

Challenging one another to faithful living?  
What does it look like?

“Faithful” can have various definitions.

It can mean having a strong set of beliefs or convictions – i.e., not straying from a creed or confession;

So “challenging one another to live with strong convictions, beliefs”  
- that’s important.

It also means “loyal, constant, steadfast”  
– i.e., more relational in its intent  
– being faithful to one’s spouse, friend  
– being there for one another.

So “challenging one another to live committed to one another”  
– that’s also good.

Or – “true to the original”  
– i.e., an exact representation of the original

So, “challenging one another to live like Jesus in the world”  
– essential for being a Christ-centered community.

Or – “deserving trust”  
– keeping promises or doing what one is supposed to do.

So, “challenging one another to live out our witness to God’s presence and activity in the world”  
– key to being missional.

**All of these are good ways of living faithfully.**

And our living faithfully grows out of our covenant relationship with God:

- Fidelity to God and the ways of God,
- Practicing that fidelity with one another as disciples of Christ Jesus.

For me, living faithfully to God is more than mere believing for me;

It has the sense for me of being “true to the original,” being true to God  
– in committing myself to God  
– I seek to represent the ways of God in the world.

It involves our being a people who are about what God is about in the world,

Just like Jesus = **creating life, restoring life, setting free from bondage, enacting God’s purposes in bringing about peace, hope, love.**

It is not so much a measure of our lives by applying a certain set of metrics  
– i.e., do I follow the right rules, etc.

Rather, it focuses on the pathway, the trajectory, which our lives are on as we walk with God and one another in our day to day being.

I meet every Wednesday morning with two other guys – pastor types – in McHenry.

After one of these times, I got a text – “Thanks for the ministering words today.”

We were talking about learning to live our lives following the leading of the Spirit, rather than setting our own goals, our own ends.

Our conversation focused more on where we are walking and where we are going, rather than the destination.

A focus on the journey, rather than the endpoint.

**My response: “Appreciate the life that happens between us when the three of us get together”**

### **Faithful Living**

- **has to do with us asking the question**
- **“Does life happen between us when we get together?”**
- **Does the life (that is God) create deeper life in us, in our community, when we get together?”**

Hebrews 10: 19-25 helps us ask this question.

Because we are on a first name basis with God, as we are in Christ, brought about by Christ’s life, ministry, death and resurrection

- we have confidence to enter God’s presence
- the presence which is the source of all life, including ours.

So, we do not have to be shy in approaching God.

And rather than merely observing God from afar,  
- worshipping God as if God is distant from us,

Being people full of life

- enables us to draw near to God, with a heart that seeks to be loyal to God and the ways of God.

Too often we think that coming into God’s presence is to be confronted with our sin, our guilt, our impurity  
– all the reasons why we are not worthy before God.

It’s true when we come into God’s presence, that which is not life, not conducive of life is confronted in us  
– **BUT** not to condemn us, **but** to get us back on the pathway of life, of living in the ways of God.

That is the purpose of confession

- “to agree with”
- to not fight life, to not hold onto the ways of death,
- but to agree with God,
- and with the community
- that the way we have been going about living has not fostered life, has not been life-giving.

So we confess it

– we name it, to bring it out into the light, to undo the power that it has over us when it remains hidden.

Confession is a practice which reveals that **we are always opting for life**

= we agree we messed up and we express our true desire: **to live in the life given us by God.**

**Confession is an act that sets us free.**

We confess our sin

– not to condemn ourselves, **but to be set free.**

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”

**Life happens in us as we encounter God and we are open to God’s embrace**

– and this life sets us free, binds our guilt, declares us to be in a thriving relationship with God.

Because, we are living in a hope that is rooted in God

– a hope that is to be found in God being loyal, constant and steadfast in relationship with us!

And so as we live in this life, share life in our gathering together

- we live our lives as people full of faith,
- full of loyalty,
- full of imaging God in the world,
- full of expressing the life of God in who we are and what we do

– in relationship with others.

And so in being a people challenging one another to faithful living, we are a people who believe that

- **life happens when we are around,**
- we are bearers of life in all our day to day situations,
- we carry life with us in our work, our lives, our ministry

We are a people in whom **Life happens** (that ought to be our bumper sticker), in which we participate with God in:

- transforming death into life,
- oppression into mutual relationships,
- fear into hope,
- hate into love,
- manipulation into encouragement.

**In short:** we are a people filled with life because we are full of Christ, full of the Spirit of God, full of all that is God.

**That is who we are when we challenge one another to faithful living!**