

God's Attributes Series: Faithfulness

"The Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Deut. 7:9)

Before we begin let me ask you a few questions: (show of hands)

1. How many people know someone who does exactly what they say they are going to do?
2. How many of you know someone who does exactly what they will do say every single time?
3. How many of you know someone who does exactly what they say every single time and does it with such thoroughness that you never have to worry about anything they say or do?
4. How many of you know someone who, no matter what the circumstances and no matter how they feel, will always do exactly what they say they will do every single time and do it with the same thoroughness and perfection that you never have to worry about anything they say or do because you know if they say it, they will definitely do it without fail, without change and without excuse?...

Interesting questions. No one can accomplish most of these especially the last question. Man's finite quality of faithfulness is not comparable to God's infinite and unchangeable faithfulness. It is a good thing for all of us that God's faithfulness is not based on our own merit.

- One way to consider God's faithfulness is that because he is the truth, everything he says and does is certain. That means he is 100% reliable 100% of the time. He does not fail, forget, falter or change.
- He not only advances and confirms that which is true, but in faithfulness abides by his promise of blessing but also executes every threat or warning he has made.

In fact throughout history and in scripture we have read about the pattern of God honoring his covenants with his chosen people only to be betrayed by them. When we think of the covenants God made with Adam, Abraham, Noah etc. we see that God is relentless in pursuing, blessing, punishing and restoring his people. His biased love and faithfulness has been proven throughout all generations of the earth.

One such story is found in the book of Hosea. Hosea was as contemporary of Amos who was called by God to warn Israel to repent and be restored to him but was told to take his message elsewhere. God then called Hosea to prophesy on his behalf but also to serve as an object lesson for his rebellious people in Israel. God called Hosea to marry a woman who would betray him, just as the Northern Tribes of Israel had betrayed God in worshipping the Baals and in its dependence for protection and security on Assyria. In the first 3 chapters of Hosea we see how God's unrelenting love, correction and redemption in the marriage of Hosea to Gomer is an object lesson for how the Northern Tribes in the nation of Israel betrayed HIM.

Hosea

Background

- Little is known about Hosea himself except he was the son of Beerli and was probably a resident of Northern Israel.

- Israel at this time was divided into two kingdoms—a northern kingdom called Israel and a southern kingdom known as Judah. Hosea, like his contemporary Amos, was called to preach to the northern kingdom. At this time God's wrath was not kindled against Judah.
- Because Hosea names the kings who ruled during his ministry, it is possible to date his prophecies to the latter half of the eighth century BC. We can place the beginning of Hosea's ministry a short time before the death of Jeroboam II which took place 743 BC. During the reigns of both Jeroboam I and Jeroboam II, Israel enjoyed a long period of prosperity but also continued in its idolatrous worship of other Gods and its dependence on countries like Assyria for its peace and security.
- This period was the one of the most politically turbulent time in Israel's history. The Assyrian Empire was growing in dominance under the leadership of its king, Tiglath-Pileser III, and its army made several incursions into Israel's territory. In fact some of the kings of Israel bought time by paying ransom to the Assyrian King to keep the peace.
 - After the reign of Jeroboam II Israel experienced significant internal turmoil, The 21 years that followed his death in 743 BC saw no fewer than six successive occupants of the throne, and the final disappearance of the kingdom of the ten tribes after the invasion by the Assyrians. Zechariah, his son, had reigned only six months when "Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him and slew him, and reigned in his stead" ([2 Kings 15:10](#)). Shallum himself reigned only a month when he was in the same bloody manner removed by Menahem. After a reign of 10 years, according to [2 Kings 15:17](#) he was succeeded by his son Pekahiah ([2 Kings 15:22](#)), and after two years Pekahiah "his captain" conspired against him and reigned in his stead ([2 Kings 15:25](#)). Pekahiah also was assassinated, and was succeeded by Hoshea ([2 Kings 15:30](#)), the last king of the ten tribes, for the kingdom came to an end in 722 BC when much of Israel was taken into exile.
 - There were two major sinful causes of God's wrath on Israel
 - Like their fathers before them, the Israelites honored the place names and began observing the customs which the previous inhabitants followed. They also celebrated the pagan festivals of the agricultural year as they slowly crept back into conformity with the religion of their neighbors. Almost before they were aware, they were doing homage to the various ba'als in celebrating their festival days and offering to them the produce of the ground. This was the basis for the many indictments God makes against Israel in Hosea.
 - Besides idolatry the Israelites were also guilty of worshipping what they regarded as their National God, routinely and insincerely going through the motions thinking that so long as they honored Him with costly offerings and a gorgeous ritual, they were pleasing Him and were secure in His protection. They went on pilgrimages to Bethel, Dan, Gilgal, and Beersheba, to appease God. During this time of prosperity and wealth their offerings were made at the expense of the poor ([Amos 5:11](#)) The people seemed to have settled down to a complacent optimism, nourished no doubt by national prosperity, and, had not wanted reminders of the sovereignty of a righteous God, as you see in Amos. ([Amos 4:6-11](#))—Natural disasters brought by God had been of no avail to awaken the sleeping conscience. They only cared about what God could do for them and resisted returning to Him in the spiritual sense and serving them with their whole heart, mind and spirit.

- This was the condition which Hosea describes as an absence of the knowledge of God ([Hosea 4:1](#)). As described by Paul:
 "As they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting" ([Romans 1:28](#)).

Read Hosea Chapter 1:1-11

"The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel:

2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD." 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5 In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel." 6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means "not loved"), for I will no longer show love to Israel that I should at all forgive them. 7 Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the LORD their God, will save them." 8 After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. 9 Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi (which means "not my people"), for you are not my people, and I am not your God. 10 "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'children of the living God.' 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel."

Hosea was commanded by God in chapter one to marry an adulterous wife, some speculate she was a prostitute, others say she was from Northern Israel that God calls a land of harlotry. The marriage served as a living parable of God's view of Israel's faithlessness.

Directives to Hosea:

1. Hosea is to take a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry in order to picture the LORD's relationship to Israel who have forsaken their covenant with the LORD 1:2
2. Hosea married Gomer the daughter of Diblaim 1:3a
3. Hosea's wife gave birth to a son named Jezreel to picture the coming judgment which the LORD is going to bring upon the house of Jehu at Jezreel for his evil murder of the sons of Ahab 1:3b-5
4. Hosea's wife gave birth to a daughter named Lo-Ruhamah (or not loved) in order to picture the nation's plight because the Lord was not going to have compassion upon Israel as He would upon Judah 1:6-7
5. Hosea's wife gave birth to a son named Lo-Ammi (not my people) in order to picture the broken covenant relationship with Israel and the LORD 1:8-9
6. God immediately promises to redeem his people. 1:10-11
7. At some point Gomer ends up as a slave or prostitute.
8. God commands Hosea is to go and love Gomer even though she is an adulteress. God uses this to show His love for Israel who were an idolatress people 3:1
9. God commands Hosea to redeem Gomer (from whoever owns her at the time) for fifteen shekels of silver and some barley 3:2 (Price of a slave in Exodus is 30 shekels.)

"The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.

3 Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you."

[Hosea 3:1-3](#)

10. Hosea was then to prohibit Gomer from any relations with a man as a picture of the coming captivity of the nation Israel so that the nation will return with a desire for the LORD 3:3-5. God did not want Israel to go back to its idolatrous ways.

Hosea announced that God would send national defeat and exile as a punishment for the sins of Israel ([Hosea 3:4](#)). However, in the book the Lord speaks not only in stern warnings, but also as a husband speaking out of great love for His people. Despite Israel's rejection of the covenant, God would one day "allure her" and "speak tenderly to her"

([Hosea 2:14](#)). The Lord then said, "I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD" ([Hosea 2:19-20](#)).

Chapter 4 is the beginning of Hosea's prophesy against Israel (The Northern Kingdom). In it he levels a series of indictments against his unfaithful people.

The First Indictment: The LORD indicts the nation for a lack of *knowledge* and a rejection of *knowledge* of the LORD so that they will understand the coming affliction which will cause them to turn to Him and be restored 4:4-19

The Second Indictment: The LORD indicts Israel and Judah for having a lack of *loyal love* in order that they might understand the coming purifying judgment and possibly repent to their loyal God who will restore them to the Land 6:4--11:11

The Third Indictment: The LORD indicts Israel for having a lack of faithfulness so that they will understand their coming judgment and return to Him who will not completely destroy them due to His faithfulness 11:12--13:16

Finally - The LORD calls upon the nation to repent and turn to Him for restoration 14:1-8

"Return, Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount warhorses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion." "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish like the grain, they will blossom like the vine— Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon"

So the story of Hosea gives us a real life basis from which to discuss God's faithfulness. :

The faithfulness of God is usually connected with His gracious promises of salvation, and is one of those attributes which make God the firm and secure object of our trust and faith.

1. Faithfulness is one of the communicable or moral attributes which, along with his incommunicable attributes (i.e. Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Unchangeableness) are what make God the worthy object of worship and devotion. Take away either of these types of attributes from God, and He ceases to be God. (The aim of much of Liberal Theology is deny his sovereignty, omnipotence to name a few)
2. It should never be forgotten that God is faithful in such an absolute sense as to contrast Him with men who are faithful only in a relative sense, and who appear as changeable and faithless in comparison with the faithfulness of God."

Faithfulness in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the Faithfulness of God is defined by his faithfulness to his covenant with his people that was made to their fathers. This attribute is ascribed to God in some passages where the Hebrew words denoting faithfulness do not occur.

- The covenant name Yahweh as shown in [Exodus 3:13-15](#), not only expresses God's self-existence and unchangeableness, but, as the context indicates, puts God's immutability as perfectly related to his faithfulness ([Deuteronomy 7:9](#); [Psalms 36:5](#)); [Isaiah 11:5](#); [Hosea 12:6, 9](#))
- His immutability is implied in those passages where God is called a rock, as being the secure object of faith ([Deuteronomy 32:4,15](#); [Psalms 18:2](#)); 42:9 (Hebrew 10); [Isaiah 17:10](#))
 - This same attribute is also implied where God reveals Himself to Moses and to Israel as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their fathers' God ([Exodus 3:6, 15, 16](#)).
- God stood in a gracious relation to the Patriarchs,
 - He is faithful to His promise to their fathers
 - That what He was to them He will continue to be to Moses and to Israel.

On the Hebrew verbs for faithfulness:

- One Hebrew verb is applied to the covenant-keeping Yahweh to express the truth that He is firm or constant, that is, faithful in regard to His covenant promises, and will surely fulfill them ([Deuteronomy 7:9](#); [Isaiah 49:7](#); and possibly [Hosea 11:12](#))
- In another case the verb describes God's faithfulness as being closely related to His righteousness.
 - He is faithful for his own name sake in perfect harmony with all his other attributes. It is not based on the merit of his chosen people. If this covenant relation had been based on any claim of Israel, faithfulness on God's part might have been taken for granted

Example – Psalm 89

- Psalm 89:1-4:
 - I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, "I have made a

covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.' "

- Psalm 89:28-34
 - "I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. 30 "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered."

Faithfulness in the New Testament

Epistles of Paul –

In the Epistles, Paul he uses Greek words to:

1. Denote the truth revealed by God to man through reason and conscience,
2. Denote the doctrinal content of the gospel.

For example in two passages these words signify the faithfulness of God

Romans 3:1-3

"Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? ² Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³ What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? ⁴ By no means! Let God be true though everyone were a liar,"

Romans 15:8-9

"For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. "

- *The realization of His promises to the fathers is declared to have been the purpose of the ministry of Jesus Christ to the Jews.*
- It is because God is faithful that His promises in Christ are yea and amen ([2 Corinthians 1:18, 20](#)).

The faithfulness of God is the basis of Paul's confident assurance that :

- God will preserve the Christian in temptation ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#));
- Establish him and preserve him from evil ([2 Thessalonians 3:3](#)).
- The "faithful sayings" in the Epistles sum up the gospel, making them worthy of trust and acceptance ([1 Timothy 1:15](#); [4:9](#); [Titus 3:8](#)).

Hebrews

- In Hebrews God's faithfulness was the basis of Sarah's faith that she would bear a child when she was past age ([Hebrews 11:11](#));
- it is because God is faithful to His promise in Christ that we can draw nigh to Him with full assurance of faith, holding fast without wavering in the profession of hope ([Hebrews 10:23](#)).

Peter

- The faithfulness of God is viewed from a slightly different point by Peter when he tells his readers that those who suffer as Christians and in accordance with God's will should "commit their soul's in well-doing unto a faithful Creator".
- For Peter the Christian's ground of hope is made the ground of comfort under persecution and suffering.
- "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. ([1 Peter 4:19](#))

John

- John says that God's faithfulness, as well as His righteousness, is manifested in the forgiveness of sin ([1 John 1:9](#)).
- Exodus 3 is reiterated in the Revelations where God is described as "He who is and was and is to come" ([Revelation 1:4](#)).
- This is an expansion of the covenant name for God of Yahweh in [Exodus 3:13-15](#),
 - Denoting not merely eternity but also immutability.
 - The phrases "the Alpha and the Omega" ([Revelation 1:8](#); [21:6](#); [22:13](#)); and "the first and the last" ([Revelation 1:17](#); [22:13](#)); and "the beginning and the end" ([Revelation 21:6](#); [22:13](#)) refer to Christ as well.
 - Thus the faithfulness of God in the OT is now also ascribed to Christ ([Revelation 1:5](#); [3:14](#); [19:11](#)).

Revelations 19:11

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God."

Infinite Faithfulness - The Crucifixion-

- Many mistakenly think of the OT being where God's focus is on delivering justice and wrath.
- The NT is perceived to be where God extends Grace, Hope and Mercy to his people, not wrath.
 - On the contrary, we see God's ultimate faithfulness can be seen in the most brutal act of divine vengeance ever recorded in Scripture
 - The cross was at once the most horrible and the most beautiful example of God's wrath
 - Jesus was the only innocent man ever to be punished by God. If we stagger at the wrath of God, let us stagger at the cross.
 - Here is where our astonishment should be focused.
 - If we have cause for moral outrage, let it be directed at Golgotha.
 - He would have been diabolical to punish Jesus if Jesus had not first willingly taken upon Himself the sins of the world.
 - He became the most grotesque and vile thing on this planet.
 - He became utterly repugnant to the Father.
 - God poured out His wrath on this obscene thing. God made Christ accursed for the sin He bore for us.
 - This "for us" aspect of the cross is what displays the majesty of its grace.
 - At the same time justice and grace, wrath and mercy. It is too astonishing to fathom.

In Summary:

God is faithful to Himself: If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). God cannot act out of character with His essential nature

God's Son is faithful and true: Just as God the Father is faithful, so the Son of God is faithful and true (Revelation 19:11). One of Jesus's titles that reflect this faithfulness is the "Amen" (Revelation 3:14). Because He is the "Amen," Jesus confirms everything that God the Father has spoken. God has spoken through His Word

God is faithful to His Plan: Psalm 33:11 declares this fascinating truth: *"The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation."* From the depths of eternity, God formed His eternal counsel, His great master plan that involves all of creation and every creature that He is working out in time and creation.

God is faithful to His Universe: *"Your lovingkindness O Lord extends to the heavens, and Your faithfulness to the skies"* (Psalm 36:5). The universe reflects the faithfulness of its Creator. God has designed the universe in such a way that it is regulated by laws that are orderly, reliable, regular, and dependable.

God is faithful to His threats: The Almighty fulfills all of His promises, but He is also faithful to execute every threat that He makes. He has vowed to repay those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face (Deut. 7:10). His promises of hell, eternal death and destruction are real. The book of John records these terrifying words:

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36)

God is faithful to Israel:

"I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord" (Hosea 2:20)

"He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel" (Psalm 98:3).).

God will be faithful to His Word, His promises and His covenant with us, no matter how unfaithful we as God's chosen people have been to Him.

Know therefore that *"the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments"* (Deut. 7:9)

How should we then live?

We are called to be faithful to Him who has kept his Covenant with us and has redeemed us at great cost.

- We are to be faithful in reading the Word and prayer.
- We are to be faithful in worship.
- We are to be faithful witnesses of the Gospel.
- We are to be faithful stewards.
- We are to be faithful to our marriage vows.
- We are to be faithful in our work ethic.