

## **Faithful stewards by the faithfulness of God**

**Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4: 1-2** *This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.*

Faithfulness is almost a lost virtue in our modern society. We see and hear how married couples remain unfaithful to one another. Divorce rates are skyrocketing in India. We see how children are unfaithful to their parents. They neither respect nor willing to take care of their aged parents. How employees remain unfaithful to their employers. How friends are unfaithful to one another. Politicians are unfaithful to the people who elected them. Servants are unfaithful to their masters. Students are unfaithful to their teachers and the list goes on and on. But Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 how we as servants of Christ and stewards of God should be found faithful.

We as servants of God, as children of God, we're called to be faithful.

We will have to ask two questions. 1<sup>st</sup> question we as servants of Christ should be found faithful to whom? You might think it's a silly question, obviously we need to be faithful to God. Right. But today many who call themselves as servants of Christ, as stewards of God are not faithful to God rather they are trying to be faithful to the world and to the people of the world.

- **Faithful to whom?**

Yes, we need to be faithful to God. We need to be faithful to God by obeying all his commands, by loving him more than anything, by offering our life and living for him, by worshiping him and him alone in all his holiness and majesty, in treasuring him above all things, in serving him, in taking up the cross and following him no matter how hard the struggle is. We need to be faithful to God, to our father who has sacrificially loved us and gave us his only begotten son as a ransom for our sins.

My question is are we faithful?

- a) **Our unfaithfulness to God**

Are we faithful to God? I don't want to answer on your behalf, for you can examine your own self. I can answer for me. I've been completely unfaithful to God for almost 25 years and still I'm unfaithful to him in many ways after knowing him. I've been an atheist for most of my life, saying that there is no god and I had the power to do all that I want to do. I rebelled against God and I was so sinful and arrogant. You might say that's ok, you didn't know God at that time. You did out of ignorance. That's a

good excuse but Bible is very clear in Romans 1:18-20 that the truth about God is so revealed to all by his creation, his invisible qualities, his eternal power and his divine nature is so revealed but we as fallen human beings do not acknowledge God but try to suppress the truth by our wickedness and ungodliness.

*18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

So we're without an excuse. Not only me, we've all been unfaithful. Paul says we've all sinned and fallen short of his glory (Romans 3: 23)

But God in his mercy saved us by his grace through his son Jesus Christ, enabled us to repent and believe, justified us freely by his grace through faith and adopted us into his family as his children. But even today after us knowing and tasting Jesus, we're still unfaithful in many ways. We still sin every day. We still disobey his commands. We still boast in us, we still grumble. We still run behind our own selfish desires and for the pleasures of this world. We still deny Christ like Peter, when problem comes and persecution arises. We still feel ashamed of testifying Christ to our friends and relatives.

#### **b) God's faithfulness:**

But God is still patiently and faithfully working in us and to make us what he wants us to be. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2: 13 *if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

He is still interceding for you and me with the father every moment. If not, we would've been long cut off from him but he's still working in us, pruning us, disciplining us in making us all that he wanted us to be according to his scriptures.

You know why you're still not cut off and standing in spite of all your unfaithfulness because Jesus has still not given up on you. He is still interceding for you, his grace is still holding you up, he's helping you by his Spirit and through his word to progressively overcome all evil temptations and sins and to become holy, you're getting better day by day by the grace of God. Know this, if God withdraws his hand a moment from us, we'll fall and we'll fall badly. So no one lest think you're standing on your own. Know that God is helping you to stand. God is helping you to run this race. God is helping you in every step as you take.

I'm going to give you 3 verses that will help you understand, how this works.

2 Peter 1: 3, 5-8 *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

5 *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Next verse Philippians 2: 12-13 *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

3<sup>rd</sup> verse is 1 Corinthians 15: 9-10 *For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

This shouldn't be difficult for us to understand. God by his grace gives power, through his Spirit and enables us to be faithful decisively unto death or until he returns to take us home.

Now the 2<sup>nd</sup> question we need to ask is we as servants of Christ should be faithful to what?

## **ii) Faithful in what?**

We'll quickly see 4 aspects, there are many but we'll see 4 major aspects, in which God wants us to be faithful and we saw how God himself gives power to us to be faithful in these aspects.

### **a. Be faithful in fighting sin**

Christian life is a war fare. You'll have to fight and kill sin every day. Puritan pastor John Owen in his book mortification of Sin quotes this ““Do you fight; do you make it your daily work; be always at it as long as you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you”. That's so true. This is not a one day fight. This should be our everyday activity. We're in the battlefield. We have 3 enemies to fight. Our own flesh, this world and satan. We need to be constantly fighting. We need to have weapons to fight. We cannot be standing in the battlefield unarmed. Paul asks us to wear the full armor of God.

Eph 6: 13-18 *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with*

*your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

God himself provides all things and enables us to fight and we need to act and he will give victory over our enemies.

### **b. Be faithful in handling the resources that God has given you.**

We need to be faithful in handling all the resources that God has graciously provided us in a Godly way. The talents he's given us. With the spiritual gifts he's given us. With the finances he's given us. With the material blessing that he's given us. With the time he's given us. With the jobs that he's given us. We need to be faithful. We need to handle every resource in a way that honors God and makes much of God. We need to use our God given talents in such a way that brings honor to God. Whether you sing or play musical instruments or paint or whatever talents God has given you use it in such a way that God would be honored. We need to use the spiritual gifts that God has given us graciously to use in such a way that brings Glory to God. Either you preach or teach or prophesy or speak in tongues, do all for the Glory of God, not to do for your own selfish gain. Be faithful in the finances that he's given us. This is a most important test where most of them fail. Prosperity stumbles a lot of people than poverty. Paul gives us a beautiful secret to pass this test of prosperity and poverty in Philippians 4: 12 *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*

We need to learn this secret. Paul knew to live in plenty and also to live in want. He knew to feast as well as to fast. He has learned the art of being content. We need to pray every day asking God to teach us to be content. I don't know about you but this is what I pray every day. Proverbs 30: 8-9 *give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord? Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.*

So we should Pray and ask God to help us to deal with the finances, in such a way that shows Christ is our treasure and not the worldly riches. We need to use our material blessings like vehicles and house and mobile phones and other things in such a way that shows Christ is more precious to us than all these material blessings. We need to be faithful in using the time God has given us by spending more

in prayer and worship and reading bible and sharing gospel and reading spiritual books and not to waste time in watching T.V and Facebook and WhatsApp and watching movies and chit chatting with friends. God would hold us responsible for all wasted time. John Piper says one good purpose of facebook and whatsapp is for God to show at the end of your life, as how much time you've wasted in all these things that you could've been spent on prayer. CT Studd said "one life is all we have, that too will soon pass away, what we've done for Christ only that matters". Lets not waste this life that God has given us but live every moment for Christ, making much of Christ, serving him in all possible ways. As Paul says in Phi 1: 20-21 *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

Let us long to live such life and die joyfully for Christ because death is not loss for us but it is gain.

Amen

Third aspect

### **c. Be faithful in our service to God and his people**

God has called and set up apart each one of us for his service. For his ministry. How beautiful is that. We as sinners do not even deserve to come into his presence. We were by nature objects of wrath. But God in his graciousness not only saved us and redeemed us but he has also called us for his service. It's a privilege. We're unworthy people. It's so saddening to see how many servants of God think their ministry is all about them and think they deserve to be applauded and praised for their ministry to God. Rather they forget to realize that we have this ministry by the mercy of God (2 Corinthians 4:1), it is our wonderful privilege to serve the king of kings and lord of lords.

So our response should be like this in Luke 17: 7-10 *"Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8 Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"*

We are unworthy servants and we have only done our duty. God who sees your service in secret, will reward you in heaven. The one who faithfully ministers would get to hear in heaven Come good and faithful servant. What a Joy it would be.

Next we need to be faithful in our service to God's people. We need to help one another, correct one

another, encourage one another, and share with one another. We need to stand by one another, when one fall, we need to lift him up and not to put him even more down. We should mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who rejoice. We need to be faithful in our service to God's people not to have any selfish ambition but to be purely driven by Godly sacrificial love towards one another.

4<sup>th</sup> aspect

#### **d. Be faithful when you face trials of many kinds**

Last, be faithful to God in midst of suffering and persecution. As how I said prosperity causes many people to backslide and the next which causes many people to stumble is suffering. But the truth is suffering is truly a gift that God allows, in fact it helps us to get closer to God.

*Romans 5: 5 (ESV) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

We need to rejoice in our sufferings because suffering produces endurance (Perseverance), endurance character and character hope and hope is a good thing, it does not put us to shame. James tells the same thing in James 1: 2-3 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*

Job said though he slay me, yet will I hope in him. Even though God kills me, yet I will hope in him.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4: 16 -18 *we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

Suffering is a beautiful thing, in fact it takes us closer to God, gives us great hope, renews us inwardly day by day but many turn away from God because they just look to their circumstances rather than fixing their eyes on Jesus and knowing that Jesus is enough no matter how hard the struggle is. He is all sufficient and he's all satisfying. What is seen is temporary, what is unseen is eternal.

My present sufferings are not worth comparing to the future glory that would be revealed.

God would one day wipe away all my tears. I would no more suffer. I would be with him forever and forever. Amen.

Our present sufferings are not worth comparing to the future glory that God would reveal to us. Let us be faithful to God in midst of all sufferings and persecutions.