

FEASTING ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Where Is God's Faithfulness?

Romans 5:18-21

INTRODUCTION: Glad you are here. Each week more new ones! We welcome you.

Still glad to have those worshipping online with us. Those of you not yet back, we understand. We are not critical of your decision, but we miss you! Turn to R2D2 and smile and wave everybody.

We look forward to being with you! It is surprising to me how much being with my brothers and sisters in Christ means, even though we are not touching and are staying distanced.

Great to have more children. Bring the children. Don't worry about distraction.

So anyway, parents when you are ready from a safety perspective, do not hesitate to bring the whole family.

My, my, what the last two weeks have brought to our country following the brutal murder of George Floyd.

- Since that tragic event, there have been tens of thousands peacefully protesting his death and expressing support and sympathy for his family and outrage at Mr. Floyd's death.
- Sadly there have also been many more brutal murders by people using the occasion to seek to accomplish their own agenda.
- There have also been many, many more who have been injured, some given permanent disabilities.
- Many businesses, some of them privately owned, have been thoroughly looted or burned to the ground.

While the violence has toned down in recent days, the situation remains a call to prayer, and I want us as followers of Jesus to bow our heads before the Prince of Peace to again plead for His intervention.

- We depend on You. (Like last week, do something that says, Lord, I depend on You. KNEEL, STAND, LIFT HANDS, FOLD HANDS, whatever signals that from you.)
- Thank You for progress in quelling the violence.
- We pray for the families of each one killed.
- We pray for the injured.
- We pray for those who have lost businesses or jobs because of the rioting.
- We pray for law enforcement officers who have had an impossible task to restore law and order without provoking more hatred and anger.
- Pray for those battling hatred and anger, on all sides of this sad, sad, situation.
- Continue to lead us to repentance where repentance is needed.
- Grateful for forgiveness – 1 John 1:9
- Pray against the evil one and all his minions and ask You Lord to restrain them.
 - They take a seed of anger and grow it instantly into a mighty pine tree to fall on someone and squish the life out of them.
 - Lord, the devil and his demons take a spark of hatred and fan it into a raging inferno that destroys everyone and everything within its path.
 - Hold them back Lord! Only You can!
- Lord, and for those of us who are called by Your mighty name, restrain our own lusts, anger, and bitterness, and through the power of Your Holy Spirit who dwells within us, not only restrain it, but eliminate it.
- Lord, let us not in sin add to the fury that destroys lives and wrecks a nation.
- God we were, we are, we shall ever be a people who need You desperately. Work within us and around us and through us, Lord, for our good and for Your glory.

In the awesome name of Jesus we pray, Amen!

Since we have personally been caught up in the trial of the Coronavirus and the disease COVID-19 it produces, we have focused our attention on the faithfulness of God.

I suspect that some, looking at the events of the past two weeks have asked, “Well, where can we see the faithfulness of God in all of this?”

And what I want to say to you this morning is that it is in the times of extreme trial and tribulation that the faithfulness of God shines as a single brilliant spotlight in a dark, dark sky.

And our world, and most especially our nation, has certainly grown darker in these recent days. But just as the brightest star cannot be seen in the night sky if one’s eyes are fixed upon the ground, so also, we must know where to look to see the beautiful brilliance of the faithfulness of God when the obscuring clouds of sin hover so close to us.

And the place where we can always look to see the faithfulness of the Almighty is in the Word of God. And this morning I take you to one of the grandest expressions of the love, mercy, and faithfulness of God to be found within the Scriptures.

Romans 5:18–21 NKJV

18 Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Walk with me through this passage.

Paul is talking about the two most cataclysmic events in all of human history.

- If you asked me a few months ago, what are the two most cataclysmic events of your lifetime, I probably would have said Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Michael.
- I would have said that because in terms of how certain events impacted me and my family personally, these two were the strongest.
- For people living in New York City, they probably would have said, "COVID-19."
- Unless they lived or worked in one of those parts of the city devastated by the recent riots, and they probably would have said, "The death of George Floyd."

But folks, none of these events compare in significance to the two cataclysmic events the Holy Spirit draws our attention to through Paul.

Look at verse 18

18 Therefore, as **through one man's offense** judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so **through one Man's righteous act** the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

one man's offense – Adam's disobedience

one Man's righteous act – Jesus' death upon the cross

Why are these two events more significant than

- the discovery of fire,
- the worldwide flood,
- the domination of the Roman empire,
- or the Protestant Reformation?

Verse 19 explains

19 For as **by one man's disobedience many were made sinners**, so also **by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous**.

by one man's disobedience many were made sinners – All of Adam and Eve's offspring inherited their sin nature.

Having inherited the sin nature, we have all chosen to sin and are therefore guilty sinners.

Romans 3:23 NKJV for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 NKJV For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, the first cataclysmic event, Adam's disobedience, made us all sinners.

by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous – On the cross, Jesus paid the death penalty for each of us.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV For He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Now think with me about all that this means in our situation today. This is not just some random theological construct.

Because our sins were punished when God's wrath was poured out upon sin at the cross, any man, woman, teenager, boy or girl can become righteous in Christ.

Because of God's faithfulness to keep His promises

- **No more penalty for sin** – that penalty paid on the cross
- **Forgiveness for all our sins** – acts, words, thoughts, motives; things public things private
 - For those who murdered
 - Those who injured
 - Those who hated
 - Those guilty of racism
 - Those who stole

- Those who burned
- Those who hated those who did

For all who have sinned as a part of this whole mess

And for all who have sinned in any way during it

- THERE IS FORGIVENESS AVAILABLE

Because of the cross the penalty for sin can be taken away, sin can be forgiven, but that is not all. Because of the cross we can have

- **The power to forgive others**

Folks, think about this.

- What if George Floyd's 6 year old daughter Gianna were to go to the jail with her mother and look Derek Chauvin in the face and say, "I forgive you."
 - What you did was wrong, but "I forgive you."
 - I will not have a daddy for the rest of my life, but "I forgive you."
 - I will not have a daddy to walk me down the aisle, but "I forgive you."
 - I will not have a daddy to be a grandpa to my children,
 - to tell them how beautiful they are
 - and how smart they are
 - and play hide and seek with them,
 - but "I forgive you."
- And what if Ann Marie Dorn found the man who shot her husband, David, the retired St. Louis police captain as he came to check on an alarm going off at a friend's shop, and she said to him, "I forgive you."

- I can't understand why, because of the murder of a black man, you would murder another black man; but "I forgive you."
- He was a man who gave all his working years to protect other people, black, white, brown alike, but "I forgive you."
- Nothing could ever replace what you have taken from me during the most vulnerable years of my life, but "I forgive you."
- And what if the mother of Italia Kelly, who attended a protest, but when things began to get unruly, Italia headed for her car. Too late, shot in the back and killed. What if Italia's mother found the gunman whose bullet sent her daughter to the grave and said to him or her, "I forgive you."
 - You took my baby in the prime of her life, 22 years old!, but "I forgive you."
 - She was so smart and had a big, bubbly personality that made me so happy to be with her. You took her from me, but "I forgive you."
 - She was always smiling and laughing, and now she's gone, but "I forgive you."

And I don't know if any of these things will ever happen.

I don't know if any of the people who have lost loved ones, been injured, lost businesses or jobs, will ever say to those who so terribly wronged them, "I forgive you."

But they could! They could. And some of them probably one day will.

But what I want us to see this morning that is so important for us to understand or for us to remember is that such a scenario is only possible because of what Jesus did on the cross. People who have been horribly wronged through all that has happened have the power to forgive, only because of the cross. They are not condemned to live the rest of their lives in bitterness, because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Because Jesus paid the price for all the sins ever committed in this sin-filled world,

God, the Father, can forgive those who have done such wrong.

God loved George Floyd more than Gianna or any of his family or friends ever could.

God loved David Dorn more than Ann Marie and Italia Kelly more than her own mother.

And God can forgive the ones who killed them... because His Son died on the cross and bore the sins.

Do you know God can do this in your life if you will let Him?

Do you know He will give you the power to forgive others, no matter how terribly they have wronged you?

And not only that, but also

- **God can and will transform lives.**
 - Those who have been so badly hurt
 - Those who did the hurting
 - Those who have stayed safely inside, but seen far too much on their TVs and those who have writhed in anger and now have a root of bitterness beginning to grow inside

Because of the cross and the faithfulness of God, every one of us can be transformed.

Folks, these past two weeks have been some of the very worst days in America. As a nation, it is like we have been opened up to reveal the darkness and demons living inside.

But we can have hope because our God is ever faithful.

Romans 5:20 NKJV ... where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, (Super abounded)

God can take a heart, a life, a people, a nation, and even though sin abounded, God can make grace abound all the more, because of Jesus' death upon the cross.

And how can that happen?

Romans 5:21 NKJV so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God is faithful to keep His promises, but He keeps them exactly.

All of these things, the penalty for our sin being paid so we can live forever, forgiveness, the power to forgive others, and transformation of our lives is only available through Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:9 NKJV ... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.