

Five Faithful Sayings

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Five times in his three letters to the evangelists Timothy and Titus, the apostle Paul prefaces or reviews a particular doctrine by calling it “a faithful saying.”
 - 1. He does not imply that other sayings of his in the New Testament are unfaithful, but rather that these must never be called into question.

I. A FAITHFUL SAYING WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTANCE

- A. 1Tim. 1:15 - “A faithful saying”
 - 1. The word “faithful” in this passage is from the Greek “pistos,” meaning trustworthy (Wuest), assuredly true (Barnes) or reliable (Lenski)
 - 2. It is not merely that these doctrines form part of the faith, but that standing alone, they are spiritually logical and founded in Divine wisdom
 - 3. In our age, so many truths have been reduced to the realm of opinion, even among professed brethren in churches of Christ
 - a. The world once universally condemned fornication, abortion, homosexuality, but now condones them and so much more
 - b. The church once stood firm against instrumental music in worship, substance abuse, and women worship leaders, but now adopts a new hermeneutic to remove the ancient landmarks
 - 4. By contrast, the New Testament should be interpreted according to its own hermeneutic, its own method of revelation, communication, and comprehension, that does not shift and drift over time.
 - 5. These five teachings of Paul’s are emphasized as “faithful sayings” because they, in particular, seem to invite controversy at the hands of modern men who wish they were different
 - a. A reliable and trustworthy foundation, however, remains intact even when the soil around it does not.
- B. “Worthy of all acceptance”
 - 1. Lenski comments that it means “complete acceptance in every way, without reservation, without hesitation, without doubt”
 - 2. There are very few things we accept with such confidence
 - a. Political candidates, CNN reporters, insurance adjusters, used car salesmen, and contingency fee lawyers, are not among them
 - b. With all of these, I will take a “wait and see” approach
 - 3. What Paul says in these passages is reliable and worthy of complete, unreserved acceptance and confidence
 - 4. The wisdom of the world and even of theologians may call these truths into question, but God says they are absolute
 - 5. “A faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance” is a statement that is absolute and undeniably true

II. APOSTLE PAUL’S FIVE FAITHFUL SAYINGS

- A. “Christ came into the world to save sinners” - 1Tim. 1:12-16

1. The Jews in the first century, including the apostles before the ascension of Christ, believed that the Messiah was coming to evict the Romans from Palestine and inaugurate the new kingdom of God around David's throne in Jerusalem
 - a. Paul had believed this too, and like most Jews, he rejected Jesus' claim to be the Messiah because He never led a revolt against Rome
 - b. The notion that the Messiah's mission was spiritually deeper than this did not occur to them, but it was God's plan from the Advent
 2. Everyone is a sinner in need of salvation - Rom. 3:23
 - a. Paul needed saved from his sins - Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-2, 26:10-11
 - b. As men judge the relative heinousness of sins, Saul of Tarsus would rank high among history's greatest enemies of the truth
 3. But it was exactly sinners like Saul of Tarsus whom Jesus came to save
 - a. If Saul could be saved from his sins, anybody could be saved
 - b. The Gospel lifts humble sinners from despair - Mark 2:15-17
 4. The Gospel, applied to the tender heart of a sinner, produces a redeemed soul - Luke 15:1-7
 5. In spite of what self-inflated men may think, Jesus, who saved thieves, harlots, and persecutors, can save the same lost souls today.
- B. "A man who desires the office of bishop desires a good work" - 1Tim. 3:1-7
1. The office of bishop is a good work in spite of the fact that many today view it with fear or disdain
 2. Sometimes unqualified men try to cast doubt on the office in God's plan
 - a. Sometimes qualified men refuse to serve because they are unwilling to commit themselves more fully to work God's plan
 3. The office remains a good and essential work despite a growing tendency to leave it empty in many churches
 - a. It is a grave and important work - Heb. 13:7, 17
 - b. It is a challenging and controversial work - Titus 1:5, 10-13
 - c. Now more than ever, we need more sound men to undertake it
 - d. It is a rewarding work - 1Peter 5:1-4
- C. "Godliness is profitable for all" - 1Tim. 4:6-11
1. Paul uses two physical metaphors to illustrate the vital nature of spiritual indoctrination and exercise of the godly mind
 2. Bodily exercise is commendable and important to physical health, but nourishment in the words of faith and then practicing them daily makes for good spiritual and emotional health
 - a. We feed our babies and compel our children to take their vitamins and eat their vegetables and get some exercise, and then we neglect their spiritual development and nutrition
 - b. Prayer and Bible study are more important than the food pyramid
 - c. Isn't cutting out sin as vital as cutting out junk food? 1Peter 2:2
 3. Godliness is an exercise and investment for the present and future - Heb. 5:12-14; Titus 2:11-14

4. So many parents focus on food, health care, education, and recreation for their children; they are to be commended for providing these well
 - a. However, many of these same parents place spiritual things low on this list of childhood needs.
 - b. Parents who do not put emphasis on serving God first, witness their children grow up and leave home outside of Christ, fail in their Christian duties as parents.

D. "If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him" - 2Tim. 2:8-13

1. The first century was an age when Christians were threatened with the idol of compromise, knowing that appeasing first Judaism and then Caesar-worship would preserve their lives and livelihood, as they blurred, denied, or changed their convictions
2. The twenty-first century is also an age of compromise in which Christians are rushing to look and sound more like the sinful world and religious world around them to avoid being treated as eccentric
 - a. "During the past several decades, the church experienced little criticism or conflict with the world, not because the world is more Christian, but because the world and the church are so much alike. We long to be loved so much that we've lost the desire for a distinctly different life. Most of us would rather be dead than different." (John Drescher)
 - b. "The church does the most for the world when it is least like the world." (Warren Wiersbe)
3. The faith is even sometimes denied temporarily, especially by younger Christians for whom it is viewed as un-cool; but, you can't deny the faith without losing the faith - Matt. 10:32-39
4. Are we willing to endure all things for our own salvation? 1Peter 3:13-17
 - a. You were supposed to have died to sin with him in baptism; is the old man of sin returning to life from peer pressure?
 - b. It is time for a revival - Rom. 12:1-2

E. "Believers must maintain good works" - Titus 3:1-8

1. True believers are saved as Jesus told Nicodemus they would be -- by being born again of water and the Spirit
2. Immersion in water is that wonderful point at which the old man of sin is buried and the new man of righteousness arises to take his place in your life - Eph. 4:20-24
3. We are not saved by our own works of righteousness or by keeping the law better than others, but by grace through faith when we submit our will to the Gospel initially and then daily
4. Christians are called to maintain good works and avoid evil ones, to be distinct from those who follow the usual course of life - Gal. 6:7-10
 - a. Zeal can wane over time, and Christians can become no better than heathen neighbors, except that they go to church weekly
 - b. Our righteousness must excel, not plod along toward being merely adequate - Eph. 2:8-10

Conclusion: Paul's Five Faithful Sayings