

THE LORD IS FAITHFUL

"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."
II Thessalonians 3:3.

At the time this letter was written by Paul, his companions in the work of the Lord were Silas and Timothy. All three of them preached the gospel of Christ in Thessalonica, which was populated by a people of the Thracian race. Those who became Christians under their ministry there were considered as both devoted and reliable according to Paul's estimation of them.

Among the many good things which Paul wrote to them was what he told them in our text. "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." What a source of consolation for them, as well as for believers of all time! It is truly good and encouraging to know that "The Lord is faithful."

What is meant by the statement, "The Lord is faithful?" When we speak of a person as being faithful, we mean that he keeps his word, that he keeps faith with another, that he discharges the obligations of his office or position, and that he is trustworthy. When we speak of the Lord being faithful, we mean the very same things about Him.

Paul was faithful. Silas was faithful. Timothy was faithful. But all are not of the same type or brand as these three. Some are not faithful. In contrast with unfaithful people is our faithful Lord. If there is any unfaithfulness, failure or defeat, these things are always on the part of human beings. There is never any unfaithfulness, failure or defeat on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ. By way of contrast between unfaithful people and the faithful Lord, let us take special note of Paul's words to Timothy, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (II Timothy 2:13). There is set forth here the fearful possibility of the unfaithfulness of man. Side by side with it runs the gloriously consoling assurance that the Lord abideth faithful. There are no shifts or changes in Him. He is like a rock and not like quicksand. He is the unchanging Saviour whether people receive Him or reject Him, and whether Christians are true to Him or disloyal to Him.

"The Lord is faithful." By the works of nature we have the evidence that these words are true. Take, for example, the repeated renewals of nature each spring. Does not nature's repeated resurrection whisper to us that "the Lord is faithful?" Alas! we can count on that faithfulness and not recognize its source. One who, perhaps, has never bent his knee to God, turns up the soil, places the grain in the ground and awaits the future with confidence. Seemingly the very repeated evidences of the Lord's faithfulness, which ought to fill the heart of man with gratitude and joy, very often serve merely as an excuse for man's unthankfulness. When and where the faithfulness of the Lord is most heartily preached and believed, there we always find the production of the most faithful and the most obedient lives. The most lax and indifferent lives are never found in the ranks of those who yield joyful obedience to a faithful Lord. The danger always comes in the failure to acknowledge the faithfulness of the Lord.

The faithfulness of Christ was that of fidelity to duty. At twelve years of age it was clearly conceived. You remember that He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" No duty can be imposed upon Him from without. If such were possible, another would have to be greater than He. But none can ever be His equal, much less His superior.

Our Lord's faithfulness guarantees His care over us. Various verses in Revelation apply this appellation to our Lord, "The faithful and true witness." His fidelity is the ground of all our hopes. Consider this expression, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Timothy 1:15). That presents our Lord's faithfulness in offering salvation to the lost. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." There is no mental reservation connected with that statement. It is as broad as the term "sinners."

I would also plead for the acceptance of the faithfulness of our Lord as expressed in His message to the children of God, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Do not let any breath of distrust darken the clear crystal of promise through which shines the fidelity of our Lord. He stated plainly that He would forgive you and cleanse you and heal you of your backsliding provided you confess it and desire to get right with Him. Ever remember that He will be faithful to that promise. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)" (Hebrews 10:22-23).

You can always rely on the Lord. He is entirely dependable. He means just what He says. His faithfulness is predicated on His unchangeableness. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). Our Lord is faithful to His Word and to His followers. Men may be unfaithful, but He will ever remain faithful. He will never abandon His great purpose and to which He has pledged His Word. When He has once made His promise, His performance will be certain.

His faithfulness is closely connected with His power. This enables Him, without the possibility of failure, to accomplish all of His promises and threatenings. His designs can never be frustrated. He will be faithful in revealing to you your condition, in offering to save you and in presenting salvation to you when you receive Him as your Saviour.

Child of God, since the Lord is faithful, apply this glorious truth to the daily events that may transpire in your life. Why not allow to disappear all that is in your life which is contrary to faithfulness?

What part does the Lord's faithfulness play in your personal life? Have you ever taken time to think upon His faithfulness to you? Do you understand it fully? Does the thought of His faithfulness rouse an overwhelming sense of love and devotion in your heart and life toward the One Who is so tender, so gracious, so merciful and so compassionate toward you? If not, it certainly should do so.

What is the promise? It is the promise of establishment. What does that imply? It implies that the Rock has been found. But when the building is raised upon the foundation, that is not all. It needs to be settled and established. You cannot move the Rock, but you can rest all of your needs upon Him. As the tree which is planted needs to be rooted, so the soul which trusts Christ needs to be "rooted and grounded in Him."

How does the Lord establish us? He does so through the power of the conviction of the truth. Justification by faith is a glorious truth, but we also need to see the importance of the truth of sanctification by faith.

It is the Lord's eternal purpose that the Christian shall be established. James wrote the statement, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." Instability is contrary to the purpose of the Lord for the life and experience of His children. It is exceedingly important that the Christian be established in Christ. In his letter to the Romans Paul said, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (1:11).

Establishment assumes that when we enter upon the Christian life we are only babes in Christ, and need to have our faith increased and our characters built. We need to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. When a Christian is disposed to waver, to lay aside his armor, to cease from doing his Christian duties, to absent himself from the assembling of God's people and to become discouraged, there comes the exhortation, "Hold fast the profession of your faith." Why is this true? Because God is faithful to His promise.

The progressive improvement of the Christian life is guaranteed by the faithfulness of the Lord. It is glorious to know that we have in our Lord One Who will guard and keep us from the evil one. What a source of comfort to the Christian that our Lord prayed to His Father that He should keep His own from the power and influence of the evil one, or Satan! Our faithful Lord has never failed a one of His followers. Let us then tell the lost, the saved, the sick, the suffering and the dying that "The Lord is faithful."