

Fruit of the Spirit study 8: FAITHFULNESS

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22–23

NOTE: Paul here uses the Greek word for ‘faith’ but he doesn’t appear to be talking about ‘saving faith’, so it is translated ‘faithfulness’.

- If you heard someone talk about a ‘faithful servant’ or a ‘faithful dog’, what sort of person or creature would you think of? Can you think of examples?

As with all the fruit of the Spirit, our faithfulness should reflect God’s. God’s faithfulness is part of who he is: Read **Exodus 34:5–7**. Paul in 2 Timothy 13 puts it this way: “if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

Last week we looked at **Psalms 107** from the point of view of ‘goodness’.

- But thinking about that psalm, how does it also show God’s faithfulness?
- how then might we sum up what it means for God to be faithful?

We are going to look at two biblical examples of people who were faithful, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

Hezekiah

Hezekiah son of Ahaz was king of Judah at the end of the 8th century BC. At that time Assyria was the superpower in the region. Ahaz had closed God’s temple and set up altars to many other gods. In contrast, Hezekiah reopened and refurbished the temple and restarted the services there according to the law of Moses. He also celebrated the Passover and smashed pagan idols and altars, ensuring that people only worshipped at the Temple.

Now read **2 Chronicles 32:1–32**, especially noting the first phrase.

Hezekiah has been faithful to God, and yet, the Assyrians invade. (Note: this passage is a summary of the fuller account in Isaiah 36–37.)

- What does Hezekiah do when he hears of the invasion (vv2–6)?
- How does he encourage the people (vv6–8)?
- What does this tell us about his faithfulness to God?
- How else does Hezekiah in this passage show faithfulness? What did it mean to be faithful to God in these circumstances? (what would the alternative have been?)
- How do we keep faithful to God when everything seems to be against us?

Gaius

You may not be familiar with this name but it's that of the person that the third letter of John was written to.

Read **3 John** (14 verses)

- What kind of faithfulness is Gaius commended for in verse 3? What do you think is meant by this?
- What does Gaius seem to be doing for the brothers and sisters (vv5–8)? How is this an example of faithfulness?
- How can we today show this sort of faithfulness?

Concluding questions

If the Spirit is to produce faithfulness in us, what does this mean? To whom are we to be faithful (or to what)? How should this show itself in our relationships: family, friends, church family....?

How can we show faithfulness to God in everyday life in using the gifts he gives us for example in the church fellowship?