

“God Is Faithful”

1 Corinthians 1:9

This verse is part of the previous five and is still part of the salutation the Apostle Paul was giving to the believers at Corinth. He had reminded them of grace and the benefits it brings, as well as recognizing them for what they had done for the Lord, and that there would be a reward for their work when they stand before the Lord.

He then brings them to the final point in his salutation before he begins the real content of the letter – and this final point is one on which the whole of the letter is anchored, as well as the whole of the Bible – the faithfulness of God.

The word order of the first three words of this verse in the original language (Greek) is simply “Faithful (the) God” – the word “is” is supplied by the translators for clarity purposes but to see it in its original way puts a greater emphasis on the word (and truth) “faithful.” Our God, the one and only true God, is faithful – He is the “faithful God.”

The word for “faithful” is one that means trustworthy, believable – it means that He is fully trustworthy in all that He says and does, and in what He asks us to do and believe. He has won us over, persuaded us to follow Him by paying our sin debt and keeping us in His will – He is the faithful God.

In God's faithfulness lies eternal security.

Corrie ten Boom (1892-1983)

If God maintains sun and planets in bright and ordered beauty he can keep us.

F. B. Meyer (1847-1929)

There are too many verses in the Bible that point to

the faithfulness of God to look at here, but there are a few that will demonstrate the attribute well:

1 Corinthians 10:13

(13) There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

Lamentations 3:22-23

(22) *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

(23) *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulness.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

(24) Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

(3) But the Lord *is* faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

If God is faithful to us, why aren't we faithful to Him? He's given us all we need to be just that but, for some reason, we don't seem to put it into practice.

I. SEEN IN HIS CALLING

"By whom ye were called"

A. *Where the call came from – "by whom"*

1. Or, "through whom"
2. Points back to the "faithful God"
3. His faithfulness is seen in the call – He is faithful, trustworthy to make the call to salvation to all, and then to those who believe, the call to service

B. Who it was for – “ye”

1. The word “ye” (and “you”) is plural – this is speaking of the congregation of believers in Corinth, not them as individuals necessarily
2. It’s not so much a call to salvation here, as it is a call to the saved to become more than just a nominal believer

C. What was the method – “were called”

1. Second person plural aorist one, indicative mood, passive tense – all this means is that it is referring to a point in the past (duration of the event is not seen – just the fact of the event is seen)
2. The word “called” means, in its base form, to invite, to bid, to call aloud
3. They were called to salvation, they received the call and were eternally saved
4. More specifically here, in the context of the passage, he’s referencing the call to holiness, to spiritualness, to “the conformity of His Son” (Rom. 8:28b-30)

Romans 8:28-30

(28) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

(29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

(30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he

justified, then he also glorified.

As to that passage, let me give a few points that will help us understand the issue of being "called:"

- a) The latter part of verse 28 simply states that it is God's purpose to save the lost – the word "call" means an invitation to a banquet – Luke 19:10
- b) In God's time frame all of time (past, present, and future) is seen as being eternally present (Ps. 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8). With that in mind He foresaw (in our time) sinners being saved – vs. 29a

Psalms 90:4

(4) For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

2 Peter 3:8

(8) But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

- c) Those He foresaw being saved (and only those) He before-ordained (again, in our time) or predestined, that they would conform to be like Christ was, and in the future in heaven, will be (1 John 3:2)

1 John 3:2

(2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

- d) At this point we need to say a word about man's free will. We have the choice to accept or reject Christ (Rev. 22:17). Once

accepted we have the choice to either follow Christ and the Bible (Matt. 4:19) or go against His will and not continue to be conformed to His will. He predestined us to be like Christ, but many choose not to.

- e) Verse 30 gives the order of things – Going back to foreknowledge, and God's time being eternally present, He looked ahead (in our time) and saw people being saved, and predestined them to live accordingly
- f) In that foresight, He saw those saved by hearing the Gospel (Rom. 10:11-14) – He then sent that Gospel – all because of His eternal foreknowledge (1 Thess. 5:9).

1 Thessalonians 5:9

(9) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

- g) The next thing He did is those He predestined because of the call being answered and accepted He justified (5:8-10) or made free from the wages of sin (6:23)
- h) The wonderful part of this is that in God's eternal present He not only saw us being predestined to live like Christ because we answered the call of "Whosoever will may come," and thus justified us of the eternal penalty of sin by His Son's death and resurrection, but He saw as being present our status in heaven for all of eternity – that being we are glorified (vs. 18), not now on earth, but in heaven.

II. SEEN IN HIS COMMUNION

"Unto the fellowship"

A. The point reached - "Unto" – or, into – the goal of our life in Christ is one of

fellowship and when received Christ as our Saviour that fellowship began – the point, the goal, was reached and we entered into that fellowship (and the goal is to continue for that fellowship to grow.

B. The purpose for - "Fellowship" - koinonia

1. The article "the" is not present in the Greek as a separate word but is implied in the word "fellowship" for purposes of clarity
2. The word means partnership, participation
3. We've been called into partnership with the Lord by our salvation first and then our call to service because of our salvation
4. Let me say this – by "partnership" we can understand that we are not in this alone. We not only have a church family to work alongside us as we work together for the Lord, but we have the Lord working alongside us – we are not alone, and we are not to act like we are alone.

John 13:8

(8) Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, **If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.**

C. To be partners with the Lord

1. In His will for our lives, and in our service to Him, we will need to "abide in Him," as it says in John 15 - to "abide" in that verse means to stay
2. If we are to do anything for the Lord, we are going to have to "stay" in Him and He

in us

John 15:4-5

(4) Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

(5) I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Karl Barth, the famous theologian, was on a streetcar one day in Basel, Switzerland, where he lectured. A tourist to the city climbed on and sat down next to Barth. The two men started chatting with each other. "Are you new to the city?" Barth inquired. "Yes," said the tourist. "Is there anything you would particularly like to see in this city?" asked Barth. "Yes," he said, "I'd love to meet the famous theologian Karl Barth. Do you know him?" Barth replied, "Well as a matter of fact, I do. I give him a shave every morning." The tourist got off the streetcar quite delighted. He went back to his hotel saying to himself, "I met Karl Barth's barber today."

Each Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit, a person in whom Christ actually dwells. But how often we sit next to other believers, eat with them, sing with them, yet fail to see we've been in the presence of Christ himself.

-- John Ross, Surrey, England, *Leadership*, Vol. 8, no. 4.

III. SEEN IN CHRIST

"Of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord"

A. In the person – "of His Son Jesus Christ"

1. We see the separation of the Persons of the Godhead in this verse – the "faithful God" is the one that calls us to the fellowship of His Son
2. The separation is necessary because it points to the work of redemption that was made by "Jesus Christ" – the Person of the Godhead that died for us on the cross

B. In the position – as "our Lord"

1. It's personal, individual – "our"
 - a) He died to set us free and provide a means for us to be able to walk with Him in fellowship
 - b) He did that for us individually, so we can unite together with Him and with others to serve Him
2. It's particular and practical – "Lord"
 - a) Particular in that we are specifically and particularly called "servants" and choose to follow our "Lord" – our "Master"
 - b) It's practical in that we don't really need to think much on the matter – we just need to obey

Conclusion: What a wonderful truth to know that "God Is Faithful" – that He is trustworthy, believable, in all that He says to us in His Word, and all that He speaks to us concerning through His Spirit, as His Spirit fellowships with our Spirit. If it weren't for the

faithfulness of God we would have no hope; but because we know He is faithful, we can have absolute peace, absolute confidence in Him, and in His Word. And, it's all because of the work of Christ on the cross.

How is your standing with the Master? Are you fellowshiping like you should be? Have you partnered with Him, on purpose, to serve alongside others as we serve Him? That's the call here to the Corinthian believers – the call to remember Who it is they serve and why, and then to encourage them to get back to doing what they know is right to do.

1967. We were at war with Vietnam. And there I was, at the U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. It was brutal.

I can still hear the raspy voice of the sergeant: "We are here to save your lives. We're going to see to it that you overcome all your natural fears. We're going to show you just how much incredible stress the human mind and body can endure. And when we're finished with you, you will be the U.S. Army's best!"

Then, before he dismissed the formation, he announced our first assignment. We'd steeled ourselves for something really tough—like running 10 miles in full battle gear or rappelling down a sheer cliff.

Instead, he told us to—find a buddy.

"Find yourself a Ranger buddy," he growled. "You will stick together. You will never leave each other. You will encourage each other, and, as necessary, you will carry each other." It was the army's way of saying, "Difficult assignments require a friend. Together is better."

Who's your "Ranger buddy"?

– Stu Weber, pastor of Good Shepherd Community
Church in Boring, Oregon. Men of Integrity, Vol. 1, no. 1.