

FAITHFULNESS

I. Faithfulness is the key for being used for the glory of God:

A. The **Fruit of Faithfulness**:

- Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

a. **Def Faithfulness**: trustworthy

- (1) Can God depend upon you / trust you?
- (2) Can your Pastor depend upon you / trust you?

B. Note what the fruit of faithfulness produced in the lives of the early church believers:

- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers

a. "CONTINUED STEDFASTLY" / DWELL

(1) **Apostles Doctrine**:

- (a) Heb 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,
2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment

(2) **Fellowship**:

- (a) If you do not have an interest in being around God's people / in fellowship
- (b) you are not in position for God to use you

(3) **Breaking Bread**

- (a) This is not merely speaking of a "**communion service**", but also a "**covenant meal**" with your brothers and sisters in Christ in within your local church
- (b) The communion service is speaking of a "**covenant relationship**"
 - (1) where you learn through both thick & thin to remain faithful in your relationships

(4) **Prayer:**

- (a) Develop your personal prayer life
- (b) be a part of your local church corporate prayer

C. Acts 2:46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

1. **DEVELOPING GODLY HABITS:**

“CONTINUING DAILYin the temple”

- a. Does not say they attended temple / church once every two weeks
 - (1) A recent study has shown that the average attendance of “so called committed” Christians is once every four weeks
 - (2) How is your church habit?

2. **One accord:** UNITY

- a. Ps 133 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in **unity!**
 - 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his garments.
 - 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the
mountains of Zion; For **there** the **LORD commanded the
blessing** -- **Life** forevermore.

- (1) God blessing & life only manifest in the midst of unity
- (2) ISSUE THAT TAKE LOCAL CHURCHES OUT OF UNITY”

(a) **Voting:**

- (b) Matt 12:25 "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand

- (1) Voting automatically divides a house / church

© Read Acts 15:6 – 22

- (1) vs 7 tells us that there was a “dispute” in the church regarding an issue that had arose
- (2) vs 6 informs us that the Apostles and Elders met to look into the matter.....not the entire church
- (3) vs 7 The Apostle Peter / vs 13 The Apostle James gave counsel

- (4) vs 22 After the issue had been settle then the Apostle & Elders met to “**the whole church**” to send an Apostolic Team to the churches with the decision of the Apostles & Elders
- (5) in every local church you have believers on various spiritual levels: mature believers, babes in Christ, carnal minded believers
 - (a) Babes in Christ and Carnal minded believers cannot be expected to vote on important issues
 - (b) This is the responsibility of the Spiritual Parents within the local church: The Five Fold Ministry Gifts of Eph 4:11 (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher & local church elders)
- (6) **Sheep Dogs:** Can you imagine a sheep dog abandoning their responsibility of watching out for the sheep, because they are busy nipping at the heels of the shepherd (Pastor)...while the wolf (devil) is devouring the sheep (members of the congregation)
 - (a) The purpose of the sheep dog / elders is to help the pastor care for the sheep / not watch the pastor
- (2) Acts 1:14 These all continued with **one accord** in prayer and supplication,
 - (a) They were not yet filled with the Spirit, and still managed to get into one accord / unity
- b. **“in the temple” / local church**
 - (a) Note: if there is not a Pastor (five fold ministry gift Eph 4:11) in the midst of your gathering....**IT IS NOT A CHURCH**
 - (b) Note: if the Word of God is not preached / if The Blood of Jesus is not preached / If the New birth is not preached..... **IT IS NOT A CHURCH**
- © If you study the epistles where you find the phrase: “**to the church in thy house**”
 - (1) The letter / epistle was written to the elder / Pastor who had started their local church within their home
 - (2) this comment was not addressed to rebellious believers who have

abandoned the church and are rebellious to spiritual authority and submit to no one

(3) **example:** Philem 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house

Rom 16:5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

3. **Breaking Bread:**

a.) Covenant meal

(a) Covenant Relationships with

(1) God

(2) Your church leadership

(3) congregation

4. **House to House:**

(a) Note: Home bible study did not replace the temple / local church

(1) note Acts 2:46 “in the temple.....from house to house”

II. A **Revelation** in regard to ministry:

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

A. God gave the Five Fold Ministry Gifts to the church for:

1. **THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY**

2. **EVERY SAINT IS TO BE INVOLVED IN MINISTRY:**

3. **MINISTRY IS WORK:**

a. ministry is not necessarily fun

b. ministry is not about getting blessed

c. ministry is about:

(1) being a blessing

(2) laying your life down for others

(3) requires sacrifice

(4) Jesus describes ministry this way:

(a) Mark 8:34 "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny

himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

B. Even though ministry is work: when our hearts & attitudes are right
We labor in love: and God takes notice

1. Heb 6: 10 For God is not unjust to forget your **work and labor of love** which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister

III. A revelation of **whom God uses in ministry:**

Judg 7:1-7

Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

2 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'

3 Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go.

"5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.

"6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.

Vs 7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place.

A. Note who was sent home:

1. vs 3 the **FEARFUL**

- a. we cannot move in faith & fear at the same time
- b. we cannot move in obedience & fear at the same time
- c. we must conquer our fears:

- (1) Mark 4:40 But He said to them, "Why are you so **fearful**? How is it that you have **no faith**?"
- (2) 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

B. God only uses the TEACHABLE:

- 1. one of the types and shadows for water in scripture is that water represents **The Water of The Word**:
 - a. Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the **washing of water by the word**,
- 2. the men putt their hand to their mouth to drink the water (vs 6)
 - a. **Hand**: type and shadow of the Five Fold Ministry Eph 4:11
 - b. This action is a type and shadow of people drinking the water of the word / preaching / teaching / counsel / prophetic word: given to them by the five fold ministry gift in their life

IV. The life of Paul is a great example & reveals several keys in being used by The Lord in ministry:

Acts 26:16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

A. vs 16 "For this **PURPOSE**"

1. Paul had a vision & his vision brought forth / revealed **PURPOSE** for his life:

a. **make you a minister**

b. **make you a witness**

(1) of the things / revelations God gave and would give to him in the future

2. Some people today claim to have visions:

a. yet, their life I still **without purpose**

b. and or / their life is still **unchanged**

B. Purpose, brought **direction** to Paul's life and ministry:

1. Acts 26:17 "as well as from the **Gentiles**, to whom I now send you"

2. Rom 11:13 "inasmuch as I am an **apostle to the Gentiles,**"

3. Gal 2:9 "that **we should go to the Gentiles** and they to the circumcised

4. 2 Tim 1:11 "which I was **appointed** a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the **Gentiles**"

C. A life and ministry of purpose requires **OBEDIENCE**

1. vs 19 "I was **not disobedient** to the heavenly vision"

2. Obedience carries a reward:

a. Isa 1:19 If you are willing and obedient, You **shall eat the good of the land;**

(1) "willing": deals with our attitude

(2) "obedient": deals with our actions

3. Obedience carries a **PRICE**:

a. Heb 5:8 "though He was a Son, yet He **learned obedience** by the **things which He suffered.**"

(1) Dwell

b. Phil 2: 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled Himself** and **became obedient** to the **point of death**, even the death of the cross.

(1) we must also die unto self.....our plans, will....etc.

- D. A life and ministry of purpose requires **COMMITMENT**:
 Acts 13:1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
- 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now **separate to Me** Barnabas and Saul **for the work** to which I have called them.
1. "**Now separate to Me**"
 - a. **Commitment requires separation** / requires **FOCUS**
 - (1) Phil 3:13 "but **one thing** I do,
 - (a) Paul had Focus on the "**ONE THING**" God called him to do
 - (b) Paul was not trying to do ten different things at once / rather he separated himself unto the one thing God had called him to:
 - (1) An Apostle to the Gentiles

V. Another key to being used of God in ministry is: **MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE**:

- A. Isa 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:
 "Whom shall I send, And **who will go for Us?**"
1. In the above passage we find God looking for someone He can send do do His work
 2. There is a shortage of laborers in the Kingdom of God:
 - a. Jesus said in: Matt 9:37 "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the **laborers are few.**
 3. Our response need to be like that of the Prophet Isaiah:
 - a. Isa 6:8 Then I said, "**Here am I! Send me.**"
 - (1) **Go to The Lord** and tell Him: "Here am I! Send me"
 - (2) **Go to your Pastor** and tell him / her: "Here am I! Send me"
 - (a) **make yourself available for ministry**

B. 1 Chron 12:17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since there is no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look and bring judgment."

18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, and he said:

"We are yours, O David;

We are on your side, O son of Jesse!

Peace, peace to you,

And peace to your helpers!

For your God helps you."

1. Go to **The Lord**

a. and **go to your Pastor** and tell them:

(1) "We are yours"

(2) We are on your side"

(a) **make yourself available for ministry**

C. How do you start serving in ministry? The answer is found in:

1. Luke 16:10 He who is **faithful in what is least is faithful** also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

2. Luke 16:12 And if you have not been **faithful in what is another man's,** who will give you what is your own?

3. We must develop a **SERVANTS HEART** and put on the towel of a servant:

a. John 13:4 (Jesus) rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a **towel** and girded Himself.

5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to **wash the disciples' feet,** and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

(1) when making yourself available for ministry; do not come flaunting your gifting and anointing

(2) come, wearing the towel of a servant

4. Gifts of the Spirit, anointing and calling
- a. **DO NOT QUALIFY US FOR MINISTRY**
- (1) because every believer has an **anointing**
- (a) 1 John 2:20 But you have an **anointing** from the Holy one
- (b) 1 John 2:27 But the **anointing** which you have received from Him abides in you,
- (2) every believer has **Gifts of the Spirit**
- (a) 1 Cor 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing (Gifts of the Spirit) **to each one** individually as He wills.
- (3) every believer has a **calling**:
- (a) 1 Cor 1:26 For you see your **calling**, brethren,
- (b) Eph 4:1 beseech you to walk worthy of the **calling** with which you were called,
- © 2 Tim 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a **holy calling**,
- (d) 2 Peter 1:10 give diligence to make your calling and election sure:
- b. it is the **life which we live** unto The Lord that qualifies us for ministry
- (1) If you would take time to study the qualifications for becoming a Deacon or an Elder in the epistles you will find:
- (a) that having Gifts of the Spirit or an anointing is not even mentioned
- (b) Rather: it deals with the life the individual must be living in order to qualify for these offices
- © This same spiritual principle applies to all phases of ministry
- D. 1 Tim 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because **He counted me faithful**, putting me into the ministry,
1. **Def Faithful**: trustworthy
- a. are we faithful / trustworthy in the eyes of God
- b. that is the key for the Lord to be willing to put us into the ministry