

“IF YOU HAVE JUDGED ME TO BE FAITHFUL”

I want us to read about the conversion of Lydia in Ac 16.

- a. Ac 16:11-15 ~ “Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.”
 - ▶ I want you to notice that the subject of Lydia’s “faithfulness” is brought up in v15, and she asks Paul and Silas to judge whether or not she is faithful to the Lord.
 - Ac 16:15 ~ “And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.”

And now I want to ask you a question: How do you think the people who know you well, and know the Bible well, would judge you concerning faithfulness?

- a. Would they judge you to be “faithful” to the Lord?
- b. Would you judge yourself to be “faithful” to the Lord?
- c. And most importantly, would the Lord judge you to be “faithful”?

This is a very important question.

- a. The Lord will ultimately overcome all opposition and be victorious over every foe, but only those who have been “faithful” to Him will stand with Him in triumphant glory.
 - ▶ Only the “faithful” will enter into the joy of the Lord.
 - Rev 17:14 ~ “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”
 - Matt 25:21 ~ “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . Enter into the joy of your lord.’”

It is a sad fact that relatively few in every generation are really faithful to the Lord.

- a. Psa 12:1~ “Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.”
- b. Prov 20:6 ~ “Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man?”
- c. Mic 7:2 ~ “The faithful man has perished from the earth, And there is no one upright among men.”
- d. Lk 18:8 ~ “I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

Many are faithful for awhile. They used to be faithful but they aren’t faithful any more.

- a. Gal 1:6 ~ “I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him who called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel . . .”
- b. Gal 5:7 ~ “You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”
- c. Php 3:18-19 ~ “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.”

I want to talk to you about the basis for judging anyone to be “faithful” ... it’s the same basis upon which the Lord judges anyone to be “faithful”.

1. A truly faithful Christian is faithful to the Lord.

Some people are very active and involved in religious activities, religious practices, and religious services, and doing good works ... and they appear to be very faithful ... but they are not truly faithful to the Lord.

- a. Some people are “faithful” **to their religion** (their denomination or sect) and they strictly adhere to the teachings and practices of their religion ... and they are very involved and very zealous and very devout ... and most people would judge them to be “faithful”.
 - ▶ But the truth is ... while they are “faithful” to their religion, they are not really faithful to the Lord.
 - If you try to show them from the Scriptures that they are involved in false teaching and religious error, they refuse to consider it.
 - Their commitment is not to the teaching of the Lord, but to the teaching of their religion.
 - ▶ In that respect, they are like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day.
 - The scribes and Pharisees were as “faithful” as anyone could possibly be ... to their religion ... to their religious traditions.
 - + Jesus said they “**appear righteous to men**” (Matt 23:28)
 - + He said they “**build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous**” (Matt 23:29)
 - + He said they were very zealous in trying to teach others: so zealous that they would “**travel land and sea to win one proselyte**” (Matt 23:15)
 - + They lived by a strict moral code
 - + They devoutly kept the Sabbath ... and they were given to fasting and praying
 - The scribes and Pharisees were “faithful” to their religion, but they were not faithful to God.
 - + If you showed them that their religious teaching and practice was causing them to transgress the truth of God’s word, they became “offended”... and were unwilling to change.
 - + See **Matt 15:1-12**.
- b. Some people are “faithful” **to a preacher**, and as long as that preacher is there they appear to be interested and involved -- but when that preacher leaves they lose interest, and after awhile they may “quit” altogether.
- c. Some people are “faithful” **to a particular congregation**, and as long as they really like a lot of the people in that church and enjoy socializing with the members there they are enthusiastic and they appear to be faithful.
 - ▶ But, if they “get on the outs” with some of the members, or if they move to another city and they don’t like the new congregation as well, their involvement may become token involvement and after awhile they may “quit” altogether.
- d. Some people are “faithful” **to church programs**, and as long as the church has the programs of activities they like (especially for their kids) they will be “involved” and give the appearance of being “faithful” never mind the fact that some of those church programs are unscriptural.
 - ▶ But, if the church discontinues their favorite programs of activities, or if they move to a community where the church doesn’t provide those programs of activities, then they lose interest.
- e. Some people are “faithful” **to their parents**.
 - ▶ And whatever religion their parents have followed, that’s what they are going to follow ... whether it’s right or wrong.
 - They are more concerned about pleasing their parents than pleasing God ... and more worried about disappointing their parents than disobeying God.
 - ▶ Some have parents who are true Christians and members of a faithful congregation of God’s people, but they themselves aren’t really faithful to the Lord ... they are “faithful” to their parents.
 - They know what their parents expect of them, and they don’t want to disappoint their parents, so as long as their parents are alive they continue their

involvement with a good congregation and they give the appearance of doing alright.

- But when their parents die, or when they move away from the town where their parents live and they are no longer under the watchful eyes of their parents, their involvement with the church shrinks to token involvement or they quit altogether.
- f. Some are “faithful” to a marriage partner, and they pretty much go along with what their spouse wants to do.
 - ▶ If their spouse is a faithful Christian they may follow the lead of their spouse and they may appear to be faithful themselves.
 - ▶ But, if their spouse become unfaithful ... or if their spouse dies ... their interest and involvement wanes and they may “quit” altogether.
 - And if they re-marry they may very well go along with whatever religion or religious practice their new spouse is involved in.
- g. Some people are “faithful” **to their children**.
 - ▶ They feel that their children need to “go to Sunday School and church” (they know it’s good for their children and they think it will help to keep them out of trouble), so the parents maintain their association with a local church and they are involved to a degree -until the children are grown and gone from home, or until the children lose interest.

But true faithfulness is focused upon God.

- a. **Mk 12:30 ~ “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”**
- b. **Matt 4:10 ~ “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”**
- c. **Rev 14:7 ~ “Fear God and give glory to Him, ... and worship Him who made heaven and earth . . .”**
- d. **Eph 5:8, 10 ~ “... walk as children of light ... 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”**

Look at the faithfulness of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

- a. **Lk 1:6 ~ “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”**

Lydia asked Paul and Silas to judge if she was “faithful to the Lord.”

- a. Are you truly faithful to the Lord?

2. A truly faithful Christian is faithful to the Lord in all things.

Some people are “faithful” to the Lord in many things, but not in all things.

- a. One of the best examples of what I’m talking about is the Rich Young Ruler (**Mk 10:17-22**).
 - ▶ He was faithful to God in many ways; he was faithful to God in most things.
 - ▶ But he was not faithful to God in all things, and Jesus exposed the one area of his life where he did not put God first.

Many passages, in both the Old and New testaments, teach us that we must be faithful in all things.

- a. **Deut 7:9-12 ~ “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; . . . 11 Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to ob-serve them. 12 Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.”**
 - ▶ This passage is basically saying that God is faithful to those who are faithful to Him.
 - ▶ And God’s faithfulness is shown in that He “keeps covenant” and, our faithful-

- ness is shown by “keeping covenant” (obeying His commandments and statutes and judgments).
- b. 2Cor 2:9 ~ “For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.”
 - c. Lk 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.”
 - d. 1Tim 3:11 ~ “Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.”

If you think it’s not possible for a Christian to be faithful in all things, just consider what Luke says about Zacharias and Elizabeth, the mother and father of John the Baptist: “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Lk 1:6).

- a. And the apostle Paul said of himself: “concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Php 3:6)
- b. And the same kind of thing was said of Job in the Old Testament: “a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil” (Job 1:8).
- c. That doesn’t mean that Zacharias and Elizabeth, or Paul, or Job were sinlessly perfect, but it does mean they were “walking in the light,” and when they sinned they soon corrected themselves and sought God’s forgiveness.

And there are other Bible examples of men who were faithful to God in all things.

- a. Abraham.
 - ▶ Neh 9:7-8 ~ “You are the LORD God, Who chose Abram, And brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, And gave him the name Abraham; 8 You found his heart faithful before You, And made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, . . . -- to give it to his descendants. You have performed Your words, For You are righteous.”
 - ▶ Gen 26:3-5 ~ “Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”
- b. Daniel.
 - ▶ Dan 6:3-4 ~ “Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. 4 So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.”
- c. Moses.
 - ▶ Heb 3:5 ~ “And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,”

Are you truly faithful to the Lord in all things?

3. A truly faithful Christian is faithful to the Lord in all things -- even unto death.

Some people are “faithful” as long as it doesn’t cost them too much.

- a. But when service to the Lord begins to make real demands on their time or their money, or when service to the Lord begins to call for meaningful sacrifice on their part, or when service to the Lord begins to cause them to suffer in some way then their religion is exposed as being a religion of convenience rather than a religion of conviction.

The truth is: a truly faithful Christian is faithful to the Lord no matter what the cost.

- a. A truly faithful Christian will pay any price, endure any hardship, suffer any loss in

order to remain faithful to the Lord and do His will.

- ▶ Lk 14:26-27, 33 -- "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. . . . 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."
- b. A truly faithful Christian will give his life for the Lord.
 - ▶ Rev 2:10 -- "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."
 - NIV ~ "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life."
 - ▶ Rev 12:11 ~ "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."
 - ▶ Lk 14:26 ~ "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

Are you truly faithful to the Lord in all things -- even unto death?

4. A faithful person compares favorably with other faithful people and "fits in" with faithful people.

There are a lot of godly people in the Bible and in the New Testament who were truly "faithful" to the Lord who are not specifically said to have been "faithful" -- that is, the word "faithful" just happens not to have been used in connection with them.

But there is an impressive list, in the New Testament, of men who are specifically said to have been "faithful" to the Lord.

- a. Moses -- Yes, I know he was an Old Testament character, but he is mentioned several times by the New Testament writers.
 - ▶ Heb 3:5 ~ "And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,"
- b. Timothy ~ 1 Cor 4:17
- c. Antipas ~ Rev 2:13
- d. Silvanus ~ 1 Pet 5:12
- e. Onesimus ~ Col 4:9
- f. Tychicus ~ Col 4:7; Eph 6:21
- g. Epaphras ~ Col 1:7

The point I want to make in calling your attention to these "faithful" men of the New Testament scriptures is simply this: If you are truly "faithful" to the Lord then your name belongs in that list and you deserve to be mentioned in the same breath with those men.

- a. Now, what about it?
 - ▶ Do you deserve to be mentioned in the same breath with those "faithful" Christians of the 1st century?
 - ▶ Do you have the same kind of faith? Are you just as devoted to the Lord? Are you of the same character?
 - ▶ Would those who know you best put your name in that list of "faithful" Christians?

5. The faithfulness of a truly faithful Christian is apparent to all who know him.

Lydia called upon Paul and Silas to judge whether or not she was faithful to the Lord, and they were able to do that.

If you are truly faithful to the Lord your faithfulness will not go un-noticed -- and especially

by other faithful Christians.

- a. Matt 5:14 -- "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden."

Even unbelievers will have to acknowledge the faithfulness of the truly faithful Christian.

- a. Example: A man who is truly qualified to be an elder is one who is faithful to the Lord in all things, and he has "a good testimony among those who are outside [the church, bw]" (1Tim 3:7).
- b. Example: Daniel.
 - ▶ Dan 6:3-4 ~ "Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. 4 So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him."

If your faith is growing stronger, and if your commitment to the Lord is growing stronger, and if you are molding your attitudes and behavior into the image of Christ it will not go un-noticed.

- a. 1Tim 4:12-15 ~ "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity 13 . . . give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . 15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all."

And so I ask you: Are you truly faithful to the Lord in all things? And is your faithfulness acknowledged by all who know you?

Conclusion.

The reward for being faithful to the Lord is wonderful indeed.

- a. Rom 8:18 ~ ". . . the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
- b. 2Cor 4:16 ~ "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"
- c. Rev 2:10 ~ "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Of course, no one is faithful to Christ who is not in Christ.

- a. If you are not in Christ, you need to obey the gospel of Christ right now and you need to be faithful to Him for the rest of your life.