
The Writer's Inkhorn

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Continuing Reflections on the Word for Your Personal Growth in Christ

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Celebrating God's Unending Faithfulness



made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

God's Faithfulness Is As a Thread

I believe that God's faithfulness is as a thread woven through the fabric of our lives. No matter how different or how difficult our lives have been, God's faithfulness *is* there. No matter how similar and sane our lives may be, God's faithfulness *is still* there. No matter how chaotic or even cataclysmic our lives may seem to be, God's faithfulness is there, yes, in your life, even as it now is. And that *is* cause to celebrate. Amen? Amen!

You see, since mankind has been upon the face of this earth, God has had each of us in His heart and in His mind. In fact, even before the dawn of time, He was making provisions for our salvation and for our life with Him. Listen to how the Apostle Paul so beautifully expresses this truth in Ephesians 1:4- 10:

For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will -- to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And He

All of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, bears witness to the truth of God's unending faithfulness as most assuredly expressed in His love for us and His provision for our salvation through Jesus Christ. This, alone, is the essence of our existence, whatever that existence happens to be.

If you lose sight of this understanding, your joy will be diminished by the sheer effort of just trying to make it *through* this life, and that is not our Father's will for us. His will is that we will experience an abundance of His joy, that we learn to handle our trials gracefully, and that we accept His peace in every situation, knowing that we do not go this journey alone.

Do you recall Jeremiah's words about God's faithfulness? Let me help you focus. In the book of Lamentations, Jeremiah wrote a series of poetic laments about the destruction of Jerusalem, probably just after the Jews had been carried away into exile in Babylon. The city was desolate and lying in ruins, because of the sins of the people and God's promised *judgment* (which also was a testimony to His faithfulness to keep His word). After going on about that, Jeremiah begins lamenting over his personal affliction, and this is what he says:

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.

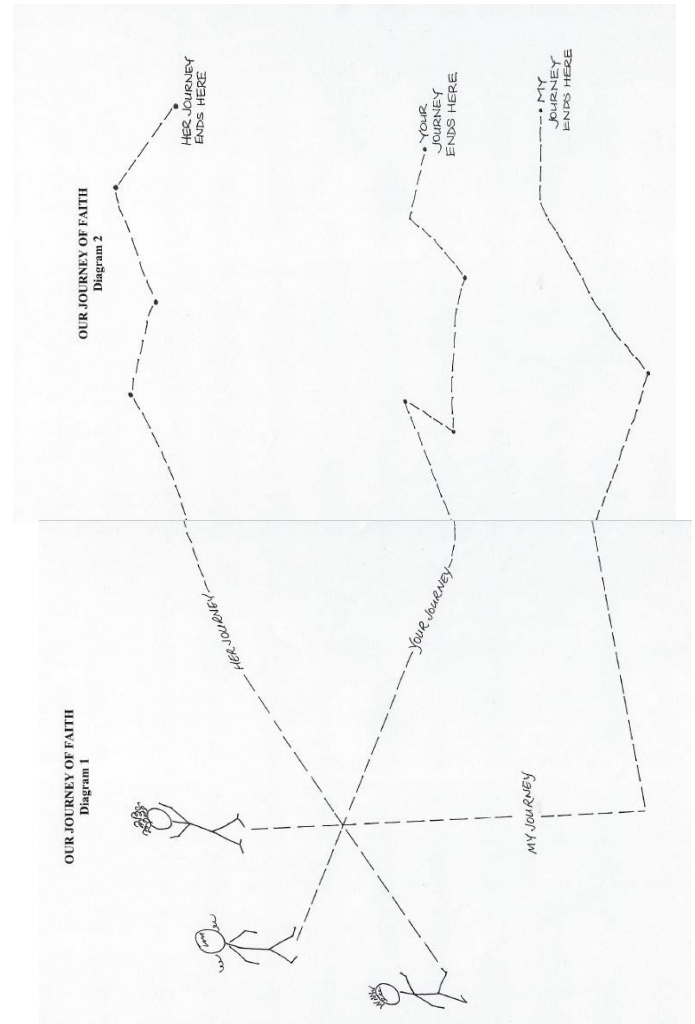
*I will remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet, **this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning: great is Your faithfulness.** (Lamentations 3:19-23, NIV))*

I think that if I had just mentioned the song up front, you would have known right away what I meant, but some of you may not have known the Scripture reference. Yes, life does get hard sometimes, along the way. In the New Testament Scripture – in the Great Commission -- Jerusalem represents home, and family, and those who are immediately close to us. Things may be hard, even now, in *your* Jerusalem. The family may be going through some crises, the house, physically, may be in shambles, and you may even be feeling like a captive; entering your house may make you feel like a stranger in a strange land, but, even in the midst of it all, great is God's faithfulness.

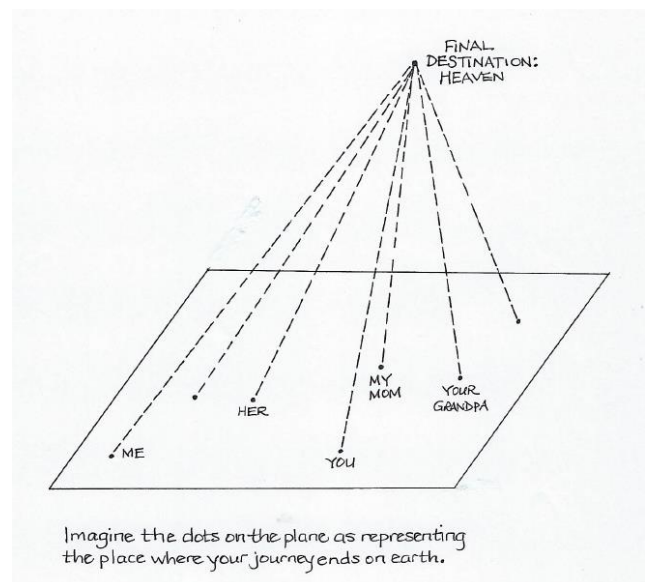
It is only because of *the Lord's mercies* (KJV) that we are not utterly consumed, by our own passions and pride, our own weaknesses and willfulness, our own desires and disobedience. So whatever my afflictions and wanderings, I will put the bitterness and gall aside, and will continue my journey of faith in hope, because I know that God's compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness – to me, to you, to all of us. We can *celebrate* that!

It is because of God's faithfulness that you are where you are at this time in your life. Contrary to popular opinion and the latest polls, your life *has not been* one aimless, patched-up, hodge-podge of unrelated coincidences, devoid of God's watchful eye and undying love and concern for you. It is not an accident that wherever you are standing

right now is just one stop of many on your journey of faith. The following diagrams may help you to understand my next point.



OUR JOURNEYS OF FAITH



Of necessity, each of our journeys must be ours alone, but take courage in the fact that it can only be the hand of God that makes it possible for our separate paths to cross, then continue on in distinct directions, and then come together again at our intended final destination – heaven.

You see, our journey here on planet Earth has been uniquely designed by a faithful and loving Father. Every hill, every valley, and every season is for a purpose, and if handled gracefully and properly, has lessons which prepare us for the next leg of our journey. Even this document which you are reading contains part of those lessons. So as you read, open your heart to all of the things that God will *say* to you, so that you receive all that God *has* for you to receive.

And know that you are never alone, unless you choose to be. If you, in sincerity, are walking with God, then He is walking with you. Your very life is testimony to His unending faithfulness that shows as a bright cord threaded through every circumstance you have encountered in your life and along your faith journey.

The Way of Faith and Place in Faithfulness

There are responsibilities in this journey of faith, things for us to consider. Here is one. While God's faithfulness as part of His character really *is* a thing that just is, and does not require anything from us in order for it to be, still there is a part ***our faith*** plays in much of what does or does not happen in our lives. I would be remiss in my duties if I left you thinking that all that matters is God's faithfulness to us. *Our faith in God* and *our faithfulness to God* *matter* to God also!

Scripture that has been crucial in helping me begin to understand this life of faith is the book of Hebrews, specifically chapter 10, vs 19 through chapter 13, vs 8. Chapter 11, which contains many examples of faith

illustrated through the lives of Old Testament heroes and heroines, is probably the most familiar to you. If you haven't read this recently, it is worthy of your time again, so that you can begin to see clearly, the connections between faith and faithfulness. You see, ***the essence of faith – that is, our faith in God – is judging Him faithful who has promised.*** This is mentioned in chapter 10, vs 23, and again in chapter 11, vs 11. The second reference is to Sarah, who conceived in her old age, because *she judged Him faithful Who had promised.* There **is** a connection between faith and faithfulness. Sarah had faith in God's faithfulness. I think this would be a good time for a self-check and to ask myself whether God can have faith in ***my*** faithfulness to ***Him***. Go ahead; ask yourself as well.

To help you see this connection between faith and faithfulness, let me offer you a specific principle that God revealed to me some years ago, about faith and giving. But the principle applies generally in other areas as well.

What I believe in the spiritual realm, and act upon in faith in the natural realm, I receive manifestation of in both the natural and spiritual realms.

First, we must start to honor, more, the powerful connectedness of natural and spiritual, especially as it relates to God's provisions for us. We must understand that we are natural and spiritual beings. Even though these are distinct parts of our nature, they are not separate and apart from each other, but are very much connected and affecting each other. Our faith and God's faithfulness, in this sense, are very much connected.

Second, if I **have** faith, I will **act** upon that which I say I believe. And I must believe, not

just that God is able, but that He also is willing to meet every need that I have. **That** is faith in God's faithfulness. I either trust God or I don't. I either have faith in God, or I don't. Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith, it is impossible to please God, and that the person who comes to Him, must first believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Every testimony of those witnesses in Hebrews chapter 11 are testimonies of people who had faith in God's faithfulness to them, and acted upon their faith.

- Abraham had to **leave** his kindred.
- Rahab had to **take in** the spies.
- Noah had to **build** the ark.

In the New Testament, I think of the many instances in the miracles of Jesus, where He responds to various persons by saying, "Your faith has made you whole/well/ healed." And sometimes Scripture says, "...and Jesus *saw* their faith."

- That woman with the issue of blood had to **push** her way through the crowd.
- Those four friends had to **lift** their friend to the roof, **tear off** the roof of someone else's house, and **let down** their friend in front of Jesus.
- The blind man sitting by the way **cried out** for Jesus to heal him – give him his sight.

It is our faith, particularly as it is *acted* upon, that moves God to act on our behalf. If we *have* faith, and are people *of* faith, then we will be faithful to the things of God. That is, in a sense, the other side of the coin. Having faith is not just about getting *our* needs met, increasing *our* store and *our* warehouse, but, more importantly, it is about being or doing whatever God wants us to be or do.

You see, inherent in faithfulness is steadfastness in allegiance and in affection; it is loyalty; it is a firm adherence to promises and to observance of our duty; it is

conscientiousness; it is obedience; it is resisting any temptation to desert or betray; it is steady and unwavering love; it is conviction to be sold out for God completely.

Faithfulness *demand*s something of us. You cannot be a lukewarm Christian and be faithful. The two are contrary to each other. Inasmuch as God's faithfulness to us is unending, it is time to take a good hard look at ourselves to see whether we have been faithful to Him. As we continue on our individual journeys of faith, hear the words of the writer in Hebrews 12:1-3:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses (meaning those mentioned in chapter 11), let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (NIV)

There will be no greater joy than to come to the end of our journey of faith and find ourselves seated around the throne of God in the presence of Jesus, the One who was faithful to the Father's desire to reconcile us to Himself. That is indeed cause to celebrate!

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