

The Promises of God

Promise of God's Faithfulness

“Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

<http://tinyurl.com/GodOfPromises>

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Key Verses

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this.

2 Timothy 2:10-13 So I endure all things for the sake of those chosen by God, that they too may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus and its eternal glory. **11** This saying is trustworthy: If we died with him, we will also live with him. **12** If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us. **13** If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, since he cannot deny himself.

Core Theme

God promises to stay faithful to His word and to His people.

His faithfulness is part of His character, so it does not change.

Key Points

- God's faithfulness is rooted in His character.
- God keeps covenant even when people are inconsistent.
- Jesus fulfills every promise God made.
- The New Covenant rests on God's faithful action.
- God's faithfulness gives the believer confidence to live and endure.

God's Faithfulness in Scripture

God keeps His covenant even when His people fail.

It's part of His name and nature...

- **Nehemiah 1:5** - *"O Lord God of Heaven... the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and loyal love."*
- **Psalm 138:8** - *"Your loyal love, O Lord, endures forever."*
- **Psalm 145:13** - *"The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises."*

Examples – This truth shows-up again and again...

- God kept His word to Abraham, even when Abraham stumbled (**Genesis 17**).
- God kept Israel alive in the wilderness, even when they complained (**Deuteronomy 7:9**).
- God kept His promise to send the Messiah (**Luke 1:72–73**).

God's faithfulness holds the whole story of Scripture together.

- **Lamentations 3:22-23** - The **steadfast love** (Hebrew : **hesed**) of the Lord never ceases; His **mercies** never come to an end. They are new every morning;
Great is Thy faithfulness, O Lord, Great is Thy faithfulness!

God's Faithfulness in Scripture

The Bible often describes God as faithful.
It's part of His name and nature.

God's faithfulness holds the whole story of Scripture together.

Lamentations 3:22-23 - The **steadfast love** of the Lord never ceases; His **mercies** never come to an end. They are new every morning;
Great is Thy faithfulness, O Lord, Great is Thy faithfulness!

Lamentations 3:22-24 - The LORD's loyal kindness never ceases; his compassions never end. **23** They are fresh every morning; your faithfulness is abundant! **24** "My portion is the LORD," I have said to myself, so I will put my hope in him. (NET)

His Nature Revealed

In Christ, steadfast love (i.e. *hesed*) and covenant faithfulness converge — God keeping His oaths through the obedient Son.

The revelation of true *hesed* (i.e. *steadfast love and faithfulness*)

When viewed from the cross:

- *hesed* = God's faithful love that fulfills every promise despite human failure.
- In Christ, that *hesed* becomes personal — poured into hearts by the spirit (Romans 5:5).
- The "mystery" hidden for ages (Colossians 1:26–27) is that gentiles and Jews together share this covenant faithfulness through union with Christ.
- "Now the main point of what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven... he is the mediator of a better covenant, enacted on better promises." — *Hebrews 8:1,6*

Summary Thoughts

- The ancient covenants were **shadows**; Christ is **substance**.
- Their rituals hinted at what his *hesed* (God's steadfast love and faithfulness) would achieve: forgiveness, transformation, and unbreakable fellowship.
- So, when we read backward through the new covenant, we see the same God — steadfast, loyal, merciful — fulfilling His own covenant from the inside out.

God's Character – Why Faithful?

The Steadfast Love of the Lord Never Ceases...

Hosea 6:6 – Jesus quotes twice in Matthew

- Mat 9:13 "Go and learn what this saying means: '**I want mercy and not sacrifice.**' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
- Mat 12:7 "If you had known what this means: '**I want mercy and not sacrifice,**' you would not have condemned the innocent."

'Mercy' is translated from Hebrew 'hesed (חֶסֶד)'

- Hosea 6:6 'I desire **mercy** (Heb. *hesed*), not sacrifice.'
- Psalms 89:34-35 'I will not break my **covenant** (Heb. *hesed*) or go back on what I promised. Once and for all I have vowed by my own holiness...'

What hesed means (and why covenant matters)

- Core ideas: **covenant loyalty, steadfast love, faithful mercy.** Love that acts to keep promises. It's relational, oath-shaped, and other-seeking.
- Hesed is **covenant love-in-action.** It's the *moral shape* of God's promise-keeping.
- **Implication:** Jesus operationalizes hesed: *mercy > sacrifice; greatness = servanthood; rule = self-giving love.*
- Paul saturates his letters with "**one another**" commands (love, bear, forgive, submit). It's the communal ethic of covenant loyalty now formed "in Christ."

2 Timothy 2:10-13 So I endure all things for the sake of those chosen by God, that they too may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus and its eternal glory. **11** This saying is trustworthy: If we died with him, we will also live with him. **12** If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us. **13** If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, since he cannot deny himself.

Lamentations 3:22-23

The **steadfast love** of the Lord never ceases; His **mercies** never come to an end. They are new every morning, new every morning; **Great is Thy faithfulness, O Lord, Great is Thy faithfulness!**

Mat 9:9-13 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. (10) Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. (11) And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (12) When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. (13) **But go and learn what *this* means: 'I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE.'** For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Mat 12:1-8 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. (2) And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!" (3) But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: (4) how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? (5) Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? (6) Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. (7) **But if you had known what *this***

means, 'I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. (8) For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

God's Faithfulness Revealed in Jesus

Proof of God's steadfast love and faithfulness

Jesus is the proof that God keeps His promises.

2 Corinthians 1:20 - *"For every one of God's promises are 'Yes' in him."*

- God promised a Savior.
- God promised forgiveness.
- God promised a new covenant.
- Jesus is the fulfillment of all three.

Jesus also shows the Father's faithful heart.

Hebrews 13:5 - *"I will never leave you and I will never abandon you."*

John 10:8 - Jesus says, *"No one can snatch them from my hand."*

God's faithfulness is seen first in Christ's cross, and then in His resurrection.

- The cross shows God keeps His promise to deal with sin.
- The resurrection shows God keeps His promise to overcome death.

Contemplations...

- How does historical hind-sight reveal Jesus as the culmination of God's plan for humanity?
- How can we encourage one another to hold to God's promises?

God's Faithfulness Revealed in Jesus

1Jn 1:5-10 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (7) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

The Book of Hebrews - Faithfulness

Unveiling Connections between Covenants

Abrahamic Covenant → Messiah, the Faithful Seed

- Abraham's promise was righteousness through faith (**Genesis 15:6**).
- **Hebrews 6:13-18** says God confirmed that oath by Himself, so it cannot fail.
- Jesus is the **guarantor (7:22)** - the living fulfillment of God's unbreakable *hesed* oath.

Mosaic Covenant → Messiah, the Perfect Mediator

- The law exposed sin but could not change the heart (**Hebrews 10:1-4**).
- Jesus fulfills it by offering His own blood, accomplishing inward cleansing (**9:14-15**).
- His priesthood is after **Melchizedek** - eternal, righteous, and merciful (**7:23-27**).
- *"He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."* (**7:25**)

Davidic Covenant → Messiah, the Eternal King

- **Hebrews 1:8-9** applies **Psalms 45** to the son: *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever... you have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness."*
- Jesus reigns as king and priest - a combination no Israelite king ever could hold under the Mosaic Law.
- This unites the covenant strands: a faithful Davidic king, a righteous high priest, and a better covenant built on better promises (**8:6**).

The author of Hebrews builds a theology that ties the old covenants to the new covenant in Christ. In Christ, *hesed* and covenant faithfulness converge — God keeping His oaths through the obedient Son.

The New Covenant promised (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

"Look, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors... I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more."

— *Jeremiah 31:31-34, NET*

- In context, Jeremiah's audience imagined national restoration — land, peace, temple. but the promise went far deeper: **inner transformation, forgiveness, and direct relationship** with God.
- This covenant isn't about stone tablets but about hearts reshaped by God's Spirit (compare Ezekiel 36:26-27). it's the *hesed* of God now written inside His people.
- The Israelites expected renewal *around* them; God promised renewal *within* them.

Israel's misunderstanding of the Messiah and *hesed*

- Ancient Israel largely read the messianic prophecies politically — a ruler like David who would free them from gentile rule. but they missed the moral and relational nature of the Messiah's rule: His *hesed*.
- **Isaiah 53** shows the suffering servant who bears sin through self-giving love — the *hesed* of God made flesh.
- **Micah 6:8** already summarized covenant morality: *"to do justice, to love hesed, and to walk humbly with your God."* the people loved ritual but ignored covenant loyalty.
- By Jesus' day, this blindness persisted. when Jesus quoted *Hosea 6:6* ("I desire *hesed*, not sacrifice"), he wasn't introducing a new idea; he was restoring the original covenant ethic Israel had abandoned.
- The mystery was not that the messiah would come — but *how*: as a servant, not a conqueror; as one who rules by dying, not killing.
- His throne was a cross.
- His victory was *hesed* fulfilled.

The revelation of true *hesed*

When viewed from the cross:

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- In Christ, that *hesed* becomes personal — poured into hearts by the spirit (rom 5:5).
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- The ancient covenants were **shadows**; Christ is **substance**.
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out.

God's Faithfulness and the New Covenant

He finishes what He starts

The promise of faithfulness is rooted in the New Covenant.

Jeremiah 31:33-34 - *"I will put my law within them. I will forgive their sin, and I will no longer call to mind the wrong they have done."*

- The faithfulness of God guarantees both forgiveness and inner renewal.

The Apostles taught the same...

Philippians 1:6 – *"He who began a good work in you will perfect it."*

- This means God finishes what He starts.
- He does not abandon His people halfway.

God commands. God promises. God fulfills.

- His faithfulness bridges His Word and our lives.
- His faithfulness shows up in baptism, the Spirit's work, the work of the church.
- God's faithfulness is the reason the church endures.

Contemplations...

- How does God's faithfulness give you confidence in your walk with Him?
- What changes when you believe that God finishes what He starts?
- How might God's faithfulness be obscured or doubted by Christians?

God's Faithfulness and the New Covenant

Early Christian and Restoration Themes

Early Christian writers saw God's faithfulness as the ground of Christian hope. They taught that God's covenant loyalty (hesed) reaches its high point in Jesus.

Restoration teachers often said:

"God commands. God promises. God fulfills."

His faithfulness is the bridge between His word and our lives.

They stressed that God's faithfulness is not abstract.

It shows up in baptism, in the Spirit's work, in the gathering of the church, and in daily obedience.

God's faithfulness is the reason the church endures.

How does God's faithfulness give you confidence in your walk with Him?

Which part of God's faithfulness do you struggle to trust?

How does Jesus show God's faithfulness to you personally?

What changes when you believe that God finishes what He starts?

How can we encourage one another to hold to God's promises?

God's Faithfulness in Life of Disciples Gives the Believer confidence

God strengthens us...

2 Thessalonians 3:3 - *"The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one."*

God forgives us...

1 John 1:9 - *"He is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins."*

God keeps us...

1 Peter 1:5 - *"By God's power you are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed."*

God stays steady even when we fail...

2 Timothy 2:13 - *"If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful."*

Philippians 1:6 - *"For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Contemplations...

- God's faithfulness does not excuse sin.
- But it does remind us that God does not quit on His people.
- He keeps working, correcting, restoring, and shaping us.
- How might people misinterpret God's faithfulness in theological understanding?

God's Faithfulness and the Life of a Disciple

2Ti 2:10-13 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. (11) This is a faithful saying: For if we died with *Him*, We shall also live with *Him*. (12) If we endure, We shall also reign with *Him*. If we deny *Him*, He also will deny us. (13) *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*