

Pentecost 6 –June 30, 2024  
Text: Lam. 3:22-33  
Theme: Great is Thy Faithfulness

**In the Church, we speak a great deal of our faithfulness to God, or faithlessness to God as the case may be. But we do not often talk about what it means that God is faithful to us. Lamentations is a book of just that...laments. Jeremiah wrote this book of poetry lamenting the sad state of affairs of God's people. God gave them the Promised Land along with 10 simple rules to keep it. And really, those 10 rules could be boiled down to 2. Love God with all your heart, soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. How hard could it be?**

**Well, you know how hard it was. It was so hard to love God and love one another that they lost the Promised Land and were deported to Babylon where they had 70 years to think about it before trying again. What is so difficult about keeping simple rules? Well, as you know, keeping those rules is much harder than it looks.**

**So, the whole book of Lamentations is Jeremiah lamenting how sad it is for the people of God in their inability to keep his Law. But in the midst of the 5-chapter book is this little section of chapter 3 that is our Old Testament reading for today. These words should look very familiar to you because they are the words of the very popular hymn we sang as our sermon hymn today. Thomas Chisum**

wrote "Great is Thy Faithfulness." He was an unremarkable man, which makes the hymn all the more important to me. Chisum lived for 94 years and worked as a teacher, a Methodist minister, and a life insurance salesman. He never was rich and he never was famous but in his 94 years on this earth, he left behind about 1,200 poems, one of which was this remarkable hymn, written by an unremarkable man, describing a most remarkable truth. God is faithful to us.

We can be very unfaithful people. We lie and cheat and steal in thoughts, words, and deeds as well. We cannot seem to manage even 2 commandments. But nonetheless, God is always faithful to us. He promised to get us to the Promised Land and he will. He sent his son to die on the cross and suffer hell for us to pay our way. Now he sends his Holy Spirit to fill us with his power through the washing of the Baptismal waters, enlightening us with his word and nourishing us with His very body and blood. Any one of these things would be amazing but all three of them? That is what inspires Jeremiah to say:

<sup>22</sup>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;  
his mercies never come to an end;

<sup>23</sup>they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

<sup>24</sup>"The Lord is my portion," says my soul,  
"therefore I will hope in him."

**We speak a great deal about our faithfulness to God...or lack thereof, but remember, it is only God's faithfulness to us that gives us the power and the desire to be faithful to him. That's what Jesus meant when he said,**

**"Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." Jesus put that faith into her. When he allowed her to touch his garment, he felt the faith flow from him into her. He was faithful to her and his faithfulness was so great that it not only healed her soul but her body as well. That is faithfulness beyond our imagination.**

**Jesus is a faith healer. When he chooses, he pours healing into us. It always heals our souls but from time to time – and most of those are times of which we are probably unaware – it heals our body as well. You know that strange pain that just mysteriously goes away, or that nagging cough that evaporates – what was that really? Did your faith make you well? God is faithful to us in many more ways than we even imagine.**

**What does this mean for us? First, never count God out. Never assume that whatever you are facing is insurmountable. Absolutely nothing is impossible for God. Never give up. If you have breath, God is with you and will lead you to the place where He wants you to serve.**

**Second, remember that we serve at the pleasure of God. God does not serve at our pleasure. Don't get so wrapped up in your personal plan that you forget to watch for the road signs that God is posting. And, of course, if you are pursuing a sinful path, don't be surprised if things don't work out. God does not bless sinful choices. He doesn't zap us with lightning bolts but He also doesn't bless us in that particular sinful endeavor. A good example of this is the person who refuses to give an offering that is faithful and can never understand why they are always living paycheck to paycheck. God says to give a faithful offering. When we ignore Him, we shouldn't be surprised that blessings are missing in our lives.**

**Third remember God's promises and remember that He will always be faithful to you. We never have to guess. God is always with us through all the seasons of life. He is not a lawnmower parent, running ahead of us to pick up all the sticks. He will let us fall when it is good for us in the long run but He is always there to pick us up, dust us off, and set us back on His path. God is always faithful to us.**

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,**

**Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;**

**Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,**

**Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!**