

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 10/14/07
The Study of Romans 9,10,11. God's Faithfulness.

Our main passage is Rom 9:1-5 where we have been noting the intense emotion that Paul has toward unbelieving Israel. Throughout the history of Israel God has revealed to them His program of redemption for them, in fact for the whole world. God gave them the Mosaic Law, Codex 1 was the moral code defining morality, and proving that man is a sinner in need of a Savior. Codex 2 was the spiritual code, a view of Christology and Soteriology (salvation). It was Codex 2 that contained instructions for the animal sacrifices which represented the spiritual death of Christ. The burnt offering (Lev 1:3-9) was to be a male lamb without blemish, and thus represented the incarnate perfect Person of the Son of God. Throughout its history, Israel offered thousands of these burnt offerings and they were continually instructed as to their meaning and significance as the Savior. So, Codex 1 was a moral code that no man could possibly keep, and Codex 2 taught that the remedy to their status as sinners was the sacrifice of the Messiah, the God-Man-Jesus Christ. There would also be hundreds of prophecies given to Israel over their history that would indicate where He would come from, when He would come, how He would live and what His mission would be.

On top of this, during His earthly ministry, Christ came to them, from the tribe of Judah, from the line of David, and taught them about Himself from the O.T. scriptures. The angel Gabriel prophesied to Mary that He would be the Son of David and sit on David's throne. God made Himself so clear to the Jews through their laws, their prophets, and through their Messiah Himself. Yet, much of Israel would not lift up and peak under that veil that was over their eyes to see who Jesus Christ was in Hypostatic Union. 2Co 3:1-14, *"Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter [the Mosaic Law], but of the Spirit; for the letter kills [Codex 1: couldn't be followed], but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory [the Mosaic Law brought glory to the nation of Israel in the OT], much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory [the New Covenant in Christ brings full glory]. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses it. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory. Having therefore such a hope [confidence in the full glory given through Christ], we use great boldness in our speech, and are not as Moses, who used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ."* Without the Person of Christ, no matter how many assets the Israelites were given, they are lost, and this is what is making Paul so sorrowful. Yet, all of this shows us that God has gone to the ends of the earth to show Israel their Messiah. He did so, even knowing that much of Israel would reject Him with hardened hearts. All of this points to the depravity and stubbornness of man, but more poignant to us who have believed in Christ, it points to the faithfulness of God.

There is only one person who is totally faithful to you and related to you, and that is God. He can only be faithful to you because of His perfect character. Divine faithfulness is God's grace expression to the believer using His perfect character as the basis for expression. Faithfulness hinges on the essence of God. God is perfect, fair, and stable to Himself, and He will be all these things to you as well. Lam 3:21-25, *"This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.*" God can be faithful to you because of propitiation or the work of Christ on the Cross. His faithfulness, therefore, does not depend upon your spiritual status, but only upon the One who propitiated or satisfied His justice on your behalf. Propitiation removes any compromise to the essence of God due to failure on your part. Divine faithfulness manifests itself in Divine discipline to the apostate and in blessing to the mature believer. That's your free will choice as to which category you will fall in. Fall into God's grace or fall into apostasy. God's faithfulness therefore is concrete and uncompromised at any time. Faithfulness is an attitude to something in life which you love, respect, admire, or recognize its authority. Understanding God's character through His word under the filling of the Holy Spirit will produce this faithfulness in your soul. Therefore, we must know Him first through the perception and metabolization of Bible doctrine, and then we will be able to apply that faithfulness to others and life's circumstances. Faithfulness begins by understanding something about God's character; and that is His grace. The fact that you are alive, plus everything you have, is a matter of God's faithfulness to you. He is faithful and loves you every moment.

God is faithful to us in recovery.

1Jo 1:9 *"if we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and righteous, with the result that he forgives us our sins [known sins] and cleanses us from all unrighteousness [unknown sins]."* Name the sins you know and God forgives all the sin. The same principle is taught in 1Co 11:31; Jer 3:13; Psa 32:5; 32:38; 32:18. David set the pattern in Psa 32:5 *"I acknowledge my sin to you, and my iniquity I did not hide. I said, 'I will confess my transgression to the Lord.' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin."* God knew our sins in eternity past. He imputed them to Christ on the cross and judged them. God is interested in the fact that Jesus Christ took our place as our substitute. God is justified to forgive us because He has been propitiated by the sacrifice of his perfect Son. Therefore, there is no compromise to His integrity when He faithfully forgives us when we name our sins. There is no merit in naming a sin. Legalism says you must feel sorry to be forgiven, but grace says that how you feel is not the issue. When we cite our sin, God faithfully forgives us regardless of how we feel. Therefore, you can forget the sin and move on immediately. Remember we are to: Name it, 1Jo 1:9. Isolate it, Heb 12:15. Forget it, Phi 3:13. Keep moving, Phi 3:14. You must be reminded of this because it only takes one thought to get you to feel guilty and condemned and that one thought can break you. The grace involved in this procedure is a big problem with the legalist and those who are influenced by self-righteous arrogance. Only arrogant people say you can commit a sin which will cause God to abandon you and not forgive you, and our case study for this point is the nation of Israel. Grace forgiveness is never a license to sin, but is the motivation to press on to spiritual maturity. The basis of god's faithfulness is his grace, Jam 1:17 *"Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow."*

God's faithfulness is manifest in his perfect plan.

1Co 1:9 *"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."* We were called in eternity past when God was aware of all our failures, and God found a way to take us through all His grace plan without any compromise of His essence. Knowing every sin, human good deed, and evil thing we would ever do, God still selected us to have human life at birth, and elected us to equal privilege and opportunity at salvation. As a part of His faithfulness, He has provided for every believer his very own plan in which to function as the basis for equal opportunity to reach spiritual maturity.

God's faithfulness is manifest in logistical grace provision and supergrace blessing.

1Th 5:24 *"faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass."* It is God's power that is

going to bring your election to privilege to pass right in front of your eyes. This is done by learning Bible doctrine, being filled with the Holy Spirit, applying the PSD's. But if you don't live in God's power systems during your stay on earth, you have in effect, said no to His will to bring it to pass. Learn His doctrine, confess your sins, apply that wonderful grace to yourself and others in this life and He will pick up the rest. Whether you are a winner or a loser believer, God will continue to provide all your needs during your sojourning on this earth. You should never worry about the basic necessities to sustain your life. The Jews are a great example of this (Exo 16:1-4). God will provide everything you will ever need. It was harder for God to find a way to save us than it is for God to bless us in time. If He could do the most for us at salvation, it follows, a fortiori, that He can provide the lesser blessing of logistical grace support in time. God's perfect faithfulness to you in eternity past inevitably leads to His perfect faithfulness to you in time. There never was a time when God wasn't totally faithful to you. If God was faithful to you in eternity past, He can only be faithful to you in time and eternity as well.

God's faithfulness in testing. (1Co 10:13; 2Co 4:17; Rom 8:18).

God knows what you are capable of doing. Therefore, God's testing is for you to see what you can do and are capable of. But He will never go beyond what you are able. God will not allow us to be tested or tempted beyond our capacity and capability to pass the test or say no to the temptation. 1Co 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.* We are tested in the area of logistical grace support from God (Luk 12:29). We are also tested regarding our love of doctrine versus social life, loved ones, our failures, other distractions, and our families. Remember that prior to the different stages of spiritual growth, we must all pass through the different forms of suffering that the Lord brings in. Even in spiritual maturity, we face testing, as did Abraham when he was commanded to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. So you are tested in all stages of spiritual growth, but never beyond your capacity. As a part of God's faithfulness, He always provides the doctrine or the opportunity to get the doctrine necessary to pass each test before it comes. Therefore, Bible doctrine is your way of escape from each test, and that doctrine is provided by the faithfulness of God. Even the negative believer has help when he finds himself in the presence of Christ. Rev 3:20 tells us, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me."*

God is faithful to the Royal Family of God.

Heb 10:23 *"Let us keep on holding fast to the profession of our confidence unbending, because the One having promised is faithful."* You have the most fantastic escrow blessings on deposit for you, protected by the faithfulness of God. The more doctrine you have in your soul, the more you see God's perfect character, and the more you advance to spiritual maturity. This results in the things around you which were formerly distracting to your spiritual growth becoming less and less important.

God is faithful to the apostate believer.

2Ti 2:13 *"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself."*

Since God has perfect character, how can He not be faithful to us even if we reject and deny Him? God cannot be anything less than He is. In fact, God is faithful in keeping the degenerate believer alive for discipline. That same believer still goes to heaven after an entire life of rejection of Bible doctrine, just as surely as the apostle Paul went to heaven.

God is faithful to the believer in the realm of the angelic conflict.

God is faithful to protect and guard you in the midst of the unseen angelic battle which is fought daily all around you, 2 Th 3:3 *"but the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."* God's faithfulness becomes a reality as you advance to and reach spiritual maturity. Faithfulness is the consistency and stability of God. Faithfulness is the perfection of God's essence and the fact that He cannot be inconsistent or compromise His essence. Faithfulness is the fact that God cannot change His essence and be unfair to anyone. God is consistent with Himself; therefore, He is faithful and consistent with us. God keeps His word, He has never made a promise He has not kept. There was never a time when God was unfaithful. How refreshing it is to know that in spite of all this there is One who is faithful. Think of all the rebellion that the children of Israel fell into and yet God was faithful. Many

times they were faithless, but He was faithful! The Father is faithful in Jam 1:17. The Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever in Heb 13:8. The Holy Spirit is faithful to indwell, Joh 14:16, and to teach Bible doctrine to the believer in 1Co 2:13. Understanding these principles will preserve us from worry. God is greatly honored when under testing for blessing or chastening, we have proper thoughts toward Him and recognize His divine attributes in action. Throughout the bible there is case after case of the faithfulness of God. For example, Abraham, the father of our faith, we have seen his life in detail. Then we have David, we could spend an entire year on God's faithfulness to him. David willfully sinned and told a lie and the result of his lie was that an entire city was wiped out (city of Nob). Thousands were killed in battle because David pretended to be crazy in the city of Gath! Then David failed in responsibility in 2 Sa 11:1 and stayed home when it was time to go out to battle. The result was disaster on the battlefield and disaster on the home front in Jerusalem itself with a woman.

He committed adultery, got a man drunk, committed murder, and he willfully lied. We could go on and on and talk about Jonah, the reluctant missionary who kept running away from the Lord. He was very disappointed at the success of his own ministry...it was too successful! Yet in Jonah 4:4-11 the Lord was faithful to him and taught him a superb lesson on divine love. We have men like Peter, Lot, women like Sarah. We could go on and on with the faithfulness of God toward those who fail!

The people of Israel completely forgot about the faithfulness of God. What did they say to Moses?

Notice Exo 16:3 *"and the sons of Israel said to them, would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

Now this is what happens when people get emotional. Emotion is irrational and can't think in terms of doctrine at all. Yet, emotion, even strong emotion, can be wonderful when it is a responder to Bible doctrine. Paul in Romans 9 has proper responding emotion to Israel's predicament as we can see in the rest of the chapter and in chapters 10-11. Rom 9:6 *"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;"* We see here that Paul always has doctrine in mind even though he is very emotional about his countrymen. But the Jews in the desert are running on pure emotion with not doctrinal thought at all, and this went on for 40 years. Yet God was still faithful to them. God delivered them, and then He tested them, and then they failed, and then God delivered them, and then He tested them, again.