**GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS**

Sunday School Lesson 2

*Lessons from the Hymnbook*

Lamentations 3:18-23

10/16/2022

**Introduction:** In our first lesson from the hymnbook, we looked at the song “Amazing Grace.” We observed what the song teaches us about the grace of the Lord. We noted how God’s grace is amazing because it brings about salvation, teaches us proper fear, brings us safely through life’s difficulties, reveals to us the goodness of God, and never diminishes. In this week’s lesson, we are going to be examining the Biblical teaching found in the song “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.” The song was first written as a poem in 1923 by a man who was a life insurance agent in New Jersey. He submitted the poem to a well-known music composer who set the poem to music in Baldwin City, Kansas. The song’s theme is the faithfulness of God, and it was clearly written with Lamentations 3:18-23 in mind. That statement – great is thy faithfulness – is found word for word in verse 23. Certainly, the faithfulness of the Lord is great. In Revelation 19:11, we see that the very name of the Lord is Faithful. His faithfulness is worthy of our praise and adoration in song. Psalm 89 is an example of a song that is all about the wonderful faithfulness of the Lord. The psalmist says in verse 1 that with his mouth, he will make known God’s faithfulness to all generations. We ought to sing this song with the same heartfelt thought in mind. Let’s consider some thoughts about God’s faithfulness that will help us to direct our praise to certain Biblical teachings.

1. **GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IS GREAT BECAUSE THERE IS NO SHADOW OF TURNING.**

* The expression *shadow of turning* comes from James 1:17. The Bible says: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. This expression is making a comparison between the Lord and the sun. The sun’s shadow of turning causes changes in our weather. We do not get light from the sun at all hours of the day. When it comes to the Lord, though, He is a constant light. His light never dims. There is never any darkness that comes from Him. Since there is no variableness in Him, then there is no way for His light to ever diminish. Thus, there is never any change from His goodness. This amplifies just how great His faithfulness is. He is always faithful to do good. It also speaks to the means of His faithfulness. The fact that the Lord never changes inclines us to understand that He must then be faithful in all things. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). The same God that we serve is the God that the saints of old prayed to and served. He does not change with the times. His goodness and light are not dictated by the darkness of this present hour.

1. **GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IS GREAT BECAUSE HIS COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT.**

* The Lord is faithful in His compassion toward us. The Bible tells us there in Lamentations 3:22 that His compassions fail not. Remember that the book of Lamentations is the book of weeping by the prophet of God over the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Jeremiah did not seemingly have much good to consider in his day. He was living in dark times. He was a firsthand witness to the chastening hand of God toward His people. He tried to warn them, but they did not listen. Jeremiah was in great mourning over his nation. In the first 20 verses of chapter 3, Jeremiah speaks to how bad things were. He speaks of being in darkness in verse two. He speaks of a frail body in verse four. He speaks of being stuck without any help in verses seven through nine. He speaks of his teeth being broken with gravel in verse sixteen. Yet, at the conclusion of this, he turns to speak to the faithfulness of God. It was this thought of God’s faithfulness that got him through the situation. He remembered that the Lord was compassionate. He knew that the quality of the Lord had not changed, despite His chastening hand upon Judah. Jeremiah trusted (vs. 32) that the Lord’s compassion would continue upon His people. It is good to know and remember when we get ourselves in trouble that God is faithful in His compassion.

1. **GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IS GREAT BECAUSE HE HAS NOT ABANDONED HIS CREATION.**

* Psalm 19 speaks to the handiwork of the Lord in His creation. The seasons and general creation of the Lord both are witnesses to His faithfulness. He has not abandoned His creation. Although we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain (Romans 8:22) because of the wickedness that is in the world, God still allows for more time for this world. He still keeps all of the seasons moving forward in their proper order. He does not take a break from caring for this world. One day, He will make things right by destroying this creation and creating a new heaven and new earth. Creation knows God’s faithfulness. The Bible speaks about the stones crying out in testimony of the Lord (Luke 19:40). All of creation understands the Creator and His faithfulness (Romans 1:20). Imagine creating something that continues to defy you and turn away from you. How long would you be faithful to such a creation? Would you not be inclined to destroy it quickly and move on to something new? God’s creation is without excuse because of how faithful He has been throughout all of our failures and shortcomings.

1. **GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IS GREAT BECAUSE OF HIS CONTINUAL FORGIVENESS.**

* 1 John 1:9 promises us that God is faithful to forgive us our sins. This is why we can sing of His great faithfulness and the pardon of sin and peace that endures. This goes hand in hand with the new mercies of the Lord that we sing about and see in Lamentations 3:23. His mercies are new for us every single morning. What do we need new mercy for? We need new mercy to go with new forgiveness. It is no coincidence that the Lord’s mercy and faithfulness are mentioned several times together in Scripture (Psalm 36:5; 89:1-2; Hebrews 2:17). The Lord wants us to know that His mercy is not just a one-time thing. He continues to be faithful in His mercy by offering forgiveness to all who are willing to confess our sins to Him. We are definitely thankful for the faithfulness of the Lord in His good nature, His compassion, and His care for His creation, but where would we be without the Lord’s faithfulness in His forgiveness? What if He only ever forgave us one time and then never again? Let’s be thankful that the Lord is very faithful in His forgiveness.

1. **GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IS GREAT BECAUSE OF HIS CONTINUAL PRESENCE.**

* You would be hard pressed to find more peaceful words than those spoken in Hebrews 13:5: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” The Lord is faithful to us with His presence. He is always there to guide those willing to be guided. Psalm 48:14 says, “For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” That’s faithfulness in guidance! The Lord wants to guide us continually (Isaiah 58:11). He has indwelled us with His Spirit to help to guide us every step of the way (John 16:13). He also has manifold blessings that accompany His presence. He wants to faithfully bless us. In Deuteronomy 28:2, the Lord tells the children of Israel that there are so many blessings waiting for them that they would overtake them. If we are faithful to him, He will certainly be faithful to bless us (Proverbs 28:20). We must only hearken unto the voice of the Lord. He wants to enrich us with His blessings (Proverbs 10:22). He is faithful to supply every single one of our needs that we have (Philippians 4:19). Let’s never forget how faithful the Lord is to us. Even if you do not believe, the Bible tells us that the Lord still abides faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). His faithfulness will never change. The Lord has promised much to us, and He will be faithful in that which He has promised (Hebrews 10:23).