

## **Faithful in the Face of Faithlessness**

‘Three men died and went to heaven. St. Peter met them at the front gate and said, “Heaven is a great big place, and we’ll assign you a vehicle to get around in based on how faithful you were to your wives”. So he gave the first man a Cadillac, the second one a Chevrolet, and the third a motorcycle. The one who got the motorcycle was somewhat disappointed, but he figured that it was fair, based on his degree of faithfulness. He went driving down one of the streets of heaven, and he saw the man who got the Cadillac parked on the curb, and he was crying loudly. He stopped and asked, “What in the world are you crying about? You got the Cadillac”. “I know”, said the man, “and I just saw my wife go by on a skateboard”.’

Well, the truth came out! Someone had been secretly pretty faithless! On the other hand, the first man had been very faithful. But however faithful he had been as a husband, he was no where near being a perfect man. For the only perfect Man Who has ever lived was Christ Jesus the Lord. And none of the people made it into Heaven unless they had repented of their sins, that first wife most particularly of adultery, and accepted Lord Jesus’ sacrifice on their behalf, and given over control of their lives to Him. Then and only then could any of them receive the gift of God which is

eternal life in Heaven in His glorious presence forever. And lest there be any misconceptions, I can guarantee you that we will not be getting around Heaven in any earthly vehicle! I hope you're not disappointed! But we won't need any such conveyances. For we will be able to travel unfathomable distances in the blink of an eye. Not even any need for "Scotty to beam us anywhere"!

All those destined for Heaven will be there thanks to the perfect faithfulness of the One sent to save us, the Lord Jesus. He is perfect in every way; thereby so beautiful, radiant and brilliant that human beings in heaven can scarce even look at Him. In His perfect and total humility in lowering Himself from Heaven's glories to earth's human depravities while allowing none of them to besmirch His Own Being, He remained sinless, and perfectly, totally, completely and excellently in obedience to the will of Father God. Because of which "God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). Yet Christ's faithfulness was only to be expected because He was, in the most perfect sense, His Father's Son.

He told us a parable of two sons. Intriguingly, both sons lied to their father in the beginning, but one of them ultimately did the right thing and obeyed their father. For the first son, after defiantly talking back to his father, and blatantly telling him he would not

obey, he would not go and do something he didn't want to do, he later changed his mind. He repented, turned back to his father's will, and went and did just as his father had asked. Though he had rebelled at first, he ultimately obeyed, and accomplished his father's will. Is not this the very situation that we in America find our country? We are at the point of having rebelled against Father God's will in so many ways, not least of which the very sins that God reminded Israel about in Ezekiel 20:30-31: "Do you plan to pollute yourselves just as your ancestors did? Do you intend to keep prostituting yourselves by worshiping vile images? For when you offer gifts to them and give your little children to be burned as sacrifices, you continue to pollute yourselves with idols to this day". How have so many people polluted themselves with rampant and shameless sexual immorality? It's become so pervasive that it every so often entraps even Christian leaders! The devil is quite good at his job of ensnaring us in his diabolical schemes. Give him an inch and he takes a mile, as the saying goes, which is remarkably accurate.

You know, I read last week something that St. Louis City's infamous circuit attorney Kimberly Gardner said last week. Unbelievably, she and I agree on something! She was quoted in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch: 'in describing why people are killing one another, said it's "a perfect storm of hopelessness".' It is a perfect storm of hopelessness. Exactly who are all these people protesting in the streets? Are they not the hopeless? They don't know

their Creator and loving Father and Savior Who died for them. He is the very author of hope, and the hope He gives is no wishful thinking. The hope He gives is an ironclad guarantee of eternal life in perfection. When people have that kind of rock solid hope, when they have perfection living in their hearts, they become, like their Master and Lord Jesus, agents of real, righteous change in the earth. They are filled with God's very presence, Holy Spirit, and by their very presence, bring the light and life of Christ Jesus wherever they walk. They are so filled with light, that the darkness of demons can not get into them. Which is why, of those who do go out into the streets, they go, not as protestors, but as witnesses of Christ, pushing back the darkness, and revealing the light of everlasting hope which will come with Christ Jesus, and come soon. For the signs of it are all around us. As He promised, it's just around the corner!

In Ezekiel, the elders of the Jews had come to the great prophet to ask him to tell them whatever "reassuring" instructions the Lord God would give them. The year was 591 BC, just five years before Jerusalem would be sacked and the Temple destroyed by the Babylonians. But God would not respond to them in the ways they wanted. They had not really come to hear the word of God, but rather to try to coerce Him to tell them what they wanted to hear, in short that He would save them from the enemies at their gates, so that their lives of sinful, prosperous indulgence could continue unabated. But God would not and could not

say that. Instead, God turns around and painstakingly reminds them of their accumulating mountains of gross sins. With those in view, there was no alternative for them except the impending judgement of exile. But even when that happened, Father God was faithful toward them beyond belief. He told them through Ezekiel that at some future day He would restore them. And at that distant time, He declared in Ezekiel 40:44: “You will know that I am the Lord, O people of Israel, when I have honored My name by treating you mercifully in spite of your wickedness”. In verse 42, He said, “when I have brought you home to the land I promised with a solemn oath to give to your ancestors, you will know that I am the Lord”. He reminds them of His promise to them, which He will never ever break. He will always remain faithful, in spite of their repeated faithlessness.

God is teaching them through Ezekiel that He will remain faithful to His covenant with them regardless of their faithlessness, for in the end He will enable them to fulfill their destiny. Verse 40 reads: “the people of Israel will someday worship Me, and I will accept them”. God’s covenant is everlasting, for God never breaks His word. He’s not like us. He is always and forever trustworthy. He will never ever let us down. Never ever will He fail us. We can and should put our hand in His and never let go! But He made this particular covenant with Israel. God did not make a covenant with America. The big contrast is that America made a covenant with God. Recall the words which founded this

country, and for which no other nation in the history of the world was ever established, not even Israel. With their eyes wide open, when the first settlers landed in Jamestown, they prayed, “We do hereby dedicate this Land and ourselves, to reach the People within these shores with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to raise up Godly generations. ... May this Covenant of Dedication remain to all generations. ... May all who see this Cross, remember what we have done here and may those who come here to inhabit join us in this Covenant and in this most noble work that the Holy Scriptures may be fulfilled” (Jamestown Settlers’ Covenant Prayer 1607). From these words, it doesn’t seem like too many Americans have remembered these words of our national founding. Despicable revisionist historians have hoodwinked us.

Yet, I can assure you that God does not forget. Not only national words, but our personal words as well. May we gathered here not forgot our own words, but renew the proclamations of the earliest settlers who came to these shores, and not only renew them, but begin to fulfill them anew, that not only this land and all its inhabitants therein, but even all the world will hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and respond with eyes wide open, choosing life instead of death. “The Return” and Franklin Graham’s Prayer March, both yesterday spilling over into each other in D.C. have marked a new chapter in America’s life. Please, earnestly pray that we each may recognize God’s new work, using even us to change the destiny of America, and the world!

