

Faithfulness is Required

- After turning from our sins to Christ
 - Committing to love God and love people
 - Beginning to grow in the word of God
 - Coming to grips with the surrender of a disciple
 - And forming our doctrinal foundation
 - We must simply continue
 - We must remain faithful to the mission to which God has called us
 - To continue turning to Christ
 - Loving God and people
 - Living out the word of God in surrender
 - Obeying and teaching sound doctrine
 - For all of the years God gives us
 - In peaceful and in tumultuous times
 - No matter our circumstances
 - This is faithfulness
 - And it is our theme in this lesson
- We find the basis for this assertion - that we must remain faithful - in 1 Corinthians 4:2...

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

- Do we fit in the category "stewards?"
 - If so, how?
 - And what does "faithful" mean?
- Let's go back to verse one of the chapter for context...

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

- Paul himself, the other Apostles, and those serving with them, were to be regarded as Christ's ministers
- While the Apostles had a special assignment from Him, their general mandate was not unlike our own
- They were ministers, that is, those serving under another
- Often the attendants of a king
- To use an earthly example, the Prime Minister of England serves under the authority of the

sovereign, that is the queen

- When he is selected by the members of the majority party in Parliament, after an election, he must request permission from the queen to form a government
- And it is only after this permission is granted that he can begin his service as Prime Minister
- And select those ministers that will be beneath him, also serving their queen
- In this role of service, certain responsibilities are assumed
- Any minister is a steward of something, no matter how big or small

- Steward means "one entrusted with the management of certain affairs"

- Going back to our England example, the Prime Minister manages all other ministers and indeed all the affairs of government
- He has, for example, a Justice Minister, managing legal affairs
- And a Defense Minister, managing the affairs of national defence
- Whatever the case, ministers steward something - and they do so with authority and under authority

- What then, were the Apostles to be ministers and therefore stewards of?

- What are we to be stewards of, as disciples of Christ?
- It says here: the mysteries of God
- Far from our concept of mystery, this is not something hidden, but rather something revealed
- More than that, something we are under mandate to reveal more and more
- And that is the gospel of Christ
- As 1 Thessalonians 2:4 says..

"...we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

- It is this message enunciated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15...

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

- We are ministers for Christ, and stewards of His message, every one of us

- Remember what He commanded to all that will follow Him in Mark 16...

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

- We hold an official role
- An appointed role
- And we are responsible

- Ministry is not merely the province of pastors and teachers
- It is not only for those that have been to seminary
- It is not even just for those who have particular gifts and talents
- It is for all disciples
- We are stewards
- And have management over the affairs of gospel proclamation
- How then must we execute them?
- Back to our theme verse...

1 Corinthians 4:2

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

- Faithfulness, then, is required of us
- But what are we talking about?
- Well, someone who is faithful is worthy of trust, they can be relied upon
- They are "faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties"
- Whatever it is this faithful person is responsible to deliver, will be delivered, and in exactly the manner prescribed by their king
- The faithful do not fail in their duty
- Trust can safely be placed in them
- This is not optional, but how can it be accomplished?

- Perhaps Ephesians 4 will help us to know...

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

- We have a job, an assignment, a responsibility, and it is official
- And it is possible to be worthy of it
- But how?

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

- The keys are: our perspectives, which should be realistic - and that means lowly
- And in our relationship to the body, which should be close
- And in our submission to the Spirit, which lives in all of us, giving us power
- We are not faithful because we have the ability in ourselves to do it, but because we serve One who is always faithful
- As 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 says...

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

- We are sanctified to completion, blameless before God, by God
- Who is altogether faithful
- And will do it
- He is therefore, not only our model for faithfulness, but also our source

- Let us be reminded of this, faithfulness is not perfection
- For we know that no man lives without some inconsistency
- Paul himself described the difficulty of faithfulness in Romans 7, starting in verse 18...

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

- But we know such people exist in some abundance in the church
- For Paul commanded Timothy to teach them in 2 Timothy 2:2...

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

- The question is, in regard to our official position as ministers and stewards, can we be relied upon?

- Are we trustworthy?
- Do we manage that which is in our purview to manage with integrity
- Do we execute our responsibilities according to the dictates of our King?
- This is required

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