

#155 “Great Is His Faithfulness”
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One of Satan’s great schemes is to make believers think that God has betrayed them or abandoned them. This technique works particularly well when we find ourselves in times of difficulty. God in His sovereign purposes may allow us to go through times of difficulty because He knows that trials can produce in us great character and perseverance (James 1:2-4). Satan wants us to believe, however, that our suffering is an indication that God is no longer faithful. He wants us to think that God doesn’t care, that God doesn’t know, or that God wants to make our lives miserable. His objective is to shift our allegiance from God to him, which we do when we turn our backs upon God in bitterness and disappointment.

Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations, which contains his laments over the state of the people of Israel and over the pain, rejection, and difficulty that he suffered. Jeremiah was faithful, but his ministry was an extremely difficult one because of the hardness of the hearts of those to whom he preached. He took a lot of flack and was severely persecuted, all for the sake of being faithful to God’s Word. Speaking of this hurt and frustration, he said in Lamentations 3:19-20, “Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me.” Jeremiah had great faith, but he had many rough times. He recalled his affliction, his wandering, his alienation, his rejection, and the bitterness and grief that just weighed his soul down. How could Jeremiah continue on with these weights and burdens?

In verses 21-24, he continued, saying, “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. The LORD’S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I have hope in Him.’” Jeremiah had to regularly choose to mentally rehearse the faithfulness of God. He had to actively look for the graces of God to him. They were there despite the suffering, and perhaps, even in and through the suffering. He didn’t succumb to doubt and despair because he could look back at all of the good things that God had done. He could believe that God was faithful even when he couldn’t see it or understand what God was doing. He recognized that no day had ever gone by without God pouring out new compassions and mercies upon His servants. He affirmed that God’s faithfulness remained sure, unchangeable, and eternally and infinitely sizable and significant. It was a remembrance of God’s faithful nature, faithful promises, and faithful actions that enabled him to look for the graces of God each day and to believe that they were there in abundance whether he was aware of them or not.

It is extremely easy to meditate upon hurt, struggle, despair, and frustration, but God’s desire is that we imitate Jeremiah and choose rather to focus and meditate upon His faithfulness. We each can bear testimony to times in our lives when God was faithful to us. Perhaps He helped us find something we thought we had lost. Perhaps He restored a broken relationship. Perhaps He answered our prayer for salvation for a loved one.

Perhaps He graciously opened a door to ministry or supplied a new place of employment. Perhaps he blessed a family with children or provided for an adoption. These are significant memory markers to call to mind when we feel like God has broken His end of the deal. Yet we should even rehearse the “lesser” mercies, such as food to eat, shelter over our heads, clothes to keep us warm, etc. We have His Word, His presence, and the promise of eternal life to top it all off. We have so much more mercy than we tend to see. The key is that we must believe it, look for it, and praise God for it.

We cannot rehearse our trials and temptations over and over again or it will harm our relationship with God because it will distort our perspective. God wants us to praise Him despite the difficulties, glorifying and thanking Him for His faithfulness and that the trials He ordains are purposeful and loving by nature. He cannot deny His own nature. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.” God was Jeremiah’s portion, and He is our portion because His very nature is faithfulness such that He cannot ever be unfaithful. Furthermore, His ability to be faithful is not predicated by our level of faithfulness to Him in return. Even if we succumb to doubt and despair or even rebellion, still God is faithful to honor His love for Christ and therefore to His children as well. There is great hope for us in the unalterable nature of God Who is faithful.

Jeremiah said in verses 25-26,32-33, “The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD. For if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness. For He does not afflict willingly or grieve the sons of men.” Jeremiah didn’t fall for the devil’s trap of doubting God’s care and goodness. God does not delight in seeing people suffer. Yet there will be times when He allows suffering and hardship into our lives. But “if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness.” We don’t know exactly how this compassion and mercy will be experienced as we go through life, but we know that it will be experienced. No matter what happens, we must trust God in difficult times and believe that His compassion and mercies are new every morning. His faithfulness is great, and it will always be.