

Sept 27, 2015



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Life is not always fair, but God is always faithful

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Trust in Him, ye saints, forever—
He is faithful, changing never;
Neither force nor guile can sever
Those He loves from Him. —
Kelly

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.
(Mark 11:22 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", Sep 19, 2007)

Series: THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY COMES ALIVE

UNIT: Giving Bold Testimony

NEXT WEEK

The Ministry of the Spirit
(Acts 8:9-24)

Remembering God's Faithfulness Acts 7:2-4,8-10,17,33-34,45-47,52-53,55

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson shows us how and why we should consistently be **Remembering God's Faithfulness**. The **study's aim** is to recognize the value of rehearsing Gods faithfulness to others. The **study's application** is to share testimonies of God's faithfulness with our family and friends.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Each of us has a story. That story explains who we are and how we came to be who we are. The story includes the tragedies and victories that have shaped us. Perhaps you can trace your story back through many generations. Parts of your story may make you swell with pride (whether of the godly or ungodly kind); parts of your story may make you cringe with shame. But whatever the details, your story makes you who you are. As Christians, the most important part of our story is that we have chosen to follow Jesus. We remember that our sins have been forgiven; we realize that we have a future in Heaven. Our individual stories are chapters within the greater story of all the people of God. Part of our chapter is the call to stand firm. Today's lesson involves an example of one who did just that.

As today's text opens, thousands already had become followers of Christ in the earliest days of the church (Acts 2:41; 4:4). Even many Jewish priests had become believers (6:7). The first-century church had taken seriously the call to be a genuine fellowship (2:42, 46) and to share with those in need (2:45; 4:32). Caring for widows was part of this; one of the seven men chosen to serve the church in that regard was Stephen (6:1-6). Stephen was involved not only in the church's benevolence ministry, he also "performed great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8). He spoke out boldly for Christ, so much so that unbelievers became hostile. A source of this hostility was "the Synagogue of the Freedmen" (6:9). There were more than 400 synagogues in Jerusalem at that time, and the membership of this one was made up largely of former slaves who had gained their freedom. False accusations began to flow when Stephen's opponents were unable to refute the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke. Ultimately, Stephen found himself being hauled up before the Sanhedrin (the ruling Jewish council) to answer these (Acts 6:11-14).

Many of us can remember from childhood the parental caution Always remember who you are! The same imperative applies to us as Christians as we face the daily challenges and temptations of life. And just who are we as Christians? Being of Christ, we are children of Abraham, the man of faith (see Galatians 3:29). As we cherish the story of Moses, we pledge our lives to the greater prophet Jesus (Acts 7:37), the Son of God who leads us in our exodus from sin-slavery. We know that the story of God's people has not always been an easy one. We know that we do not wrestle against mere flesh and blood, but "against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). We win the ultimate victory in this battle as we stand firm. We resist the devil, not God's Spirit. As we do, we join our story to the story of Christians through the centuries. The challenge is to recognize that we must stand firm in all occasions of life. Think of opposition to God in government, rejection of God in academia, or when acquaintances want to relax the standards of what is right. Whatever difficulty may arise, we are to be ready to take part in the age-old story of standing firm. There will be opposition, but standing firm for God is always the right thing to do.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN ESTABLISHING HIS KINGDOM (ACTS 7:2-4)

Establishment through revelation (2)

- Revelation of God's will (Eph 1:9)
- Revelation through the prophets (Rom 16:25-26)
- Revelation through the Church (Eph 3:10)

Establishment through guidance (3)

- Guidance that is part of God's plan for our lives (Jer 29:11)
- Guidance into truth (John 16:13-15)
- Guidance that represents I am a child of God (Rom 8:14)

Establishment through obedience (4)

- Obedience that leads to righteousness (Rom 6:16)
- Obedience that delights God (1 Sam 15:22)
- Obedience in love (2 John 1:6)

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS DURING BETRAYALS (ACTS 7:9-10)

Betrayal of covenant (8)

- Betrayal through idolatry (Deut 32:21-23)
- Betrayal through serving other gods (Josh 23:16)
- Betrayal through violating a vow (Josh 24:19-22)

Betrayal because of envy (9)

- Envy that makes a man unclean (Mark 7:20-23)
- Envy that rots the bones (Prov 14:30)
- Envy is manifested in jealousy of other's blessings (Matt 20:9-16)

Betrayal ending in deliverance (10)

- Deliverance from all troubles (Ps 34:19)
- Deliverance from trials (2 Peter 2:9)
- Deliverance that is part of the new covenant (Heb 9:15)

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN DELIVERANCE (ACTS 7:17, 33-34)

Deliverance through a promise (17)

- Promises of peace (Ps 85:8)
- Promises that have been tested (Ps 119:140)
- Promises made "Yes" in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20)

Deliverance through God's Holiness (33)

- Holiness because of its justice and goodness (Rom 7:12)
- Holiness through living in peace (Heb 12:14-15)
- Holiness that produces righteousness (Heb 12:10-11)

Deliverance through God's knowledge (34)

- Because God sees man's ways (Job 31:4)
- Because God formed us (Isa 29:15-16)
- Because there is nothing hidden from God (Jer 23:24)

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS THAT LEADS TO VICTORY (ACTS 7:45-47)

Victory over enemies (45)

- Victory over enemies because God goes with those who belong to Him (Deut 20:4)
- Victory over enemies because the victory rests with God (Prov 21:31)
- Victory over enemies through Jesus (1 Cor 15:57)
- Victory over enemies so that we may overcome the world (1 John 5:4)

Victory found in God's House (46-47)

- Victory because Jesus is faithful over God's house (Heb 3:6)
- Victory because God is greater than all (1 John 4:4)
- Victory through God's love (Rom 8:37)

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN SENDING A SAVIOR (ACTS 7:52-53, 55)

A Savior that was foretold (52)

- Prophesied to bring hope (Rom 15:12)
- Prophesied to fulfill promises (Jer 33:14-15)
- Prophesied to remove sin (Zech 3:8-9)

A Savior that will judge (53)

- Jesus is the judge of the nations (Matt 25:31-33)
- Jesus is the judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42)
- Jesus is the judge at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10)

A Savior that is the Glory of God (55)

- At the transfiguration Jesus physically showed God's glory (Matt 17:2)
- Jesus' first sign revealed His glory (John 2:11)
- God gave us His glory through Jesus (2 Cor 4:6)