

The Call to Faithfulness

by David Guzik

God's call to faithfulness is a call to live for Him wherever He sets us, being faithful in our daily lives and relationships.

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Scripture: Exodus 39:42, 1 Timothy 1:12

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the concept of God's call in our lives. He emphasizes that God wants us to walk worthy of this calling, which is demonstrated in four different aspects. The first aspect is the call to faith, which is the call to salvation. The speaker references the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 to illustrate the principle that faithfulness is rewarded. He also highlights the importance of being faithful in the specific roles and positions that God has placed us in, such as being a husband or a mother. The speaker concludes by discussing the three things that are involved in being faithful.

Transcript

We're taking a few weeks out to examine this idea of God's call. So this is the third of four studies along the way that will look at the call of God in our life and how we should answer it. And since the Book of Romans and really so many of the writings of Paul is rich with the idea of calling, we should take an example here from Ephesians 4, verse 1. Let's look at it together here.

Paul says, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you. That's like an old way of saying, beg you. Paul's begging us.

I beg you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. God's given us such a high and glorious and magnificent calling. Now he looks to you and he says, walk worthy of it.

Don't walk worthy in an effort to earn it. You can't earn the calling. He gives it freely because he loves you.

Yet he has given it to you. Now live up to it. Walk worthy of it.

God wants you to walk worthy of the calling that he's given you. That's the first principle to really get in your mind this morning. What I want you to see as well, that as God wants us to walk worthy of this, it shows itself in four different aspects of calling.

Two weeks ago we looked at the call to faith. That's the call to salvation that every one of us has. We're called to be saved and transformed by the work of Jesus Christ.

And how do you walk worthy of the call to faith? Well, you respond. By putting your trust, your love into Jesus, into who he is and what he did for you, especially on the cross. That's how you respond.

How you walk worthy of the call to faith. Then God also has a call to follow. So how do you walk worthy of the call to follow? Well, the main idea behind the call to follow is a relationship with Jesus.

A daily relationship with him. And you walk worthy of the call to follow by living out a daily relationship with Jesus. Where it isn't just that you visit Jesus, you know, from time to time here on Sunday morning.

But every day is genuinely lived with him. And you have a true, genuine, personal relationship with Jesus. It'll cost you something to have that, but it's worth it.

It fulfills the purpose of your life. And then the third aspect that we're going to talk about this morning is the call to faithfulness. In other words, that Jesus calls us to live for him wherever he sets us.

Now, walking worthy of the call to faithfulness means that God has put you in different arenas, different areas in your life. You could be a husband, a father, and an employer. Well, God wants you to walk faithfully to him in every one of those areas.

You can be a mother, a daughter, and an employee. God wants you to walk faithfully in every one of those areas. I want you to notice that what we're talking about is a foundation that builds each step upon the other.

The bottom of the foundation is the call to faith. If you don't have that first, none of the rest really matters. But the second part of the foundation is the call to follow, or the call to have real relationship with Jesus Christ.

And as we talk about the call to faithfulness this morning, I want you to examine, first of all, if you fulfilled the first two. Have you really put your faith in Jesus Christ for your salvation? But secondly, are you following him in the sense of a daily relationship? You know, you could be a great mother. The world's best mother.

You pour all your energy into your children, and everybody looks around there just in awe of the job that you do as a mother. But I want you to know that if you haven't fulfilled this idea of following Jesus, of having a real relationship with him, then you're missing out on the main reason why God created you. You understand that? That it's important that God has made you a husband, or a mother, or an employee, and you have a role to fulfill in those areas.

But the real reason why Jesus created you was to have fellowship with God. That's the real reason for your existence. So remember that these build upon one another.

Don't neglect one for the other. First we come to faith. Then we follow Jesus.

Now we live it out in faithfulness in the different arenas where he's put us. And I think a great example of this is in 1 Corinthians 7. So turn in your Bibles there. 1 Corinthians 7. We're going to begin at verse 17.

And if you don't mind, let me sort of give you a running start on the context here. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is answering questions that the Corinthians had written to him about regarding marriage and singleness and divorce and all the rest of it. And basically, the Corinthians wondered, well, is it more spiritual to be married or is it more spiritual to be single? Which one really pleases God? Where can I really please God? And what I want you to see here is, as Paul talks about this here, is he wants to get across the principle beginning in verse 17.

But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk and so I ordain in all the churches. It's very basic here. The principle is this, is that God wants us to be faithful right where we are.

Right where God has put you. That's his call on your life. No matter what your station is in life, if you're married, if you're single, if you're divorced, if you're widowed, if you're remarried, whatever, God can work in your life.

Instead of thinking that you can walk with the Lord, when something changes in your life, realize that God wants you to walk with him right now. Right with where you're at right now. What a danger it is for us to think that we'll really walk in faithfulness when our situation changes.

You know, Lord, I'm single, but if I was married, man, then I could really walk in faithfulness to you. Or Lord, you know, I'm married, but man, if I was only single again, then I could really serve you. Or Lord, you know, if I only had children, man, I could pour my life into those children and serve you.

And if you have children, it's Lord, oh, when the kids finally move out, then I can get back to pleasing you. It's so easy for us to adopt that kind of thinking, isn't it? But the real issue is that God wants you to be faithful right where you're at. As God has called you, so let you walk.

Might I say as well that this is also a warning about trying to undo the past in regard to relationships. Most pointedly, Paul's talking about marriage. And he's saying, hey, listen, wherever God has called you, you walk that way right now.

You say, well, what about my situation? Well, my situation is that, you know, I'm in my third marriage and that one isn't working out too great. And so maybe if God really wants me, maybe the first person I was married to is the one that God really had me to be with. And so maybe I should divorce my present wife and go back to my first one.

No, Paul says, forget about that. As God has called you, you walk in that right now. Don't try and go back and untangle the knots of the past.

Where are you right now with the Lord? You walk faithfully to Him right now. That's the principle that Paul's getting across to us. And then he says, walk in it.

Walk in where God has you now. You see, it really doesn't matter so much that the important issue isn't getting married or single or divorced or remarried or working at this job or working at that job or having kids or not having kids. The real issue is an on-fire walk with Jesus now.

And if you think that your situation in life has to change before you can have an on-fire walk, you're mistaken greatly. Matter of fact, I'd say you're deceived. Satan's giving you the old delaying tactic.

You can get right with God and walk right with Jesus then. Not now, then. And that's a wonderful word in Satan's ears, then.

The word he hates is now. Walk with Jesus now. Now, Paul's going to give us an example here in 1 Corinthians 7 from the practice of circumcision.

Look at what he writes here in verse 18. He says, was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised.

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. You see, what Paul's saying is if you were circumcised when you became a Christian, great.

If you were not circumcised when you became a Christian, fine also. Those things don't matter. What matters is faithfully serving the Lord right now where you're at.

Now, Paul's point here isn't really about circumcision. He's bringing that in as an example. It was a big issue in the days of the Corinthians when Paul wrote to them.

He's saying, look, that's not the issue. Paul could have just as well write by the same analogy. He could have written, married is nothing and unmarried is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

Get the message. God has a call on your life and that call is faithfulness right where he has you today. Does he put you in the place where you're a husband? Oh, God expects you to be faithful and God will bless your faithfulness.

Turn your heart and your mind to be faithful in your position as a husband. Has God set you in a place where you're a mother? Well, God wants you to be faithful in that calling and to devote yourself to faithfulness. There's a rock that you have to come back to.

I need to be faithful in these places where God has given me to be faithful. I thought about it this week. I thought about what goes into being faithful.

What is it that enables us or makes us? What's involved in being faithful? I thought of three things and I suppose if we talked about it together and thought longer, we could think of a lot more. But here's at least three things that I think are vitally involved in being faithful. And the first one is that faithfulness requires endurance.

You've got to have a real sense of endurance to be faithful, don't you? Because if it was easy, everybody would do it. If it was easy, everybody would be faithful as a parent or in their marriage or at the workplace. But we look around us and we see a lot of people not being faithful in those places.

And what it takes is it takes a lot of endurance. It takes endurance because in some places the job of being faithful is never done. All right, so let's just say that here you are.

You're in your home and, you know, being faithful to the Lord means keeping your home up. And, you know, the problem is you have children. And as soon as you clean the house, not 10 minutes later, it looks like a tornado has gone through there again.

Man, is that frustrating, isn't it? It takes a lot of endurance to just not give up. Does this not say, well, forget about it. It's too hard.

I'm not going to do it. It's very difficult. We all know it's very difficult.

That's why it requires endurance. You have to stick with it. Faithfulness is shown in the long term.

You can't tell in five minutes or in one day whether a person really has faithfulness. It's shown over the long term. The second quality, I think, that is important to faithfulness is that faithfulness requires godly values.

In other words, if what's important to God is not important to us, we're going to find it very difficult to be faithful. You have to make sure that the things that are important to God are also important to you. For example, humble service is very important to God.

God loves that. But it's not particularly prized in our world today, is it? And so humble service isn't very important to you. You're going to have trouble being faithful in humble service.

But God loves it. And if you regard it as important to you because it is important to God, it'll change your perspective. Have you heard about the woman who had this sign in her kitchen? Maybe some of you have it or you would like to have it.

It's a sign in her kitchen that she had. It said, Divine service performed here three times daily. It's true, isn't it? Faithfulness to God in the routine or in the mundane things of life can be a wonderful example of divine service in your life.

It's not glamorous, but it's important to God. And so for a lot of us, the problem with our faithfulness is that we don't have God's kind of values. We've established our own values, our own priorities.

But what's important to God, if that becomes important to us, then faithfulness becomes a lot easier. Why do I have to cook another meal? Well, you have to do it because it's honoring to God. Well, I want to honor God.

Well, why do I have to go to work again and be good on the job again? Well, because it pleases God. He's honored by your hard work. He's honored by your honest effort.

And, of course, you know when you go to work and you don't give your employer a full day's work for your wage, you're stealing from your employer. Well, you honor God in what you do. He's glorified by that.

When His values are our values, faithfulness is easier. And I thought about a third quality that I think is essential for faithfulness. Faithfulness requires cheerfulness.

Don't you think so? I don't think you're being faithful if you're doing the job, but with the most sour disposition you can muster up. You're letting everybody know what a sacrifice it is and how noble you are and all the rest of it. I don't think that's faithfulness.

That's just misery that you're inflicting on other folks when you do that. True faithfulness says, I'm happy to do this even though it's unpopular, even though other people may not appreciate it. I know it's pleasing to God.

He has called me to be faithful, and so I need to walk worthy of the calling that He's given me. See, this is what matters. It matters being faithful where God has put us.

And if you think about all those different arenas, God wants you to be faithful in them right now. Not waiting. Think about the example of Jesus.

When did Jesus demonstrate faithfulness? When He started His ministry? Oh, no. You know Jesus demonstrated faithfulness in the carpenter's shop, don't you? Well, you knew you would get a good deal there in the carpenter's shop. You know that the work would be good.

When Jesus turned out something from the carpenter's shop, you know it was first class. You know He had worked hard, and you knew that He charged a fair price for things. He wasn't giving them away, but you know He wasn't gouging anybody either.

He was faithful. You know that Jesus was faithful as a son. There He is hanging on the cross, and He's still thinking about His responsibilities as a son to His mother.

There's Jesus faithful as a leader. On the night He's betrayed, He's concerned for His disciples, and He prays more for them than He prays for Himself. There's Jesus faithful as a Savior, going to the uttermost and paying the price on the cross that we could never pay for ourselves.

Jesus is our example for this, because faithfulness is for right now. Now. You don't have to wait.

You don't have to be smart to be faithful. You don't have to be talented to be faithful. You don't have to be gifted.

Faithfulness is something very down to earth, and every one of us can be faithful in the sphere that God's given us. How easy it is to say, well, I'll be faithful when I'm in such and such a position. That's nonsense.

Your faithfulness is demonstrated where you're at right now, and especially in the small things. And let me make one other observation about faithfulness, beginning at verse 21 here. Paul says, Were you called while a slave? Don't be concerned about it.

But if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freed man. Likewise, he who is called while free is Christ's slave.

You were bought at a price. Do not become slaves of men. Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.

Did you notice here, Paul says to slaves, well, you can be faithful even in your occupation. Now, don't you think it would be easy for a slave to say, well, I can't do anything for God right now, but if I ever get free, then I can really please God. Paul says, no, even as a slave, you can go out and please God.

How easy it would be for the slaves. And what's the use? Nothing I do can really please or glorify God. And Paul says, no, you can be faithful even as a slave.

At the same time, I want you to notice in verse 21, Paul says, if you can be made free, rather use it. This shows us that faithfulness isn't fatalism. Faithfulness isn't saying, well, here I am and I'll never be anything different.

And there's no point in trying to advance myself or change my situation. Well, no, you certainly can. You'd be faithful where you're at, and if the door is open or if God makes you able to press on and change your situation, well, then you do it.

You see, being faithful as a single person doesn't mean that, well, I'll never be married. Not at all. And that can apply to so many other different stations of life.

The principle is plain, though, and he makes it very clear there in verse 24, where he says, brethren, let each one remain with God in that calling with which he was called. Married or unmarried. Circumcised or uncircumcised.

Slave or free. Employer or employee. God wants you to be faithful right where you're at.

Now, I want to touch on just a few more principles of faithfulness from different passages of scripture before we conclude this morning. And you don't need to turn to these passages, but I'll just describe them to you, and you can look them up on your own during this week as you dig a little bit deeper in the message. The first principle is from Matthew chapter twenty five.

The parable of the talents and the real principle there is that God wants us to understand that faithfulness is rewarded. You remember the parable of the talents, don't you? That was when Jesus described the story where a man went away to a far country and he entrusted different amounts of money to different servants of his. And so he gave some to one servant and some to a second service and some to a third servant.

And he went away on his trip and while he was away, they were supposed to invest and do all the rest with it. And when he came back, he required an accounting of them. And the first two servants did very well.

The third servant did poorly. But you understand what Jesus said that the man said to the two servants who did well. This is what he said to him.

He said, You've been faithful over a few things. I'll make you ruler over many things. Jesus said your faithfulness will be rewarded.

I will reward you for your faithfulness. And sometimes you just have to trust God on that, because oftentimes your faithfulness will not be rewarded by other people. Your faithfulness will not be honored by other people.

But God in heaven promises to reward it. And he will either on this earth or in the age to come. You can count on it.

Remember what Jesus said that the master said to those servants when he blessed them, when he praised them for their their work on his behalf? He said, well done, good and faithful servant. You see, that's what the master looked for in the servants, not primarily success. He looked for goodness and faithfulness.

Whatever successes they were, it came because they were good and faithful. Don't you want to hear that from the Lord when you get to heaven? Well done, good and faithful servant. And I'm sure that there will be some they get to heaven and they'll expect to hear those words from God.

You know, Lord, look at the great things that I accomplished in your name. Look at all the great things I did. And God will say, well, yeah, but you know, you weren't faithful as a husband.

You weren't faithful as a father. What about that? Well, you know, Lord, I had more important things to do. And God says, no.

I've called you to be faithful in those areas, too. That's just as much your calling is just as much your ministry as anything else. So be faithful in those things.

You know, the Bible prizes faithfulness so much. It says that faithfulness is the basis on which God will give us more. Jesus said in Luke chapter 16, he who is faithful in least is faithful also in much.

And he who is unjust in what is least is also unjust in much. He said, if you have not been faithful in what's another man's, who will give you what's your own? In other words, God says, be faithful. Be faithful in what I give you.

And God says, I'll reward you, I'll entrust you more. Or how about First Corinthians chapter four, verse two? It says, moreover, it's required in servants that one be found faithful. When God looks for leaders, what does he look for? One of the great things he looks for is faithfulness.

Paul said to Timothy in Second Timothy, chapter two, verse two, and the things that you've heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Look for faithful men, Paul told Timothy. That's what you want to look for.

And we'll be faithful even in the little things, in the calling that God has given them. Look for faithful men. You know, when we look at the kind of resume that Paul said we should look for, for leaders in the church, we find this in First Timothy and in Titus, he doesn't say, find the most gifted person you can find.

He doesn't say, look for the spectacular, look for that really charismatic guy that everybody just loves. Paul never said that. He said, look for character.

And he said, look for faithfulness. Faithfulness in the home, faithfulness as a husband, faithfulness as a parent. Those are the places you want to look.

So the Bible is filled with examples of great faithfulness in small things, rewarded with greater blessing and opportunity. You know, God wants to bless you. And so he's put something in front of you right now.

Well, this is much. This isn't much. I can't do much with this.

You know, you be faithful in it and God will bless you with more. You know, Joseph. Oh, he was faithful in great adversity, right? Faithful in the pit.

Faithful in the prison. Faithful in Potiphar's house. And God rose him up to give him the second place of power in a superpower nation.

You think of Moses. Moses was faithful as a shepherd and then he was made leader of a nation. David was faithful as a shepherd and God made him a king.

Daniel was faithful even in what he ate and he was made second in the kingdom in the mightiest empire on the earth at that time. I think in the New Testament, the book of Acts, Stephen was faithful as a deacon

and God gave him the honor of being the first Christian martyr. You can't get away from God's call to be faithful.

Now, a couple of final points. And for one of them, I want you to turn to First Timothy, chapter one. First Timothy, chapter one.

Next week, we begin talking about the call to fruitfulness. And what I'm going to focus on next week is the special assignment that God has given you in his kingdom. God created you for a special reason.

He didn't make a mistake when he made you. With all of your unique abilities and experiences and all that, God has a special assignment for you in his kingdom. And most of us sense that.

You probably sense that this morning. There's probably maybe even an ache in you to say, I want to know what that is and I want to fulfill it. What is that special assignment you have for me in your kingdom, God? What is it? I want to fulfill it.

Well, you need to know that faithfulness is required before you can fulfill your special assignment. You can't really fulfill that special place that God has for you in his kingdom, in his work, until you're already fulfilling the call to faithfulness. It's shown so clearly here in First Timothy, chapter one, verse twelve.

And I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has enabled me because he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. Do you long to know the special assignment that God has for you in his kingdom? Do you really want to come to the place of great fruitfulness for God and his kingdom? Well, friends, let me ask you a question first. Can God count you faithful? Maybe you're running ahead of things.

Maybe you're thinking about the special assignment that God has you and you're really fixed on that and you're not being faithful, right? Where God has put you as a husband, as a mother, as a wife, as a father, whatever spheres he's put you in. You know, because you can't let ministry, you can't let that special assignment get in the way of basic faithfulness. You know, that's something I have to try and work hard to remember all the time.

Sometimes it's easy to leave what you might consider to be the more mundane things of everyday faithfulness in favor of things that seem to be more special. But you know what? They're not more special at all. What's really honoring to God and special to him is faithfulness in the spheres that he's put us in, the calling that he's given us.

That's where we need to show it first. And then out of that can grow wonderful fulfillment of the special ministry or assignment that God has given us. Now, what if you're listening to me this morning and you sense an almost overwhelming feeling of guilt? Because honestly, you're not being terribly faithful.

You're thinking on the job. No. As a spouse in your marriage.

Not really. As a single person. No, I'm not.

You know, I'm not being faithful to God there. And as a child or as a parent. You know, it's possible here for somebody to leave with an almost enormous burden of guilt.

Let me just, in conclusion, ask you to discern between conviction and condemnation. Conviction draws you to God. God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

I'm not where I should be, but I want to be Lord. You come and make me right before you in these areas. That's conviction.

Condemnation, it's very different. Condemnation says you can't come to God. Well, he doesn't want to have you around.

Look at you. You're such a filthy sinner. Don't even come near him.

Oh, I don't mind if you're convicted by the Holy Spirit this morning. Say, Lord, I'm sorry for these places in my life where I'm really not doing well in faithfulness. Make me faithful.

That's fine. But let no one leave here condemned by the devil. Now, this is a struggle for every one of us.

Friends, it's just another step in this great path to fruitfulness. You wait. You don't even know how great your life can be until you fulfill the very purpose that God created you in your unique way for your special place in his kingdom.

That's going to give you such a sense of fulfillment in your life. But you have to go through the right building blocks and you have to be faithful first. Let's pray together and ask God to work these things in us.

As I pray in just a moment, I'm going to give a silent moment where I want you to speak to God. I want you to pour out your heart silently before him. And if you need to be forgiven, then ask God for forgiveness.

Don't don't beat yourself up over the past, but don't try to justify it either. Be honest before God and then move on to what he has for you. Father, I pray.

I pray that you would make us a faithful people unto you. Lord, you put us in different arenas of life. And how easy it is, Lord, to think that something might be better if our situation was changed.

You know, Lord. You're the same yesterday, today and forever. Jesus, you don't change when our situation changes.

Help us to look to you. And to glorify you. And to honor you with our faithfulness right here where you've called us right now.

We want to bring you glory, Lord. And we know that you're glorified through our faithfulness. So, Father, I pray that you would speak to hearts right now.

And in the next silent moments, that you would lead people to be honest with you and real before you. And get it right before you and receive the strength to move on in faithfulness. Jesus, won't you hear the prayers of your people? You've heard hearts crying out to you, Jesus, for forgiveness, for strength, for a change of attitude.

Lord, please answer those prayers from your people here this morning. We want what you want, Lord. So pour it out upon us for your glory.

And by your grace. We pray it, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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