

Who is like the LORD? He is Faithful (Isaiah 49)

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Dominant Thought: Our faithful LORD chooses to be with us.

Objectives:

I want my listeners to understand the faithfulness of our LORD.

I want my listeners to feel encouraged by God choosing us before we were born.

I want my listeners to show the faithfulness of the LORD to the nations.

I read [Isaiah 48.17](#) this week. I've read it many times over the years, but this week it hit me in a fresh way, and I hope it will help you, too.

Isaiah 48:17 NIV

This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.”

The Lord teaches us what is best and directs us in the way we should go. Through this series in the latter half of Isaiah, we are asking the question, “Who is like the LORD?” We are answering the question by looking at His character traits. This week, we will see our God is faithful. In faithfulness, He teaches us what is best and the way we should go.

In our time together, we will look at four faithful actions of our heavenly Father.

First, our Faithful LORD calls us before our birth ([Isaiah 49.1,5](#)).

As we saw God as our Creator in [Isaiah 43.15](#), Isaiah returns to this theme again. “Before I was born, the LORD called me” ([Isaiah 49.1](#)). Later, he wrote, “He who formed me in the womb” ([Isaiah 49.5](#)). This language is similar to the prophet Jeremiah’s call recorded in [Jeremiah 1:5](#), “Before I

formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

In the book, *Seventeen Fathoms Deep—The Saga of the Submarine S-4 Disaster*, Joseph A. Williams tells the story of diver Tom Eadie who made contact with 6 crewmembers of the S-4 submarine that had sunk off the coast of Massachusetts in 1926. Later he wrote about that moment, “If you never do anything more in your whole life, inspire those men in there with confidence that we on the topside are onto our job, and doing every last thing we can” (p. 104).

As followers of Christ, that could be our life mission. Doing everything we can to rescue people who are dying without hope in Jesus.

Second, our Faithful LORD rewards us ([Isaiah 49.4](#)).

“My reward is with my God.” Notice the relationship with God connected to our reward. We are not saved by our works. Yet, there seems to be a reward for faithfulness.

In the book, *Seventeen Fathoms Deep—The Saga of the Submarine S-4 Disaster*, Joseph A. Williams tells the story of rewards and promotions for those who served in a recovery effort for a sunken submarine S-51 in 1926. One of the key individuals on the job was Edward Ellsberg. Ellsberg graduated first in his class from the US Naval Academy in 1914. Williams writes, “Ellsberg gained national celebrity for his role in the salvage of the S-51. Captain King gave commendations to divers but reserved his highest praise and recommended promotion to the rank of commander for Ellsberg” (page 78). Ellsberg received a Distinguished Service Medal, as well. Nine of the divers on the mission were given Navy Crosses.

Later, Boatswain’s Mate Bill Carr swung open the door of Ellsberg’s cabin. Ellsberg remembers Carr’s red face and angry blue eyes. “In his hard fist was a piece of paper. Ellsberg momentarily pondered why an enlisted man would barge suddenly into an officer’s cabin before Carr thrust the paper at him” (p. 78). Carr’s paper was all wet. It was a letter of commendation for a promotion. Also on the letter was the list of the divers who were receiving Navy Crosses. Carr’s name was not on that list. It was true that Carr made more dives on the S-51 job than any other man.

Carr continued to press Ellsberg, ‘Gimme that Navy Cross anyhow. Sure an’ you know I’ve earned it! And what good’s a

letter o' commendation to me anyway?...A Navy Cross is different...those other lads that's gittin' 'em can pin their Navy Crosses on their coats every time they makes a liberty, an' the girls ashore all knows they're heroes. How about me? Can I pin that letter o' commendation on my chest when I goes ashore so the girls'll know I'm a hero too?...Gimme that Navy Cross!...' Ellsberg, however, was unmoved, and Carr had to go without a Navy Cross" (page 79).

What's the motivation for pursuing the rewards God has for us? If it's for selfish gain like Bill Carr, then we are in trouble. If the reward surprises us because we are simply living faithfully and honoring our Lord daily, then that's probably a good thing.

Jesus tells a story in [Matthew 25.31-40](#) when people were surprised at the reward of helping Jesus. The King will come and separate the people like a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" ([Matthew 25.34](#)). The King will say that you cared for me when I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, needing clothes, sick, or in prison. The righteous will answer, "Lord, when did we see you in need and help you?" The King will reply, "Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" ([Matthew 25.40](#)).

Later while working on the S-4 submarine salvage in 1927-28, Bill Carr was called to rescue a fellow diver who was trapped in some mud next to the submarine. The diver? Edward Ellsberg. Fortunately, Ellsberg was able to recover and come to the surface on his own. Carr told Ellsberg in the decompression chamber, "You should have stayed there until I could have rescued you." Later, Carr did receive a Navy Cross along with other divers who were working the S-4 recovery.

Third, our Faithful LORD restores us ([Isaiah 49.6, 8ff](#)).

He restores the tribes of Jacob. Our Father's heart is for His people. For more descriptions of how God restores His people you can read [Isaiah 49.8ff](#).

Environmental artist Tom Deiningger takes discarded items and childhood toys to fashion them into works of art. From one vantage point, it looks only like a bunch of trash collected. Then, as you look at it from a different

angle, the collection of items forms an exotic bird, a fish jumping out of water, or a robin on a perch. He takes trash and restores it into something beautiful.

Fourth, our Faithful LORD chooses us to reach the nations ([Isaiah 49.6](#)).

God servant is called to be a light to the nations, that His salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

I'm thankful for our mission partners both local and international. From Lake Springfield Christian Assembly to Asia Pacific International, Inner City Mission to Mathetes Youth Center in the Philippines, Ozark Christian College to Pioneer Bible Translators in West Africa.

We can look again at Isaiah's vision in [Isaiah 6.1-8](#). He sees the LORD high and exalted and answers the call, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah replied, "Here I am! Send me."

To help bless the nations, you have at least three choices: Go, Send, Pray. You can go. We have a group who will represent our church on a mission trip to the Philippines in August. Some people are called to send. That may be with an encouraging word or with financial support. We all can pray. Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest field." ([Matthew 9.37-38](#)).

What has missions taught me? Mission has taught me God's kingdom is bigger than I imagined. I have brothers and sisters around the world. I feel missions addresses racism. When you realize God's heart to reach the nations, you have no room for racism.

When our children were still young, Beth and I set a goal to take our children out of the country on a mission trip before they graduate from high school. Grace went to Jamaica, the Philippines, and Nicaragua in her teen years. Walker went to Mexico City after a two-year delay because of the pandemic. Lord willing, Weston and Hope, will serve in the Philippines in August. Why do we want our kids to experience a short-term mission trip? We want them to recognize the blessings of living in America. We want them to have a love for the nations like our heavenly Father does. We want them to learn about other cultures. We want them to share the good news of Jesus with our neighbors and the nations.

Our faithful LORD chooses to be with us.

He calls us from our mother's womb. He rewards His servants. He restores us and wants us to reach the nations. How will you choose to honor the faithfulness of the LORD this week?