



Faithfulness
Fruit of the Spirit
Courage Church, Detroit, MI.
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Jacob Bender

Today we are going to talk about Faithfulness. This is the 7th fruit of the Spirit, after today we only have two more weeks to go, and they are gentleness, and self control.

But Faithfulness is a fruit that, really, ties the first six fruits together, and I will explain a little more about that in a little while. But first lets start with a reading of 2 Timothy 2:13 which says:

“if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.”

Ashley Madison

Many of you have by now, probably heard about this website, Ashley Madison.

It is a website that apparently, from my understanding of the articles that I read this week, was created for the purpose of cheating on your spouse. The whole point of this site is, to my understanding, its basically a dating site for married people looking to be unfaithful. The purpose, the literal purpose of this site is to create avenues of infidelity for people. Its purpose is to facilitate adultery.

I, probably like many of you, heard of this website for the first time this week, because they were hacked, and the darkest secrets of over 30 million people were suddenly in the hands of hackers. Reports are saying many of them are government officials and military officials and people who work for big companies... and of course we know that people could use aliases and fake names and likely not all 30 million of these people are really users on this site, however, this apparently this is not just a free site but

to me the fact that a website like this would even exist, much less have gained enough traction to attract more than 30 million users, is one of the greatest tragedies I have heard of in a long time.

We live in a society that simply does not value faithfulness.

Guys, this devastates me.

I think about situations in life. Situations that happen, and they are tragic that they happen. Circumstances that lead to things like adultery. Things that there are no excuse for at any rate, yet we know that they happen. We know that in life, there are things that happen. People make mistakes. King David saw Bathsheba bathing on the roof, and he made a very big mistake. And it lead to another mistake, really, a series of really bad choices.

Bad things happen. People make bad decisions in moments and they ruin their entire lives, their families, their futures... mistakes like these, and mistakes in other arenas of life... it is tragic and we never try to downplay or justify those actions but people who realize that we live in a fallen world can at least acknowledge that we are all fallen... and the truth is, that apart from the grace of God none of us are not beyond mistakes like that, it only takes putting your guard down for a moment. We have to pray for the grace of God to protect our marriages. Our relationships. Our hearts. We have to make diligent, conscious efforts to protect against things like that, that especially now are so are in your face, and sadly, normal, in our broken world.

Because the truth is, whether we want to sugar coat it or not, that in a fallen world, people fall.

But the fact that we have grown so incredibly numb to what a covenant even means in our society, that we have millions of people literally getting on a website and strategically looking for ways to break their promise to the person who is supposed to be their closest and most valued friend in all the world, is literally beyond my comprehension.

When I read about this, I did a google search on Wednesday afternoon of the company, and the first article that came up was an article to people who

may be exposed on their list, and steps they can take to still not get caught. Its just a never ending thread of deception. You tell a lie, then you have to tell another to support the first, and then another to cover yourself from exposure. It will never, ever end for those seeking to be perpetually unfaithful.

A few hours later I tried to find that article again (because I always try to clip and resource my sources) and it was buried because the list had officially been released and every article highlighted different people who were exposed. It was a tabloid magazines dream. Apparently, the hackers promised that if the company did not close the website down immediately and indefinitely, they would release this list... and from the sounds of it, the depth of exposure seems deeper than anything that we have ever experienced. From the sounds of it, there are going to be a lot of broken people who need the church to step up and be faithful in their lives.

When we eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (like we talked about last week), and we try to do things on our own and figure life out on our own, we have to navigate good and evil on our own. But at times I wonder if people have gotten so sick of navigating good and evil that they have thrown both away entirely... because when there is no line of what is right, there is no cause worth being faithful to. There is no reason to give yourself fully to anything, you can live your life with no accountability even to yourself.

But if you don't have accountability with someone else then you will find yourself on an island that is falling into to ocean...

and if you can't even hold yourself to a standard you can be faithful to, then does tomorrow even matter?

Faithfulness is the Greek word *Pistis*

It means "the character of one who can be relied on."

It means fidelity... which if you were to look up the word fidelity in the dictionary you would see faithfulness to, OR loyalty to a person, a cause or a belief.

Last week we said that “goodness” always sees the “UNLESS” - you don’t just base your decisions on what people deserve and you don’t accept their fate just because it may seem obvious... you see the unless. You see, they are in big trouble, UNLESS, I stand in the gap for them.

Well, the word I would use to describe faithfulness is the word “Always.”

Which, I know, is close to the way I described integrity last week but faithfulness is more so keeping the consistency in your relationships and to the people and things that God has given you.

Faithfulness is very very similar to goodness. When I first began studying the fruit I thought the hardest ones to distinguish were going to be kindness and goodness, but now I am realizing faithfulness and goodness are so hand in hand its ridiculous. They both deal in consistencies. They both deal with valuing others. You truly can not have one without the other. Moses was faithful to the Israelites that God had him lead, so he stood in the gap for them when they sinned. His faithfulness caused him to be good on their behalf. It caused him to see the value in their lives. It caused him to do what was “good” for them.

Its easy for me look back at all the times when I haven’t been reliable. When I have committed to do something and never saw it come to completion.

There have been video projects that I have started for people and have never gotten around to finishing them. Sometimes its been out of my control, sometimes it probably hasn’t been. There have been times when I have over committed. Over promised and under delivered in all sorts of areas in my life.

As much as faithfulness is a fruit of your life it is also a character of your life. People should know that when I say I am going to be there, that I will be there.

My kids should know that if I say I am going to take them to the water park,

or to grandmas house, I am not going to let all sorts of things get in the way of taking them there and then give them excuses as to why it I have to back out. I have done that before... and even at their young age, you can see it wearing on them.

You can see them getting less excited by big ideas, and instead they are seeing, "hey, you know what, this may just be something he is saying... this may not really ever happen." and shame on me for ever even for a moment doing that to the mind of a child. It kills their little taste for wonder.

Literally, unfaithfulness kills the wonder of children. Nothing will kill a child's wonder faster than showing them that "it won't actually happen."

It really does. If kids are introduced to disappointment at such a tender age in their lives, then the wonder that truly is our beautiful world will diminish for them down to an inconsistency. We will teach them in school about our vast our oceans are, and how wide our world is, and how much potential there is for them to be anything that they want to me. It will become thoughts more like, "Yeah, maybe the world is wide, but my world is shrinking." - We never want them to think that the things that they dream of are only illusions, and disappointment leads to those thoughts.

Let me give you an example. And I didn't do this... this story turned out okay... but all summer, since we moved here, our kids, especially our oldest, has really missed her cousins. Her cousins are in town this weekend, visiting from New York, they are here with us today, and all week leading up to the weekend we would remind her, "your cousins are coming... we are picking them up at the airport on Friday."

and these girls, all week, were just so thrilled, its what got them through the week... the anticipation of Friday. At kids church, its all they could talk about, "my cousins are coming, my cousins are coming!"

And this sounds awful, but what if I would have promised them that we were going to pick their cousins up and spend the weekend with them, and spend a day at the pool with grandma, but On Thursday, I get a request from Pastor Kevin to have a meeting (which I did). And we were able to

work it out where we could tie it all in together, take all the cousins to Lansing which we were doing anyway, and I could go meet with Pastor Kevin and then meet up with the family... but had the circumstances been different and had that last minute meeting had to of taken the place of my kids seeing their cousins but for whatever reason I agreed to it anyway... they would have been devastated. But even worse than the disappointment, is that a little bit of their faith in their father would have diminished. And honestly, a little bit of their faith in people in general would have a bit of a stain on it, because the person they are supposed to trust the most would have let them down.

And one way or another, this happens to us. A little at a time, over a lifetime.

Because somewhere along the line in all of our lives, we lost faith in mankind that it will actually do what it is supposed to do, and then we began restricting our own dreams around these false realities that society has created.

and If you are a parent of a young child, or even if you are not, take note now because that will likely come for you... protect your children from experiencing disappointment at that level from you. They will get it their whole lives from a million different people and other sources that are dead set on sucking the life right out of them. You should be the constant in their lives. And I am preaching to myself here. I should be the constant in my kids lives, and I am trying to, and I feel like I fail at it every single day. Sometimes I find it easier to be faithful to God and the church than it is to be faithful to my own family. Its easier for me to be a constant as a pastor than it is to be a constant in my home but if I can't shepherd my home I can't even begin to try and be a shepherd here. That is why the first thing that Pastor Kevin told me when he anointed Dawn and I over Courage church was "Work on you." I need to work on the person I am, the Father I am, the fruit that comes from my life, because whatever *that* fruit is, will be reflected in Courage Church and I know that.

and I have to constantly repent of the times when I fall short of that, especially with my kids. Because its not goodness. My sometimes lack of faith-

fulness is a reflection of a lack of goodness and sets off a lack of kindness and of love and joy and peace and patience and suddenly I am bearing no fruit at all in the home environment.

But *Pistis* is the character of one who can be relied on!

When people think about me, when they think about Jacob Bender, they should think of someone who is faithful to live a life that walks in the fruit of the spirit. They should not have a wavering opinion of how loving I am, or of how much joy I carry through my daily walk, they should not have to wonder, "is he going to be patient with me today?" Is he going to be kind today?

They should be able to rely on me to be all of those things.

Pistis is also the Greek word behind what we translate as "believe."

Remember when we talked last week about Abraham? We talked about the verse that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

When Paul is quoting this verse in Galatians (3:6) and in Romans (4:3), the Greek word he uses that we translate as believe is "*pistis*" - but he is quoting a verse in Genesis which was written of course in Hebrew, and the word that Moses used when he originally wrote it was the Hebrew word *aman* (a man) or the word *emunah* which does mean "to have faith" but its meaning goes much deeper than just believing, in fact various times throughout the old testament the word is used to describe an action like in Exodus 17 when Moses held his hands up and would not put them down until the Israelites won a battle. The bible says that whenever Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed (Exodus 17:11) but when ever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. Moses, of course, got tired of holding his hands up, so they put out a stone for Moses to sit on (Exodus 17:12) and Aaron and Hur held up his hands... and his hands remained steady.

(His hands remained **steady**) His hands remained *emunah*.

it also means persistence. It was never just something you thought in your heart it always was followed by an action that demonstrated that thought. In fact, some of the words that will come up around the word *emunah* include: supported, to prove oneself, to remain, to continue, to establish.

It is to both confirm, and to support.

To have faith in something is not just a belief in it but is a lifestyle that expresses that belief.

Because just like James says, “Faith without works is dead.” (James 2:26)

Example: I want to start an internship program here. Eventually we will have that, and my first thought is, lets buy a house, a two family flat or a four-plex or something that we can renovate and then we can house them in... and I believe we will do that. But as Dawn and Freddie and I were talking about it a couple of days ago... about how much I want to do that, we realized something.

It would be far better to have so many interns and people wanting to give a year to the church that we have to buy a house for them to live in, than it would be to have a house that we have to figure out how to fill with interns.

God will bless our faithfulness when we do everything that we can with what we have.

In Luke 16:10 Jesus tells us ““One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”

There is this amazing account in 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 when Paul is encouraging people to give generously, and he starts bragging on the churches of Macedonia because they have an abundance of joy in the midst of severe tests of affliction. He says (2 Corinthians 8:2) that out of their extreme poverty overflowed a wealth of generosity. Paul says (8:3) They gave both according to their means, and *beyond* their means... They didn't just look at their situation and say, “we are in extreme poverty, we can't give any-

thing right now... we can't be faithful, right now, there is nothing to be faithful with..."

No, they said, **even in the middle of having so little, we still have a little.**

Which means we still have a little to give. A little to steward. And they were faithful with it.

So that is kind of where I am at right now. I don't have everything that I want to have. Nothing is quite where I want it to be yet in life, but I still have a little. I have something. And honestly, its probably quite a bit more than most of the world. What can do I with it? How can I be faithful with that?

What do you have?

Maybe to you, it seems like so little, but you still have a little!

What seeds can we plant that we already have? How do we soil the ground that we already have?

And so let me just put this out there, if you are in here and you want to come and intern for a year at the church, we will figure out your housing, maybe we just rent a house in the neighborhood, we don't know yet... If you are watching online and you think, maybe God is calling me to Detroit.... come. Now! Get here before we build a program and have a whole plan in place and a program in place that would have a cost. Right now, we are just opening it up to people.

I obviously know most of us won't be able to do that. What can you do? What has God given you, that you are not using? What has God given you, that you have buried in the ground and are not being faithful with it?

Who has God entrusted to your care, who you just haven't been faithful to?

To be faithful to someone is living a lifestyle of steadfastness to that person. Its a persistence to live love in and through all circumstances.

It takes faithfulness to never ever give up on a person. And it takes faithfulness, to be there for a person.

Whether they are walking a very dark path or they are living in the light.

The first fruit we talked about, love in this series was love, and Dawn talked about foot washing in John chapter 13... Well one of the most powerful verses in that passage to me is the end of verse 1, it's before any of the foot washing even takes place but it explains the heart behind what Jesus was about to do. It says that Jesus loved his disciples, "to the end."

Can you say that? Is there anything you can say that about? That you are with it to the end?

It doesn't matter how long it takes.

It doesn't matter how much it hurts.

It doesn't matter how different it looks compared to how you thought it would look.

You are with it, to the end.

That you love it, to the end? Are there people like that in your life? That your love for them goes beyond loyalty, and to faithfulness. To *emunah*.

Hopefully you married people can say that about your marriages. There is no greater fruit that grows in a marriage than that of faithfulness. Faithful to your promises not just to stay but to stand by. To defend. Faithful to do the work it takes to keep the marriage alive. Faithfulness is not just staying off of the Ashley Madison website yet living your whole life wishing you could visit it. Its actually loving your spouse, agape - whether or not you get anything in return, and loving them *to the end*.

It is doing the hard work to stay in love when its not the first instinct you may feel toward a person.

If you think that merely "believing" you have a good marriage alone is all it takes, you will find yourself in a very unhappy marriage.

Marriage has to have *emunah*. It has to have persistence, it has to have faith brought to action... It has to be actively working to stay alive and to grow. It has to have COMMITMENT not just to the principle you signed your name to, but to the person that God has given you AND to the PERSON THAT God is making YOU.

There is no relationship that can last simply by faith in the other person or even merely by being loyal. There has to be action steps that demonstrate that loyalty, and that causes it to grow in you!

It should demonstrate your faithfulness.

That your love is not fleeting. That your joy is everlasting. That your peace doesn't run dry.

That your patience is persistent... That your kindness and your goodness will keep on growing? That you will stick with these things... You will stick with the hard work of growing in the spirit, of growing up beyond the milk of babies as Peter puts it (1 Peter 2:2-5) - and growing up into salvation. Because you have tasted and have seen that the Lord is good. And the Holy Spirit is making you something new every single day. He is making you more faithful. He is eliminating the inconsistency in your life. If you have the first six fruit and you don't have faithfulness, each of those fruits will come and go... they will be off, and they will be on. You can't rely on a person who doesn't have faithfulness to always have love or joy.

Faithfulness adds the always to the fruit. It adds the dependability to the person and it adds the reliability on God.

Are you faithful?

Seriously, are you a faithful person?

What has God given you? And what have you done with it?

When we were in New York we started an online campus with a couple of cameras that you can buy at Costco. We are doing the same thing here and its just getting started... but we had no money, no budget, and we had to start this creative department so we figured out ways to make it work on no budget, and last year the gospel went into almost 200 countries through those videos.

Resources were limited, but we were stewards with those resources. We were faithful with what was in our hands... and God gave us what was in our hearts.

A successful online campus with a global reach... People hearing the good news in amazing ways.

Soon followed by opportunities for Dawn and I to grow in our own teaching gift and stretch our capacity...

to now being Pastors of Courage church.

What is in your hand? What are you doing with it?

And here is an even harder question... Who do you trust with it?
Who will you give a chance to be faithful?

The reality is, that in a world of people that pride themselves on not needing anybody, not relying on anybody...

nobody needs to be faithful because nobody wants to admit that they need faithfulness. Everybody kind of has this skewed perception of what it means to trust people... they don't trust each other, and honestly faithfulness is not really an expected trait in our society. People expect marriages to fail. Bosses expect to have to fire a certain amount of people each year.

Thats why its so hard for people to move up in the corporate world from a button pushing doer, to someone who is in charge of the ones doing it but is not actually doing it themselves. Because the expectancy is that the person you are asking to do something will not do as good of a job as you

are... or wont do it at all. You have mastered a craft and suddenly you have to master the art of trusting someone else to be faithful with what you have built.

You have to depend on someone else being “faithful.”

But we need to work to develop a culture of faithfulness. A culture of people that trust each other.

Because that is exactly what the Great Commission is all about! Its all about Jesus trusting us to be faithful with the gospel. To be faithful with the joy news that the war is over, its already been won, a new kingdom has been established, and we are inviting everyone to be a part of it... to be faithful to the truth in the word of God, to share it, to spread it, to live it.

When I was in youth ministry, we had a contest to see who could grow the largest small group. The winning group would win a trip to Toronto for the group, and our group won... So here I am, leading this group in Toronto. We were riding on their train system, and we were all kids from Lansing so nobody really was familiar with public transit or anything at that point, I was maybe 20 or 21 (it was before I met Dawn.)

So we were riding the train, and while we were riding, one of the students, Chris, fell asleep.

And we came up with this prank idea. He was sleeping on the train, so at the next stop, we all got off the train car and got directly onto the car right ahead of it. There were windows on the train cars, so we could still see through the window and could see Chris sleeping, so we didn't actually abandon him or anything but when he woke up, none of us were anywhere in sight.

And he panicked.

We weren't just in a new city. We were in a different country. Where your cell phones don't just work (this was 10 years ago) and on a transit system he didn't understand. And suddenly he thought he was all alone. He got off

the train at the next stop, and so of course we did too. We didn't actually want to abandon him, just in our immaturity wanted to play a small prank.

He was very, very, very upset.

In fact, the rest of the trip, he was shut down. He didn't seem to enjoy a moment of it.

And every time I think back at that moment, I smile only for a moment before I get a little bit sad about it. I was his leader, and even though it was all in fun and games, the joke that we played portrayed the image of a lack of faithfulness to him. It communicated, "I am not going to be there for you when you wake up."

He woke up to each and every person who should have been there for him, missing.

I apologized 100 times but the damage had been done.

Just the illusion of unfaithfulness destroyed the influence that I had worked to establish with that young man.

Jesus had a similar circumstance in the Garden of Gethsemane, only he wasn't the one who fell asleep.

This is one of the few accounts that is recorded in all four of the gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all tell this same story, each recording details that another left out.

The garden of Gethsemane is called (the place of the press) - this garden was named after a wine press. People say that the name is meant to symbolize the weight with which Jesus went to the cross. And we will get there in a moment. Anybody who is familiar with the story knows that the very men who should have been the most faithful to Jesus, let him down deeply in this moment.

We will read Marks account, Mark 14:32-42, you can read along if you have your bibles:

“And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.” And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Let this cup pass from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

The obvious observation here is that the disciples failed Jesus in his darkest hour. And its hard to read this and not see that this was a very dark hour for Jesus. Luke 22:44 records that Jesus was sweating tears of blood in this moment, it says that “being in agony he prayed more earnestly; his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground”

He was in agony... so he prayed more diligently! It reminds me a bit of what Paul said about the church in Macedonia... things seemed really bad for them, yet they were more diligent than ever in their generosity. Jesus pushed harder. He was more diligent as he was faced with more and more agony.

The weight of the world was upon our savior, so he equipped himself through prayer to be faithful to what he knew he had to do.

a weight was on him that was never on him before... Mark records him as being sorrowful even unto death for the weight that he was carrying...

and that's when his disciples were sleeping.

They couldn't handle their own heaviness. They couldn't handle their own thoughts of what was coming. They couldn't handle their own fatigue, in order to stand watch for their rabbi in this desperate hour in his life. It's easy to have no pity on these guys, but the reality is that you would be tired too. They weren't going through what Jesus was going through, but they were going through a lot. I am sure that the tone of the entire night was one of such heaviness that they would have literally even had trouble standing. Like, you know when someone gets bad news... really bad news, and they fall. It's not because they physically don't have the strength to stand... if a doctor would look at them in that moment they would say, you are fully capable of standing... yet all they can do is fall. It is just too much weight.

I imagine a lot about that night... I feel a cool breeze and I hear garden insects making their traditional sounds, as if life was completely normal, yet for these disciples, it would never be the same again.

But for all the weight that the disciples would have felt that night, Jesus was feeling it far more.

This was a crucial moment for Jesus. The text says that he was sorrowful, even unto death. He was carrying the weight of what was happening in that moment... and crying out, he found no-one. No resolve from anyone, anywhere.

Let this Cup pass from me

I always would read this quote from Jesus, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" and I would think, "it's not like Jesus wanted to go to the cross" and I would read it like, he was asking God for a way out. But that's pretty hard to reconcile with John 12:27 when Jesus says "My soul is troubled. And what shall I say? Father save me from this hour? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name."

Jesus is saying, "This is the whole reason that I have come... I can not ask the Father to save me from it now." So instead, he asks the Father something different.

And do you remember the very first verse we read today? 2 Timothy 2:13? It says that "even we we are faithless, HE REMAINS FAITHFUL... because He CANNOT DENY HIMSELF. -

It is so easy to read these things and find ways to think, Jesus was uncertain, he had a moment where he didn't want to be faithful to the call... he didn't want to be faithful to humanity... he didn't want to take the weight of it all... and of course nobody would want that... but he never questioned it.

That's not the only time he says something like this. His entire journey to Jerusalem he is constantly reminding the disciples of what will happen when he gets there. Over and over again Jesus prophesies his own death... He tells the disciples that this whole journey is going to end at an altar... He is never fluctuating throughout his ministry on what the end is going to be for him. So what does he mean when he says that?

Well in that day and in that culture, there was a traditional way to take passover, and the imagery that Jesus is pulling from here relates to that imagery.

Symbolically, as you read the old testament you see that it is a metaphor for the wrath of God. There has to be a cost for sin... there has to be a payment. So when he says, let this cup pass from me, the cup he is talking about is the wrath of God, but he is not asking to skip out on the plan.

You see, There were four cups at a passover meal.. and as they would eat this meal they all would be drinking from these four cups, and after all the wine from the four cups was gone, there would be one last cup, a larger cup, that everybody would then share. They would all drink from it. In the tradition, they would pass the cup around and each person would drink as deeply from the cup as possible before passing it on to the next person. So, before you could "let the cup pass from you" you first had to drink as deeply of it as you could.

Now, At the bottom of the cup was all the gross stuff. the dregs and seeds and everything that would settle at the bottom, and I imagine everyones backwash was mixed in there too... that last drink would be just nasty.... Nobody wanted that last drink. Nobody wanted to drink “deeply” of the bitter.

Well there was a tradition that the person who took that last drink would have to drink all of the stuff that settles on the bottom, and it would be a bitter, nasty drink, and they would take it all down, then they would take that cup, they would refill it with more wine, and then they would “let that cup pass from them...” to the next person.

What Jesus was saying was, if it be possible, lets do this all in one drink. If it be possible, he wanted to take everything... every last disgusting drink... every bitter experience. All the residue that is lingering in our lives and do this thing once and for all. Let me take the bitterness. Let me take the weight of this. Let me take the tears, and death, and the broken mess that all of these people have made of their lives...

Let me drink of the failed marriages
And the adultery.
and the abortions.
and the unfaithful friends.

Let me drink of the hypocrisy.
and the deadbeat parents.
and the kids who grow up not knowing what faithfulness is even supposed to look like.

Let me drink of the bitter, so I can fill them back up with life... that they may taste the wine the way it is supposed to be tasted.

This is not Jesus asking God a question, as his faithfulness wavers.

This is Jesus wanting to be faithful even to the very last drop.

This is Jesus asking God if he can be faithful to the end.

John 18:11 records another perspective in the Garden of Gethsemane in which Peter pulls out his sword to defend Jesus, and in fact struck a servant of the high priest cutting off his ear, and Jesus stops Peter and tells him, "Peter, shall I not drink the cup which my father has given me?"

Shall I not be faithful to my Father?
Shall I not be faithful to you?

Peter, it doesn't matter that you weren't faithful to me in the garden. It doesn't matter that you are not going to be faithful to me tomorrow when people are questioning you and accusing you of knowing me.

"I will be faithful even when you don't have faith yourself."(2 Timothy 2:13)

And if you look back only a few verses in John's record of the account, (John 18:4-9), it says that Jesus, KNOWING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO HIM, asked the men looking for him, "Who do you seek?" and they respond, "we are seeking Jesus of Nazareth" and of course, Jesus says to them "I am he."

But then he says this, he says (John 18:8) "If you seek me, let these men go." and then the bible says that this was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."

Jesus told the guards, you can take me, but you can't take my disciples. He was faithful to the men who had just fallen asleep on him. He was faithful to the men who couldn't keep watch, even for an hour, because Jesus is always faithful.

In his darkest hour, they let him down.
But in his darkest hour, his faithfulness still shined bright.

He is always there.

The bible says in Hebrew 13:8 that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Isaiah 54:10 says “For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”

He is always. He is constant. And he always has compassion.

And maybe you are in this place and you have lived your whole life and you have never been able to rely on anybody. and quite frankly, it has killed your compassion. It has killed your wonder. It has killed the awe for what is good and you’ve grown cold to what is evil.

Maybe Nobody has ever come through for you. Every promise ever made to you, it feels like it was broken.

Every time you were lifted up, you were let down.

Jesus is faithful to you even when you fall asleep on him.

He has been faithful to our nation even when we have websites specifically designed to facilitate deadly sin, and tens of millions of people that use them.

He is still faithful.

For some of us, we need to be more faithful to our families, more faithful to our friends, more faithful to our community. More faithful to the people who are desperately looking for faithfulness as their whole worlds are falling apart because of their sins that have been brought to the light in this Ashley Madison scandal.

And for some of us, it needs to start by seeing just how faithful Jesus is. How constant he is. How righteous he is, that he drank the whole cup, so that he could fill us.

So we could taste life, the way it is suppose to taste.