

The Faithfulness of Jesus
John 13:1

He never fails the soul that trusts in Him;
 Tho' disappointments come and hope burns dim,
 He never fails.

Tho' trials surge like stormy seas around,
 Tho' testings fierce like ambushed foes abound,
 Yet this my soul, with millions more has found,
 He never fails; He never fails.

He never fails the soul that trusts in Him;
 Tho' angry skies with thunder-clouds grow grim,
 He never fails.

Tho' icy blasts life's fairest flow'rs lay low,
 Tho' earthly springs of joy all cease to flow,
 Yet still 'tis true, with millions more I know,
 He never fails; He never fails.

He never fails the soul that trusts in Him;
 Tho' sorrow's cup should overflow the brim,
 He never fails.

Tho' oft the pilgrim way seems rough and long,
 I yet shall stand amid yon white-robed throng,
 And there I'll sing, with millions more, this song –
 He never fails; He never fails.

That is a poem found in [Explore the Book](#) by J. S. Baxter.

It happened on May 7; a day Roger Simms would never forget as he hitchhiked home. He was tired from carrying his heavy suitcase, anxious to take off his uniform for the last time. Throwing his thumb out at a passing car, he lost hope of a ride when he saw that it was a black, new Cadillac. But to his surprise the car stopped, and the passenger door swung open. He ran to the car and tossed his suitcase in the back and thanked the nice looking, well-dressed man as he slid into the front seat. The driver asked if he was going home for keeps. Roger affirmed that to be the case. The driver introduced himself as Hanover and said he was going to Chicago where he had a business. Roger wasn't going that far.

They talked about a lot of things on the trip, but Roger, who was a Christian, felt a compulsion to share the gospel to this apparently successful businessman. But he kept putting it off till he realized he was only about half an hour from home. Now or never, Roger cleared his throat and said to Mr. Hanover that he had something important he wanted to talk about with him and proceeded to share the gospel. He ended by asking if he would like to receive Christ as his Savior. To his astonishment the car pulled over to the side of the road. Roger thought the man was going to kick him out to the curb, but instead this well-dressed businessman bowed his head and received Christ as his Savior exclaiming that it was the best thing that ever happened to him.

Five years had passed. Roger had gotten married, had a two-year-old son and owned a business of his own. He needed to go to Chicago on business and decided to look up Mr. Hanover from the business card given to him when they parted company five years earlier. He found his way to Hanover Enterprises and approached the receptionist's desk stating that he didn't have an appointment but was hoping to see Mr. Hanover. She told Roger that it was impossible, but he could see Mrs. Hanover. Unsure of what was going on, Roger was ushered into a lovely office and found himself facing a keen-eyed woman. She extended her hand to welcome him and asked how he knew her husband. Roger explained that five years earlier he was hitchhiking home after his discharge from the army when Mr. Hanover gave him a ride. She asked if there was anything special about that day to which Roger hesitated, wondering if he should mention that he had witnessed to her husband, but decided to share that he had explained the gospel. He shared that her husband had pulled over to the side of the road and weeping with head against the steering wheel, trusted Christ as his Savior. On hearing that news, Mrs. Hanover began to sob herself with her body trembling. Getting some composure, she exclaimed that she had prayed for her husband's salvation believing that God would save him. Roger then asked where her husband was to which she replied that he had died in a car crash that night

after dropping Roger off. He never made it home and she thought God had not heard or answered her prayers. She continued by saying that she stopped living for God five years ago because she thought God had not kept His word.

I would venture to guess that everyone of us has felt the disappointment of unanswered prayer, of wondering where God was when we called out to Him pleading for Him to step in and immediately intervene. We may have even felt His silence was in some way a sign of rejection. Like Mrs. Hanover, many have walked away from God because of feeling snubbed and forsaken having forgotten the very promise of God that He would never leave or forsake them, forgetting that He promised He would walk with them through their valleys.

Our topic is one that is essential to the growth of our faith. With your Bibles open, let's look at the character of faithfulness. We'll see that it is part of the nature of God, how it was displayed in the person of Jesus, and something that we as believers are to imitate. We have a number of passages to consider and eventually will end up at **John 13**.

My outline is very simple today with just three main points. We'll look at the promise of God to us, the pattern of Jesus for us, and the practice of believers by us.

Historian Patricia Millen was working on a book about images depicting Washington's crossing of the Delaware when she saw a reference to a lost painting. George Harding's mural had once hung in Trenton's opera house, which was torn down in 1969. Millen finally found the huge painting stored in the basement of another building.

It may be that at one time or another you have felt forgotten by God like a rolled-up painting and tossed in some out of the way place. I want to be as abundantly clear as possible about the clarity of Scripture regarding the faithfulness of the Lord.

I. THE PROMISE OF GOD TO US

There are a lot of things I look forward:
Summer

Vacation
Thanksgiving dinner
Mowing the grass

Something I don't look forward, especially now and for the next 15 months is the seemingly endless bombardment of political ads and literature during an election cycle. Regardless of what level of politics, whether it be for local, state or federal office, every candidate stands on promises they say they will keep when voted into office. If they happen to be elected, they make a promise to faithfully uphold the duties of their position. Yet, no matter who gets into office, he or she encounters many roadblocks to faithfully fulfilling their campaign promises.

We all have an idea of what faithfulness means. It's defined as steadfastness, constancy, allegiance, keeping faith, loyal; marked by a strong sense of duty or responsibility; resolute and reliable. Faithful implies steadfast adherence to a person or thing to which one is bound by an oath or obligation.

Loyal implies undeviating allegiance to a person or cause.

Constant suggests freedom from fickleness in affections or loyalties.

Staunch implies such strong allegiance to one's principles or purposes as not to be turned aside by any cause.

Resolute stresses unwavering determination, often in adhering to one's personal ends or aims.

From a Biblical perspective, faithfulness is carefulness in keeping what has been entrusted. The Bible speaks of faithfulness in four ways: it is an attribute of God, it is the positive characteristic of some people, it is a characteristic many people lack, and it is a fruit of the Spirit.

The root of faithfulness is the word faith. The same root word can also be used for the word trust or believe. So when we think about the faithfulness of God, that He is dependable to keep His word, we can trust what He says He will carry it out. That means we trust Him even when He is silent or can't see Him working or when He takes a long time.

Abraham waited 25 years before God faithfully provided the son of promise.

Moses waited for 40 years after his exile from Egypt before God spoke to him.

Israel waited 40 years while wandering in the desert before entering the Promised Land.

When reading the book of Esther, we come to realize that God is not mentioned one time. **Did God forget His promise to Israel? Are we to conclude that He is absent or uncaring about the plight of the Israelites who are seemingly in the hands of a wicked tyrant in Haman? Are we to conclude that all the circumstances in the book are somehow coincidental?** Yet:

He was working in Queen Vashti's heart to defy the king who subsequently banished her.

He was working to make a young Jewish woman beautiful so that she would catch the eye of the king and take Vashti's place.

He was at work to keep the king from sleeping one night and then in the selection of material that was read from the king's annals.

He was at work in the hatred of Haman toward Mordecai and all his people.

While His name may be missing in the text, His hand is hard at work fulfilling His promises because He is faithful. Be assured that He is present.

God's silence in no way means His absence or indifference. God's silence in no way means His impotence. He is faithfully working.

He is always working to faithfully complete what He has promised.

We will not always see Him working miracles like parting our waters or calming our storms, but make no mistake, God is working to fulfill His purposes. Alistair Begg asks us to consider for a moment why God's name would be silent in Esther and suggests that it's perhaps to teach us that even though it may seem that He is absent, He is not. He is working, even behind the scene to keep His word because He is faithful.

Charles Spurgeon writes, **"Although the name of God does not occur in the Book of Esther, the Lord himself is there most conspicuously in every incident which it relates ... I have seen portraits**

bearing the names of persons for whom they were intended, and they certainly needed them. But we have all seen others which required no name, because they were such striking likenesses that the moment you looked upon them you knew them."

Consider what Scripture has to say about God's faithfulness and apply that to His promises.

Psalm 89:8 "O Lord God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O Lord, and Your faithfulness surrounds You."

The Psalm opens with a shout of praise and even declares that all creation gives God praise. In every way He is superior and deserving of our adoration. His title alone indicates His sovereignty over everything. As sovereign ruler, He has entered into a covenant with men. It is a covenant of deep love and one, that because of His nature, He will keep. The psalmist then declares that God dwells in faithfulness, that He is clothed with faithfulness. It refers to the fact that there is nothing in all creation that is as faithful as He is. His faithfulness is embodied in Truth as Jesus attested to the disciples in **John 14:6** when He says that He is the Truth. God not only speaks the truth, He is Truth.

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie. Neither the son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

Hebrews 6:18 "It is impossible for God to lie."

God is holy and so it is a contradiction for Him to lie. God won't lie because as part of holy nature He can't lie. His faithfulness stems from His being Truth. He does what He says. We fail at faithfulness because we lack the power to carry out everything we say or promise. But not God. Because of His unlimited power He will do all He says. We can say that because faithfulness is an inseparable part of His holy nature.

After Moses broke the original stone tablets containing the 10 commandments, God instructed him to return to Mt. Sinai with two new tablets of stone on which God would etch His word. **Exodus**

34 says that God came down in a cloud and declared His name to Moses. We read in **verse 6** **“And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.’”**

Just as you can't separate the ingredients of a cake so you can't separate God's faithfulness from any of His other attributes. If God failed to keep even one promise, He would not be God. Because He is holy, His nature is and always will be one of faithfulness. **Psalm 119:89-90 “Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations.” (Psalm 36:5)**

This verse speaks of the extent of His faithfulness. His faithfulness is eternal.
His faithfulness is never changing.
His faithfulness is to every generation.

One generation will not experience more or less of His faithfulness than any other generation. That's why the writer of Hebrews could emphatically exclaim and encourage us to **“Hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)**

I Thessalonians 5:24 “The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.”

Psalm 91:1-8

We can have confidence in God because of His faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

We can count on God's mercies being renewed every day because of His great faithfulness. We can count on His compassions, we can count on Him every day.

We can count on God's forgiveness when we sin.

I John 1:9 “He is faithful and just to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

And when we are tempted, we have the confidence from **I Corinthians 10:13** that His faithfulness will provide a way of escape so that we are not overtaken by temptations.

Now, let me say this before we move. The psalmist uses some word pictures that strengthens the idea of God's faithfulness. They help us have confidence in His unfailing and faithful word. When the psalmist says that God is our rock, or our fortress, or our refuge, or our shield, or our wing under which we can hide, they are terms which speak of faithfulness. When we think of a rock, we think of something that is unmovable. Maybe you think of the Rock of Gibraltar.

When we think of a shield, we picture a knight holding a shield out in front to receive the blows from an enemy.

When we think of a fortress or refuge, we think of an impenetrable castle where nothing can break through. **“The one who called you is faithful, He will do it.” (I Thessalonians 5:24)** He abounds in faithfulness.

Remember from our definition that faithfulness speaks of being resolute and reliable, that nothing can alter its cause or purpose. That is God's faithfulness. Nothing can keep Him from keeping His promise.

Because of God's faithfulness we can endure trials. **II Thessalonians 3:3 “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”**

It may be that today you find yourself in the middle of some overwhelming trial. You may feel that God is absent and silent. You may even think that God can't be trusted. How easy it is in those trying circumstances to question His faithfulness and consider that if He can't or won't keep His Word that He isn't worthy of following. It's all too easy when we don't have complete trust in Him to think He's abandoned us, so we might as well abandon Him. If that's the case, have we really trusted Him? It seems in that case, that our trust or faithfulness to God is conditional. When we say we trust the Lord, we say we believe in His faithfulness. Doubt on our part is questioning that faithfulness.

In those moments we need to earnestly pray to hear God's faithful promise that He will never leave us or forsake us (**Hebrews 13:5**). Never forget that He

who promised is faithful. Even though He may appear to be absent, He is not. He is working. Trust in His faithfulness.

Wayne Grudem writes, “Faithfulness means that God will always do what He said and fulfill what He has promised. He will never prove unreliable or unfaithful – we can trust Him... True faith is taking God at His word because He is faithful.”

Again, **Hebrews 10:23** “Hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.”

Now, as I have said before, what is true about God, is also true about Jesus who is God.

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and Word was God.”

As God in the flesh Jesus manifests the same attributes as God the Father because He is also God.

The promise of God to us is His faithfulness. Because that is true, we must then consider the pattern of Jesus for us.

II. THE PATTERN OF JESUS FOR US

For that we turn to **John 13:1**.

At first glance when we look at the chapter, we may wonder what it has to do with faithfulness. Here is the account of Jesus washing the disciples feet, predicting Judas’s betrayal and Peter’s denial. Yet the very first verse compels us to consider the faithfulness of Jesus.

Something that we see consistently throughout the gospels is Jesus’s obedience to do what the Father asks of Him. His faithful obedience is out of love for the Father and His love for us in willingly going to the cross to die on our behalf or in our place in order to procure salvation for us.

Verse 1 speaks to the faithful obedience Jesus demonstrated. He left nothing undone. That’s why on several occasions, God the Father could say that He was well pleased with the Son.

John writes that Jesus, having loved His own, showed them the full extent of His love. Loving them to the end, as stated in the KJV, is not in

reference to time as if there was an end to His love for them. Instead, it means His love for them was complete or perfect. Jesus couldn’t love them anymore and to show them what His love and faithfulness looked like He washed their feet.

Foot washing was considered to be the most menial task a servant could do. It was given to the lowest servant. It was a sign of hospitality, cleanliness, and religious ritual. It symbolized humility and service. Jesus was showing His willingness to humble Himself in submission to the Father’s will by coming to serve rather than to be served. It was an act of love and faithfulness to do and be what the Father wanted from Him.

He knew His hour had come and in faithfulness served His disciples one more time.

He knew Judas would betray Him, but He faithfully and lovingly washed his feet.

He knew Peter would deny Him, but He faithfully and lovingly washed his feet.

He knew they would all abandon Him, but He faithfully and lovingly washed their feet.

He knew the cross was before Him, but He faithfully and lovingly washed their feet.

He knew the Father had put all things into His hands to fulfill.

Knowing all this, in His faithfulness to the will of the Father, He showed them His complete and lasting love by washing their feet.

He demonstrated faithfulness in His service.

He demonstrated faithfulness in His sacrifice.

Three times in the book of Revelation (**1:5; 3:14; 19:11**) Jesus is referred to as the faithful witness.

That simply means He was faithful in what He taught and also in how He lived.

If I lived differently from what I taught, you would question my faithfulness. But Jesus is perfectly trustworthy in everything He says and does.

Hebrews 13:2 describes Jesus as a faithful leader comparing Jesus to Moses. It was Moses who was called by God to lead the people of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt and on into the Promised Land. Like Moses, Jesus was called by God the

Father to lead people out of bondage to sin and into the Promised Land referred to as Sabbath-rest, a promise given to those who would believe in Him. Some believe this to be the redemption one receives through faith, but others say it refers to the Sabbath-rest of heaven. Both may be in view here. The point being that Jesus is the faithful leader who brings us to that place of spiritual and eternal rest.

There is one more example of Jesus's faithfulness that's found in **Hebrews 2:17** and **Hebrews 4:14**.

Of the many titles that are applied to Jesus, which refer to a specific aspect of His character and ministry, being called a faithful High Priest speaks of His mediation between God and man referring to someone who is holy or set apart to perform religious services.

In the Old Testament, the idea of High priest is first used in **Genesis 14** regarding Melchizedek. His name means the King of righteousness. In the second instance, the term is applied to Aaron and then subsequently to the descendants of Levi who would serve as priests in the Tabernacle of God where they would offer the sacrifices required by the Law. But only one was selected as High Priest, and only he could enter the Most Holy place and represent the people before God.

That was Jesus. He came as a faithful High Priest to offer Himself once for all for our sins and represent us before the Father. Because He is our faithful High Priest, we can come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in our time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**).

Here's how Wycliffe's Bible Encyclopedia refers to the faithfulness of Jesus. "As the self-revelation of the divine character, Jesus Christ is fittingly designated the Faithful One (Revelation 19:11), who with absolute fidelity discharges all the responsibilities of High Priest (Hebrews 2:17), Apostle (Hebrews 3:1-2), and Witness (Revelation 1:5; 3:14)."

Jesus gives us a pattern of what faithfulness looks like both in His service to others and His sacrifice

for others.

I hope you can resonate with the songs we sang that God's faithfulness is great and that Jesus never fails. We can absolutely trust Him.

Have friends forsaken you?

Have friends disappointed you?

Do doubts and fears assault you?

Is the sky of your life dark and dreary?

Are the storm winds blowing strong?

The example of Jesus through the pattern He gives us is that He is always faithful. He will never abandon you. Like the Father, He will not forsake you. Like the Father, He will do what He says.

Let me close with this thought about the practice of believers by us.

III. THE PRACTICE OF BELIEVERS BY US

Because Jesus is our example, there is the expectation as His followers to do as He taught.

Wycliffe's Bible Encyclopedia states: "This quality of the divine character finds its human reflection in men of faith. Like their divine Exemplar they manifest a steadfast trustworthiness in all their obligations; they are faithful to the point of martyrdom. Responding to faith, the Holy Spirit produces in men this trait of faithfulness."

That tells me three things. The first is that His faithfulness or trustworthiness to do what He said reflects itself in my faith of Him, that I trust Him with all my heart (**Proverbs 3:5-6**).

Second, we then take His lead and live a life as believers who also exhibit faithfulness in what we say and in what we do so that others can depend on us. We are to be people who are faithful and obedient to the Word and faithful to keep our word.

Third, we are to allow the Holy Spirit to develop faithfulness in us. Faithfulness is not something inherently part of our character (**Galatians 5:22-23**). Like all the other character traits of Jesus we have talked about, faithfulness is only possible because the Holy Spirit grows it in us. Faithfulness is God's gift to us through the empowering, ever working ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Faithfulness affects every relationship we have. Both with God and with others. When we walk in obedience to God and humbly serve Him, we can be known as someone who is faithful. People like Silas, Tychicus, Epaphras, Onesimus, and Moses were known for their faithfulness.

Is faithfulness something we are known for? Try as we may, from time to time we're going to fall short. We aren't always going to demonstrate faithfulness. But keep striving to let the Spirit develop it in us. Take our example from Christ who was faithful.

Do you feel like God has somehow let you down or been unfaithful in what He says in His Word?

Faithfulness means that God will always keep His Word. He can always be trusted to do what He says. So believe Him. He never fails. Great is His faithfulness.