

Thursday 12th November Janice Rodgers The Faithfulness of God

Good morning, Father's house family, it is good to speak with you this morning, I hope that you're all well. It seems a while since I've been chatting to you on the morning and I always look forward to it, even though you know, I find it really hard to see my face looking back at me. So this morning, I'm imagining your beautiful faces looking at me and that's good. So it's great to be with you, virtually with you this morning, thank God for this technology, thank God. And you know what, for people like me who've been a little bit scared of this kind of technology, it's really thrown us in at the deep end, hasn't it? And we're getting used to it and just so, so thankful that we've got this way of communicating with one another.

So as I was praying, and really pondering on what the Lord wanted to say to you this morning, what He wanted to encourage you with, He started to speak to me about faithfulness, something that is so, so precious to the Lord, something that He holds in such high esteem, that even in various places of the Bible, He promises that for those who remain faithful, there will be great reward. And even in Revelation I was reading earlier, and we'll perhaps look at in a few minutes, but there is a crown of life for those who remain faithful. But I wanted to start by looking at the faithfulness of God. You know, unless we really experience our God as a loving and faithful God we will find it very hard to be faithful, we'll find it very hard to stay the course when the going gets tough.

So it's really important that we look at the faithfulness of God, and that we ponder on that every day. The Bible verse that Helen put up is from Hosea, where God says, of the people of Israel, 'I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, then you will know that I am the Lord'. That is a very intimate expression and intimate relationship between God and Israel, where God refers to Israel and sees the people of Israel as His wife. And many times he chastened them because of their unfaithfulness. It broke the heart of God, that even where we see in Jeremiah, he was told to go and marry a harlot, go marry a prostitute and it was a type of picture of how Israel was behaving like a prostitute toward God, who was her husband. And of course, we see the bigger picture of that in the New Testament, where we see that we are betrothed to Jesus Christ. The greatest honour in the world, is to be one that is born again of the Holy Spirit adopted into sonship, and to be daughters of the living God of the Father, and given by the Father, in marriage to the Son, and that day is yet to come.

So we have a God who is not distant, who does not see us just as His minions, but who sees us as His family, and His betrothed. And our faithfulness to Him is something so precious. This morning, I woke up with a very old hymn on my mind, and I knew it was the Lord reminding me and I dashed downstairs, where is that scripture? And if I try and sing this, you'll probably all switch off but 'Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness, Morning by morning, new mercies I see'. I remember as a young woman, newly saved, I got saved in my late 20s, and singing that old hymn and my heart just bursting, because faith was building up inside of me of the faithfulness of this God, that this was a God who was committed to me, not just for life, but for eternity.

So of course, I had to go and find the scripture this morning. And it's in the book of Lamentations, which is believed to have been written by Jeremiah. Some may disagree with that, but generally, and Jeremiah of course, has seen the devastation of Israel. He's seen the results of the faithlessness of Israel, and yet in it all, even in their chastisement, he sees the faithfulness of God. And so he is lamenting on the state of Israel. And then in chapter 3, verse 20, this is what he says, and I'm reading from the ESV: 'Surely my soul remembers, and is bowed down within me. But then, that's my bit, This I recall to mind, He remembers, therefore, I have hope. The Lord's loving kindness, indeed, never ceases. For his compassions, His mercies never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness'. And that's where that great hymn Great is Thy faithfulness is taken from, morning by morning, new mercies I see. You know to live in the goodness of God, to live in a place where we are continuously thankful to God, that He is a merciful, righteous, just, faithful God, whose compassions and mercies never fail us, will hold us steady, it will hold us like an anchor, it will be an anchor, in times of testing and trial.

And I shared the other Sunday morning about how I'd come to faith and knew Jesus is my saviour. I wanted to serve him with my whole life, I mean, I was completely 100% saved. And then God began to really take me to reading about the persecuted saints, something that I had no awareness of. That in our generation and in the previous generation, there were saints that were persecuted terribly and even died for their faith. And it really deeply challenged me but it was the goodness of God preparing me, causing me to look and say, Lord, will I remain faithful, even when my life doesn't go the way that I expect it will. Because Jesus said in this world, you will have trouble, but don't fear I am with you. I've overcome the world. I've overcome death, I am with you. This life is not the end. He has given us eternal life and to be with Him forever and ever. And I began to encourage myself with those things, and knowing that I would be like Peter, I would say, Lord, I'll never fail you, Lord, I'll never... that knowing myself that I would, but just calling upon God and saying, Lord, I believe you will strengthen me in times of testing. I believe that when you take me through troubles and fiery trials, that you will be with me, that you will be the fourth man in the fire, that you will hold me. And He has done that, He has been faithful to His promises. I've been through many trials, but He has remained faithful to me through them all. He has kept His promises, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.

So faithfulness starts with knowing the faithfulness of God, and walking with Him knowing that He will never ever fail us. You know, it's like if we have a husband or a wife or a dear friend, who is loyal to us, it is so much harder to be loyal to them. *Easier, easier*, sorry, it is so much *easier* to show them faithfulness, to walk with them in that, in marriage in covenant relationship and that's the kind of faithfulness that God is speaking about. Faithfulness is required by both parties. God is faithful to us as only God can be because He cannot fail. We can fail, but we endeavour to be faithful to Him. And that's where I'm coming to this morning. I really wanted it felt that the Lord wanted to encourage you that He is so thrilled by your faithfulness. You know, many times I'm chatting to fellow believers, and they'll say, 'Well, I haven't done any great exploits for the Lord' and I look at them, and I know their stories. I know what they've been through. I know what they're struggling with today, and then remaining faithful. Even when things are so difficult, and the faithfulness of God, things are not matching up for some of you, I know, I see your names there, that you have right now are walking through valleys. You're walking through times where you've said God I don't see you answering this prayer, I don't see your hand in this. But I believe your word, I know your character. I know that you're faithful. I trust you as a faithful friend. I trust you as one, what the Bible says that remains closer, sticks closer than a brother. That is so beautiful to the Lord, that you remain faithful.

And I felt he wanted to commend you this morning, so please, receive this yourself. Don't look at what you haven't done, don't look at, you know that you haven't been to foreign lands, or I don't know, you're not the managing director of some huge company or you, you haven't got a church of 20,000. You know, God gives you a church of six people, and you're faithful with those six people, your reward will be just the same as the one that was given responsibility over 20,000. In Hebrews, it says that He that has promised is faithful, and He will do it. The heroes of faith didn't always see those promises come through in their lifetime, they did come, but not in their lifetime. And yet they died in faith and they died faithful, and went on to be with the Lord, who is our very great reward.

In Revelations 2:10. It says 'Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial, for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life for which God has promised to those who love Him'. The crown of life. This is how highly God values your faithfulness, that there is a crown of life promised. And of course, we read too in Revelation that some that will be receiving those crowns have actually had to endure right until the end and suffered martyrdom. But there is a crown laid up for you, there is a treasure laid up for you in heaven. I love the verse and I'm going to finish with this one, in Matthew 25 verses 14 through to 30, which speaks about the parable of the talents. Now, parables are stories of the kingdom. But they're not bedtime stories like I tell my grandchildren, they are realities, their spiritual realities, they give us insight, they give us revelation into the principles of the kingdom, into the things that are valued by God, and the economy, if you like, or the system that operates in the kingdom of God. And of course, we are already in that kingdom, that kingdom is already here, that kingdom is within us. And one day we shall fully enter into that kingdom.

And so as children of God, we walk not according to the principles of the world, but we walk according to the principles of the kingdom. And so when we read the parables that Jesus told, we can read, and we can learn about the deeper truths. Many, many promises laid up for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. Yeah, just think about that one. It's not nine o'clock yet, and my dog hasn't made an appearance, that's a miracle, isn't it? 'Well done good and faithful servant. Because of your faithfulness, you will be entrusted with much more'. You see, each of the three servants talked about in that parable (and go later and have a read as we haven't got time), in Matthew 25, have been entrusted with, let's say seed and seed that was a spiritual seed. Seed that was heaven born, that had the power of multiplication, it has the power of increase. Everything that has been given you, your giftings, whether you are called to teach, you're called to come alongside and encourage people, you're called to give of your finances, you just seem to have a grace upon you to be able to give lavishly, all of those things are given by God. And He is looking on and seeing how we will manage the things that are given us.

And there's a direct correlation between how we walk out that journey with what has been entrusted to us here on earth, and what we'll be entrusted with for all eternity. That just blows my mind. That God sees the smallest thing and He says that is an act of faith faithfulness. He saw the widow give that tiny little amount of money, the smallest amount of money. He didn't talk about all the wealthy men that had given so much, his eyes were on that little widow, who had given out of her poverty, out of everything she had, she was storing up treasures in heaven. She was proving faithful. And so I encourage you and I finish with this, I encourage you to be faithful with all that God has entrusted you. To hold on to Him, to lean on to Him, knowing that He is faithful, that He will never forsake you, He will never leave you. that He has got His hand tightly grasped around your hand. And His promise is that nobody can grasp you out of His hand. Nothing can separate you from His love. So we are lavish, we are rich, we are those that can afford to invest in the kingdom, and to give all that we are and all that we have and to give lavishly, because our God is a faithful God and He will reward everything, the smallest thing that we do for Him, my dog's making a noise but not an appearance, can you hear it?

So I'm going to finish with that and say thank you for tuning in this morning. And God bless you and God bless all of you who are listening to this later on, either on Facebook or on the podcasts; which there are on Father's house and which you can listen to. So bless you so much, love you all, miss you. And looking forward to the day when we're gathering together again. God bless.

Bye



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