

HSU
DEVOTIONAL

Two overlapping circles with diagonal hatching. The top circle is black with white lines, and the bottom circle is purple with white lines. They overlap in the center.

GOD IS: FAITHFUL

NAME:

Responding in Faith

Passage: Exodus 14:21-31

Parallel Passage: Exodus 14:13-14

If you grew up anywhere near a church you've probably heard the story of Moses parting the Red Sea to help the Israelites escape Pharaoh's army after the Lord brought them out of slavery in Egypt. And if you're anything like I was growing up, you've heard this story, thought, "that's cool," and then moved on without giving it any more of your attention.

Have you ever wondered how this story applies to you? You hear about this God who shows steadfast love to His people in these stories and you think, "that's great, but what does it have to do with me?" Let me tell you something amazing about the faithfulness of God: The God who faithfully rescued His people out of Egypt is the same God who sent His son Jesus to die on a cross for you. This isn't a story about a distant God, or a God who no longer acts on behalf of His people, this is a story that encourages us as believers to trust that God is faithful to those who trust in Him.

Notice that when God commanded Moses to part the Red Sea, the Israelites still had to make the decision to walk between the giant walls of water to the other side. Why didn't God just snap his fingers and move them to safety? He is God, He can do anything! Instead He gave Israel a choice: **to decide whether they would respond in faith to God's faithfulness.** God can and does act in mighty ways, but part of our job as believers is to respond in faith, and God extends that invitation to all of us. So how do we do that? We go to the Word of God. He has revealed to us in the Bible the type of people we are to be as Christ-followers: *humble* (Matt 23:12), *forgiving* (Eph 4:32), *holy* (1 Peter 1:15), *loving* (Rom 12:10), *kind* (Gal 5:22), *gentle* (1 Tim 6:11), *patient* (Rom 12:12), and a people who *trust in God* (Proverbs 3:5). When we intentionally strive toward being who God calls us to be, when we listen to His Word, do the things he tells us to do, and respond in faith to the faithfulness of God, our lives are radically changed and we get to witness firsthand what God can do with a willing heart.

Missy Matteson

Prayer:

Father God, you know my heart better than I do. You know what makes me afraid, what causes me to hesitate to follow you, what gives me pause when learning about you, and what brings out doubt in me when I don't understand. Lord, would you open my eyes to the faithfulness you have shown me throughout my whole life. Would you put a desire in my heart and mind to read your Word, to pray to you, and to follow you. Help my unbelief, Lord, when I doubt your faithfulness, and please help me to respond to you in faith. Please help me to trust in your goodness. Thank you God that you have been faithful even when I have not. Amen.

Questions:

Reflect on the ways that God has been faithful to you, even if you didn't realize at the time that it was Him. Write down a few examples.

What is the most difficult part about trusting God to be faithful? What makes you doubt?

How can you respond in faith to God's faithfulness in your life right now? What is a practical step you can take to respond to God's invitation to become more like Jesus?

Faithful In What He Calls Us To

Passage: 1 Kings 17:4-7

When God calls us, we tend to look for an incentive, a way out, and maybe loopholes, and what we forget is that God is a God of provision. God told Elijah where to go and what to do and Elijah obeyed because he had faith in God. When Elijah could have been filled with utter doubt, he was reminded that the God that valued Elijah's obedience was faithful. In the midst of what seemed like pure crazy in the eyes of the world, Elijah took a moment to respond and seek the heart of the Lord, being confident that God would indeed show up.

For as long as I could remember, I always told myself that I wouldn't want to have my own kids or work in any job that involved kids - then God called me to volunteer with the Children's ministry here at CTK. I didn't realize that I was keeping myself from something that fills me with joy until I followed God's calling for me. In my moment of obedience, my genuine response of surrender, God has continued to show me pure joy in what I do and has continued to model his faithfulness in His call for me—building the kingdom. If I were in Elijah's shoes, I would have been skeptical about birds bringing me food and drinking from a random water source, but Elijah knew that God would provide and would always be faithful to him.

God will always keep his promises and will love us, even when it feels terrifying to follow what He calls us into. He has gone before us and knows what is coming our way yet calls us to relationship, to walk alongside the living God and Holy Spirit. May we lean on that truth today—that God wants to be faithful in our relationship with Him. Our choice is simple: *do we surrender and trust the call He has for us?*

Kyle Quintanilla

Prayer:

God, give me the faith to follow You into what You call me to. Rid my heart of any fears and distractions so that my focus is on You and Your love in the unknown ahead of me. I pray that my faith in You grows stronger everyday and that Your works are revealed to me. Amen.

Questions:

What might God be calling you to do?

What makes following God's calling challenging?

In what area of your life is it hard to have faith?

How does it make you feel to know that God is faithful even when you may not feel it in the moment?

Remembering God's Faithfulness

Passage: Luke 22:19

In a season of gratitude we want to remind you of what communion is and why we are grateful for it. It's easy to think about Thanksgiving and look forward to the food we're going to eat and the time we will spend with family and friends. I would encourage you to take a moment and remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and why it is important. We take communion in remembrance of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us, He died on the cross for our sins so that we could live life here on earth and have an eternal relationship with Him.

In this passage Jesus breaks bread and says, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me." He wanted them to remember His sacrifice, the basis for forgiveness of sins, and also His friendship, which they could continue through the work of the Holy Spirit. When we take communion, we honor the way in which He paid our debt as sinners, and gave up His life for us, and for that we have a reason to be forever grateful.

This devotional lines up perfectly with Thanksgiving, and it would be so cool to be at our gatherings and break bread to tune our hearts and focus on Jesus, the most important reason to be thankful. It's important to remember that Jesus didn't have to die for us, **He chose to**. God sent Him to be an example for us and show us what it meant to live a life like His. To live a life like Jesus is to live in full surrender of all that we have and all that we do, so that He can be glorified.

My favorite part about communion is that we get to honor the debt that was paid for us. A simple, humble gesture of breaking bread in remembrance of who Jesus is and what He did is one of the most honoring things we can do. It is a beautiful symbol of the love that Jesus has for us. It is a blessing that we can partake in something so beautiful and honoring to the one who paid it all for us, and asks for nothing in return other than to pursue Him and glorify Him in all seasons and circumstances.

Caley Whitner

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, please help me examine my heart as I prepare to take communion and remember the sacrifice you made on the cross. Would you convict me of any sin in my life Lord that I may confess it and forsake it. Help me to understand what you did on the cross for me, help me to honor the bread and the cup as your body and blood, and to receive these elements with thankfulness in my heart, reverence, and joy knowing that you love me enough to have died for me. Thank you Jesus for your faithfulness. Amen.

Questions:

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Why do you think it's important to "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes"?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-32. What do you think it means to examine yourself before taking the elements of communion? Why do you think that matters to God?

Reflect on the reasons you are thankful for God, and what Jesus did on the cross. Write down a few of them.

God's Faithfulness in Prayer

Passage: Mark 11:24

Prayer has always been a hard idea to grasp. Being able to be fully present and talk to God in hopes that He is listening can sometimes be challenging. We tend to be filled with doubt more than ever when we pray—especially in certain situations where we anticipate a certain answer. However, it is sometimes difficult to accept “no” as an answer. Seeking God to validate or justify our hearts’ desire can sometimes be the very reason we think God can’t hear us—because He is waiting for us to recognize how we come before Him.

God delights in us being faithful towards Him in prayer. He is the only one who is ready & willing to bless you in ways you never could have imagined. I think this can sometimes be hard to understand because we may have experienced a time in our lives where we have prayed and asked things of God and those things weren’t ever fulfilled.

James 4:3 says, “You ask and you do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” Ask yourself, “Are my prayers aligned with the heart and will of God?” Those who trust God for the right things, in the right way can be confident that God will be faithful in prayer. The best way to find out if you are praying with the heart of God and to work towards aligning your heart with the will of God, is to *turn to the Word of God*. The Bible is the Living Word. Each word in the Bible is truth to help us align to the will of God.

We must recognize the heart of God is to listen. God’s intent is not for you to come before Him and ask him to solve your problems. He already knows the deepest desires of your heart and soul. Yet, He still longs for us to come to Him. Jesus bridged the gap between people and God so that we can have a true and authentic relationship with a God who listens - that is why we desire to reach out to God.

May we find the faithfulness of God in prayer through a sustainable relationship that leaves us wanting more of Jesus.

Katlin McKinley

Prayer:

Jesus, help my unbelief. I give my selfish desires into your hands—God, change my heart. I come before you surrendering the desires of my heart that are not aligned with your will and Spirit. God, we believe in your faithfulness and your consistent presence and for that we are thankful God. I am thankful for the ways you show up to meet me where I am at, and for that I know you are faithful. Realign my heart today, Jesus. Amen.

Questions:

What is your prayer life like?

What is your experience with God answering your or someone else's prayers?

Take a moment and reflect on your week. Where can you recognize the handprint of God in a moment/situation and acknowledge His faithfulness?

God's Faithfulness Through A Baby

Passage: John 1:9-14

Christmas has always been my favorite holiday. It is a day of joy and peace, family and friends, and the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus. As good of a day as it is though, our culture has distorted the day and how we perceive it. Each year people step into this distortion instead of the true meaning of the day. Family and friends is a great byproduct of the day but it still isn't the true meaning of Christmas. What the day is truly supposed to be is a marker of the day God initiated His greatest display of faithfulness to all the people on Earth.

The birth of Jesus was the beginning of a thirty year plan that would carry out God's faithfulness to all people. God displayed his faithfulness by flipping the script and being made flesh, so that He could live a human life, suffer betrayal and death, and ultimately save us all. Without God displaying his faithfulness to us through this baby born in Bethlehem, we would never have had our Messiah. We would never have been saved by the most holy and perfect sacrifice. A way would not have been made for all to enter into a relationship with our Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit would not have come into our lives.

Without Jesus we would all be stuck trying to perform well enough so that we could be worthy of God. Instead, through the blood of Jesus, we have been *washed clean and made worthy* to be children of God. It is God's faithfulness that allows Christmas to be a day filled with joy and peace, and our family and friends, not just a general attitude of good tidings for all.

Logan Nelson

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the birth of your son, Jesus. Thank you for your faithfulness, even when I cannot see it or the things you have planned for me. Jesus, thank you for willingly making yourself human, so that you would be sacrificed as the ultimate display of your faithfulness to us. God as you have been faithful to me, open my heart and lead me by your Holy Spirit to be more faithful to you. Amen.

Questions:

How do you see God's faithfulness in the Christmas story?

What is a tough situation in your life that makes you unsure of God's faithfulness?

What is a situation you can look back to in which Jesus has carried you through? Did He work things the way you wanted, or His own way?
