

## 8. God's faithfulness and mercy

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All the worries of the believers come from our doubts in God's faithfulness. Either we are worrying that God may not do the things and the ways we want or we just don't trust that God is capable to do what He has promised.

Non-believers don't have a whole lot of choices. Because they don't have anything or anyone to depend on except themselves and the economy that is worse than a schizophrenic psycho patient. But for the believers of Christ, we should not worry. Jesus told us not to worry for tomorrow in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke for 7 times.

If I may remind ourselves, the Israelites wondered around in the wilderness for forty years because they didn't believe God and worried about their future so much that all two million people exception of two, Joshua and Caleb, died there. It is not that God killed them in the wilderness, but their unbelief and worry did. Worry is a sin. Those who worries will never enjoy the fullness of God's faithfulness. It is their choice.

Our God remains faithful while we are unfaithful. He always keeps His promises no matter what, even though we fail to keep our promises to Him and to each others. Over 7700 promises of God are recorded in the Bible. He kept them the majority of them and He will keep the rest.

Let's study the faithfulness of God and His mercy.

### A. STARTING ALL OVER AGAIN

*Genesis 9:1-4 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.*

God gave Noah the same kind of mandate He gave Adam in the beginning of creation, since Noah essentially began all over again.

Since man is now allowed to eat animals, God would help the animals. Because man did not look to them as food before. For their protection God put in them a fear of mankind. Additionally, God forbids man from the consuming of blood of animals.

Some of you guys are good hunters. More power to you. I have a great spot where I can the meat I want exactly. Safeway.

*Genesis 9:5-7 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it."*

For the first time in the Bible, the capital punishment is ordered by God to as a form of a punishment against murderers.

In its original languages the Bible makes a distinction between killing and murder. Not all killing is murder, because there are cases where there is just cause for killing, such as self-defense or soldiers' killings during the time of war. And there are other instances where killing is accidental. This is killing, but not murder.

The Bible also consistently teaches God gives the government the right of capital punishment.

I am amazed at how the attitude of the present generation has gotten away from the Bible. We do not have a Bible-oriented country anymore. It is almost totally ignorant of the Word of God. As a result, we find many liberal left wing judges, crooked lawyers and liberal democrat politicians all wanting to get rid of capital punishment. They have succeeded in many cases. At the same time we have a tremendous increase in crime. Thank you very much, liberals.

Some of the criminals could care less about killing people. To them, it is nothing more than a collateral damage for their own criminal activities. Although I know that many people, especially those who are liberals, would disagree with this capital punishment. When a criminal knows that if he takes a life, his life is going to be executed justly and promptly, then he'll think twice before he takes a life. Also, there is an idea today about making a tougher gun-control law. The problem is not with the gun in the hand, it is with the heart inside the man. By the way, the true gun control is using two handed Weaver Stance.

## **B. GOD'S FIRST COVENANT AND A SIGN**

*Genesis 9:8-17 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

God used the rainbow as a sign to Noah and all generations including us that He would be faithful to His covenant. His purpose is that He will not again destroy the earth with a flood. The next time His judgment of the earth will be by fire. We find that stated in 2 Peter 3:10.

*2 Pet. 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

Every time we see a rainbow, we should remember the faithfulness of God and all the His promises He kept. He even says His covenant of peace with us is just as sure as His covenant with Noah and all generations.

If the promise of God to the mankind is not good enough, we find that the Lord put His rainbow very close to Himself. We find an evidence in Rev 4:3.

*Rev. 4:3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.*

However, the rainbow is not for God to remember His promise with us, because our God never forgets anything. But it is a reminder to the mankind as a sign of God's faithfulness.

About ten years ago, my family was going through a real difficult time in our finance. The bills were stacking up against us faster than we could pay. On one hot humid summer day right after a stormy rain, I was driving to home from work in my little car which broke down so often on the streets. At the traffic light of Golf Links and Kolb in Tucson, I was praying to the Lord for His help in our finance. Do you know what the Lord said to me in my heart? He didn't tell me that He would send me a bundle of money to solve all my financial problems on that afternoon, nor giving me the grand prize lottery ticket number. But when my eyes caught a bright rainbow, He reminded me this very portion of the Scripture and told me, "I am faithful." It was not an instant solution that I was looking for. But it was an encouragement and reminder of His faithfulness that would last my lifetime.

### **C. DRUNK AS A SKUNK**

*Genesis 9:18-23 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.*

This is the first mention of drunkenness in the Bible. Noah's own sinful and shameful actions show the foolishness of drunkenness.

Speaking of a foolishness of drunkenness, there was a false teacher within the ranks of Christian leaders who claimed God's desire is to make people "drunk in the spirit" through the work of a "Holy Ghost Bartender" which is himself. The verse they often quoted was completely misquoted and out of contexts.

*Eph. 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

Alcohol is a depressant. It "loosens" people because it depresses their self-control, their wisdom, their balance and judgment. The filling of the Holy Spirit has an exactly opposite effect. He is a stimulant, and He influences every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance. He brings glory to the Father in heaven through us when we are obedient to Him.

This is repulsive, but not terribly surprising. Many people who get drunk become victims and aggressors of abuse, sexual and otherwise. 75% of the men and 55% of the women involved in date-rape situations were drinking or taking drugs just before the attack. The FBI says 50% of all rapes involve alcohol.

There are more costs to drunkenness. In the United States 100,000 people die each year in alcohol-related deaths, while alcohol abuse costs the nation hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Still, the average American television viewer sees 90,000 incidents of drinking on television by age 21 and 100,000 beer commercials by age 18.

I don't think that it is necessary for me to quote any more national statistics of the damage by alcoholism. I am absolutely positive that many of us are affected by those who are our alcoholic family members or relatives.

I am going to talk about something rather hitting closer to home. If you are a born-again Christian, why is it necessary for you to drink alcohol? You may come up some flimsy excuses why you need to drink. You might even say that Jesus made wine at the wedding banquet and apostle Paul told Timothy to drink some wine. Jesus made wines not to embarrass the bridegroom at the banquet and Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake since the water in that area were bad quality.

I don't believe that many of you have to provide beverage for any of the wedding parties at the last moment or cannot find a bottle of drinking water in grocery stores. If you want to drink alcohol because you want it, just say so.

I am not saying that you don't have a liberty in Christ to drink alcohols. You do. But would drinking beer or wine bring glory to Christ? If you have been in the Lord for some time, and let's say there is a new believer near by your home. And he sees you buying a six pack of Rocky Mountain Pee Water Coors. The new believer thinks that you mature Christian is drinking beer, so he justifies a six pack for himself. You might be able to control how much you drink, but he may not. Then you are making your brother to stumble. That is a sin.

*1Cor. 8:13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.*

Besides, do you think that your Christian testimony would be convincing if you have a can of beer or a glass of wine in your hand and witnessing to a non-believer? I think NOT, nor unbelievers.

Just for your info, all of our church leadership is strongly encouraged to not to drink or smoke or chew. In future, if the Lord willing, we get to have church staff, they'd better not drink any alcohol or smoke or chew tobacco. Because they will be fired on the spot. I expect them to be examples, not stumbling blocks to others.

What did happened to the righteous Noah? According to the Bible he was righteous before this sin, and the NT tells us that he was a Preacher of righteousness. Why did he become a stark naked drunkard? It shows us that anyone can fall into sin.

It is easier for someone who has been in the Lord for a long time to get into sin than someone who is brand new in the Lord. When we are new in the faith, we usually

have guards up and try very hard to please the Lord in every way. But when we get used to with what we are doing, it is not surprising to see some of veteran believers to get involved with sins. A little compromise here, a little compromise there, pretty soon there is a big crash.

Ham was having a some spiritual perverse satisfaction that made him to enjoy in his father's sins. I guess he thought he was such a ham to do this. Literally, the ancient Hebrew says that Ham "told with delight" what he saw in his father's tent. He determined to mock his father and undermine his authority as a man of God.

*Genesis 9:24-29 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." And he said: "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem, And may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant." And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.*

Perhaps the strongest punishment against Ham was for Noah to reveal the destiny of his son Canaan prophetically. We can trust God is not punishing the son, Canaan, for the sin of the father Ham. This goes against the heart and justice of God in Ezekiel 18:2-3. However, through Noah's prophecy, God tells Ham what will happen to his son. It is not the generational curse which is another false doctrine within Christianity.

Some prejudiced people regarded the descendants of Canaan as black people from Africa, and they used the curse on Canaan from this verse to justify slavery and racial prejudice. When it comes to the colors of the skin, God is a very much color blind. He is a God of all races and loves them all equally.

## **E. APPLICATIONS**

**1) God never forgets us even though the circumstances seem to tell us that He is not with us.**

Our God is faithful to complete what He started to work in us and it is His promise is that He will never leave us nor forsakes us.

**2) Do you feel that you have spiritual pride and perverse satisfaction when you hear Christian leaders fall? We should not. We should pray for them and learn from their sins.**

Because none of us are immune to sin. We are all capable to do the exact same thing or worse. Galatians 6:1

**3) If we think that we can handle sin, we are making a grave mistake.**

That is exactly what satan wants us to think. He wants us to flirt with sin, he wants us to dabble with the things we should not even come close. If you've been doing that, stop it now before it gets worse. Submit yourselves to God and resist the devil, he will flee from you.