

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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God Is Faithful

The word faithful simply means to be trustworthy. It refers to those on whom you can rely to keep their word and fulfill their promises. The world of professional sports epitomizes the opposite of faithfulness. Contracts are broken all the time simply because of a thirst for monetary gain and the prestige of being able to say "I make more money than the next guy; thus, I am more important than he is." Oftentimes someone will sign a multi-million dollar contract which involves several years, only to hold out the next year in an effort to get a new and better contract. In the world of sports, a contract, or a man's word, means very little.

Man, as a whole, has a propensity to break promises. Paul once wrote, "...yea, let God be true, but every man a liar..." (Romans 3:4), and the Psalmist declared, "I said in my haste, All men are liars" (Psalms 116:11). This does not indicate that we all lie habitually, but it does show that man has the ability to lie and he very often does.

But God is not like man. We can stand on the promises of God because with Him there is no broken contracts or unkept promises (2 Corinthians 1:20). Lying is one of the things that God cannot do (Hebrew 6:18). Now understand that not being able to lie is a self-imposed limitation that God has placed on Himself because it is incompatible with His nature. Nevertheless, it teaches us that God's Word can be unequivocally trusted. Paul simply stated it like this: "*God is faithful*" (1 Corinthians 1:9). Now let's look at some important areas wherein God is faithful.

1. Only those in the church will be saved. This is not a very popular saying, but it is what God teaches us through His Word, and since God is faithful, we can be sure that His Word is true. Someone may wonder where God says that only those in the church will be saved? He said it in Ephesians 4:4 when He inspired Paul to teach that there is only one body (the church). The body or the church is made up of all the saved (Acts 2:47). If all of the saved are in the church that Christ built, then obviously all those not in the body or the church are lost. Remember, while Jesus tasted death for all men (Hebrews 2:9), He is only the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23). Does that not also indicate that those outside of the body of Christ are lost? This is what God has said through His Word, and God is faithful. If you want to be saved, you need to get into the body of Christ by obeying the gospel before it is too late (Galatians 3:27).

2. Only those in the church who are faithful unto death will be saved. How do we know this? God said it! It is not enough to be a member of the body of Christ, you must be a faithful member. There will be a weeding out process on the day of judgment, and all those in the kingdom who are found disobedient to God will be cast out. Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:47-50). Clearly we must be faithful unto death if we expect to receive a crown of life

(Revelation 2:10).

3. The member of the church who dies faithfully will be saved. We don't have to guess or wonder about this. How do I know? The bible declares it to be so, and God is faithful to His Word. As Paul approached death, he did not worry about missing out on heaven. He knew he had lived a faithful life; thus, he was sure about his salvation (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Faithful Christians need not fear death. We have victory over death through Christ Jesus our Lord (I Corinthians 15:50-58; Romans 8:14-15; 1 John 4:17ff; John 11:17ff, etc.).

Are you not glad that God is faithful to His Word? We do not have to guess at whether or not we are on the right track spiritually. We do not have to guess at whether or not we are doing God's will. He has revealed His will to us, and we can put 100% trust in His Word because our God is faithful.

Don

Speak Where the Bible Speaks

Lately it seems as if many ultra-liberal thinkers in religious matters have attacked the slogan “speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent.” One man said in reference to the above statement, “Though well intentioned, this slogan has caused many to view the new testament writings through legalistic lenses...” I might say in response to that statement that although this brother has good intentions, it is that kind of attitude that leads people away from the Bible and into unscriptural and, therefore, sinful practices. The charge, that those who claim that we should speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent are somehow legalistic, is without validity. Was Peter a legalist when he said, “If any man speak, let him speak according to the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11)? The whole idea that emphasizing strict adherence to the Word of God is somehow wrong is ludicrous.

The Bible is God's inspired word (2 Timothy 3:16). When Jesus went back to heaven to be with the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13). The New Testament is the product of that inspired guidance (Ephesians 3:1-5). The Bible is not just a man-written book from which we can pick and choose what to accept and what to reject. It is God telling us in no uncertain terms how to live our lives. What if we neglect to honor some portion of the Word of God, whether it be by not living by it or by adding to it? Listen to James: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). That has to do with how we live, but what about what we teach? Do we have the right to go beyond the word of God? If so, what passage of scripture gives us that right? Is there any statement made by Jesus or by one of His apostles that might in any way suggest that we can go beyond God's Word in our teaching without consequences? If so, what is the passage? Are there any passages that might warn us against adding to the Bible? Yes! Read 2 John 9-11; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 2:17. These are just a few of the many passages that might be sighted. Certainly, it ought to be the goal of any Bible believer to speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent. Any attitude that differs from that is shameful.

Can division result from brethren demanding that we abide by the Word of God? Yes, but sometimes division is necessary. God wants unity, but not unity at all cost. What if a church decided to install three or four young single men as elders in the church? Should everyone in the local church go along with it to prevent division? Not too many brethren would say yes. But on what basis should some in that situation reject those men as elders? There could be just one objection—it would be a violation of God's word. If it is not right to go beyond the Word of God in this area, on what basis could we go beyond the Word in another area? If we open the door that allows unscriptural practices in, when do we have the right to close it? If we open it for musical instruments, on what basis can we close it for homosexual practices? If we open it for recreational facilities and social

functions, on what basis can we close it for musical instruments? If we open the door for false teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, on what basis can we close it for the false A.D. 70 doctrine?

We should all strive to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent, and that attitude should be reflected in our teaching and in our living.

Don