righteous,” what do James and Peter mean by their use of the word “righteous”?

c. Do you feel that God hears you when you pray? If you cannot feel that way, can you still know it in your head?

d. Read [1 John 5:14–15](#). What do you think it means to ask according to God’s will?

3. Read [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) and [2 Thessalonians 3:3](#). According to these verses, how is God faithful?
 - a. Everyone has been overtaken by temptation at some point. What are the examples given in [1 Corinthians 10:6–10](#)?
 - b. What temptation is hardest for you to resist? What way of escape does God give you for this temptation?
 - c. Think back on a time when you were tempted and yet stood firm. What was the difference between that time and a time when you gave in? Was there an attitude difference? Were you at a different distance from God? What elements made the change?

4. Have you ever felt that something you did was too bad for God to forgive you? Read [1 John 1:9](#). Underline, in your mind if not in your Bible, the word “faithful.”
 - a. Read [Hebrews 6:18](#). God cannot lie. If He says in His Word that He will faithfully forgive you, then what must be the truth?
 - b. Do you carry a burden of sin that you can’t seem to forgive yourself for? If so, confess it again to God and focus on the faithfulness of His forgiveness. If God in His holiness can forgive you, can’t you forgive yourself?

5. Read [Psalm 89:1–29](#). When we praise God for His faithfulness, we enjoy His faithfulness. We cement that truth deep within our soul and it becomes the strength of our life. Do you spontaneously praise God for His faithfulness? Or is it something that does not often occur to you?
 - a. Looking back on your life, when does God’s faithfulness to you seem most apparent? Did you recognize it at the time? Did you praise Him for it then or later?
 - b. If we don’t often spontaneously praise God, what does that say about our enjoyment of Him?

6. Read [Lamentations 3:1–24](#). Note how Jeremiah goes from abject despair to a declaration of God’s faithfulness.
 - a. Write your own lament using this pattern. You may want to use a situation you’ve already gone through or one you’re presently dealing with.