

A Faithful Servant

Written by Dr. Harold R. Carpenter -



Dr. Harold & Myrna
Carpenter

TEXT: Ephesians 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ
(Ephesians 1:1-2).

INTRODUCTION:

Since we live in the age of television and videos, I may be dating myself, but let me ask, "How many of you remember Horton the elephant?" From Dr. Seuss' stories you may remember the classic phrase, "An elephant is faithful one hundred percent!"

I well remember hearing my wife read the story of Mazzie Bird asking Horton to care for her egg and then flying away. Time passed and Mazzie did not return. The winds blew, the snows came, the tree was moved, but through it all Horton was faithful 100%.

Wouldn't it be marvelous if when we spoke the word "Christian" the phrase would immediately come to our mind, "A Christian is faithful 100%"?

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In our text the apostle Paul refers to the believers in Ephesus as being "**the faithful in Christ Jesus.**" They were the
Horton--the elephants--of Asia Minor.

The message of Christ to His Church is, "**...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life**" (Revelation 2:10).

If God were to evaluate your life today, as He will at the Judgment Seat of Christ, would He be able to say, "**Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord**" (Matthew 25:21).

What are the qualities of faithfulness which God will look for in His children when He passes out His rewards? This morning I would like for us to consider a few areas of our Christian walk which will certainly be factors in His evaluation of our faithfulness.

I. STEADFASTNESS IN FAITH

We live in an age in which faith is belittled. Science is considered fact and should be spoken of in public. Faith is subjective and should be kept private. However, this is not what Jesus taught:

A. The story of the barren fig tree in Mark 11:

Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). B. The blind beggar of Jericho in Luke 18:

And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee (Luke 18:42). C.

The biblical principle of faith in Habakkuk 2:

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith:as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4). (See Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.)

D. The biblical principle of faith in Hebrews 11:

But without faith [it is] impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). If

God does not exist, there is no basis for morality. Your faith will be put to the test. E. Jesus indicates the possibility of a lack of steadfastness in Luke 18:

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7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:7-8)

II. STEADFASTNESS IN WORSHIP

6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD (Psalm 150:6).

A. The very purpose of man is to worship God:

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship : for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him (John 4:21-23). B. The

wise men from the East came to worship Christ:

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him (Matthew 2:1-2). C. The apostolic Church was constant in its worship of the Lord:

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2: 42). D. Paul calls upon the Church to be steadfast in its worship of the Lord:

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25).

III. STEADFASTNESS IN SERVICE

A. The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord (Matthew 25:21). B. Paul's exhortation to the believer:

8 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Galatians 6:8).

C. The Christian life as a living sacrifice:

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1). D. The

believer's reward for faithful service:

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Revelation 22:12).

IV. STEADFASTNESS IN SUFFERING

A. Suffering is a natural consequence of the fall and the curse will not be fully removed until the coming of Christ.

B. Suffering for Christ's sake is a natural consequence of the enmity between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

C. Christ assured His disciples that they would suffer in this world:

1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me (John 16:1-3).

33 In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

D. The disciples joyfully endured suffering:

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name (Acts 5:41). E. Paul challenged Timothy to join with him in suffering for Christ:

2 Tim. 1: 8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; (2 Timothy 1:8).

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 2:3). F.

Christ challenges the Church to the ultimate form of suffering:

10 ...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

CONCLUSION:

The biblical description of the spiritual condition of the world in the last days is not encouraging:

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation (2 Peter 3:3-4).

8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8).

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YES HE WILL, BECAUSE I INTEND TO BE FAITHFUL. AND YOU?

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This is the outline of the sermon Dr. Harold Carpenter preached at Fair Grove Assembly of God in the morning service, 21 September 2003. Dr. Carpenter and his wife served as missionaries for twenty years. Dr. Carpenter also taught missions for twenty years at Central Bible College. He now serves as Pastor of Fair Grove Assembly of God, Fair Grove MO.

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