

A photograph of a person from the back, standing in a field with their arms raised towards the sky. The sun is setting in the background, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The person is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt.

Davidson Goodnews

The Faithful Christian

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I believe in God the father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the father, and shall come again to judge the living and the dead..." Thus goes the ancient creed. These words could literally get the one who affirmed them into trouble as it spells out that the one who affirms them is a Christian, a believer who believes Jesus to be the Son of God. The committed affirmation of these words may still get people into trouble today among all such as hate Christ. Hatred for

Christ takes its root in Satan and the world under his power -- world of men who love darkness rather than light. And so it was that the world killed Christ, the light of the world, and persecute till date all such as live godly in Christ. It was with these inevitable trials and persecutions in view that Jesus aforetime gave the encouraging words of Matthew 5:11 to us his followers.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Matthew 5:11

And out of these followers Christ sought and still seeks faithful people (that includes you and I), who can say to him: Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my

people, and thy God my God (Ruth 1:16). Who then is the faithful Christian? From Scriptures we see that the faithful Christian is one who holds the Faith, keeps the Faith and contends for the Faith of Christ.

Being a Christian is a whole lot of commitment. It is a whole lot of involvement. Our intellect and will must be fully involved. We must stick with the historical Jesus of the Bible and not the Jesus of our own fancy, or the false Jesus of other sources of whom Christ himself had forewarned his followers. We must believe in God theologically not philosophically; not according to science, or according to any other sources but the Bible only. God must be apprehended only as revealed in scriptures, for Christ taught the God of the prophets, not the god of the philosophers. As the hymn writer A W Dicus rightly puts it: ...God whose voice the

prophets heard. He is the God that we should know, who speaks from His inspired word.

We must exercise our will to stand for Jesus. We aren't to lean on our fickle emotions. We must answer that question: "Who is on the Lord's side?" We must realise that it is through cloud and sunshine; that it is, as the old hymn put it: *to him that overcometh a crown of life shall be; he with the king of glory shall reign eternally.*

Our choice and decision to follow Christ will be tried over time. Temptations will try it. Circumstances of life will try it. Modernization will try it. Heresy will try it as well. Whenever anyone decides to follow Christ, lots of things come up to try to make him or her turn back. But that is not peculiar to the faith alone; that is how it is with every resolution and decision in

life. Jesus gave an interesting parable in Matthew 13 of a sower who went to the field to sow, and then some fell on the way side, some among thorns, some on stony places and some on good soil. When asked what he meant, he explained that those who fell on the way side are those who when they receive the word, the devil comes and takes it away from their heart. Contrary voices from circumstances, modernization, liberalism, science, atheism, philosophy or even other religions create doubts in the heart of people today and so the word of God is gone from them. Modernization, science, philosophy and the rest are good and valuable in their own place, but when ever they present a view contrary to the faith we must say, No. Let God be true and all men a liar. We must hold it out against contrary voices no matter where they come from. Those that fell

on the thorns, Christ explained them to be those who when they receive the word, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things, choke them and they are unable to bear fruits of the kingdom. And as for those that fell on stony ground, they grow quickly, professing Christ, as it were, for some time. But when trials and temptations, tribulations and disappointments come because of the truth, such Christians, Christ says, get discouraged, lose hope and give up.

I believe our commitment to Christ must be wholly inclusive of all that Christ taught and commanded. It must be Christ and Christ completely. We dare not cherrypick what to believe in Christ or what command to heed and what not to. We are in and in absolutely.

But that we are believers does not mean we dare believe everything in the world: we must readily reject all that Christ rejected, and that totally. We can't claim love for Christ when we like what he hates and hates what he likes. No. Only birds of a feather flock together. Christ died that we may be one with him. We must be exclusively committed to him to the end that we love him and him alone. We cannot love God and the Devil. We can't love Christ and self. We can't serve Christ and Mammon. We can't love God and the world at the same time. He who loves this world the love of the father cannot be in him.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

Many professing Christian don't want to serve Christ the way the Apostles served him. Well, we can't serve him differently, except it is a different Jesus. In 2 Timothy 4:7-8 Apostle Paul says:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

If Paul says in his service of Christ that he fought a good fight, then there is a fight. We must get ready for it. It can't be a different fight: it is the good fight in Christ, the fight of faith. There is a course for everyone of us too to finish in this heavenly race. More so there is

the faith we must all keep who love his glorious appearing -- and that is the faith of Christ. It is not a different faith. It is that old Faith which was once and for all delivered (Jude 1:3). All these Christ expects of us and for which reason he warmly praised Antipas who was martyred for his sake.

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. Revelation 2:13

We must therefore strive to be found faithful to Christ our Lord and Master who will give to every man his reward on that day. To this end we must walk in the path of the faithful saints who were before us, lifting high his royal

banner and not allowing it suffer loss in our own segment of time. Let us now therefore acquaint ourselves with the characteristics of the faithful Christian and pray God for grace to live accordingly, viz:

1. The faithful Christian holds the faith of Christ

To hold the faith is to be a believer, an adherent of the faith. The one who holds the faith lives by the principles of the faith. He is a staunch believer in the tenets of the faith, obeying the gospel from the heart. He doesn't merely have a mental assent of Christ, he lives by every word of Christ. The one who holds the faith is the one whose lifestyle is shaped by the doctrines of the faith of Christ. Who holds tenaciously and unflinchingly to the faith of Christ. He lives by the faith, exercising himself

thereto; for example: the faith of Christ teaches meekness, so he Consequently, leads a meek life. He seeks to live his life according to the principles and values taught by Jesus Christ. The faithful Christian is not one who merely goes to church but doesn't have true convictions about the religion that he affirms. The one who has settled for the convictions of his or her heart about the word of Christ and has taken them for absolute truths, he or she it is who holds the faith. Very well does the words of the beloved Apostle Paul fit in ...*ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister (Colossians 1:23).* Not the one who would debate God's word rather than obey it. Who would rather

edit the word of Christ than live by it. Not he who is content to be passive in his worship of God and indifferent in matters of faith. Not he or she who wants to be in the number but neither want the stresses, nor meet the demands of being a member. Not the one who says "Lord", "Lord" but does not those things which the Lord says. Not the one who names the name of Christ, but will not depart from iniquity. The kingdom of Christ is not in words of mouth only; the hearers and the doers, they it is that are blessed in all their ways.

2. The faithful Christian keeps the faith

It is possible to hold the faith of Christ but not be a keeper of it. He who keep the faith ensures he is an observer of its tenets and a preserver of its values. "...These things,"

Apostle Paul says, "commit unto faithful men." We who believe are called upon to keep the faith like the Apostles of Christ. The beloved Apostle Paul tells us of his responsibility placed on him by Christ to keep the Faith: *1 Timothy 1:11-12*

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. ...for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-5

For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

Recognizing he was put in trust with the gospel, Apostle Paul lived a life that did not hinder the flow of the gospel(1Cor 9:12), he accepted the responsibility to be a voice of the gospel- he must preach it (1Cor 9:16). He mustn't keep quiet no matter what, just like the other Apostles (Act 4:20). He mustn't corrupt or pervert it, not for anything in the world. So long Apostle Paul was committed to keeping the faith which was committed into his hand, God was committed to keeping his soul which he had committed into His hands (2Tim 1:12).

The Apostles of Jesus kept the faith intact and handed it down to our generation. We too must keep it intact, unadulterated, unmodified. The Apostles did not alter the gospel, not for their own selfish interests or the wishful lusts of a mixed multitude church. Not in fear of the government, or in love for worldly approval. As

they received it from their Lord, so they handed it down. As they learnt from Christ, so they taught. They were faithful to their Lord and his ordinances -- they dared not alter what they did not institute. Are we wiser than they were? No. We must be keepers of the faith not editors of it. We dare not Lord it over our Master's will.

The above I think blessed Apostle Paul meant when he said, " I have kept the faith.... " The same is required of us today who are true disciples of the Master. We must keep the faith faithfully. We can't emend Jesus for the Church, nor edit him for the world. We can't make Jesus fit into the world, he has never fitted in. We can't create a Jesus of our own fancy, or a twenty-first century Jesus. We must tread the old path of the crucified life and preach the old gospel of eternal salvation in the manner the

Apostles did. It was Jesus as received, that the apostles handed down:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; --Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:3)

And it is Jesus (i.e the gospel) as we received it from the Apostles that we are expected to practice and hand down to the next generation. The faith has been once and for all delivered (Jude 1:3); no new version. It must remain the New Covenant; no modern covenant.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.
(Galatians 1:9)

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: (Colossians 2:6)

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

The faith of Christ has been under great attacks over the years. What I feel is dealing greater blows on the faith is the manhandling of it by faithless and self-willed men who have occupied the front seats of church leadership. Leaders who feel they are in position to add or subtract from the doctrines of our Lord. Who fear not the greater damnation they are thereby opting for. Faithlessness has brought about the infusion of ideas from business, philosophy and the world into the faith. The faith of Christ does not need a refining touch from secular education or a constructive criticism from any political world view. It stands

tall on its own pedestal-- godliness is a mystery born of God. The teachings of our Lord, is not for all (Jn 10:45-46). It is for such as can receive it. The Lord has its own sheep separate from the world. No worldly ideology is qualified to handle or contribute any input whatsoever to the subject of eternal salvation. The subject is not within the reach of intellectuals. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit, says the Saviour. The path of eternal life must be followed as originally delivered, world view or popular acceptability notwithstanding. God has never sought man's suggestion to make his laws. Any act of seating over his laws by mortal man reflects nothing but man's puffed up, rebellious finite heart towards his infinite sovereign

creator. The faith of Christ is for such as care about the salvation of their souls. We must therefore keep it faithfully; no additions, no subtractions. We dare not create our own doctrines, they won't save us. It must be the doctrine of Christ. It we must take heed to and be mindful to keep, as Paul wisely counselled Timothy.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. 1 Timothy 4:16

There seems to be confusion today in the body of Christ. This is largely because some people in a bid to please themselves or to make the faith much user-friendly added their own beliefs and views: used their own interpretations to add to the practice of the faith what they like and

subtract what they dislike. This do no good to the Church. Faithful Christians must keep the faith.

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 4:2

We stand faithful to the keeping of the faith when it is not evil spoken of because of our conduct; when we do not compromise it, or shift grounds; and resolve to, among other things, maintain its simplicity as Christ designed it (2 Cor 2:17).

3 The faithful Christian contends for the faith

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for

me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Jude 1:3

The contention of the Christian is not in taking up arms. Of such acts we have no example from Christ. There exist no such command to his Church, and no such example from his Apostles or the early saints who held his original faith. *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:36).* On the contrary they lay down their life to be killed for the gospel's sake. Proving their oneness with Christ and allowing their adversaries, the government of the day, bear the guilt of shedding innocent blood in the great judgment to come.

The contention however is against the kingdom of darkness through prayer and the preaching of the word. When the word of God prevails in a city, the kingdom of darkness is dislodged there. And as the Lord be willing to take over a territory, the faithful Christian must be willing to rush in and contend with the gates of hell in that territory through the preaching of the undiluted word of God and ceaseless prayer. We are his people who will be willing in the days of his power.

Within the the guidelines of godliness, the faithful saints must contend. They must speak up against false teachers, false doctrines, false brethren, heretics, atheist, evil individuals in power that seek to pervert, deny, corrupt, or dismiss the original faith. This the Apostles and Church Fathers lived and died for, serving both as preachers and apologists. They preserved

the faith with their resources, efforts, voices and their bloods. They loved not their lives unto the death.

Stand up, Stand up for Jesus

by George Duffield (1858)

1 Stand up, stand up for Jesus
ye soldiers of the cross;
lift high his royal banner,
it must not suffer loss.

From vict'ry unto vict'ry
his army he shall lead
till ev'ry foe is vanquished
and Christ is Lord indeed.

2 Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
the trumpet call obey;
forth to the mighty conflict
in this his glorious day.

Ye that are men now serve him
against unnumbered foes;
let courage rise with danger
and strength to strength oppose.

3 Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
stand in his strength alone;
the arm of flesh will fail you,
ye dare not trust your own.

Put on the gospel armor,
And watching unto prayer;

where duty calls or danger,
be never wanting there.

4 Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
the strife will not be long;
this day the noise of battle,
the next, the victor's song.

To him that overcometh
a crown of life shall be;
he with the King of glory
shall reign eternally