

Series: 1 Corinthians
Title: God is Faithful
Text: 1 Cor 1: 4-9
Date: May 28, 2015
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

If left to ourselves, every believer knows we would certainly fall away. But if God has begun a work of grace in us, God will finish it. This was Paul's confidence for the Corinthians. And it is his word to us.

1 Corinthians 1: 9: God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul did not say, "You are faithful." Paul did not say, "You have faithful ministers." Paul says, "God is faithful." All who persevere in faith unto the end, will do so because God is faithful.

We will look at God's faithfulness in three ways: 1) God's faithfulness in calling us to faith in Christ; 2) God's faithfulness in confirming us in Christ; 3) God's faithfulness to preserve us unto the end in Christ

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN CALLING US

By whom did you begin trusting Christ? Paul said, "God is faithful: by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor 1: 9)

Many speak of how they began in faith by something they did. Whoever thinks they began in faith by something they did have not yet begun in the faith. Faith trusts God's work, not our own. We would not want to begin by something we did because then it would be up to us alone to continue in the faith.

All God's true children begin in the faith the same way, "God is faithful: by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." There are various things that may differ in the way we were called. But God is the Alpha—the Beginning—the Giver—"by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son." So all the glory for our beginning in faith goes—not unto us—but to God alone—"God is faithful: by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

Can you confess it was by the faithfulness of God alone that you began in the faith?

When I was dead in sin, my whole being was enmity against God. The mention of the scriptures made me uncomfortable. I went to church but I did not want to; I could not hear or understand or believe. The scriptures were a locked book. I opposed the truth with my own vain reasoning. I had no love for God the Father or his Son, no love for his gospel and no love for his people.

But at some point, as the gospel was preached, God spoke into my heart, "Lazarus, come forth!" I had lots of grave clothes but I began to hear. I began to see my sin and inability. I began to see my need of the Savior. In time, God called me unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ! I met him who is my Peace! But none of it was because of me, it was God who called me and taught me.

Do you remember when God first began to call you, believer? Was it of you or of God? All God's true children give God the glory for calling us into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Remember, Paul's purpose of declaring this is to remind us that God is faithful. By his faithfulness he called you into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, by his faithfulness God will keep us until the end.

In the very beginning, what caused God to call you to faith in Christ? Back up in verse 4, Paul said, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you...” (1 Cor 1: 4)

Did God foresee any merit in you that caused God to call you? Did God foresee you would believe therefore God called you? If we think we were called because God foresaw something in us then we are trusting in our works rather than the grace of God.

All God’s true children begin in faith by “the grace of God which is given you...” That was such a profitable message Brother Donnie preached on “The Nature of Grace.” God’s grace is free—not based on anything in us. We sinned and deserve nothing but condemnation. God’s grace is sovereign—God chooses whom he will and passes by whom he will. God’s grace is irresistible—none can resist his grace and God’s grace makes you not want to resist his grace.

Brethren, if there was absolutely nothing in you to cause God to call you to faith in Christ then it will be by grace that God keeps you—because God is faithful who called you by his grace.

By whom did God give you grace? Paul wrote, “the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor 1: 4)

God chose his Son and his people in his Son and God sent him forth to represent us. Christ finished the work. So God is just to give his elect all his blessings of free grace.

Is God just to charge you with unrighteousness and ungodliness? Yes. We were in Adam when he broke God’s law so we broke God’s law—unrighteousness. We were conceived of Adam so we are born with Adam’s ungodly nature—ungodliness.

But God’s grace is given to us by Jesus Christ. God’s elect were in Christ when he fulfilled the law and made it honorable so in Christ we fulfilled the law and made it honorable—righteousness. Our Holy Redeemer is formed in our hearts when we are born-again so we have his holy nature—called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord—holiness. So in the court of our conscious, when God charges the believer with righteousness and holiness, God is just because we have been made the righteousness and holiness of God in Christ by Christ. God did not pretend when he charged us with unrighteousness and ungodliness—it is what Adam made us by his disobedience. So God is not pretending when he declares us righteous and holy—it is what Christ made us by his obedience.

Do you rest, believing on Christ, trusting that all God’s grace is given us in Christ Jesus by Christ Jesus? If you believe it is because God called you by the grace given you by Christ Jesus. And for the sake of his Son, he will not lose one for whom Christ died. The blood of his Son is too precious. His glory and justice is too high and too holy. “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO CONFIRM THE GOSPEL IN US

This is the second way we see God’s faithfulness. God was faithful to confirm the gospel in us. By the same grace, from the beginning until now, Paul says, “in every thing ye are enriched by him,...” (1 Cor 1: 5)

Imagine creating a new man out of nothing. That is what God does when he creates us anew. So “in every thing ye are enriched by him.” “What do you have that you did not receive?” God gave us everything.

Remember, Paul is not telling us to look to our gifts for assurance. He is saying look to the faithfulness of the Giver, “in every thing ye are enriched by him,...”

Let's begin where our experience of grace begins, "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift." (1 Cor 1: 6-7)

God confirmed (established, made firm, made sure) the testimony (the gospel) of Christ in us—individually and in us as his local church. This "confirming" means God established the testimony of Christ in us, enriching us with gifts, so that he made it evident that he truly made us rest in Christ.

God confirmed the gospel of Christ in us, enriching us with the gift of faith and repentance. "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph 2:7-9) This gift of faith, like all others, was given by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5: 31)

Through faith God enriched us with the gifts of eternal justification, eternal redemption, eternal life, eternal inheritance and all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Along with these gifts, he gave us the greatest most lasting of all gifts—love. He made us effectually love God our Savior and love one another.

By giving us repentance and faith and love and many other gifts of grace, God confirmed in us his faithfulness, his power, his grace, his love and his righteousness in Christ. He made his salvation firm and sure in our hearts.

Also, God was faithful to confirm the gospel of Christ in us by giving us the tongue of the learned? "Ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge." (1 Cor 1: 5) Later we will see how many great apostolic gifts God gave the Corinthian church. But you and I could not have confessed Christ publicly or bore witness of him to anyone until God faithfully gave us the gift of utterance. We were too ashamed to speak of Christ, now we are not. We did not know the power of the gospel of Christ, now we do.

So as we have received mercy, so we speak! It was this faithfulness of God confirming the gospel in our hearts that makes us preach the gospel in simplicity and truth and wait on God to work in the hearts of his people. Paul experienced this confirming power of God's faithfulness that is why Paul preached Christ and waited on God. He said, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor 2: 4-5)

We could not have believed on Christ in our hearts until God gave us the gift of "the knowledge of Jesus Christ" in spirit and in truth. (1 Cor 1: 5) But when Christ the Truth was formed in us, then Christ was made unto us Wisdom. God gave us the mind of Christ. Now we understand and speak the truth

1 Corinthians 2: 6: Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:... 12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13: Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The point is this: by confirming the gospel in our hearts and giving us these gifts, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself". (1Jo 5:10) Now, we know him that is true because Christ revealed to us is now "Christ dwelling in us." By his quickening, sanctifying power "Christ in you is the hope of glory." He is "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Let me illustrate this confirmation of the gospel in us. Life proves itself. We do not question the reality of our physical life. We know we live by living. We think, feel, breathe, move therefore we know we are alive. So it is spiritually, by the faithfulness of God, God has confirmed the gospel in our hearts, demonstrating Christ's power "to give eternal life to as many as God has given him." Only God by his faithfulness could give us this life and these gifts of the Spirit. So we rest in Christ, preach his word and wait on God to work the same power in the hearts of his redeemed.

Now, for all who believe, apply this to God's faithfulness to keep us unto the end. Believer, by God's faithfulness "ye come behind in no gift." (1 Cor 1: 7) From the beginning until now, think of what God has given you and made you. You are justified—there is not one sin to be found against you past, present or future by the all-seeing eye of God. The righteousness of Christ clothes you from head to toe so that God cannot see one spot in you. You are a son of God: his heir and a joint-heir with Christ. You are immortal!

And God has continued to enrich us so that we have no lack of anything. He grows us in faith, grows us in hope, grows us in the grace and knowledge of Christ, grows us in all spiritual blessings. This is all by God's faithfulness. We begin in the Spirit and continue by the same Spirit. We are not made perfect by the flesh. We continue the same way we began—by Christ our Strength by God's faithfulness!

You say, "Why then do I sometimes have doubts and fears?" Usually, it is from seeking assurance in ourselves and in our gifts rather than in the faithful Giver. Our gifts are given to us "according to the measure of the gift of Christ." If he gave us a full measure of gifts, our assurance would be our gifts and we would strut around like peacocks and forget the Giver. But he gives us only a measure so that we will never find assurance looking to our gifts. Peter said, "if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet 1: 8) Note he said "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Likewise, Paul is reminding us that by confirming the gospel in us and giving us these gifts to rest in Christ and bear witness of Christ, God has given us a sure confirmation that God is Faithful in Christ, by Christ and for the sake of Christ.

Do you believe on Christ more now than in the beginning? Do you love Christ more? Do you love your brethren more? One reason is because God is Faithful! God has continued to confirm us up to this very hour! "In everything ye are enriched by him" right now, "even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you" in the beginning.

2 Timothy 1: 7: For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but [when he confirmed the gospel in us, God gave us the spirit] of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. [we learned that God is faithful and powerful and able to save to the uttermost] 8: Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9: Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10: But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, [in the world and in our hearts by the confirmation of the gospel in us] who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: [both on the cross and by confirming the gospel in our hearts he has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. I am immortal in Christ!] 11: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I

know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO CONFIRM US UNTO THE END

Lastly, Paul assures us of God's faithfulness to confirm us unto the end, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 1: 8)

There is no repentance in God toward his child. In the first point, we saw God's faithfulness in our calling then God's faithfulness in giving us gifts as he confirmed the gospel in us. Do you know what God says about his calling and his gifts? "The gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance." (Ro 11:29) God promised, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (Hos 13: 14)

God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ are not only the Alpha, he is the Omega; not only the Author of our faith, he is the Finisher. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ." (Php 1:6) Every true child of God shall be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1Pe 1:5)

Spurgeon said, "True religion is supernatural at its beginning, supernatural in its continuance, and supernatural in its close."

Now, let me say this. This preservation by God will only be enjoyed by those in whom the grace of God has begun. It would be terrible to give a sinner a false hope while in his sin or in a false profession. If God has called you and you truly believe on Christ now. Right now, Christ is all your salvation by God's grace. But you are discouraged because you do not think God called you back when you first confessed Christ then if you believe on Christ now stop hanging on to an old profession, repent from it, be baptized and follow Christ in faith.

For you who have begun by grace, God's inward working shall make "Babes" be grown to be "fathers" in Christ. God will deliver us from being "unstable as water" and cause us to be more and more "rooted and grounded" in Christ. He shall "build us up in Christ" more and more. He promises to make us as a "tree planted by the rivers of waters" preserved by his hand so that even our "leaf shall not wither."

Believer, hope for these things but hope for them by God's faithfulness, by God's gift of grace, not by your works or the production of your own hand. Our flesh is a hindrance and dark valleys lie ahead. We have a sinful world to contend with and death awaits us. We must all stand before God in that great day. But for all who are truly called by God, we have the word of our faithful God that the same God and Father, by the same grace, by the same Lord Jesus Christ, "shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is our assurance "God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1Co 1:9)

Amen!