

The heart of faithfulness is honest, fearless, and trusts in God.

1. Faithfulness is honesty
 - a. Keeping your word
 - i. Matt 5:33-37 - Let your statement be “yes” or “no”
 - ii. There is no need for swearing, as if we don’t have to faithful without it
 - iii. Simply put: faithfulness is keeping your word even at cost to yourself
 - b. Following through on what you have promised
 - i. “Love never fails”
 - ii. Bears insult and injury and does not let go, continuing to seek and pray for blessing even for its enemies
 - c. It is able to be trusted
 - i. “Full of faith”
 - ii. All of these characters of the heart of a child of God, being made and imaged by His Spirit are reflections of His heart
 1. Deut 7:9
 2. Is 49:7
 3. 1 Corinthians 1:9
 - d. It is integrity
 - i. Loyal and courageous and trustworthy
 - ii. You are the same no matter the threat or circumstance
 1. Opposite: fair-weather friend or an opportunist
 2. Counterfeit: loyalty without love, love without truth, being afraid to lovingly confront
2. Fear is usually the reason that we don’t keep trust.
 - a. Fear of loss
 - i. We don’t *functionally believe* that God is working for our best, so we turn to other things to find that satisfaction
 1. This is what Israel did in the OT over and over again, turning to pagan kings and nations to deliver them, instead of trusting the LORD and faithfully praying and waiting for Him
 2. We lose hope so quickly in our day and age of immediate gratification
 - a. Example of high speed internet on airplanes (comedian on Conan O’Brien show)
 - ii. A child of God Has God as a Father
 - iii. Can’t He provide all we need?
 - iv. Rom 8:32 - He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
 - b. Fear of failure (Pride)
 - i. Don’t take risks in remaining faithful, because we’re afraid of appearing weak or being humiliated
 1. Sermons often become attempts at works of art meant to impress
 - a. They cease to be a means to the end of exalting Christ and building faith in the hearers and become the end in themselves (faithless preaching)
 - b. This is because of a fear of being perceived as a fool
 - ii. Fear losing our reputation in some area

1. “There are segments of the world where you can find acceptance even if you a pervert, a punk, a sadist, or a snob...but Christ and His church are alien and threatening.” Peter Kreeft
 2. We fear being known as fundamentalist, bigoted, intolerant (if your friend is more irreligious), or as liberal, tolerant, morally loose, godless (if your friend is more religious)
- c. Fear of Pain
- i. It’s too doggone hard!
 1. Laziness is a sign of nearness to death
 - a. lacking zeal for the Lord = lacking love for the Lord
 - b. When we lack zeal to follow through on our word it shows that our words are empty and meaningless, devoid of actual content of the heart, and merely intended to acquire a particular response from the hearer
 - c. Laziness to follow through reveals that my promises were never about serving the Lord or serving people, but were merely about me
 2. It’s also extremely self-centered, self-motivated, and self-interested
 - a. The opposite of love
 - b. Out of line with the character of Christ
 - c. How did Jesus respond when things got hard?
 - i. He went off to pray
 - ii. He trusted His Father for the resources to strengthen Him
 1. Luke 4 – His temptation
 2. Matt 26:38 – His greatest temptation
 - ii. If God is your Redeemer, whom have we to fear?
 - iii. God has not called us to a life without humiliation, actually He has called us to humility...but we are completely loved!!!
 1. Jamie Buckingham, Pastor who baptized in waders
- d. Fear of Despair
- i. This work takes too long
 1. This person has not figured it out, yet!!
 - a. It won’t do any good
 - b. Often, we give up first so that we don’t feel that we are the ones who failed
 - i. To reject before you can be rejected?
 - ii. “It’s my choice to stop, nobody had to tell me or force me into a corner, or take anything from me. I didn’t fail. I could have finished, but....(insert excuse here).”
 2. So, if they give up, then I can give up!
 - a. This isn’t LOVE!
 - b. Love never falls down
 - ii. Perseverance is a mark of large faith.
 1. Do I really believe that God is going to do what He has promised?
 2. Can I really be like God has promised I will be? Yes! He is doing it and He is faithful!
 3. In fact, biblical faith is a perseverant faith. There is no such thing in Scripture as a faith that does not persevere
 - a. James 1:12 – perseverance is linked to love for God and the crown of life
 - b. 2 Pet 1:5-8 – qualities that keep one from being unfruitful

- c. Matt 10:22; 24:11-14 – the one who endures to the end, in spite of people’s hatred of you, for following Christ will be saved
 - e. What Have the Sons and Daughters of God have to fear?
 - i. Ps 27:1 – the LORD is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear?
 - ii. Did Jesus “lose” on this earth?
 - iii. Was that the end of Jesus?
 - 1. Jesus faced into His fears with obedient faith because He *knew* that His Father is faithful and good.
 - 2. Matt 26:38-39 – His greatest desire was for the Father’s will to be done, and He trusted the Father to do what is good, right, true, and glorious though He suffered and grieved the cost
 - iv. God has made you complete in Christ when you put your faith in His Son. There is nothing *real* to fear about losing. So, be willing to give and willing to lose as you keep your word to others.

3. Faithfulness Treasures Jesus First

- a. Every fruit of the Spirit, every mark of the transformed heart has two components
 - i. Vertical: relationship with Christ
 - ii. Horizontal: relationship with others
 - iii. Faithfulness is no different: faithfulness to Christ and His desires comes before and is the source of strength to be faithful to others
 - 1. Paul’s two reasons for remaining faithful in Acts 20:17-27
 - a. To Christ and His glorious gospel: constrained by the Spirit
 - b. To declare you the Ephesians all that was profitable
- b. See the love of Christ at the Cross!
 - i. Eph 3:14-19 – Paul prays that we would know the love of Christ completely and be filled up to all the fullness of God
 - ii. Hope leads to great faith leads to great hope
 - iii. Romans 15:13 - May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
 - iv. 1 Timothy 1:14 – grace overflowed through faith and love of Christ
 - v. His love cannot be stopped, even going down the road from the eternal glory of heaven to a hay-filled manger, a stony path to a rugged cross...enduring the fiery wrath of His Father on Calvary. May our trust in Him be so perseverant.
- c. He is faithful
 - i. He promised salvation and secured it for us who believe
 - 1. 1 Thess 5:23-24!!!
 - 2. Heb 6:16-20
 - 3. 2 Thess 3:1-5
 - ii. He did it graciously, without us having to earn it
 - iii. He crowned His chosen people with every spiritual blessing in His Son
 - iv. ...and He lost in the process so that He might gain the greater glory
- d. Remember His love, power, and faithfulness to His promises as He changes you to be a trustworthy child of His
 - i. His love is free to you, so make your love free to others
 - ii. His love never fails, being from the foundation of the world, so our love ought never to let down our friends

- iii. His love cannot be stopped, even going down the road from the eternal glory of heaven to a stony path to a rugged cross...enduring Hell on calvary. May our love be as unreserved and as vigilant to others, no matter the cost.

May we look at Cross again and see the God of grace, who has saved us out of complete and utter desperation and called us out to be His children through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave His life for us so that God remained faithful to His promise. When we are having trouble keeping our word and being trustworthy, may we look at the cross once again and see our Redeemer who paid such a high price to remain faithful.