

- Have you ever been reading a book and you read a page, then another, and then realized that you have no idea at all what you just read? You saw the words. They registered and went in your brain, but they did not land anywhere and just went right back out. Then you had to go back and read it again. After the third time, you are done.
- Or perhaps you were watching a show or movie. It was one you had seen before, perhaps several times. Someone comes into the room and asks, "What are you watching?". You pause and think, "I'm not sure. What *am* I watching?"
- Or have you ever been driving your car and you suddenly snap to attention and think, "How did I get here? I don't remember anything from the last 15 minutes of driving." It's terrifying if you think about it. You did all the turns, stopped at the lights, navigated traffic, but did not remember doing any of it.
- We started a new short series last week called "The Words we Sing"
- In the course of this month we are going to dive deeper into the lyrics of some of the songs we sing on Sunday morning.
- The purpose of this series is to increase our understanding and revelation of who God is and so draw us in to a deeper connection to Jesus through our time of singing. Because it is really easy to come on Sunday (or even listen on your radio or Spotify) and the same melody and words go in and go out and they don't land anywhere.
- Last week Skeeterless through the song "Fullness" by Elevation that talked about how we are inviting the Holy Spirit to move deeply in our lives in the lives of those around us to bring revival and renewal out of brokenness.
- This week let's look at the song "Do It Again" by Elevation worship.
- Let me read through the lyrics again.

*Walking around these walls
I thought by now they'd fall
But You have never failed me yet
Waiting for change to come
Knowing the battle's won
For You have never failed me yet*

*Your promise still stands
Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness
I'm still in Your hands
This is my confidence, You've never failed me yet*

*I know the night won't last
Your Word will come to pass
My heart will sing Your praise again*

*Jesus You're still enough
Keep me within Your love
My heart will sing Your praise again*

*I've seen You move, You move the mountains
And I believe, I'll see You do it again
You made a way, where there was no way
And I believe, I'll see You do it again
I'll see You do it again*

*And You never failed me yet
I never will forget
You never failed me yet
I never will forget*

- This entire song is about the faithfulness of God.
- God's faithfulness when we are unsure what our next step in our job is.
- God's faithfulness in taking a relational risk.
- God's faithfulness in taking care of us and providing our needs when we don't know where the resources are coming from.
- God's faithfulness when we are struggling with physical pain and sickness.
- God's faithfulness when our children are not living how we know they should live.
- God's faithfulness while we pray for a spouse to come to Jesus.

- God's faithfulness when we feel unnoticed or unappreciated.
- God's faithfulness when we continue to struggle to overcome a sin pattern.
- **GOD IS A GOD OF FAITHFULNESS.**

- The song begins by evoking imagery of a very famous episode in Israel's history.
- We find the account in Joshua 6.

Joshua 6:1 Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. 2 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. 3 March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 4 Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in."

- Honestly, this is like the worst tactical advice ever given for battle.
- I'd love to have been there when Joshua told the troops their plan of attack.
- Men, we are going to go out armed for war. Axes, swords, spears, full armor. We are going to assemble before dawn.
- And then . . . we are going to walk in a circle. [PAUSE] No, that's pretty much it. Oh, and we're going to do this every day this week.

6:13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. 14 So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

- I wonder how they felt on day 1? What about after the 3rd day? 4th?
- Then the seventh day came. This time, we are going to do it 7 times. Then the city will be hours.
- Let me get this straight. We are going to hike for hours and hours until we are totally tired. Then we have to fight?
- If you take this story without understanding the context, it is a neat story. But it takes on enormous significance if you understand the process leading up until this moment.
- Let's go back 550-650 years. We meet a man named Abraham. The world was messed up and God was going to restore it, so he picked a man that he was going to do this through.
- Part of God's promises to Abraham was to give his descendents a land to live in.

Abraham

Genesis 12:7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

- He did this multiple times with Abraham

Genesis 13:14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever."

- Re reiterated the promise to Abraham's son about 70 years later.

Genesis 26:2 The LORD appeared to Isaac and said . . . "For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham."

- If you fast forward another 70-100 years, and to Isaac's grandson Joseph, we hear that the promise God made is still in their minds.

Genesis 50:24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

- It has been 150 years, and you think that maybe something will happen, but then Israel grows into a nation and spends 400 years in Egypt, with the later portion of that as slaves.

- We know they never forgot God's promise because when God appeared to Moses he told him this:

Exodus 6:8 And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.' "

- The Israelites left Egypt, God delivered them, and where were they headed? The Promised Land.

Exodus 23:22 If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. 23 My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites,

- The entire nation travels for 2 years until they stand on the doorstep of this Promised Land. It has been 550 + years and they are finally ready to receive what God had promised. But then they go to spy the land, and the task seems so daunting that they rebel against God and Moses. Only Caleb and Joshua object.

Numbers 14:6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us.

- Sadly, the people did not listen, and God turned them around and they spent the next 38 years wandering the desert till all those adults who saw the Promised Land died and a new generation came up.
- Now they are there again. I want you to feel the weight of those expectations. Generation upon generation of people who were waiting for this moment. You are not sure how this will happen. The cities you see, like Jericho in front of you, are strong. You don't know if you can do it. How is it going to happen? You want to move forward. But you just can't see it.
- Then the first city you attack is done by walking in circles.
- **GOD IS A GOD OF FAITHFULNESS**, but:

I. God's faithfulness is not decided by my current circumstances.

- God's promise to Abraham and his descendents was not fulfilled for over 500 years.
- Can you imagine waiting that long to see God do something?
- We think it's difficult when God doesn't answer in a couple of weeks.
*I know the night won't last
 Your Word will come to pass
 My heart will sing Your praise again
 Jesus You're still enough
 Keep me within Your love
 My heart will sing Your praise again*
- It was one long night for many of the Israelites.
- Consider Abraham who had this promise and for decades didn't even have a son to pass anything on to.
- How about those who were born, lived and died under the tyranny of slavery?
- I think of those who actually stood on the edge of the Promised Land but had to turn and wander in the desert and died without experiencing it.
- If they had determined God's faithfulness on the basis of their circumstances, many of them would have come to the conclusion that God was absent, did not care and was certainly not living up to his promises.
- How many of you are dealing with something that you thought by now God would have fixed in your life? Or taken away from your life? Or given you something? Yet you are still waiting.
- How many of you have had a dream, a hope, for something that now seems to be dead?

- Yet God is faithful. They believed this enough to step into the unknown future and towards the promises of God. **GOD IS A GOD OF FAITHFULNESS.**

II. Our trust in God's faithfulness leans on the past when the present is cloudy.

- How do you trust in God's faithfulness when everything (and often everyone) is screaming at you to take control and that to trust God is foolish? Remember.
*I've seen You move, You move the mountains
 And I believe, I'll see You do it again
 You made a way, where there was no way
 And I believe, I'll see You do it again
 I'll see You do it again*
- If I want to trust in God's future faithfulness, the best indicator I have is how he has been faithful in the past.
- The Israelites had little experience in conquering a new land. For all they knew, they could attack and be slaughtered. Enslaved again. Scattered. But they had the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. They had seen what God did to deliver them from Egypt. They had seen how he provided for them in the desert. They had seen his faithfulness over and over.
- As Christ-followers we all have moments where we can look back at when God intervened and showed up in our life. Even if the only thing you can think of now is how he drew you to know him for the first time.
- The authors of this song said this: *"When you look back with gratefulness for those times, those are some of the best building blocks for faith now. We are not done yet, and the future is bright. We can believe because He's done it once, He'll do it again."*
- **GOD IS A GOD OF FAITHFULNESS.**

III. Because of God's faithfulness, I can step confidently into the future.

- With all these expectations, all of God's promises, all of the evidence of God's faithfulness, the Israelites did exactly what God told them to do, including that fateful seventh day.
15 On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. 16 The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! 17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. 18 But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. 19 All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury." 20 When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city.
- They conquered the city. This was the first step in taking the land that God had promised so many centuries before.
- **GOD IS A GOD OF FAITHFULNESS.**
- The question this morning is simply this: Are you trusting God's faithfulness?
- Are you willing to move forward and towards him even when your life and circumstances seem to make him distant or that he is ignoring you?

- Where is he inviting you to trust in him?
- How has he proved his faithfulness to you in the past.
- The bridge in this song says:
*And You never failed me yet
I never will forget
You never failed me yet
I never will forget*
- Our God has not failed. He has not forgotten you and he invites you to remember his faithfulness. His love. His care.
- As we celebrate communion, I want to encourage you to do two things.
- Take time to pray, to consider one specific instance where God has demonstrated his faithfulness to you. When was that? What did he do? How did it feel? Thank him for that faithfulness.
- Then think about one way he is inviting you to trust in his faithfulness going forward. How can you step towards his faithfulness in the face of uncertainty?

Reflection

- Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
- 2 Corinthians 5:7 For we live by faith, not by sight.
- Lamentations 3:22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
- Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,
- Psalms 36:5 Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.
- Psalms 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you?
- Psalms 119:90 Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.
- 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.
- Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
- Matthew 17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."
- The ultimate demonstration of God's faithfulness is found in the life, death and resurrection of his son. He promised when Adam and Eve sinned that he would make a way for us to get right with God. He did it. He brought us to himself. He loved us. He took away our sins. He gave us an escape from punishment.
- For your whole life, you can rest in the assurance of his faithfulness, and that he cared enough about you personally to die for you!