

UNIT 1: The Attributes of God

Section 21: God's Truthfulness and Faithfulness

Assigned Reading:
A. W. Pink – *The Attributes of God*
The Faithfulness of God

Introduction:

In understanding God's Goodness, we 1st examined God's Righteousness in particular and then what could be seen as out-workings of that Righteousness – God's Justice and Wrath. Over the past several weeks, we moved on to study God's love, and that love in action – God's Grace, Mercy, and Patience. We now turn our attention to God's Truthfulness and Faithfulness.

A. W. Pink's introduction to the Faithfulness of God needs to be where we begin: "Unfaithfulness is one of the most outstanding sins of these evil days. In the business world, a man's word is, with exceedingly rare exceptions, no longer his bond. In the social world, marital infidelity abounds on every hand, the sacred bonds of wedlock being broken with as little regard as the discarding of an old garment. In the ecclesiastical realm, thousands who have solemnly covenanted to preach the truth make no scruple to attack and deny it. Nor can reader or writer claim complete immunity from this fearful sin: in how many ways have we been unfaithful to Christ, and to the light and privileges which God has entrusted to us! How refreshing, then, how unspeakably blessed, to lift our eyes above this scene of ruin, and behold One who *is* faithful, faithful in all things, faithful at all times."

Q1: *What do we mean by truth?*

Q2: *What is the relationship between God's Truthfulness and God's Faithfulness?*

Q3: *Why are truthfulness and faithfulness so important to our understanding of God and our actions?*

Outline:

I. Defining Terms...

A. Truthfulness and Faithfulness

1. **Grudem**, "God's truthfulness means that he is the true God, and that all His knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth... The term *veracity*, meaning truthfulness or reliability, has sometimes been used as a synonym for God's truthfulness."
2. **Ryrie**, "Truth means agreement to that which is represented and includes the ideas of veracity, faithfulness, and consistency. To say that God is true is to say, in the most comprehensive sense, that He is consistent with Himself, that He is all that He should be, that He has revealed Himself as He really is, and that He and His revelation are completely reliable."
3. **Erickson**, "There are three dimensions of truthfulness [which he terms integrity]: (1) genuineness – being true; (2) veracity – telling the truth; and (3) faithfulness – proving true."
4. **Culver**, "God is true and truthful and the ground of all truth. Since God is true He will not change His character. He will be true to Himself. To us, His creatures, He will remain the same as He has always been."

5. **Boyce**, “The expression “truth of God” is ambiguous, and must be considered under the specific terms which set forth its various meanings [His Verity, His Veracity, His Faithfulness].”

II. Discussing God’s Truthfulness and Faithfulness...

A. *What makes this discussion all the more important in our present day?*

1. The first part of our understanding of God’s truthfulness indicates that the God revealed in Scripture is the ONE and ONLY TRUE GOD! All other so-called gods are just idols, and misrepresentations of the True God!
 - a. This is what Erickson terms “Genuineness” – God is the Real God!
 - b. In contrast to all other claimants of deity, God is the only true God. In a world full of so much artificiality, God is real!
 - c. **Jer 10:10-11** “But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation. ¹¹ Thus you shall say to them, “The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”
 - d. **John 17:3** “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”
 - e. **1 Thessalonians 1:9** For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,
 - f. **1 John 5:20-21** “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. ²¹ Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”
 - g. **1 Corinthians 8:4-6** Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, ⁶ yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.
 - h. **This leads us to the question, what does it mean to be the “true God?” Whose definition sets up the standard that must be met in order to be God?**
 - (1) We must not say that it is OUR idea of what God should be like in order to be the true God! We, being mere creatures, cannot define what God must be like!
 - (2) Therefore, God HIMSELF is the only one with the perfect description of what the true God is like – He perfectly conforms to His own idea of what the true God should be... and meanwhile He has implanted in our minds a reflection of his own idea, and has further described Himself infallibly in His Word!
 - (3) The true God is the God of the Bible! The God we’ve been discussing over these past few months!
 - (4) **Erickson**, “God does not simply seem to embody the qualities of greatness and goodness which we are examining. He actually *is* those attributes.”
 - (5) **Boyce**, “The ideal conception “God” can only be partially comprehended by any of his creatures, because of their implications; but it is known by God in all its supreme excellence, and his nature must fully correspond to it as thus known. Otherwise he would not be God.”

2. To say that God's knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth implies several things...
 - a. All that God knows and thinks is true is correct understanding of the nature of reality
 - b. **Job 37:16** "Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,
 - c. Since God knows all things infinitely well, His knowledge is the standard of true knowledge! Since His words are perfectly true, he can be perfectly relied upon and trusted! God is faithful because He does what He says He will do – His veracity!
 - d. God represents things accurately, as they really are! God's veracity combines with His omniscience to guarantee that everything He says is true! He knows all truth and speaks all truth!
 - (1) **Deuteronomy 32:4** "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.
 - (2) **Numbers 23:19** "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
 - (3) Notice the connection between the *faithfulness* and *truthfulness* of God: **Rom 3:1-4** Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? ² Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³ What then? 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."
 - e. God's words are not true because they conform to some external standard of truth, but are themselves the final standard and definition of truth!
 - (1) **2 Samuel 7:28** "Now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant.
 - (2) **John 17:17** "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
 - (3) **Psalms 111:7** The works of His hands are truth and justice; All His precepts are sure. ⁸ They are upheld forever and ever; They are performed in truth and uprightness.

B. Our response to God's truthfulness and faithfulness...

1. **Ground for Trust!**
 - a. All of God's words about Himself or His creation completely correspond w/ reality!
 - b. **Boyce**, "In relation to God's creatures, God's veracity is the foundation of their confidence in the knowledge obtained through the use of their own faculties, whether by intuition, observation or reason."
 - c. This is the basis for scientific inquiries – God who remains the same, continually upholds all of His creation! God's faithfulness is the solid foundation of all of reality – of a life of intelligent action!
 - d. God cannot lie!
 - (1) **Hebrews 6:18** "...it is impossible for God to lie..."
 - (2) **Titus 1:1-3** Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, ³ but at the proper time manifested, *even* His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior"

- (3) **Prov 30:5** Every word of God is **tested/pure/flawless/proves true**; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.
- e. **God will never prove unfaithful to those who trust what He has said!**
- f. This is the BASIS for our understanding of the Infallibility and Inerrancy of the Word of God! These words come from God who is true, therefore these words are true and can be trusted! God keeps all his promises...

2. *Ground for Obedience and Truthfulness*

- a. We are called to imitate God in this! We are to strive to think true thoughts about God and Creation, and communicate that truth to others!
- b. **Grudem**, "As we begin to think true thoughts about God and creation, thoughts that we learn from Scripture and allowing Scripture to guide us in our observation and interpretation of the natural world, we begin to think God's own thoughts after Him! We can exclaim with the psalmist, 'How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!' (**Ps 139:17**).
- c. We can pursue knowledge in all areas of the natural and social sciences and humanities, knowing that in discovering more truth about the nature of reality, we are just discovering more of the truth God already knows. In this sense, "all truth is God's truth."
- d. **Culver**, "Christians, as lovers of God, are not only lovers of truth considered abstractly, but of every truth individually, because we know Him who is true. Our God is the author of truth. His children, therefore, should not be obscurantists afraid to embrace any truth newly presented. They will be lovers of true chemistry and geology, astronomy, farming and industry, as well as true love, true Christian doctrine, and true Bible interpretation."
- e. In a society which is very careless with truth, we are to speak and behave truthfully!
 - (1) **Falsehood and lying come from Satan: John 8:44** "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
 - (2) We are to emulate our Father in heaven... not giving our word thoughtlessly, but keeping our promises to God and those made to fellow humans!
 - (3) **Desiring to please the Lord:**
 - **Ps 19:14** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.
 - **Ps 15:1-2** A Psalm of David. O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? ² He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart.
 - **Prov 4:24** Put away from you a deceitful mouth And put devious speech far from you.
 - **Prov 12:22** Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal faithfully are His delight.
 - (4) **Speaking truth w/ others:**
 - **Eph 4:25** Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.

- **Col 3:9-10** Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,¹⁰ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
 - **2 Cor 4:2** but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
 - **Zech 8:17** 'Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,' declares the LORD."
- (5) **Grudem**, "Scripture teaches us that lying is wrong not only because of the great harm that comes from it... but also for an even deeper more profound reason: when we lie we dishonor God and diminish his glory, for we, as those created in God's image and created for the purpose of reflecting God's glory in our lives, are acting in a way that is contrary to God's own character."

3. **Ground for Encouragement and Hope!**

- a. **Tozer**, "The tempted, the anxious, the fearful, the discouraged may all find new hope and good cheer in the knowledge that our Heavenly Father is faithful."
- b. **2 Tim 2:11-13** It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;¹² If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.
- c. **Heb 6:16-19** For men swear by one greater *than themselves*, and with them an oath *given* as confirmation is an end of every dispute.¹⁷ In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.¹⁹ This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,
- d. **1 Thess 5:24** Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.
- e. **1 Peter 4:19** Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

4. **Ground for Fear...**

- a. Just as God is faithful to fulfill His promises to bless His people, He will also be faithful to judge the world in righteousness!
- b. **Boyce**, "His faithfulness demands equally the performance of His threatenings, as of his promises."
- c. **Heb 9:27** And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to **die once** and after this *comes* judgment,
- d. **Gal 6:7** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.
- e. **Revelation 19:11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called **Faithful** and **True**, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.
- f. **2 Thess 1:6-9** For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,⁷ and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,⁸ dealing out **retribution** to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey

the gospel of our Lord Jesus.⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

C. Questions for Application:

1. Are you diligent to know the truth? Do you know the Word of God?
2. Do you allow what you have learned from the Word of God to help you interpret Creation? Do you learn in the context of worship? Knowing all truth is from God?
3. Are you careless in your truthfulness in speech?
4. Are you careless in your truthfulness in behavior?
5. **Grudem**, “Do you need to ask for God’s help to more fully reflect God’s truthfulness in speech in any of the following areas: promising to pray for someone; saying that you will be some place at a certain time; exaggerating events to make a more exciting story; taking care to remember and then be faithful to what you have said in business commitments; reporting what other people have said or what you think someone else is thinking; fairly representing your opponent’s viewpoint in an argument?
6. **Do you praise the Lord for His truthfulness and faithfulness?**

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;
As thou hast been Thou forever wilt be

~Thomas O. Chisholm ~