

Uncommon Virtues: Faithful Servants

2 Tim 2: 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

God is faithful. We can only be faithful because He is. This is one of His core characteristics and He calls to be likewise.

Mt 25: 15-21 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,[a] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

The word faithful here speaks of being reliable and trustworthy. It's the word "Pistos". It happens when we believe and are full of faith that God will reward us and He is faithful. Being full of faith with regards to God's goodness helps you to be faithful.

- 1. God will reward us primarily based on our faithfulness with that which He has entrusted to us.**
- 2. Faithfulness is seen in how you steward a few things in obscurity.**
- 3. Faithful servants are promoted based on their trustworthiness with a few things. The result is that they are given more responsibility ("Poulos" = Many things)**
- 4. Faithfulness is essentially to do with stewardship**

Faithfulness is primarily to do with how well you take care of that which belongs to another. In essence a conversation about faithfulness is a conversation about stewardship. So we are not talking about faithfully finishing that chocolate cake or faithfully watching that movie you enjoy. The starting point is always; "What have I been entrusted with? Was I faithful with it?"

Faithfulness is a key virtue because the degree to which you walk in it will determine your promotion in God's Kingdom. I have wondered why I sometimes end up only dealing with one department in a company in terms of the service I render. The Lord showed me this last week that you can be faithful, but don't forget to pray for God to grant you the desires of your heart. As I prayed about it today, immediately a door opened to expand my influence in one organisation. There are various manifestations of faithfulness that I will outline in this message:

9 Things that Faithful Servants do Differently?

- 1. Faithful servants believe that God is faithful and will reward them.**

They know God's heart and anticipate a reward from Him. They don't see God as a harsh task master who is out to trick them. This is what keeps us going in prayer, pastoring or book writing etc. The wicked servant doubted the kindness of his master and ended up burying his talent.

Mt 25:24-30 "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'

26“*But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 27Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 28Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’* 29“*For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

2. Faithful servants have discretion.

This means they can keep things confidential. They use discretion in disclosing information as well as guarding against unlawful or inappropriate access by others.

Prov 11:13 A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

Prov 17:9 Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

Proverbs. 17:9a (NASB 1977) - “He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.”

Proverbs 20:19 (NASB 1977) – “He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip.”

Romans 1:29 – 30 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;

2 Corinthians 12:20 – For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

The two verses above differentiate gossip from slander and condemn it as the result of a depraved mind, unfitting for Christians.

Gossip = sithyristés – a whisperer; a sneaky gossip (a "back-stabber"); a backbiter, quietly (secretly) destroying another person's character – i.e. covertly, not out in the open, but rather operating "in a corner."

Slander – a defamer and evil speaker

Faithfulness in this area was a standard Paul set for the wives of deacons. In our organisations today, is this something that is emphasised?

1 Tim 3:11 In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

1 Tim 3:11 (NKJV) Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not [a]slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

Some translations say, “malicious gossips”. Do you know how to deal with someone who gossips? Give them direct feedback and let them know that you are concerned because you thought they were friends with the person they are gossiping about. You are concerned they will do the same to you. **Gossips can only do so if they have an audience; stop being that audience.**

3. Faithful servants are trustworthy.

*1 Cor 4:17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, **who is faithful in the Lord.** He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.*

Timothy’s faithfulness was seen in how he was willing to be representational and not substitutional in his approach to leadership.

Faithful servants are trustworthy when it comes to the 3 categories of trust. Relational trust; you feel safe with them. They are not going to spread rumours about you when you share your secrets with them. Capability trust; you know that they will operate with excellence regardless of the context. Functional trust; they will keep their word. **Faithful servants are reliable.**

This means that they have an ask once policy. You don’t have to ask them and then immediately have a plan b.

In order to be faithful, we need to know what we have been entrusted with and then guard those things.

2 Tim 1:14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

You have been entrusted with personal information, mysteries, responsibilities, children, a spouse, money etc

4. Faithful servants are full of integrity.

Prov 13:11 Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.

When you are patient as a person it helps you to have integrity. A lot of people compromise due to impatience. I interviewed a former gangster who explained that this is one of the reasons he went into crime; impatience. I want it now.

5. Faithful servants are good stewards of their gifts

Eph 2:10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Seek the Lord to understand which ones are for different seasons of your life. Ask Him which ones are primary and which ones are secondary. Ask Him what stage you are in them. Ask the Lord who you can go to for further activation of those gifts. Your gifts can grow and multiply. We

see this in sport. Figure out what your gift mix is. Your life role (teacher, caretaker, advisor etc) should be aligned to your passion (Young entrepreneurs etc).

Remember that not every strength you have is linked to your purpose. God is a God of abundance. You can be good at certain things you hate.

6. Faithful servants complete their assignments from God despite the obstacles.

1 Cor 9:17 If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.

1 Cor 9:17 (NKJV) For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

1 Cor 4:2-4 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

Do you know what has been committed to you? How far are you in the process of completion of your assignments from God? What steps do you need to take to complete them?

Rev 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

We see this powerful message from Jesus to the church at Smyrna. Remaining faithful to the end is an important theme in Revelation. **Many people remain faithful only when there are no obstacles or opposition. Sometimes your faithfulness is tested in persecution.**

7. Faithful servants are consistent in giving.

They don't get tired of doing good. They keep giving of their time, talents and treasures. **Let heaven be your blue print when it comes to generosity. Don't be externally referenced in your giving, where you stop giving when you feel unappreciated. If Jesus had that mindset we would not be here today.**

Gal 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Good = Kalos = kalós – attractively good; good that inspires (motivates) others to embrace what is lovely (beautiful, praiseworthy); i.e. well done so as to be winsome (appealing). Noble and honourable.

How fatigued are you right now? Could this cause you to become weary of doing good?

8. Faithful servants keep covenant with their spouses.

Mal 2:13-14 Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favour on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. 14 You

ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Young people, keep yourself for your future spouse. Be faithful to your future spouse. In the same way you want him or her to come to you without baggage, focus on being Mr Right for her. If you get immersed in lust today, don't think the spirit of lust will leave you just because you say "I do" one day. **The things you do today are sowing seeds into your future marriage.**

9. Faithful servants remain at their Intercessory posts.

We are called to different dimensions of intercession. We can function as watchmen, legislators and gatekeepers etc

Rom 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

What does your life look like when you are UNFAITHFUL in prayer? You leave your post. Imagine you hire a security guard but then you don't see them there when they are on duty. Some people are there in body but ineffective. E.g. when I was young I would go out to give our security guards coffee and from time to time I would catch them napping. The sad thing is that I don't ever remember them looking remorseful about it. The language used here implies that prayer is a responsibility that we have been entrusted with. **God is looking for those that can stand in the gap. Once He has located you, will you be faithful?**