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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**July 13, 2014**

**Faithfulness**

**Galatians 5:22-23**

**Prayer:** *Father, we do again thank you, praise you for your grace, for your goodness, for your mercy. We just thank you, Lord, that we can gather again each week and offer up to you corporate prayer, corporate praise, and that we can sit and open up your book and learn from you. So Father, I pray as we again open up your word, as we look into the fruits of the Spirit that your Holy Spirit would be here, that you'd be guiding us, that you'd be opening our eyes and our ears and our hearts that you'd be giving us lessons of permanent value. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Galatians 5:22 and 23 says this: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

Now, as most of you know, we've been spending the last few weeks looking at the fruit of the Spirit, and so far we have covered five of them. We've seen that joy is the sense of contentment knowing that God is a good God and that God is ultimately in control.

We've seen that the peace of God is really peace with God. We've looked at patience and seen that the key to patience is not really circumstance but the attitudes that we cultivate in reaction to circumstance. So we've looked at patience, and again we saw that patience flows from consciously cultivating a knowledge, as the psalmist says, *that my times are in his hands*. And the last time out we were looking at kindness and goodness, and again, we saw that goodness is really a reflection of God-ness and that none of us possess the goodness that God demands which is actually flawless perfection. In essence the fruit of the Spirit goodness that flows out of us only begins to grow as we turn towards God and not ourselves as the source of that goodness. We also saw that if goodness is attitude -- we talked about goodness and kindness -- well, if goodness is attitude, kindness is action. When goodness is what is inside you, kindness is how you express it. Goodness is God; kindness is Jesus Christ. That is, Jesus Christ is the literal expression of the goodness that is God. And so that's what we've been looking out so far in terms of the fruit. We also reiterated the crucial point, that the fruit of the Spirit is not a product but rather a by-product of a relationship with Jesus Christ. That is, you don't get fruitfulness by pursuing fruitfulness. You get it by pursuing God. We said the fruit of the Spirit is what grows within you when you begin to draw near to God, and it grows just like fruit grows. It grows by the natural

outflow of the life of the Holy Spirit flowing through you.

Now this morning I want to look at the sixth of these nine fruits, and that is the fruit of faithfulness. Of course the most important distinction we have to make right off the bat is the difference between faith and faithfulness. And you know what that difference is is this: Faith is a gift from God. *Ephesians 2:8: For by grace you've been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* So faith is a gift from God. Faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit that begins to grow only when faith is first received.

Now this morning I want to ask the same three questions of this fruit that we've been asking of all the other fruits, and that is what is it, how do I get it, how do I grow it and keep it? But there is so much to faithfulness that we're really only going to get to the first question in this message. We will have to take another message to answer the other two. So the first question is this: What is faithfulness? Well, faithfulness as a fruit of the Spirit is the ability to trust God like Jesus trusted God. It's the ability to see like the Master sees, to think like the Master thinks, and to understand this world just like the Master did. And to understand that, let's first look to a parable about

faithfulness that Jesus told, and he told this in Matthew 25:14-30. This is what Jesus said. He said: "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you

*have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast that worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"*

Do you see what Jesus is on about in this story? If you get what he's getting at, then you understand faithfulness. And if you truly get what Jesus is getting at, it can literally revolutionize your Christian walk, because faithfulness is the great equalizer. It enables God to judge each of us by one criterion that doesn't care how gifted you are or are not. And there's a huge difference in what the world and what God both judge as success, and we can see that in God's response to these servants. You know, the two talent servant was given two talents and he earned two talents more, a total of four. Now the five talent servant is given five talents and he earns five talents more which is a total of ten. And so we see the five talent servant, he earns two and a half times what the two talent servant earned. And again in earthly

terms he had two and a half times the success. But the exact same reward is given to both. Why is that? Well, it's because God's criterion for success is not results. It's faithfulness. You see, both servants hear the exact same thing. Verse 21: *"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You've been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'"*

We need to unpack this a little bit to see just how revolutionary Jesus' words are here. It's because of this: Jesus' standard for success looks only at you, and all it wants to know is how faithful have you been with what God has given to you? James Dobson once said that children are born possessing in some measure the two things that our culture regards as critical to success. You either have the gold coin of good looks or you have the silver coin of intelligence. And if you don't cut it with either of those coins, you can hardly even imagine being successful in our culture. Well, Jesus is telling us in this story there's a different coin, and it's a coin that trumps all of the others, and that coin is called faithfulness. And the good news is that faithfulness cuts across every single measure of success. The good news is that in the kingdom of God, there's no such thing as little people because everyone, big or little, is going to be judged on their faithfulness. I mean, you may have very little of the gold coin or

the silver coin but you can have the exact same capacity as anyone else to spend the only coin that really matters to God, and that's the coin of faithfulness. It doesn't matter if you're Queen Esther or Queen Esther's cleaning lady. It doesn't matter if you're John the Baptist or John the deacon, the apostle Paul or Paul the janitor. The bottom line for every one of us is that we will be judged on one basis and one basis alone, and that's what we do with the resources that we've been given.

Now Jesus tells the two faithful servants: *"You've been faithful over a little. I will set you over much."* Paul tells us in *2 Corinthians 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.* The five talent servant and the two talent servants faithfully used their master's resources and that was good. The one talent servant wickedly misused his master's resources by burying them in the ground, and that was bad. You know, some folks look at this story and they conclude, well, okay, I think I get it, it's about performance, it's about what we do. The five talent and the two talent servants, they performed well and they were rewarded and the one talent, he performed poorly, and he was cast out. But that's not what the story is about at all. You see, the difference between the faithful servants and the unfaithful servant was that

the faithful ones, they saw and they thought and they understood their role as servants because they were part of the kingdom. The unfaithful servant was not. You see, faithfulness is not about performance or non performance. It's all about attitude. The unfaithful servant wasn't cast into darkness because his performance did or did not fail. He was cast into darkness because his performance meant nothing to him. It's incredibly important to see that distinction. You see, Christians are new creatures who have God himself living inside them and that changes drastically how they see, how they think, and how they understand the world around them. We look at the unfaithful servant and we realize he was not in the kingdom, he did not have God living within him, and he had none of those changes, so he thought only about himself. You see how this works? Faithfulness is what grows inside you only when you have the gift of faith in the first place. And when you have that gift, you want to glorify God because now he lives inside you.

You see what Paul says in *1 Corinthians 10:31*, he says: *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.* And he's saying that because God sees right through whatever we do to his knowledge of our faithfulness to the gifts that he's given to us. You see, faithfulness, your faithfulness, my faithfulness, well, that's something that's known by only two



people in the world, in the universe. The only two people who know if you are faithful is God and you. I mean, you and I have this limitless capacity to fake it and kid ourselves, but God sees right into our hearts. You know, if I give you a half-hearted effort, how are you to know? You know, if God's given me five talents and I can wow you with a two talent performance, there are only two beings who will ever, ever know that. One of them is God, one of them is me. You know, as Lincoln put it, you can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. And the time will come when the Master's going to return to settle accounts and nobody's going to fool him. And his criterion will not be how impressive I was, how holy I looked, or how successful I was. The one question the Master's going to ask and it'll say it all is how faithful were you with the talents that I gave you. I mean, the heart of that question is not results, it's faithfulness. The problem is we tend to favor results. We think God awards great achievers. Billy Graham is a great achiever, therefore he's significant. What about Billy Smith? Who's Billy Smith? He's the little guy who faithfully exercises his talents no matter how humble. You see the problem is Billy Graham and Billy Smith both stand equally before God accountable for their achievements, accountable for their faithfulness in those achievements, and only God knows and only Billy knows how faithful Billy Graham is.

Consider, if he led a million people to Christ and God gifted him to lead 10 million, then he's been a miserable failure. I doubt that's the case, but only God knows how faithful Billy Graham or you or I have been. Only God is able to evaluate our intentions along with our results, and he's the one who knows the difference between faithful and unfaithful servants. You see, God sees and he knows and he understands that results are not the criterion of success but faithfulness is, and here's the critical point. Every one of us, including every one of us here at Grace, will have to answer the question of our own faithfulness regardless where our talent lays, whether it's making coffee or teaching Sunday school or standing behind a pulpit. Whatever you do in every area of your life, whether it's in church, at school, at work, or at home, it's going to be evaluated not in terms of results but in terms of faithfulness to what you've been entrusted with. And it doesn't matter how modest your gifts are. The Master's going to expect a return. If you've been given more, he's going to expect more.

*Luke 12:48: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."* You see, the good news in that? The good news is this makes the playing field completely level for everyone, from presidents to paupers. You see, it doesn't really matter how many talents you've been given, five, two, or one. What matters is

what you do with what you've been given. *1 Corinthians 4: Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.* The master gave each servant talents, to each according to his ability, and then he judged the faithfulness of that ability.

Now here's the bad news for some, perhaps the bad news for many. The bad news is that having a modest level of gifting does not excuse you from being faithful. Now this parable paints a very frightening picture but it's not where you might think. It's not on the president end, it's more on the pauper end. Let's take for a moment a look at the one talent servant. You know, he got only one-fifth of the five talent servant, he got only one-half of the two talent servant, so we can safely say that he was modestly gifted. Perhaps he received the level of talents that God gives to most everyone, not exceptionally high, not exceptionally low, just what an average person could expect to receive. But figuratively and literally he decides to bury his talent. He didn't lose it, he didn't spend it, he didn't steal it, he just made it unavailable for the Master's use. Now he wanted to play it safe. He knew his master was a hard and demanding man who appointed the talents and then went away for a long time, and when he returned, he knew he was there to settle accounts. The one talent servant thinks he's taking the safest course, but in the end, it winds up being

disastrous. The master refers to him as a wicked, lazy servant. You say why? He didn't steal or squander the talent, he just buried it. He tells his Master: *"So I was afraid, and I went and I hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours."* Again, his master is furious and again we ask well, why? Well, the master gave each servant different talents, not so they could hoard them but so they could grow them. You know, the faithful servants, they understand that. The unfaithful servant starts making up his own rules. He thought all he needed to say was, "Hey, here's your money back" and his master would have to be satisfied. He never even factored in the opportunity cost or what his master would lose by having his talent buried in the ground instead of working for him. And then there's something we call inflation. You know, if I gave you a thousand dollars cash and I came back in 20 years and you dug up a lock box and you handed me that very same thousand dollars that you had just dug up, it's not worth the same as it was when I gave it to you. I mean, depending on inflation, it's got to be far less than it was worth than when you first got it. And in fact, the master says this in verse 26, he says, *"You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest."* The master's perfectly capable of digging a hole in the ground and putting the money in it, and

that's clearly not what he wanted in his servant. See, the unfaithful servant thought he was risking nothing but he wound up losing everything because he defined faithfulness by his own vision. He defined it on his terms and not on the master's. He refused to see outside of his line of vision. And you see, the faithful servant sees the world not through his own eyes, he sees the world through the eyes of his Master. And it goes back to the nature of faithfulness in the first place. I mean, what does it mean to be called by God a faithful servant? I mean, is it the same as being called a faithful friend or a faithful employee or a faithful spouse? Well, the answer's no. The faithfulness that God speaks of here is very, very different than those others. And the key difference between being a faithful servant of God and being a faithful anything else is that everything else is rooted in the physical, tangible world. You see, it's far simpler for friends and employees and spouses to be faithful when the object of that faithfulness has flesh and blood and vocal cords and cell phones. I mean, it's far easier exercising faithfulness to those we are accountable to in the here and now as opposed to those who we are ultimately accountable in the there and later. A faithful friend answers to that friend, a faithful employee answers to his boss, a faithful spouse answers to his or her spouse. A faithful servant, however, answers to a boss who no one sees but him. According to Paul in *2 Corinthians 4:18*, he says: *So we fix our eyes not on*

*what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.* That's our marching orders. The problem is the temporary world shouts and screams out its demands and the internal world, it whispers them. Somehow, in spite of the repeated times that God tells us so, we insist on seeing this temporary world as the real one, the substantive one, and God's eternal kingdom is somewhere out there between a retirement village and Disneyland.

For example, which of these commands in your mind has more impact? Let me first give a Sunday command. This is a Sunday command. This is *Hebrews 10:24*: *Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* That's a Sunday command. Now let me give you a Monday command, simple one: Let me have that report on my desk by 2:00 o'clock Monday afternoon. Okay? You see a difference between these two commands? A Sunday command differs from a Monday command in two areas. It differs in the urgency and the severity of the consequences. Violate the Monday command and the consequences are going to be immediate and they might be very severe. You're certainly going to get chewed out. You might get fired. Violate the Sunday command and the consequences have no urgency. You're not going to get a phone call

from God that you missed church, and they have no apparent severity. In fact, often times the consequences appear nonexistent. I mean, we don't feel their effect immediately. The scary thing is that the one command that seems so powerfully real is the Monday command which is from the temporary world and is ultimately absolutely meaningless. And the one command that seems so inconsequential is the one from the eternal world that is unseen and has eternal consequences. Well, the faithful servant is someone who sees those distinctions clearly, and that is precisely why he is faithful. It's the ability to see exactly the way the Master sees. See, faithfulness is really a matter of vision. It's a matter of fixing your eyes on the eternal instead of the temporary. Again: *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.* This is the determining factor in whether your whole Christian walk is going to be a success or a failure.

You see, we evangelicals like the rest of the world, we worship success. God says there's only one measure of success, and that measure is your faithfulness. Like I said, it's the great equalizer. It's the one criterion that puts us all in a level playing field. And we tend to look around to the left or to the right to see how we're doing. We judge each other by our peers. And some of that is good. Hebrews 10 says we encourage one another

that way. It's one of the purposes of Christian fellowship. But judging by our peers is not at all the way God evaluates us. God has one criterion to evaluate everything we do and that criterion is absolutely unique for every one of us. When the master comes back from his long journey and demands an accounting, God's going to ask: Have you been faithful with what you've been given? Have you faithfully used the resources I have placed in your hands to advance my kingdom? God's not going to ask you if you've been successful. He's going to ask if you've been faithful. See, there's a beauty and a responsibility to that criterion that touches every believer regardless of his position in the body. It means there's no such thing as big shots or little shots in God's kingdom, because both big shots and little people are measured not by results or success but by faithfulness. And since we're measured by our faithfulness to the gifts we've been given, then the least in the kingdom is on the exact same footing as the greatest, 'cause the standard again is: What are your resources and what have you done with them? You know, under this criterion, a semi literate pauper passing out tracts may be a spectacular success and a gifted pastor with a huge following may be a dismal failure. Again, 'cause the question's not what did you do but the question is how faithful were you. And like I say, a faithful servant is someone who sees and thinks and understands that he is here for the master's purpose and not his own. So who is a



faithful employee? It's the guy who sees like his boss sees.

Well, here's the big question. What does the boss see? I think Jesus made it pretty clear in *John 15:8*, he said this, he said:

*"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."* You see, a faithful servant sees that. *John 15:16: You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit -- fruit that will last.*

See, Jesus Christ is the master, he appoints us to go and bear fruit, he gives to us for that task, he goes away on a long journey, he comes back and he demands an accounting. I don't think any of this is spiritual rocket science. I mean, it's all pretty simple. I mean, I think we all know that's what the story's all about. The difference for us between a faithful and an unfaithful servant is not what we know, though, it's how we put what we know into practice. It's what we do. But again, let me caution you. I've said it before, faithfulness is not about performance or non performance, it is all about attitude. The faithful steward was not cast into darkness because his performance wasn't up to par. He was cast out because his performance meant nothing to him. Like I said, it's incredibly important to see that distinction. Listen to how Jesus makes that clear in this part of *Matthew 24*. Listen to what Jesus says here. He says: *"Who then is the faithful and*

*wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time.' And then he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

If you look beneath the surface of these words, you get what Jesus is saying. What he's saying is the faithful servant is thinking just like his master would think. He's got his ability to keep his eyes on the prize. And what is the master asking him? Is he asking something grandiose, something spectacular? From what I can tell, this guy's in food services, I mean, that's what he does. Listen, it says: *"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns."* So here's the servant, his job consists of making sure the other servants get their food at the right time. Well, it sure looks to

me like it's a one talent gift being faithfully exercised by a one talent servant to the delight of the master. And what God delighted in was not so much the action but the attitude behind it. See, there's no such thing as a bad surprise for the faithful servant because he's always going about his master's business. And when you see faithfully, and when you think faithfully, and when you understand faithfully, you're never surprised by what your master does because you're always on the same wavelength. The unfaithful servant acts the way he does because he's never been on that wavelength, and so he's clearly not thinking like his master at all. In fact, he's trying to take advantage of his master before he returned. He takes a gamble and he loses. A faithful servant sees like the master sees, he thinks like the master thinks, and he understands like the master understands, and because of that, he doesn't see service as a chore but as a joy. And here's why. It's very simple. If I know that my emptying garbage cans is as important and as meaningful as someone else's preaching or teaching or leading in a church, well, I can do whatever my job is with joy. We can see that with one little word that we see in the parable of the talents. Let me go back to that parable, go to verse 20, and repeat a statement here. I want to highlight one little word.

Verse 20 says: *"And he who had received the five talents came*

forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'" In verse 22 it says: "And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'" Now, that key word is this little tiny three-letter Greek word "ide." It's the word "here." The ESV translates that little word as "here." It says: "Here, I have made two talents more." The NIV translates it as "see". The guy says, "See, I have made five talents more." The King James translates it as "behold." The guy says, "Behold, I have made five talents more." Three different translations of that little tiny verb "behold" or "see" or "here," and what they're all saying in essence is the person is saying, "check this out." "Look at this." "Look what I've done." And what they're saying is, "Master, look what I did with your resources!" There's joy in that statement, there's excitement in that statement. These are faithful servants doing what they love to do.

Now, the unfaithful servant used the very same word, "here," but it came after his tirade and it preceded his handing back his talent. The best he can muster is, "Here you have what is yours." Translation: Here's your stinking talent back. See, there were

two things the unfaithful servant never understood. That was the difference between a Sunday command and a Monday command, and because he wasn't part of the kingdom, out of sight meant out of mind, and that was so because he didn't see faithfully, he didn't think faithfully, he didn't even understand faithfully, so he had no sense of urgency about the master's business and certainly no idea of the consequence. And his master now gives him both. He says: *"You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

So the master says, you know, if you really believed that I was what you accused me of, then you would have understood the urgency of complying. Then you would have invested my money. The fact that you didn't proves that it's you that is the fraud. It further proves that you never had the mindset of a faithful servant in the first place. The Master says: *"And cast that worthless servant*

*into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* Understand, he was not cast out for a failure of performance. He was cast out for a failure of caring. No doubt the unfaithful servant is shocked! I mean, he was faithless, disloyal, resentful, and joyless, but no doubt he was blown away that he was cast out, and that's how it is with faithless servants. You see, they don't see like their master sees, they don't think like their master thinks, and they don't understand like their master understands, because they've never known the master. Jesus says in *Matthew 7*: "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*"

We might think how in the world could that happen? I mean, how could the servant not know that he was an unfaithful servant? Well, the answer is simple. He was deceived. He believed a lie. Now, the lie that most folks fall prey to is the lie today that there are many different ways to get to heaven. And there is but one. *Acts 4:12*: *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be*

saved. That name is Jesus Christ. God himself took on flesh, he lived the life that we were supposed to live then he died the death that we all deserved to die so that he could offer you and me the great exchange, his life of perfect righteousness for your life of sin. In fact, *Romans 5:8* says it, it says it well, it says: *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* By placing your faith in Christ alone, you can defeat the lie that captured the unfaithful servant and you can find eternal life.

But you know there's also another lie that is being sold wholesale today, and it's the lie that the church itself promulgates when it says: You're not a servant, you are a customer; when it says: Life isn't service given, it is service expected. You know, many churches have devolved into spiritual consumer service centers rather than living expressions of the body of Christ where people go to express their worship through kingdom citizenship and responsibility. So what marked the difference between the faithful servants and the unfaithful was not performance. I need to stress that. It was attitude. They both delighted in pleasing their master no matter what the task was. So here's my question this morning. My question is this: Is that your attitude as well?

Now, I've sort of been looking around to see if Leon is here. Is

Leon here? He's not, so I can pick on him a little bit. To me, Leon is an example of what I'm talking about here. Leon is just a faithful guy who just shows up all the time. And he's always whistling, he's always cheerful because he thinks, he sees, he understands how the kingdom works. And let me tell you, you don't know a lot of the stuff that Leon does. I've sent him off to places and he's dealt with people who have slammed the door in his face and have treated him incredibly rudely, and it doesn't matter. He's not working for them, he's working for God. He knows what it is like to be a faithful servant. He's a humble guy but he's somebody you can look to and say that's how you do it. So a little shout out to Leon for that.

A faithful servant delights in exercising the talents God has gifted him with, whether it's five, two, or one, like I said, because he sees faithfully, he thinks faithfully, and he understands faithfully, he knows that faithfulness is what delights his master. *Matthew 24: "Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns."* Let's pray.

*Father God, I do thank you and praise you for your word. I do*



*thank you for this amazing revelation in your word, Lord, that your judging of us is on the basis of our faithfulness. And Lord, that is a wonderful thing and a frightening thing because it cuts across everything. Every one of us is going to stand absolutely equal before you to be judged by what we've done with the resources and the talents that you've given to us. I pray that you would give each and every one of us the desire and the grace and the power to exercise our ability to use those gifts to the best of our ability. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*