

God is Faithful

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Preacher: Michael Lilley

[0 : 00] I'm really excited to introduce our preacher, speaker to you this morning. Mike Lilly, Michael Lilly, is one of my dearest friends.

And we served together at King of Grace Church, which eventually sent us both out to plant churches. So we've planted Trinity Cambridge Church in Cambridge, and Mike's planted King of Peace Church in Salem, Massachusetts.

A lifetime before that, Mike was a lieutenant colonel in the army. He served there for a while. He's still a highly coveted instructor. But he gave all of that up so that he can serve Jesus by preaching the gospel.

And he's a man who has personally experienced God's grace in his life in a radical way. And because of that, he very effectively ministers God's grace to others, those who are in need, all of us as sinners in need.

And Mike's a man of prayer. And we had him come, and he actually preached to us, taught us about prayer a few years ago, actually, when we were still at Kennedy Longfellow School in East Cambridge.

[1 : 08] And so this is his second time I guess preaching for, it's been a little while. But yeah, so probably a lot of you guys don't recognize him, but I'm really glad that you guys get to meet him today. So Mike is married to his wife Enza, who serves as a doula.

So their service usually meets in the afternoon. And so Mike was able to come preach for us. But Enza had other commitments. That's why she's not here with him this morning. He's married. He's got three sons. He's got three girls. He's got three sons.

And it's wonderful to have you to preach for us. Thank you, Mike. So please come up. Let's welcome Mike to come preach for us. Thank you. Thank you. Well, greetings to you from your brothers and sisters in Christ in Salem.

And it's good to be here together with you today. I just can't say how excited I am. I remember coming here years ago and walking the streets and praying with Sean before there was any of you here.

So it's really cool to look out and see this today. You know, the work that God has done building his church. Amen? So 20 years ago, I was still in the Army.

[2 : 18] And during that time, performance counseling was really a part of my professional life. Now, I liked my soldiers. In fact, I love videos.

I love my soldiers. I liked what I did a lot. And sometimes you had to go, oh, you had to do counseling, whether it was good or bad. Right? Well, even in the stuff where I knew I was going to get a negative counseling, where I really needed to correct where we were going, I always tried to start off with the positive things that I saw about the soldiers that I was counseling.

I wanted to know. I wanted to know that I saw things that made me hopeful for their future. So as we move today at the first nine verses of 1 Corinthians, we see Paul doing something pretty similar to that as he writes the church in Corinth.

See, between a letter that he had received from the church in Corinth, one that we don't have, and a personal report that he had received from one of the house churches, Paul's gotten some really disturbing news about the church in Corinth.

So in response, he's sending one of his most comprehensive correction letters that we have probably in the New Testament.

[3 : 45] Yet, unlike the counseling that I conducted with my soldiers that kind of grounded them in the faith that I had for them, Paul starts 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 1 through 9 by grounding the believers in God's faithfulness.

He points them to the good things that God has faithfully done on their behalf and how he has seen the results of those good things manifested in them.

Paul doesn't move their hope and their ability to do better. But in God, and in when God is already faithfully done through Jesus Christ.

And how God will sustain them until Jesus returns. So please, turn in your barbers to 1 Corinthians 1, 1 through 9, and follow along as I read.

Paul writes, Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus and a brother of South Carolina.

[5 : 00] To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.

grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony about Christ was delivered among you, so that you are not lacking in any care, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful. God is faithful. By whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

May God bless the reading and the hearing and the preaching of his Holy Word. Father, this week, may you send your Holy Spirit to bring these words to recall and would encourage your people by the knowledge that they are called by you.

They are being holy in Christ, and they are sustained guiltless. Until Christ on the time. Father, ask today, in your spirit, and let your word go out and run forward.

[6 : 49] That's your promise. Lord, empower the preaching of your word today as you have prepared to receive it. We pray that in the name of your Son. Amen. So, from this passage this week, I have one simple thought, I guess, that I want you to walk away with.

And that is, God is faithful. He will call you, to sanctify you, and to sustain you, who trust in the Lord Jesus. I guess we could really just kind of cut that down, even more simply say, that God is faithful.

But I like the longer one, because it sort of has the gospel in a nutshell there, right? God is able to call, sanctify, and sustain all those who believe in Jesus Christ.

So now, to move that proposition to you today, I really just want to say, that God has called you, and my three points are really, God has called you, into the fellowship of His Son.

God has called you, to be saints, and God has called you, into the ministry, of His Son, which is Christ. So let's get started, with our first point, that God is faithful to call us.

[8 : 11] In this first word, I want to briefly show you, three ways, in which God is faithful to call us. I want to, I'll build your faith, by seeing that God, has been faithful to you, faithful to call you, first, into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus.

Second, to live as saints, of the Lord Jesus, and third, into the ministry of Christ. Now, Paul, in verses 1-9, begins with ministry, moves to saints, and then to fellowship.

But I'm going to do that, in reverse order, and we're going to start, verse 9. There, we read, that God is faithful. Let me ask you, who does this verse, say, called you and I, into the fellowship, of His Son?

Who called you? God. It was God. It was God that fought. And as we consider this passage, the first thing we learn, the first thing we really need, to hold on to, is it is God, who is faithful, to call us, not we, ourselves.

It is God, who is faithful. We have not called ourselves, into this fellowship, of Jesus, with God. But, God, was faithful, to do this, while you and I, were still enemies.

[9 : 54] But, where were you, when you caught, called us? Stop the thing about that, where were you, when God called you? Most of you, were probably not, saved in childhood.

You can go, thank God, that I had a grave, before you. But I bet, a bunch of people are not. I was 30, when I was called, and I was eight, in a full-out spirit, away from God.

I wanted nothing, to do with God. I experienced a church, when I was living, and I wanted nothing, to do with that. But God, but God, was faithful, even while I, was still living in sin, following my own desires, following the course, of my own way.

He, called, me, into fellowship, with his son. I, God, faithfully called me, bore the foundations of your, pursued me, with his relentless love.

He, sent, his Holy Spirit, to open my eyes, and even gave me, the faith to believe, because I couldn't even do that. So, so let's, all, see, that this is, God's, work, not ours.

[11 : 16] It is God, that is faithful, to do it. It is God, who is faithful, to call us, into the fellowship, of his son. And friends, God, has, faithfully, called you, into a relationship, with his son.

But it's more, than just a relationship. So you're called into the fellowship, of Jesus. And the word, fellowship, is important.

In our current context, we talk about fellowship, and, you know, it kind of sounds like, off and go, not a little chit-chat, after church. Jesus didn't die, he didn't have chit-chat, after church.

These are why God sent his son, to say, maybe, you're familiar, with, J.R.

R. Trump's, trilogy, the fellowship, of the ring, maybe, Friday, maybe, or maybe, just a word, but, but, the point is, that there's this trilogy, out there, and it's called, the fellowship, of the ring.

[12 : 23] Fellowship is kind of, a noun in that, right? And, what he's talking about, is, these nine, companions, who are brought, together, to accomplish, something, right?

These, they're on this quest, to destroy the ring, the fellowship, that they had entered, was full, of danger. It was hard, it was costly, people would die, from the ring.

That's much more like, fellowship, also going after. In the original language, the noun, fellowship, is referring to, a legal, and binding, partnership, between two, other people, excused in terms, sometimes, of marriage, and it's often used, in business contracts, and I'm repeating, for example, Peter, and James, and John, and Luke, and I, where they are, in partnership, in this, in this fishing business, that they're in.

And if you think about that, it's a financial partnership, with them, but it was a partnership, of blood, and sweat, equity, right?

And then they failed, and you didn't bring, cats, and what happened? You went hungry, your family went hungry. So you put everything, you had, in making this thing work. It was costly.

- [13 : 53] So, think of the people, in your term, right here, in your book, you are called, into the eternal, fellowship, of God's, Son, Jesus, your God, our Lord, your Lord, God.
- And you're called, into that fellowship, with these people, whose lives, are bound up, with yours, in Christ. You are to, partner with Jesus, as it goes, this church, not just, as a individual, but as members, who are, partner, partner, and, partner, and, partner.
- Let me stop, just a minute. And what I want you to do, is you look at the person, to your left, right? Is there anybody, in your left, right? Do you see a parent, right? Somebody. You've got one, on one, the other, right?
- And now, I want you to look at that person, on your left, on your right, and say, we are in partnership, with Jesus, together. And here, look at that person, we are in partnership, with Jesus, together.
- Good. Good. Good. God is faithful, to put you, into that partnership, with his son, together. Amen. So the second thing, that God has, Paul was into, is in verse 2.
- [15 : 26] And there we see, that we are called, to be saints, as those, whom God has called, into the fellowship, of his son Jesus. Paul wants to make sure, that the Corinthians, and I think us today, know, that God, has also, called us, to be, saints.
- That, we didn't call ourselves, to be saints, I guarantee you. God has, called us, to be saints. So let me ask you, did God, call you, into the fellowship, of his son Jesus, because you, were holy.
- You were holy, before you were called, please raise your hand. There's the door, in the back, because you don't want it. No, seriously. God did not, call you, because you, were holy.
- He didn't look down, from heaven, and say, oh, that went there. She is, so holy. She is, so righteous. Come on, girl.
- No, it isn't, what happened. Not at all. This isn't, like a modern, day law, from the little view, and says, wow, that person has prestige, their holy, bring them on, because they're built, a prestige, and well, not for, that didn't have that work.
- [16 : 45] That is not, at all, for the world. You never have, to prove yourself, because God, has already, done it for you. God, is the one, who made you faithful, through his son, Jesus Christ.
- And it is God, who has called you, to be, saints. Come, through the Lord, Jesus Christ. So let's take a minute, to explore this last thing, a little further.
- Paul makes a single, profound statement, in verse 2, he addresses this letter, to the church, of God, in Corinth, to those sanctified, in Christ Jesus.
- What does that mean? What does it mean, that God has, sanctified us, in Christ Jesus? Well, let's start with that word, sanctified.
- The word, sanctified, means, you make something, holy, right? Dramatically, Paul is using, the perfect tense here, which means that, something has been, accomplished, in the past, but it has, ongoing, effects.
- [17 : 57] You have been, made holy, and you are still, holy. Now I know, the things I think, I know the things I do, I know, there's a reason, like, that's it.
- Right? There's a reason for it, it's not because, I'm living, holy, right? I'm not, perfectly, righteous, in my daily law. So how can I be, more of you?
- Well, a little roundabout way here, but what did, John 3, 16? For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have a total life.

what does Jesus mean when He says that? What does He mean when He says that God gave His Son? Jesus was referring to the fact that God had sent Him to earth to live a perfect life, so that He could be given as a perfect sacrifice for everyone who believes in Him.

But that begs the question, why do He need me a sacrifice? And the answer is that you and I have a problem.

[19 : 25] God has made laws and given commands, and you and I, intentionally or unintentionally, have broken those laws.

We have thumbed our noses at God, and done whatever we wanted to do. Well, Romans 6, 26 reminds us that you can do that, but there is a penalty for that.

There's a penalty for breaking God's laws. And like a person who, yes, there are people who, and oh, because our hearts are placed that I shouldn't necessarily be, I hope that doesn't happen in the other way, there's a penalty, right?

Because I've done that, I could get ticketed, and I could get towed. And just because I didn't see a sign, doesn't make me innocent. The problem is that when we break God's laws, we just don't get ticketed and towed.

We get a penalty. And even worse, every human being that has walked the face of the earth, has broken God's laws and faces.

[20 : 49] That's the penalty. But God, God is compassionate, merciful, fell with steadfast love and faithfulness.

He knew humanity could not get out of the mess that was created by Adam and Eve. So, he sent his son, Jesus. He gave Jesus to be a sacrifice in a new place, to pay our price, to pay a price in our place.

To die for our sin, to face our punishment, to be an offering that established peace between God and us.

Yet, before Jesus could live, before he could be a perfect sacrifice, he had to live a perfect life. Right? So, Jesus had to live a life that was declared righteous and holy before God, by following God's laws perfectly.

And he did that. Jesus did live a life before God that was perfect, and God did declare him holy and righteous. And when he had to live that life, to the point that was necessary, God sent his son to the cross, where the sin of every believer was placed on Jesus.

[22 : 18] Then God, the Bible, put his son to death. In doing that, Jesus became a sacrifice on our behalf.

He completely paid for all of our sins. Every command, every law, that you have ever broken, ever will break, past, present, future, in mind, in heart, in physical form, all of it, painful, done, been gone.

Let's come back. Right? So what does that mean for you and I? It means that, that when you and I face our faith, gave Jesus as our Savior, we are saying that, that we believe, Jesus paid the price for all of our sins, but he died on the belt.

All of my wrongdoing, right? Even the things I haven't thought about doing that, which I really agree with you. There's a lot of them. That makes us sinless before God, which is great.

We need that. But we are made holy by living sins before God. So God doesn't stop at forgiving all of our sins without our starvation.

[23 : 41] He places us in Christ, right? He transfers that perfect life that Christ lived, and he, like, puts it on to us. We call it you, but, then he, I don't need to talk.

It means that he put it on to us, right? It became ours. The perfectly righteous life of Christ became mine. I'm clothed in the righteousness of Christ. I'm hidden in Christ.

Just as if I had been in that perfect life. And because of that, we are declared holy. I am both sinless and the heaven, and the perfectly righteous life before God.

In Jesus Christ, we are declared being made, fully, through Jesus. You have been sanctified, completed action, done. Now, let me give you, I can give you a view of these, but let me give you just one proof, one proof, of why I am sure that as a believer, God has sanctified you as a completed action.

I know that we are declared holy for God, because when we saved Jesus, God does not, when I'm saved by Jesus, right? When I'm raised by Jesus, God loves me with his Holy Spirit.

[24 : 58] He went, uh-uh, God loves me, God loves me. I'm not trying to find you. Okay, think about it for just a second. You are filled with the presence of God.

Jesus, but, do you know what happened in the Old Testament? When you came into the presence of the living, God, and you weren't, okay, think about it, think about it.

It goes on, right? The parents are, the parents are, the parents are, the parents are, the parents are, right? The other guy, right? The Mark starts to fall, and so well, people are thinking he's doing the right thing.

Reach his head. Presence of God. Think about it. Dude, he died. He fell over, dead.

Actually, he cried. I don't know, but he was dead. What happened in the temple when the high priest ran, before the Holy Ghost, did all this stuff, and then they died, where both wanted his wood so they could cry and body out in case he wasn't.

[26 : 13] Because he was about to experience the presence of God. All right, maybe that's not making me think. Here's what I'm like. if you are a believer, raise your hand.

If you're not, that's okay. But if you're a believer, raise your hand. Okay, good. Now, how many of you are believers, now there's no answer, how many of you believe that you're filled with the Holy Spirit? Raise your hand. Good.

That's wonderful. I'm very excited. That's a very exciting shot. Okay. Any of you physically dead who just raise your hand? Oh, good.

I hate talking. So I'm really glad to be here today and that you're alive and you're filled with the Holy Spirit, which tells me you must be sanctified.

You must be declared perfectly holy because the presence of God dwells in you. Amen? Don't you see me going, oh my gosh, I can't believe this is true.

[27 : 15] The power of the living God resides in you. That's amazing. Amen. Okay.

Let me finish up this second point by saying that God has made you holy though to be holy. Right? It's not just that He's a good one to hang out while they're in order or do nice chit-chat.

No, He's called you to be holy, to be saints. God has sanctified you even as He did with the Corinthians and all those who have ever believed in Jesus Christ so that you can be saints.

so that you can go out with this. So that you can do this among one another. God has given you everything you need to be saints. He has declared you holy in Christ Jesus.

He has filled you with His Spirit to show you how as saints you, you, you can do this. He gives you the power to say no to sin and yes to righteousness.

[28 : 15] This is what we're talking about in the saints, right? This is the testimony of Jesus in you. You're living this out. These gifts working within you.

You have the Holy Spirit in you. You are a new preacher. You've been transformed. This is the testimony of Christ in you. So as saints, we're a good picture of what it means to be, to be with Jesus and to the world around us.

Right? We're going to be saints to our spouses, to our significant others. We're going to be saints to our children. We're going to be saints to our employers and our clients, to our neighbors and our parents who are not the tougher.

To our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. So is that how you're thinking about the way God has called you to live?

Are you thinking about actively, thinking actively that you are a human picture of what it would be like to be with Jesus? That's crazy, but that's what it means to be saints.

[29 : 41] That's what we're calling what God called us to do. That's the sanctified. So let me encourage you, church, that same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power at work from day to day to live as a man.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead that is the same power at work in you to help you live this way. That's exciting. You don't have to do this on your own to be in the spirit because you knew you would.

That's why we're raised. That's why we're not raised. All right. God has faithfully called us into the fellowship with the Son. God has sanctified us and called us to be saints of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then he calls us into the ministry of Christ Jesus. So let's turn to our third point that God has faithfully called us into the ministry of the Son. In his introduction, Paul identifies himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus called by the will of God.

Now what I am hoping to see, what Paul is making plain, is that this also is not of his own doing. He is not a self-declared apostle.

[31 : 05] Now if you grew up in North Carolina and South Carolina, there are a lot of self-declared apostles. Let me tell you, there may not be anybody else in that church, but he's preaching every Sunday and is an apostle of his church.

I love it. God bless him. He is not, the Paul is not a self-declared apostle. It is by the will of God and the will of God who met him on the way to Damascus.

While Paul was set on destroying the church, God had other plans. God made the Paul, Paul, out of his previous way of life and into the fellowship of his son, Jesus.

God made the Paul did all that was necessary for Paul to be declared holy and righteous. And then he called Paul to be a saint and loved with all those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet God also made Paul into ministry and he gave him gifts. gifts. He gave him gifts like preaching and teaching and evangelism and leadership and serving.

[32 : 17] God made Paul an apostle. Amen? Not Paul. Church, ministry is not just what your pastor does.

And I'm sure he's taught through that. It's not just what your pastor does. Paul will go on later in chapters 12 and 13 to talk about the gifts that God has given for the building of the church.

And he's talking to the church. Remember the intro? This is to the church, not just to the elders of the church. This is all of them. All of us. God has given gifts for the building of the church.

It's so that you and I and be ministers and minister to one another using the gifts that God has given so that we are all strengthened and encouraged, corrected, exhorted, built up in love until we all reach full maturity to have an integral part of what it means to be the church.

that's why we call the fellowship. You're entered into a partnership because each will be given all these special things that are uniquely joined together.

[33 : 36] And if you are an active member of the partnership, we all are blessed. Friends, God has been faithful to call you into this fellowship, but he didn't stop there.

He called you to live together and see. That's the Holy Consummation to you. I can't believe it. And then he gave you, he called you into ministry, he gave you the gifts necessary to do.

He didn't just ask you to do that to stick with all you in ministry and left you alone. He's given you, has given you all the gifts you need. But do the ministry and that's all.

And I don't care about service and hospitality or prophecy and teaching from one end to the other of those gifts. In one sense, we need all of them to be the church.

And he's faithfully given you these gifts that body can be built up. God, God, and faithful calls us and has given us everything we need to be in the partnership of his son.

[34 : 50] Let me challenge you this week to evaluate how you see your relationship with Jesus and with one another. Are you living like a whole member of the partnership?

Take some time this week to consider what would it look like for me to be a full member of this partnership?

What needs to change in life? Then ask God to help you do that. If you need to repent, do that. Because sometimes it's a sin issue, right?

So if you need to repent, then receive mercy, receive grace, and then with God's help seek to live differently. Now, I realize I've covered a lot with some of you even for me, and this can seem rather daunting than just sort of laid out.

So let me give you some courage right here that God has not just done all of this in the past.

[36 : 02] He left you on your own now and figure it out. See, in verse 8, we're reminded that he also sustains a guilt with to the end for the day the Lord is when he returns.

Let me give you quickly three ways in which God shows the Corinthians and us today how God is faithful to sustain us for the day of our will be. First, let me press the point that part of God's means of sustaining us is what we've already spoken about in the first of the points, that God has faithfully called us into fellowship and as we know from John 10, if he's called you into the fellowship, nothing will snatch you out of his hand.

It's a done deal. We've also seen that he has sanctified us in Christ Jesus. We've seen that as a completed action with us and in fact the music of the Holy Spirit is now in you actively working with your victims and to guide you into the future so you know how to live and to be more like Jesus each day, sustaining, literally sustaining guiltless until Christ returns.

Yet, by no means that will not be after what he's done. What God is doing with faith is to stay his way. God is able to stay with grace and peace.

Look again at Paul's reading in the church in verse 3. Paul says, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Now mercy is when you get what we don't get what we earned or deserve.

[37 : 56] We don't get what we earned or deserve or breaking God's goals which would be death. Grace, though, is when God gives us what we did not deserve.

What we did not deserve. Life. Eternal life. Moreover, eternal life Christ Jesus and it is a grace upon grace John was saying in the first chapter.

Consider that he adopts you as his sons and daughters and makes you co-heirs of Jesus and in Christ God calls you beloved. Grace upon grace.

Brothers and sisters, God extends grace to his gang out of the gang and through Jesus he says, come boldly before my throne with mercy and grace to receive mercy and grace at the time of me.

In Jesus we come as his loved children and we make our request to know we don't need to be anxious about anything. Matthew 7 tells us that God knows what we need.

[39 : 00] Come, come, come with all those angels and thoughts, come with all those birds. Jesus is my bird and not me. Come, put him on me.

God is there to bless us, to give us his mercy and grace in our time of being. God already knows what you need in God and he's faithful to sustain us.

He even pursues us, Psalm 23 tells us, pursues us with goodness and mercy, pursues you with me. He sustains us for those living in Christ who is our mediator, interceding for us, for the throne of God each day.

Jesus is at peace with God. He stands when the enemy comes to condemn us to God's throne. Jesus stands up.

He holds up his hand, that nail scarred hand, of his name, he's engraved and he says, this one is mine. He pulls over his shirt, it's written on my heart, their name right there, this one is mine, this one I shed my blood for, they are blood bombs.

[40 : 21] This one is mine. Come over there, it's cheating, with his blood. And we extend it, peace from God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is to be given also the shalom of God, the peace of God, the extension of God's will not just be to thrive, but be to thrive and flourish.

This is God's will for you, and his desire for you, for you to thrive and flourish. No matter what your understanding of life will happen, to be able to rest in the knowledge that you will know and love by God, that grace and peace extend to you.

Now I could talk all day about our God's extension with wise speech and knowledge and birth and testimony over the Holy Spirit, the gifts forgiven, how he keeps you every spiritual gift with the building up and sustaining the church.

But let me just give you at the end here, God is faithful. This is faithful. Hidden in Christ Jesus, who lived a perfect life, who paid for all your sins, who grew him, who are declared righteous and holy before God guiltless on the day when Jesus is eternal, when he will judge the living and the dying.

[41 : 50] And friends, he is our faithful God who will welcome you. Jesus looks at my and says, God, God, could have been to him.

And to him, he is faithful. Church, it's my hope today that he is grounded in my roots and the life that God has been built in faith.

God's faithfulness did not ever depend on you. The truth is that God knew he before the foundations of the earth and set his love upon you.

God has been faithful to call you a sanctifier and sustain the guiltless of you. The day is done and be done. Amen.