**Rewards of Faithfulness**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**2 Kings 18:1-8**

**Sunday Morning**

**May 26, 2024**

**2 Kings 18:1-8**

1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah.

3 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. 4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.

5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.

7 The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

Saints, the process of the Christian life is just as important as the product of the Christian life.

As someone has said, **"Heaven is not our goal; it is our destiny."** In other words, if we are born again and continue with Jesus Christ, reaching heaven is the ultimate end of our path.

We do not have to fret and worry about whether or not we will make it to heaven if we continue with Christ faithfully.

The process of faithfulness will carry us through to the culmination of our relationship with Christ.

**1. Results of Unfaithfulness**

**Hosea 4:1-4**

1 Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land. 2 By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery, They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed.

3 Therefore the land will mourn; And everyone who dwells there will waste away With the beasts of the field And the birds of the air; Even the fish of the sea will be taken away. 4 "Now let no man contend, or rebuke another;

**Proverbs 25:19**

“Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble Is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint”

Saints, the Bible tells us that people who choose to be friends with the world are an “adulterous people” having “enmity against God”

**James 4:4-5**

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

Saints, the “world” here is the system of evil under Satan’s control.

**John 12:31**

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out”

**Ephesians 2:2**

in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience…

**1 John 5:19**

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

Saints, the world system, with its contrived and deceitful scheme of phony values, worthless pursuits, and unnatural affections, is designed to lure us away from a pure relationship with God.

Spiritual adultery, then, is the forsaking of God’s love and the embracing of the world’s values and desires.

**Romans 8:7-8**

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

**2 Timothy 4:10**

“for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica”

**1 John 2:15-17**

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Being an unfaithful person will always lead to ruin!

**2. Remove the Idols that won’t go away on their own!**

Saints, King Hezekiah, in the spirit and fashion of David's leadership, tore down the high places and broke the idolatrous images into pieces.

**2 Kings 18:3-4**

3 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. 4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.

Spiritual adultery includes any form of idolatry. In many places in the Old Testament, the children of Israel tried to mix the worship of other gods such as Baal with that of God.

**Judges 3:7**

“So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs”

**1 Kings 16:31-34**

31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

32 Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

**Jeremiah 19:5**

“(they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind)”

Saints, in doing so, Israel became like an adulterous wife who wanted both a husband and another lover.

In the New Testament, James defines spiritual adultery as claiming to love God while cultivating friendship with the world.

**James 4:4-5**

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

Saints, the person who commits spiritual adultery is one who professes to be a Christian yet finds his real love and pleasure in the things that Satan offers.

For believers, the love of the world and the love of God are direct opposites.

Believers committing spiritual adultery may claim to love the Lord, but, in reality, they are captivated by the pleasures of this world, its influence, comforts, financial security, and so-called freedoms.

**4. God is Gracious and rewards His people with Favor, Mercy and Grace that are Faithful to Him!**

Saints, the best definition of the word favor is

**“Demonstrated Delight”**

The favor of God can be described as “tangible evidence that a person has the approval of the Lord.”

When we favor someone, we want to be with him or her. We delight in him.

We connect with her in a way we don’t connect with everyone. We usually favor people who also favor us.

In the same way, God shows favor to the ones who delight in, connect with, and give honor to Him. Isaiah says,

**Isaiah 66:1-2**

1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? 2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

**2 Chronicles 16:9**

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” …

Saints, to be “perfect” toward Him means we seek His favor more than we seek the favor of anyone else, even ourselves.

Favor is closely related to grace in the Bible. Those who have received Jesus as their Savior are saved by grace through faith.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Saints, we know the favor of God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God,

**Hebrews 11:6**

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”

but those who have saving faith in God’s Son are declared righteous and live in God’s favor.

**Romans 4:5**

“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness”

**Philippians 3:9**

“and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith”

Saints, the most basic answer to “how can I get God’s favor” is “believe in the Lord Jesus.”

**In Closing:**

God seeks out those who love Him and love His commands so that He can bless, guide, and protect them.

**Psalm 37:23-24**

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.

Saints, those who are favored of God know that God is with them and that nothing can happen to them apart from His good purpose.

**Romans 8:28**

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”

They have His ear as they walk through dark valleys!

**Psalm 34:18**

The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

And know that their struggle to remain true to Him will not go unrewarded.

**Matthew 10:42**

And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

**Revelation 2:10**

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”

In addition to outward evidences, God’s favor can be felt in the spirit.

When we have the favor of the Lord, we rest in quiet confidence that our sins are forgiven,

**Romans 4:7-8**

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

Knowing we are within the plan of God,

**Psalm 86:11-13**

11 Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. 12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore. 13 For great is Your mercy toward me, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

and that He is there for us at all times (Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 28:20).

**Isaiah 41:10**

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

**Matthew 28:20**

“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen

Saints, learn how to walk with God as with our closest friend. We begin to see and appreciate the little blessings that God provides for our enjoyment—blessings that we once took for granted.

Saints Jesus is about to return! Are you ready to see Him face to face!

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peac**