

TITLE:

“FAITHFUL REMNANTS”

Jeremiah 31: 2- 3

This is what the LORD says: "The people who survive the sword will find favor in the wilderness; I will come to give rest to Israel." The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.(NIV)

Thus says the Lord: "The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. (ESV)

"The people who survive the sword" = Remnants

A ***remnant*** is a remaining group or portion; an unused or unwanted piece or item typically of small size or value.

In reference to God's people, it means those who are faithful to His original truth despite apostasy and opposition.

The Sahara desert.

The wilderness is the place of demons—and the place of the divine. By entering the desert, we volunteer to be stripped of our pretensions of self-sufficiency. We determine to throw ourselves on the God who provides.

The Hebrew verb for **found** is *māṣā'*. It is used for *finding just about anything*.

The Israelites were looking for a way of escape. They were fleeing from their pain. They did not know where they were going. But when they confronted the place of desolation, they found what they needed. They found grace because God provided it.

Grace (*hen*) is unmerited favor.

E.g. Hagar

Grace sends her right back to Sarah. But with a completely different attitude and a completely different hope.

GRACE FOR THE FAITHFUL

1. Crucial Moments.
2. The Faithful Abides.
3. The Search for Faith.
4. Grace Through The Faithful One.

What do you do in difficult times? How do you navigate?

The 3 buttons:

➤ **Panic button**



➤ **Pause button**



➤ **Purpose button - return to the basics.**



I. CRUCIAL MOMENTS

4 Things we must do:

1. We Must Be Anchored.

Where must we be anchored upon?

The **WORD OF GOD**. *"This is what the Lord says,"* Jer. 31: 2

During our ups and downs the Word of God, not our tradition, should be our anchor. The word of God should be our foundation, the basic that we need to return to.

It is not the acquisition but the application of TRUTH that matters.

In our pleasure, pain and pursuit in life, our cognitive lens may take over and impact our feelings and that becomes our core belief.

Core belief vs. Word.

Our options:

- We give up. We throw the Word and take our core belief.
- We repent and return to the Word of God.
- We operate in 2 systems that result in LIP SERVICE to the Word of God but operate in our own core belief. It means living a double life.

To '**Anchor**' is to apply, because the application of God's Word is the definition of God's love.

Take the Word like honey.



2. We Must Be Grateful.

What must we be grateful for?

“FAVOR in the wilderness”. - **“Grace in the wilderness.”**

Israel found grace in the wilderness. God’s people will find favor in their wilderness.



Performance traps:

1. Over-achieving syndrome. Where we feel superior when we accomplish.
2. Impotence syndrome. Where we are fearful until we are paralyzed when we have no accomplishments.

God's calling is EVERYTHING. When He calls, He provides the grace or the favor.

3. We Must Be Committed.

What must we be committed to?

Commit to believe God against the impossibilities we see. We do not depend on human resources because it is God who provides.

E.g. Abraham and Isaac.



➤ Abraham had faith that the Lord will provide. Provision is God's covenant and God's character. God is committed to His promises and so He expects every believer to pursue commitment.

4. We Must Be Certain.

What must we be certain of?

God's FAITHFUL LOVINGKINDNESS.

God's love is a promise. It is God's faithfulness. We need to seek God who loves us because God's love keeps on seeking us.

II. THE FAITHFUL REMAINS

John 15: 9- 11 *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

Abiding is equal to sustainability.

Principles to learn in order to abide:

1. Cherish the Love of Christ.

We need to understand the essentials of Christ's love. Jesus said, *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you."*

What kind of love is it?

- It is love without beginning, not from the beginning.
- It is love without end – no expiry date; endless.
- It is love without measure – without limit; not limited.
- It is love unto death.

This love is not about right and wrong but God righting the wrong.

2. Learn to Grasp Its Implications.

Ask God of His agenda for our lives. Just as Jesus combined love and obedience together, we will grow in joy by keeping His commandments.

Misery is in disobeying Him.

3. Learn to Embrace His Call.

Love is an old commandment but Jesus called it “new” because it is radical and revolutionary.

Love is **a posture** - it acts.

It is **a language** - it speaks.

It is **a choice**

It is **a debt** we choose to repay.

The apostles embraced the call of faithfulness.

- **Peter** was crucified upside down.
- **John** faced martyrdom when he was boiled in a huge basin of boiling oil during a wave of persecution.
- **James** was the first of the 12 to be put to death. King Herod had him killed by the sword.
- **Matthew** suffered martyrdom, killed by a sword wound.

- **James** was thrown from the southeast pinnacle of the temple when he refused to deny his faith in Christ.
- **Bartholomew** was martyred for his preaching, being flayed to death by a whip.
- **Andrew** was crucified on an x-shaped cross.
- **Thomas** was stabbed with a spear during one of his missionary trips to establish the church there.
- **Matthias** was stoned and then beheaded.

- **Jude** was killed along with Simon the Zealot.
- **Simon the Zealot**, like Thaddeus/Jude, tradition says was martyred.
- **Philip** was brutally put to death.
- **Paul** suffered for the Lord throughout his life. 2 Corinthians 11:25 *" Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea."* Paul was beheaded in Rome.

They were all willing to die for their faith. The fact that all of the apostles were willing to suffer and die horrible deaths, refusing to renounce their faith in Christ, is tremendous evidence of their faithfulness to God's call.

III. THE SEARCH FOR FAITH

"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" **Luke 18: 8**

When Jesus comes he will look for precious faith.

He will care nothing for the treasures of the rich or the honors of the great.

He will not look for the abilities we have manifested, nor the influence we have acquired; but he will look for our faith and faithfulness.

The Heavenly Merchantman counts **faith** to be the pearl of great price— **faithfulness** is precious to Jesus as well as to us.

The last day will be occupied with a great scrutiny,— where is faith, and why is there no faith?

A search-warrant will be issued for our houses and our hearts, and the enquiry will be: Where is your faithfulness? Did you honor Christ by trusting his word and his blood, or did you not? Did you glorify God by believing his revelation and depending upon his promise, or did you not?

IV. GRACE THROUGH THE FAITHFUL ONE.

Think very highly of faithfulness.

Unfaithfulness is a human disposition of sinful self-interest. "Not adhering to promises, obligations, or allegiances; disloyal."

We easily choose to become unfaithful because it is less troublesome and conveniently acceptable to our human nature.

"But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to Me, O house of Israel" and "Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding" declares the Lord
(Jeremiah 3:20, 22 NIV).

Unfaithfulness breeds destruction. Only faithfulness can counter it.

Jesus, the Son of man displayed faithfulness in God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is mentioned as one of the points in which He is made like unto his brethren, that He said, *"I will put my trust in Him."*

He knows what fierce temptations men experience, for He has felt the same.

He knows how 'want' tries the faithful, and what faith is needed to be able to say, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live.*"

He knows how elevation tests the soul; for He once stood on the pinnacle of the temple, and heard the infernal whisper, "*Cast thyself down: for he shall give his angels charge over thee.*"

He knows what it is to be tempted with the offer of honor and gain: *"All these things will I give thee,"* said the devil, *"if thou wilt fall down and worship me."*

He knows how faith puts all the glory of the world away with its one brave and prompt utterance, *"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

The life of Jesus was a life of faithfulness and faith which cried, *"My God, my God,"* when He was forsaken on the cross. On the cross He received judgment for sin and not grace so that the undeserving man may have the grace of God. The grace of God through Jesus the Faithful One brought salvation and this grace extends to the ones who are faithful.

Jesus is the revelation and embodiment of God's grace and faithfulness. While He reigns on the throne, grace and faithfulness will not cease because He reigns forever.

1 Thessalonians 5: 24 - *Faithful and absolutely trustworthy is He who is calling you [to Himself for your salvation], and He will do it [He will fulfill His call by making you holy, guarding you, watching over you, and protecting you as His own].(Amplified Bible)*

The faithful will find grace as **Hebrews 4:16** says, *"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

CONCLUSION:

When Jesus comes as the Son of man He will recognize our weaknesses, He will remember our trials; He will know the struggle of our hearts, and the sorrow which an honest faith has cost us. He is best qualified to put the true price upon tried faith, self-denying faith and long-enduring faith. He will discern between the men who presume and the men who believe; the men who dote upon vain delusions, and those who follow the plain path of God's own Word.

But God has been in the grace business a very long time. Even in a wilderness of water, grace arrived. Grace is not just the partner of desperation. It is the offspring of faithfulness. It is the child of God's character.

As you wander in the wilderness, turn your sight not toward the serpent in the sand but toward the God who rules over the sandbanks. When your life is filled with shifting sand, God's finger is touching those sandbanks. The sand is only the means by which He brings His favor.

Not everyone finds grace in the wilderness. God says that His people, the ones who have survived the sword, the ones He calls Israel, the ones who remain faithful as He is, find something unexpected in the desolate wasteland. They find grace.

Grace is for those who know they cannot survive without it. Grace does not arrive in the midst of affluence. Grace comes to us, powerfully, personally, in the desolation of our lives.

We are all desperate. We are all desolate. We are all in need of the sustaining Spirit. But we will find grace in our wilderness. Grace is for those who survive the sword. Who are these people? They are the ones to whom God says, *"You shall be My people, and I will be your God."* –

THE FAITHFUL.



