



Summary of previous discussion (what we've already learned from God's Word) (Points 1-3):

Faithfulness (*not perfection*) is what Christ *has always required* to receive and remain in a saving relationship w/Him.

(IOW): to receive Christ as Savior, a person must not only trust in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, but also vow faithful (not perfect) obedience to Him as Lord. Once they have gained that saving relationship (thru baptism – 1Pe 3:21), they must (then) fulfill their former vow by living in faithful obedience to Him if they hope to maintain it and its promises. This is true under the New Covenant just as it was under the previous covenants (e.g. Old Covenant). The mechanics of salvation have remained the same. That salvation requires faithfulness is completely reasonable given that it does not negate faith in Christ (since our faith in Christ includes/implies faithfulness); nor does it mean we are earning our way to heaven (since our salvation is a marriage covenant w/Christ). Instead, what this requirement of faithfulness does mean is that our initial justification (by faith) is not enough and that God (having also required faithfulness), has supplied us (in His Word) with the knowledge necessary to both acquiring it as well as assessing whether we already possess it.

4. Obedience to God's Word must be what characterizes our covenant life if our obedience is to be recognized by God as faithful¹.

5. The obedience that characterizes our covenant life must also possess certain attributes if it is to be recognized by God as faithful. Or put another way, it is our commitment to these attributes that is the key to achieving the faithfulness God requires in our obedience.

5.1. Careful [Question being addressed: Can I take risks and be sloppy in my practice of God's Word and still be considered faithful? *No, you must be careful in both your lifestyle and obedience.*] (Deu 28:1b) – **"If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments"**

5.2. Comprehensive [Question being addressed = Can I be selective in what I choose to faithfully obey as commandments necessary to salvation? *No, you must be comprehensive in your submission to God's Word.*] (Deu 28:1b) – **"If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments"**

5.3. Confirmed [Question being addressed = Can a person be considered faithful whose obedience has never been tested or when tested, fails? *No, faithful obedience refers only to that which has been confirmed through testing.*] (Deu 8:1-2) - **"You shall remember the whole way the Lord your God had led you...testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not"**

5.4. Cheerful [Question being addressed = Can I be faithful and yet possess a bad attitude or be unhappy in my obedience? *No, you must serve God with cheerfulness.*]

(Deu 28:45-47)

Verses 46 and 47 exist to give further clarity to the previous statement/warning in verse 45 ("All these curses shall come upon you...because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God..."). As such, Moses is attempting to communicate what - among other things - would cause the Lord to view the Israelites as unfaithful. And it included an obedience that was not cheerful ("they shall be ...against you...because you did not serve the Lord your God *with joyfulness and gladness of heart.*"). **IOW: God cares about the attitude we have in relation to the obedience we give.**

5.4.1. OT examples of God (directly) calling His people to cheerful obedience (Psa 100:2; As revealed by their context, many of the Psalms which speak of giving thanks/praise to the Lord are referring to serving God w/cheerful obedience - Psa 32:8-33:1 = "Praise"/"joy" is the benefit[ing]/correct attitude of those who obey God/the "righteous"/the "upright"/those who "walk in the way [they] should go"; Psa 50:14-23 = The way we are to fulfill our [marriage "covenant"] "vows" [of obedience to God's "statutes"] is w/"thanksgiving" [i.e. cheerfulness/joy] since this is how the one receiving "the salvation of God" "orders his way rightly.").

5.4.2. NT examples of God calling His people to cheerful obedience (Phi 3:1 w/4:4; Col 1:9-12; Gal 5:22; 1Th 1:6, 5:16-18; 1Pe 1:8-9; 2Co 8:1-2 w/9:12-13 = Giving to the Jerusalem church was viewed as obedience. An act the Macedonians did w/an attitude of joy of cheerfulness— something Paul was calling for in the Corinthians' obedience as well – see 9:7; Heb 13:15 = Live characterized by a joyful attitude toward God ["continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God"] since such cheerfulness is the sign/proof ["the fruit of lips"] of those living in obedience to Jesus as Lord [those "that acknowledge His name" – literally, "who confess His name" – Rom 10:9]; 1Jo 5:3 = They are a joy [versus being "burdensome"]. We therefore obey them with cheerfulness).

¹ Characterize = the behavior that most occurs, is the typical or predominate pattern of your life since becoming a Christian. IOW: YOU ARE WHAT YOU DO (Eze 18; Rev 20)

5.4.3. Number one reason God's OT people failed to possess cheerful obedience (and therefore be recognized by God as faithful) = Grumbling/Complaining² (In re: to dissatisfaction = Num 11:1-6; In re: to distrust = Num 14:1-11, 27-35 w/Deu 1:26-35; Consider also - Mic 6:3; Mal 2:13).

5.4.4. NT examples of God warning His people to avoid grumbling or complaining in their service to Him – i.e. of serving/obeying Him w/o a cheerful attitude (1Co 10:10; Phi 2:12-15 w/3:1).

5.4.5. What else God views as sinful grumbling/complaining:

5.4.5.1. Questioning the moral character or competency of God's legitimate leaders³ (Exo 16:1-8, 17:1-3; Num 14:2, 16:8-50; Jos 9:17-21; No doubt this was in the mind of Hebrew's author when giving instruction as to the church's leaders – Heb 13:17).

5.4.6.2. Possessing a bad attitude when adversity comes or you don't get what you want (e.g. throwing a pity-party for yourself thru pouting, weeping/whining like a baby, throwing a temper-tantrum/getting angry, acting like a jerk to everyone else, using such adversity as an excuse to act irresponsibly in your spending, eating, etc. – see again Num 11:4 w/18-20; Jam 1:19-20 w/1:2; Jam 4:1-3 w/Jon 4:1-11 = Anger b/c we do not get what we want w/no regard for what God wants – or trust in the good that He may be accomplishing thru it - does produce the righteousness of God" [i.e. qualify as righteous behavior/faithful obedience]. It is does not therefore "do [us] well to be angry"/possess a bad attitude in re: to what God has determined take place in our lives. It is instead another form of sinful grumbling that does not accomplish the cheerful obedience God expects of us).

5.4.6. What God does NOT view as sinful grumbling/complaining:

5.4.6.1. Calling out for God's help (i.e. casting your burdens/anxieties on Him believing He cares and will deliver you) (Exo 14:10-15, 15:22-26; Psa 55:1-23, 64:1, 102:1, 142:1-7; Jer 12:1; 1Pe 5:7; e.g. Jesus – Luk 22:39-43 – Notice Jesus' complaint expresses both trust in God's help and will as right. In this light consider Heb 12:1-2 – Notice Jesus knew his suffering would end in a joyous/worthwhile deliverance – We are to take the same attitude in our suffering).

5.4.6.2. Calling out to God for understanding, trusting that He will (one day) provide a righteous answer/reason and ultimately bring deliverance⁴ (Psa 6:1-10, 13:1-6, 35:17-28, 94:1-23; Hab 1:1-2:14; Jam 1:1-8).

5.4.6.3. Expressing a desire to be free from sin, this sinful world and faithless/unfaithful followers of God (Rom 7:24-25 w/8:20-23; 2Co 5:1-4; Mat 17:14-17).

CLOSING QUESTION/CONTEMPLATION: How would those who know you best describe the temperament of your obedience (especially when in the midst of adversity)? Is it cheerful or do you act like the world's biggest baby and martyr? Understand if those who know you best see flaws in this area- how much more the Lord! Remember, YOU ARE WHAT YOU DO – NOT WHAT YOU THINK (YOU ARE). No-one therefore will be considered faithful on Judgment Day who was not characterized by cheerful obedience. Today is the day of salvation (to change in the direction of salvation)!

² There are several words used in the Bible to communicate grumbling or complaining. When referring to those types of grumbling/complaining God hates, they refer either to: 1) dissatisfaction w/the Lord's provision or 2) distrust in His moral character and competency (Num 14:11- "how long will this people despise Me? [dissatisfaction] And how long will they not believe in Me? [distrust]". The word for "despise" can also be translated as "blaspheme" –e.g. Isa 52:5; 2Sa 12:14).

³ The Scripture provides examples of illegitimate leaders. Our questioning of their moral character and competency is warranted (Deu 18:18-22; 1Co 14:37-38 w/11:15-16; 2Co 11:1-5, 13 w/11:22; 1Th 5:19-22). When however individuals have demonstrated themselves to be legitimate, all such distrust/questioning is recognized by God as sinful grumbling/complaining and severely condemned. Hence the reason Paul says what he does to the Corinthians (2Co 10:1-13, 18, 11:6, 12:12, 13:1-4) and to Titus (Tit 2:15).

⁴ This is what makes asking questions different than questioning: the former does so believing in the moral character and competency of its subject, the latter does not.