Let me begin, Church, by rereading Galatians 5:22-23: “22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” These attributes help to give us a picture of the character of God as the Holy Spirit works in our lives, making us more like Him. Perhaps one of the most under-appreciated attributes of God, and an under-developed attribute in each of us, is faithfulness. Pause for a moment and think of the times that you have benefited from God’s faithfulness: in forgiveness of sin, with answered prayer, with provision and protection, in resistance to temptation. God has always been faithful to His promises because of His unchanging character. The entire Bible tells the story of God’s faithfulness toward wavering people—the Israelites, Noah, Jeremiah, Peter, Thomas, and so many more. Some of us, because of the season through which we are living need reminding of our God’s faithfulness (\*Psalm 25:10; \*\*Psalm 100:5). Our trustworthy, dependable God shows his faithfulness in His mercy, His Grace, His steadfastness, His love, His patience, His kindness, and His goodness. He holds on to us in every circumstance, through every challenge.

 Faithfulness speaks to fidelity, dependability, reliability. Church, faithfulness involves commitment and is rooted in trust. In our Old Testament reading in the midst of misery and lamentation over the effects of sin in the world—the judgment of a Holy God, the prophet Jeremiah pauses to recognize and preach the truth to himself (and, by extension, to us) that God remains ever faithful. Jeremiah’s confidently states his faith amidst the darkness: “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” (Lamentations 3:21-22). In the midst of today’s sin-induced darkness, some need reminding of God’s faithfulness. Revelation 19:11 tells us that the very name of the

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\*Psalm 25:10

All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful

 toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

\*\*Psalm 100:5

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

 his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Lord is faithful and true (\*see also 2 Thessalonians 3:3). It is so very simple: God is faithful because that is who He is—eternally reliable, steadfast, and unwavering. And these attributes of His He demonstrates time and time again in the lives of believers and in the pages of scripture. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ prays to His Father God to let pass the violence and pain of the crucifixion to come, but He also prays, “Not my will but Yours be done” (\*\*Luke 22:39-46). Jesus is faithful as He weeps for Jerusalem on His way to the cross. He continued faithful as soldiers drove nails into His hands and feet. Believer, the Lord your God is faithful to you. In every circumstance, in every season of life, He is God. Our faithfulness to Him, His church, His Word, and our maturity in faith hinges on what we find important. His faithfulness should motivate ours. Listen! Your God finds you important; He is committed to you. He demonstrates that in His faithfulness. Our faithfulness to Him is a place of love, joy, and peace. Our hope is to hear from Him, “Well done good and faithful servant” (\*\*\*Matthew 25:14-21).

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\*2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

\*\*Luke 22:39-46

39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” 41 He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. 45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”

\*\*\*Matthew 25:14-41

14 “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,[a] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

 When I think of the faithfulness of God compared to my own, I am both convicted and encouraged, challenged and motivated. Christ says in His parable, “Enter into the joy of your master” (also translated, “Come and share your master’s happiness”). This invitation results from our faithfulness to our God. The joy of the Lord is ours. No matter where we are or what we do—at the gym, in school, with music, with service, in marriage—His gift of His faithfulness requires commitment. And our commitment of faithfulness to God means that He shapes the way we live. As the Spirit strengthens character, our lives are molded by faithfulness. Our faithfulness is rooted in trust. Family! Faithfulness gives structure and stability to all the other attributes, the fruit of the Spirit. We find capacity to be faithful even when we don’t see or understand what God is doing, even when we suffer pain, even through our tears. I think of how Christ remained faithful to Peter, even after Peter denied Him three times (\*2 Timothy 2:13).

 Clearly, God’s faithfulness does not depend upon us, but as we depend upon God, He should be able to depend upon us to do what we are called to do. We are to consistently follow Him daily. So, how has your faithfulness been? His faithfulness to us is covenantal, unquestionable, eternal. God does not change His mind about us!

John the Apostle writes, “9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). This is where we begin—with humility and confession. As the prodigal son returned home to a faithful Father, so can we. He has not abandoned any of us and never will. Our God is in the trial, the drama, the test, the paint, the uncertainty that is in each of us He is not frightened or intimidated or challenged by our earthly circumstances *ever*. He finds each of us important. He finds YOU important. You may be disappointed or discouraged, but faithfulness says, “I will not let you go.” Because God has called you and me to be faithful and because He has been faithful to you and me, I will not quit. I will not let my faithfulness fail. I long to hear—and I know you, do, too, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the Master’s joy!”

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\*2 Timothy 2:13

 if we are faithless,

 he remains faithful,

 for he cannot disown himself.

Passages in support of this sermon:

Lamentations 3:22-25

Because of the Lord’s great love, we are not consumed,
    for his compassions never fail.
**23**They are new every morning;
    great is your faithfulness.
**24**I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion;
    therefore I will wait for him.”

**25**The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him,
    to the one who seeks him

Hebrews 10:19-25

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.