

GOD IS FAITHFUL

IN ALL THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE

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GOD IS FAITHFUL

- THE BIBLE TELLS THE UNFOLDING STORY OF GOD'S ETERNAL FAITHFULNESS...
 - Beginning with creation and the Fall
 - The covenant with Abraham
 - The Passover
 - The rise, fall and restoration of Israel
 - The recurring promises of a Messiah

GOD'S STORY CONTINUES:

- The birth, life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ
- The growth and development of the Christian Church
- Final fulfillment of the unfolding story in Jesus' Second Coming

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- Exodus 34:6 (God describing His nature to Moses):
 - “And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness’.”
- Lamentations 3:22-23:
 - “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

GOD IS FAITHFUL

- 1 Corinthians 1:9:
 - “God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:13:
 - ..”.And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

- God's faithfulness is also witnessed in the daily challenges of our individual lives
- But we often get bogged down in the details of life and sometimes overlook God's love and grace given to us so abundantly each and every day

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ME...

- I am a lifelong Christian
- Gail and I have been happily married for 48 years and have attended SPC since 1983
- We have been greatly blessed with three children, four grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and many friends
- I retired in early 2019 after a long career with a single law firm

BUT I ALSO HAVE STRUGGLED ...

- With prayer for others and daily Bible study
- With worry, impatience, pride, anger, stubbornness, etc.
- In prioritizing projects over people
- In short I am a sinner
- Did God give up on me? NO!!!

GOD IS FAITHFUL...LESSON ONE: PRAYER

- For years I struggled with following through on my desire to pray for the needs of others
- God answered my prayer that He would remind me of those needs the next morning so that I could pray during my commute
- The next day (and every day since) God has focused me on that prayer and it is now a daily part of my life

GOD IS FAITHFUL...LESSON TWO:BIBLE STUDY

- I also struggled with daily Bible study
- God intervened through a sermon by Pastor Eric and a legal conference in Israel
- Biblical sites became even more “real” to me and daily Bible study is now a joy not an obligation
- Each time I read through the Bible God brings new books to “life” for me--Job, Philemon, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, Proverbs, James and Jeremiah

GOD IS FAITHFUL...LESSON THREE--HUMILITY

- The more I study the Bible, the more I realize how much more I have to learn
- God also continues to work on my “active listening” skills and on increasing my focus on others
- I remain a work in process...

GOD IS FAITHFUL...LESSON FOUR: INVEST IN PEOPLE OVER PROJECTS

- Projects used to dominate my focus
- God changed me through a secular resource
 - I was mentored in the art of network marketing of legal services
 - This involved meeting new people, telling them my story, listening to their story and learning their business needs, solving their problems and becoming their friend
 - This perspective has changed my life

GOD IS FAITHFUL... LESSON FIVE: CELEBRATE MILESTONES

- I used to go from project to project without reflection
- God has totally changed my perspective especially with the births of our grandchildren
- Now we seek out every new opportunity to celebrate

- GOD IS FAITHFUL...LESSON SIX:FINISHING WELL

- I have always focused on finishing each project well
- I have reflected much on this topic in my transition to retirement
- I now realize it is a much wider subject

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN ILLNESS--

A GREAT SETTING FOR SPIRITUAL
LESSONS AND BLESSINGS

MY STORY

2016-2017: Part One

- Prostate cancer
- Surgery
- Cancer began to migrate
- Radiation followed

2019: Part Two

- Possible partial intestinal blockage
- Surgery went well
- My digestive system stayed “asleep”
- Readmitted for several days of tests and observation

LESSON ONE: Our Earthly Life Is Fleeting

- We are promised no tomorrow here on earth
- James 4:14-15:

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that”.

- We should live each day to the fullest

LESSON TWO: We Are Not In Control

- I like to feel in control
- Human control over our lives is purely illusory
- God is in control of everything, including the smallest details
 - Luke 12:6-7- Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.
- We should seek to move ever closer to God

LESSON THREE: Bible Study And Prayer Constitute Our Lifeline To God

- I began to understand 1 Thessalonians 5:16 in a deeper way:

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- Seek God in the small stuff as well as the big stuff
- Your world shrinks to the size of your hospital room

LESSON THREE: Bible Study And Prayer Constitute Our Lifeline To God

- James 1;2-4:

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

- The right message at the right time for me

LESSON FOUR: It Is Really Hard Not To Worry

- The medical journey can seem never ending
- The daily challenges and new problems often worried me
 - Medical answers can be illusory
- Trusting God means trusting Him through all of the details, daily challenges and decisions
- It is a continuing challenge and I am still learning

LESSON FIVE: God's Daily Blessings Continue

- Lamentations 3:23: Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each morning.
- God continues to shower us with blessings, even on our “worst” days
- We must keep our focus on God
- God delivers us in, not necessarily from, our trials

A Small Sampling of God's Blessings to Me

- My cancer was treatable and did not reach my bones or lymph nodes
- Both surgeries were successful and without infection
- God sent me the messages I needed at the times I most needed them
- I am now cancer-free
- My digestion has returned to normal

LESSON SIX: Among God's Greatest Blessings Are The People He Places In Our Life

- Medical professionals
- Fellow patients
- Caregivers of many kinds
- People with helpful advice and words of encouragement
- People want to help if you let them
- Don't go through your medical journey in private
- Don't be uncomfortable accepting help

LESSON SEVEN: It Is Important To Pay It Forward

- Seek out opportunities to help others experiencing the same conditions
- Be available to answer questions, provide assistance and tell your story
- God regularly brings such people to my attention

DON'T FOCUS ON THE WRONG QUESTIONS

- Throughout the book of Job, Job and his “friends” focus on questions such as:
 - Why me?
 - Why this?
 - Why now?
- In his book Where Is God When It Hurts, Philip Yancey makes the following observations:

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTION

“Suffering involves two main issues: (1) cause...and (2) response. By instinct, most of us want to figure out the cause of our pain before we decide how to respond. But God does not allow Job that option....As for Job, he has only one thing to worry about. God never explained the origin of Job’s suffering, but rather moved to focus on the future...He (Job) needed to exercise responsibility in his response, the one area he, and not God, had control over.”