

He Is!

An Expository Exploration of the Attributes of God

Sermon 11: He is Faithful

Lamentations 3:19-40

March 22, 2020

Scripture Reading: *Psalm 89:1-24*

Opening Illustration: When you woke up this morning, even with everything that is so strange and different and scary and confusing, one thing has been constant. God has been faithful to us. He has been faithful in His sovereignty, sustaining all created things, including the moon and stars, the succession of moments, and even the beating of our hearts. He has done so without any regard to any supposed worthiness, beauty or godliness that may be found in us. He has also done so without our really even noticing. He has been faithful to us for one, central reason. He has acted faithfully to us because He is, in and of Himself, faithful. He is faithful!

Some verses to consider:

Deuteronomy 7:9-10 “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;¹⁰ but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face.

1 Corinthians 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, so that you will be able to endure it.

I. Introduction/Review

A. This Sunday (or Thursday, really) is something quite different from anything I have ever experienced.

B. At times like this, our study of the Attributes of God becomes particularly important. We must understand and cling to the Lord during times of struggle.

Quote: There are many humble professors while the sun shines, while God gives, smiles, and strokes. But when he frowns, and strikes, O the murmurings of proud souls! They kick when God strikes. But the humble soul wisely and patiently bears reproof.—Thomas Brooks

II. O Lord, Please Remember! (v. 19)

A. My affliction (אֲנִי) —What does this mean?

1. “Affliction” here means, “misery, oppressed situation.” Jeremiah is crying out that God would be mindful of how miserable his life has been.

2. Jeremiah wants the Lord to keep his suffering in mind. Why?

a. Because Jeremiah knows that the God we serve is quick to be moved with compassion for hurting people. He delights in compassion and mercy.

b. **ILL:** If we fall into the deep end of a pool, and we cannot swim, wouldn't we assume the lifeguard would save us? A faithful lifeguard is dependable at a moment's notice. When we know that somebody loves us, do we not assume that they will intercede for us when we are suffering?

B. My wandering (אֲנִי) —What does this mean?

1. There seems to be highlighting our ignorance and our helplessness. This Hebrew word communicates the idea of homelessness.

2. **ILL:** When I first moved to Montana and I got lost in my own neighborhood. I was beginning to panic. There is something scary about not knowing where you are going, and yet having to keep moving.

3. **ILL:** Maize Maze—How long did Jen and I wander in a corn maze before we were shown the way out?

4. Point: When we see someone wandering, don't we feel sorry for them?

C. My wormwood (אֲנִי) and bitterness (אֲנִי) —What does this mean?

1. These 2 things are basically synonymous.

- a. They basically refer to bitter herbs and bitterness in general.
2. These are referring to the unpleasantness of life.
3. ILL: What are some things that are just...bitter?

III. Surely, I Remember! (v. 20)

- A. Jeremiah is honest with the Lord about his pain.
 1. He is honest about the fact of his pain.
 2. He is honest about the effect of his pain.—“And [my soul] is bowed down within me.”
- B. Jeremiah is forthright with us about his pain.
 1. What a blessing it is to have this passage in the word of God!
 2. We need to remember that suffering, pain, confusion, etc. is not some strange experience, but is instead the expectation even of the godly.

IV. I Shall Remember (vv. 21-38)

- A. I shall remember that Your compassion never fails (vv. 22-23a).
 1. Jeremiah makes reference to God’s “lovingkindness” (רַחֲמֵי), which refers to His covenant faithfulness.
 2. Jeremiah makes reference to God’s “compassion” (חַסְדֵי), which refers to His merciful care for us.
 3. God’s mercy for us is new every morning.
 - a. This means that God is constantly renewing His mercy and compassion for us.
 - b. This means that God’s supply of compassion is never exhausted.
 - c. What a tremendous blessing!
- B. I shall remember that Your faithfulness is great (v. 23b).
 1. This statement is really the theme for this whole section.
 2. We would do well to remind ourselves constantly that He is faithful.
- C. I shall remember that You are my portion (v. 24).
 1. What I hope to gain from this life is not:
 - a. Riches
 - b. Power
 - c. Physical gratifications
 2. What I hope to gain from this life is God! (as realized in a closer walk with Him).
 - a. **Psalm 27:4** One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.
- D. I shall remember that You are good to us (v. 25).
 1. Unfortunately, it can be really easy to forget that God is good to us.
 - a. This can be true in hard times.
 - b. This can be true in good times.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 6:10-12
- E. I shall remember that it is good for me to wait on You (vv. 26-30).
 1. Even though it may not always be pleasant, we are definitely better off as the result of waiting on the Lord to act.
 2. Notice the 3 “Let him” statements in these verses:
 - a. Let him sit alone.—Social distancing before it was trendy. ☺
 - b. Let him put his mouth in the dust.—sometimes the best thing we can say is absolutely nothing!
 - c. Let him give his cheek to the smiter.—We must embrace the fact that we will have opposition.
- F. I shall remember that Your displeasure is temporary (vv. 31-36).

1. **Psalm 30:5** For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy *comes* in the morning.
2. God is not the type of Being that delights in torturing us.
3. God delights in mercy, even when it seems like mercy is taking a long time to get here.

G. I shall remember that You are sovereign and in control (vv. 37-38)

1. Over the good things.
2. Over the bad things.

Point: Remember that the Devil couldn't touch Job or do anything against Job without God's permission. We need to remember that even the worst things are under His jurisdiction. I already preached on this, though, so I will just leave it at this for our sermon today.

V. Beloved, We Must Remember (vv. 39-40):

A. That we have no argument against what God has determined to do. (v. 39)

1. Seriously, sinner, do you really have a reason to complain?
2. What would your life be like if God didn't overlook your sinfulness?
3. There is only one valid response to suffering: To shut our mouths and recognize that He is good and we are not.
 - a. **Galatians 3:22-23** But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.
 - b. **Romans 11:32** For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

B. That we are called to examine ourselves and cast ourselves upon His mercy (v. 40).

1. We are called to look very closely at our lives and at our hearts.
 - a. The assumption is that when we do so, we will find an ample list of things for which we must repent.
2. We are called to turn to the Lord.
 - a. We must turn away from the things that cause our misery and turn to the wonderful, faithful, compassionate God.

Concluding Point: You are as safe in Jesus during the worst of your experiences as you are in your best experiences.

Quote: "The saints on earth, though exposed to many sufferings, and assaulted by many enemies, are as safe as the saints in glory. They have been enabled, in the day of God's power, to commit themselves to the care of Jesus, the great Shepherd; who is faithful to his trust, and able to save them; his everlasting arms are underneath them; and no power, or policy, can separate them from his love."

John Newton, works 1:414-415