

Introduction:

Good Morning...Thank you for being here this morning...I am Byron Bradshaw the pastor here at Calvary...And this is Calvary Bible Church...

I have had the privilege this year to walk around in our AWANA clubs and to also recently participate in some of their awards ceremonies...AWANA is a special program that has touched the lives of so many young people throughout Calvary's history...

Thank you to the parents here that support it...Thank you to the students and young people that work hard in it...And thank you to all the AWANA leaders that serve faithfully in it as well..

We have some people serving here who have served in AWANA for 53 years...WOW....And many many more serving 40+ years...Thank you for your support of this program and for all the leaders that make it go round and round...

Before we begin let us bow in a Word of Prayer...

ME:

Today, I'd like to talk to you about the faithfulness of God...Specifically, God's faithfulness to the nation of Israel and also God's faithfulness to each of us here today...But this message may not be what you expect.....

When you think of faithfulness...What comes to mind? Specifically, when you think of someone who is faithful whom do you think of? There are many names that personally come to my mind...But I especially think of one person in particular...

To tell you a quick story...I have started the discipleship process with many young men over the years....Many of them were very faithful to meet and to continue then discipling others...

But perhaps the one that stands out the most is Luke..

Luke was very faithful...He was very dependable...predictable...reliable...As part of the discipleship process, the disciple needs to have daily devotions and to memorize whole chapters of the Bible... This is a steep requirement but Luke proved his faithfulness...

Because Sure enough week after week, Luke came to meet me at Angels Island Coffee with his devotions in hand and his scripture memorized...

He was punctual...Luke was always on time...And if he was even 10 seconds late, he would profusely apologize...

He was consistent...When we met, I knew what I was getting...An eager learner....A dedicated listener...And an urgent follower of Christ...

He was dedicated...There was no task beneath him, there was no requirement to far, nor was there any person unworthy to serve...

Transition: Luke was faithful.....When you think of someone who is faithful...What characteristics come to your mind? Dependability? Punctuality? Integrity? Character?

WE:

Transition: But I am going to ask you another question....

- **Yes or no...Is God faithful?.....Some are saying, “Um duh...”** Yet, I imagine there some in this room that would say “no He is not”.....

But for all you “yes’s” what then makes God faithful? I asked staff this question and someone said correctly, “What makes God faithful is that He is God...” Very true....(Clear Throat)

I guess a better question is....What proves that God is faithful?

#1: God is punctual- I heard in seminary an interesting phrase... “God’s timing is always perfect but never convenient...”

#2: God is consistent...He is the same yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever...

#3: God is a Guide...God’s faithfulness is displayed that He has not just abandoned us despite our sin...Instead God sent His Holy Spirit as a guide to Godliness and gave us His completed Word as our road map...

Transition: But What else proves that God is faithful?

#4: The one inescapable characteristic in my mind that proves that God is “faithful” is that God keeps His promises...

God keeps His promises of the Gospel, of eternal life, of His return...God is faithful because He keeps His promises of sending His helper, of sending us His love and grace...And yet God’s faithfulness is not just to me...or to us..... (Long Pause)

WE: Why should I listen?

Today's message on God's faithfulness is probably not what you are expecting... Because today's passage does not describe God's faithfulness to me or you but to another group of people... Today's passage describes God's faithfulness to Israel...

Perhaps the greatest example of God's faithfulness throughout all of history is His relationship to Israel... The history of Israel is a testament to God's true, abounding, unending and never failing faithfulness...

Transition: But today's message is also probably the most important message on God's faithfulness to Israel is probably the most important message you will hear on God's faithfulness...

Some of you maybe asking, "Why is today's message one of the most important on God's faithfulness that you will ever hear?" Because God's faithfulness to Israel assures us that God is faithful to us...(repeat)

Transition: Today's passage is Romans 3:1-8...and today's passage is very important and also very difficult...Difficult to understand...To be transparent...it is one of the most difficult passages I have ever preached...

Transition: As one commentator puts it that verses 1-8 is like a bird's nest... Simple from distance but complex and difficult to unwrap... up close...Verses 1-8 are absolutely PACKED....And IT IS Simply AWESOME... Yet to unwind the nest, in order to pick it apart, we must notice the two areas of God's faithfulness by pointing out and explaining Paul's four main questions in verses 1-8...

Transition: So, Come with me to Romans 3...And we will begin with Question #1 in verse 1....

GOD:

Read verse 1, *"Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?"* or more literally in the original language... *"Therefore what is the more (or advantage) of a Jew or what is the usefulness of circumcision?"*

QUESTION #1:

What is question #1? In verse 1...Paul asks the first question "What advantage has the Jew?" Now, let us take a step back for just a second and ask...why in the world would Paul lead off with this question?

Question #1 reveals the exact momentary thinking of all the 1st century Jews reading his

letter...Think about The Book of Romans to this point...

Why are they, the Jews, questioning the benefit of being a Jew?

Well, in Chapter 2:1-11, Paul says what? Paul says to the Jews...”that they can’t judge because they too are broken and sinful too just like those Gentiles...”

Then, in Chapters 2:12-16, Paul says to the Jews...”that they can’t be justified through the Law... “

Then, in Chapter 2:17-29, Paul adds to the Jews... “That not only can they not be justified by the law...But that their most important mark of their covenantal relationship with God, circumcision, doesn’t save them either...”

Now, I can just imagine the shock and discouragement to all the Jews reading Paul’s letter at this exact moment...

Because to a Jew...Circumcision is THE sign that you are part of the great Abrahamic covenant with God...And as a Jew, it has culturally become their greatest salvific security...

And then in Chapter 2... Paul basically says... “Ya know...all the stuff that you have been culturally raised to believe...All that stuff about justification through the law and Circumcision isn’t really true...”

In fact, God doesn’t really care about it all that much...What matters to God is the circumcision of the Heart through the Holy Spirit...”

So, imagine you are a Jew...At the end of Chapter 2...You are defeated...you “metaphorically” want to throw in the towel...and right now at the end of Chapter 2 they are questioning if they are special at all...

Transition: But then notice how Paul answers Question #1: His answer is not what they expect...Look at verse 2...

Read verse 2, *“Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect...(WHAT?) First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God...”*

What does Paul say is the advantage of being a Jew?

***Answer #1: Great in every respect...**Literally in the original language, this phrase in verse 2

says, “Much...according to all ways...” A Jew’s spiritual advantage is “in all ways...” Their advantage is in God’s blessing, God’s instruction and God’s provision...

But then notice the rest of verse 2, “Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.”

***How else are they advantaged Answer #2: The Jewish advantage is that they have been given the very oracles of God...** In other words their advantage is **This.... (Hold up the Bible)...**

At the end of Chapter 2...I imagine God shaking his head at all those Jews thinking they weren’t special...I imagine Him taking a deep breath...with a deep sigh...

I then imagine God saying something like this to the Jewish nation, “If only you would see.....” “If only you would just look for true salvation in the text I gave you...”

Listen friends, the very Oracles of God (the Old Testament), the Torah DO NOT EVER reveal salvation through the Law or circumcision.....GOD NEVER INTENDED IT TO SAVE THEM...

Salvation has always been by grace through faith...Demonstrated in the very oracles that they were given...Demonstrated specifically in Genesis 15:6 which demonstrates salvation before the Law, before circumcision, and before the completion of the Old Testament...Genesis 15:6 says, “And Abraham believed in God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness”... Their salvific advantage is that they had a leg up on grace through faith but unfortunately many of them totally missed it under the weight of legalism and bureaucracy....

Transition: But notice a key phrase in verse 2...Notice the phrase “First of all...” So, when we read this today, we expect a list of advantages... What else is the Advantage of being a Jew? In order to discover another advantage of being a Jew... We must observe the **second question** found in verses 3...

QUESTION #2:

Read verses 3, “*What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?*”

What is the second question? “If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?” In simpler terms...*Question #2: Has the Jews’ unbelief “voided” God’s faithfulness to them?

How does Paul respond? Notice verse 4

Verse 4, *“4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.”*

***What is Paul’s answer to Question #2? Answer: May it Never Be!!**

Has the Jews unbelief “voided” God’s faithfulness to them? “May it never be!” These four words are two very important words in the Original language,* “μη γένωτο.” Literally translated, as the NASB has it, “May it never be!” This is VERY strong language... But culturally speaking Paul is inferring the KJV translation, “GOD FORBID!!”

Has some of the Jews unbelief nullified God’s faithfulness to the Jews? GOD FORBID IT... In other words, MAY THIS NEVER BE THOUGHT OF EVER AGAIN...GOD WAS FAITHFUL, GOD IS FAITHFUL, and GOD WILL ALWAYS BE FAITHFUL TO HIS PEOPLE...

Despite their sin...Despite their rejection of the messiah...That God is still faithful to them...God is still faithful to give them their promised land, seed and blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant described in Genesis 12...

But Think about this... I want you to listen to me friends....Verse 3 and 4 fly in the face of all replacement theology proponents...The falseness of replacement theology cannot be more clearly demonstrated nor communicated than in verse 3-4...

Now some of you may be asking the question, “What is replacement theology?”

Replacement theology is the view that the church has replaced Israel...That the blessings of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant are not Israel’s but the church’s.....

Many modern scholars believe that the church has replaced Israel as the promised people...WHAT? ARE YOU SERIOUS? I WANT TO SAY TO ALL THOSE SCHOLARS... Have those people ever read Romans 3:3-4? I mean it cannot be more clearly stated?

Look at it again, *“If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? 4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.”*

Transition: God was faithful, God is faithful and God will always be faithful to His promised people...Israel...To summarize, based on Paul’s answer to the two questions...What is Paul’s point in verses 1-4...

***Point #1: God is still faithful to fulfill his promises to Israel...**

AND.....RIGHT HERE I WANT TO MAKE A QUICK CAVEAT...

God must remain faithful to Israel to prove that He is true as it is stated in verse 4...and think about this...Why would God ever make an unconditional covenant based on conditions? Why would God make an unbreakable covenant conditional upon Israel's obedience? **GOD KNEW ISRAEL'S FUTURE UNBELIEF...RIGHT?** I mean he is GOD...

When God sealed the covenant with Abraham and his descendants, God knew they would disbelieve...He knew they were liars...But it doesn't matter...the Abrahamic covenant is not conditional based on Israel's obedience but is solely based upon God's faithfulness...In Genesis 15...God is the only one that went through the sacrifices...

Allow me to illustrate the importance that the church has not replaced Israel...

If you have ever talked with my wife, then you know she is a sharp lady and a bit sassy...But my wife is super intelligent especially when it comes to making concrete Biblical observations...I tell her on a regular basis that she is a great pastor's wife...She is a great sound board for me and.....She will always speak her mind whether I want to hear it or not...

But To tell you a quick story...

One time we were driving and she said something absolutely profound regarding replacement theology.....I remember exactly where we were when she said this...I was pulling off I-565 on the ramp to head south on the Parkway (ya know that insane death trap...) So, I am concentrating to get all the way over...

And my wife says to me, "Ya know Byron I have a problem with replacement theology... (Of course my Bible nerd self perked up)...My problem is that if the church has replaced Israel...*Then that means that God does not keep His promises...*

WOW...SPOT ON...Right? The problem with replacement theology...is that it means that God does not keep His promises...That is a HUGE problem..

Practical:

And think about this... God's faithfulness to Israel ASSURES us of His faithfulness to us...If the church has replaced Israel...If God did not and does not fulfill His promises to Israel...Then how do I know that God will fulfill His promises to me?

Ladies and Gentlemen, BUT since God IS faithful to the Jews, then God IS faithful to me and

to us....Since God keeps his promises to them then God will keep His promises to me...

TIME OUT

Now let me take a time out really quick...Now.....before you go on a Facebook crusade bashing on all replacement theologians...

Listen to me...One of my favorite seminary professors used to say when someone had an opposing theological view...He used to say, “And they are good people...” I did not understand quite what he meant until I became a pastor...What he meant was...

There are lot of great Godly and justified men and women out there that believe differently than you and me....And that’s ok... When it comes to areas that are not necessarily “heresy” it is okay to have a disagreement.....And we can still embrace them in love

Friends, there are a lot of Christians and good Godly men and women that believe in Replacement Theology...replacement theology is not “heresy”..... but it is just wrong...haha...

Transition: So, verses 1-4 communicate the advantage of being a Jew...The advantage is #1 Great in every respect, #2: the Oracles of God and in verses 3-4 Paul communicate that God is still faithful to Israel despite their sin...

Transition: But then Paul gives us the second area of God’s faithfulness by answering question #3 and #4 in verses 5-8...

***QUESTION #3:**

Read verses 5-6, “*But if our unrighteousness ^ademonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?*”

Interesting here...Paul in verse 5 seems to make a declarative statement of sorts...followed by question #3...

In a round about way, what is Paul’s declarative statement? That our unrighteousness demonstrates or “exhibits” God’s righteousness...That our sinfulness magnifies or “puts on display” God’s **perfection**...And It does...But then notice Paul’s third question found in verse 5...

Reread verse 5, “*But if our unrighteousness ^ademonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He?*”

In simpler terms....Question #3: “How can a righteous God inflict wrath to the Jews?”

It seems here that Paul is not just stating a hypothetical question... But an actual question...It seems that Paul is specifically addressing some of his detractors...And What are some of Paul’s detractors saying? “How can a righteous God inflict wrath to the Jews?”

What is Paul’s answer? Verse 6, “May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?”

Answer #1 “May it never be! “God Forbid”...

Answer #2: For otherwise, how will God judge the world?”

Does God’s faithfulness to judge show he is then sinful? NO...**In fact, it’s the opposite...** God’s ability to judge sin displays, magnifies, exhibits, puts on a billboard HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS...

Only a God that is perfect and above reproach...Only a God that is completely and totally righteous can judge sinfulness...God’s wrathful judgment proves His righteousness and our unrighteousness...

Question #4:

Transition: But then notice Paul’s fourth question in verses 7-8,

Read verses 7-8, “*But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? 8 And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”?* Their condemnation is just...”

Once again in these verses, Paul seems to be addressing his detractors...

But verses 7-8 still seem a bit unclear to us 21st century non-Greek speakers...So, to clear it up a bit, **Listen to how another English translation puts verses 7-8,** “*Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?”* ⁸ *Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”?* Their condemnation is just!”

***What is Paul’s fourth question? *Question #4:** In simple terms, Should we sin so that God’s righteousness is magnified?”

***What is Paul’s answer?** In a round about way...Paul is essentially, “Anyone who holds this view then their condemnation is just”

But Paul answers this fourth question in a bit of a round about way...and his answer is more to answer his detractors...

Inferentially, what are some of Paul's detractors saying? It seems that perhaps some Jewish People are spreading gossip and false claims...

Their criticism of Paul's aspect of grace is that well if you agree with Paul then you should... "Do whatever sin you wish because it magnifies God's grace..."

But notice in verse 8, Paul does not directly answer the question nor his distractors here... What does he rather do? He basically says God's judgment on them is just (for thinking that) ...

Now listen to me friends... Now hear me for just a second..... Paul is not saying and never says... "Keep sinning because it magnifies God's grace..."

In my opinion, Paul is saying the opposite..... Since God is FAITHFUL... Not only is He faithful to keep His promises to Israel and to us... But then....

Point #2: God is also faithful to judge Israel and us for our sin... And Paul is saying to the Jews... "Since God is faithful to judge you for your sin... Then STOP SINNING..."

Practical:

I imagine to God... One of the most frustrating things to Him is the misuse of His grace... It must be absolutely nauseating.... I mean excruciatingly frustrating for God that anyone would ever think of Question #4... That anyone would ever think that His grace is permission to sin...

In order to put into perspective God's frustration over the abuse of His grace... Allow me to illustrate it with a scenario you have probably faced...

Let's say hypothetically... That as you exit into the parking lot today that a homeless person runs up to you and begs you for 5 dollars so that he can buy some food... The homeless person mentions that he is absolutely famished and can barely move due to hunger...

So, Let's say this homeless man catches you just at the right time... Perhaps you remember my message on James 2... (Clear Throat)

So, in an effort to show grace and love... You decide to really bless him... So, gladly you take out your purse or wallet and instead of giving him \$5 you give him \$10 instead...

So, then let's say you then go out to lunch with your church friends to Jason's Deli... Then, on

the way home...You see that same homeless person with a bottle of Jack Daniel's...

What is your instant reaction? ABSOLUTE ANGER... Why? Because your grace and love was abused...It was misused, right?

I imagine this is how God feels towards anyone who sees God's grace as permission to sin...(Clear Throat)...

Friends.....I can poke? I imagine that is how God feels towards us when we sin...

That here is God...Who sent His son to die on the cross because we sin and we could not earn our way into the presence of a perfect God...So on one hand, God displays His love and Grace through His Son Jesus Christ....And then he peers across the wall to mankind...And here is His creation who have been given a free gift...And even if we believe or reject...All of our sin is in a sense spitting and abusing the grace that He has freely given us...

WHAT A TRAGEDY!!!

Ladies and Gentlemen, Listen to me...GOD IS FAITHFUL...AMEN? #1 God is Faithful to Keep His promises...TO Israel and TO us...

#2: BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL Also to Judge... To Judge the Jews for their sin and to judge us for our sin...Let us not abuse God's grace...But rather use God's grace to get our life on track...To use his grace to be obedient...

Can I make another really quick observation? WE love to think about God's faithfulness to fulfill his promises...**But** we hate to think that He is also faithful to fulfill His judgment...

Why? Because His judgment is not "warm and fuzzy"... If God is faithful then He must be faithful to fulfill His promises and judgment...He has promised that He will judge our sin...Friends, Let us not run from the truth...And let us not fear the truth...Rather let us embrace the truth and let the truth shape our actions...

God's Truth is not handcuffs but freedom... God's truth is not meant to be a prison of fear and rules but freedom from prison of shame and sin...

Ignorance of God's truth is a false sense of freedom...(repeat) That is why I don't do the warm and fuzzy thing...I believe the truth sets us free...

God's blunt, clear and concrete truth gives us freedom from ignorance and freedom from

sin...God's truth and grace is not designed to shame or shackle...but designed to help us live life to the fullest...

Transition: As we head toward closing, how do we take the truth of God's faithfulness to His promises and judgment and apply it to my life?

YOU:

How does God's faithfulness to keep his promises shape my life? God's faithfulness to Keep His promises should create in us...

#1: Gratitude...God's faithfulness to Keep His promises to Israel assures us that God will keep his promises to us...So, Let us #1: Live with Gratitude...That God is faithful...That heaven is waiting for us...For all those who have believed in Jesus Christ, then there is a place prepared for you far away from the worries of this life...That truth demands our gratitude...

God fulfilling His promises should create in us Gratitude...But #2: it should give us...Confidence...

#2: Confidence ...God's faithfulness to His promises also should provide us confidence...Confidence to face tomorrow...Confidence to resist the prison of sin...Confidence to trust the Lord for His direction...Confidence to TRUST what this (hold up Bible) says...Confidence to put it into practice...GOD's Faithfulness to fulfill His promises should create in use Gratitude and Confidence...

But where does Point #2's rubber meet the road? How does God's faithfulness to judge shape my life? God's faithfulness to judge should create in us...

#3: Fear of the Lord...God's faithfulness to judge should honestly create in us a healthy fear...I am not saying we should fear God as one would fear an abusive father...

I am saying...We should fear the Lord as He truly is...As a loving yet "just" Father...His love and comfort as well as his strictness and authority should cause us to live a life that is holy and pure...For freedom comes from purity...but with sin comes chains...

Transition; What else should we do because God is faithful to judge?

#4: Resist...Resist sin...listen to this...Freedom comes with purity and chains come with sin...The fact that God is faithful to judge should cause us to resist sin...To resist sin...God's faithfulness is not permission but a responsibility to obey...**WE:**

As we close...Allow me to close with a thought...

“God is faithful to all His promises, nor can He fail or deceive; He is all wise and foreknowing of everything that comes to pass; He never changes His mind, nor forget His word; and He is able to perform and is the God of truth...and cannot lie; nor has He ever failed in any one of His promises...”

“The glory of God’s faithfulness is that no sin of ours has ever made Him unfaithful...”