

## A Faithful God

by Travis Dean

November 28, 2009

I've tried to imagine the Pilgrims coming across the Atlantic on the **Mayflower** in 1620, almost 390 years ago. They land on the shores of Massachusetts. They believe GOD has led them here. He has given them a place where they can worship Him according to the dictates of their own conscience. But during their first winter, HALF of them die. Fathers bury their children. Husbands bury their wives. It's an awful scene. They must have wondered, "God, You've brought us this far. Surely You haven't left us." Their faith in Him is tested. But then comes **Squanto**. He's a lonely Indian. His whole tribe has been wiped out by disease. They used to live in the very spot where the Pilgrims have settled. Squanto and the Pilgrims are a perfect match ordained by God. Squanto needs a family. The Pilgrims need a native American to show them how to survive in this new land. Squanto gets adopted. And the Pilgrims learn how to grow crops and hunt. So, when harvest time comes, there's a **celebration**. They have a Thanksgiving meal. **They are thankful because God has been faithful.**

I would like to spend some time today in honor of Thanksgiving. I would like to dwell on God's faithfulness as one of the greatest reasons we have to be thankful. He came through for the Pilgrims, because they held on to their faith in Him. He ALWAYS comes through, for ANYONE who keeps their faith in Him. The Pilgrims have left us with a testimony. And today we will hear the testimonies of 3 other individuals who also have found God to be faithful.

The first is a woman in **1 Kings chapter 17**. Israel has turned away from God. They have lost their faith. Their faith has failed. So, in an effort to turn their hearts back to Him, God dries up the heavens. He stops sending rain to the land of Israel. This drought reaches northward beyond the land of Israel. Here there is a town called Zarephath. And in this town lives a woman. Somehow she has learned of the one true God, and come to believe in Him. But the drought is so severe, she has run out of food. All she has left is enough flour and oil for one more meal. She has done everything to keep her family fed. But the day has finally come when she has given up hope. She believes this is the last day of her life. She is gathering up some sticks to build a fire to make their last loaf of bread. Suddenly Elijah appears. He asks her for a drink of water. Water is scarce. There are in the middle of a drought. She is staring death in the face, and this man asks her for water! But **because of her faith in God**, she doesn't even hesitate. She turns to go get Elijah some water, when he stops her with another request. "Bring me some bread, too." She is about to eat her last meal, and this man is asking her for bread? She tells the man her desperate situation. And he responds in **1 Kings 17:13-14**. (Read) He assures her that if she makes him some bread first, for as long as the drought lasts, she and her son will never run out of flour and oil. She's not even an Israelite. But in her desperate circumstances **she chooses to keep her faith in God**. She uses her last bit of flour and oil to make a loaf for Elijah, instead of for her and her son.

Did God come through for her? Did God let her down? Did she die of hunger? NO! Her supply of flour and oil never ran out! There was always enough for one more meal. God came through. This woman gave her life to God and He gave it back. She didn't die of hunger, because God is faithful! **She was thankful because God was faithful.**

Just as God promised this woman in Zarephath to save her from the famine if she put Him first, so He made a similar promise to Israel through Malachi. Turn with me to Malachi 3. The setting is the same as in 1 Kings. Israel has again fallen away from God. Their faith has failed. So, they are under a curse. They are like the Pilgrims. All their crops have failed. They have nothing. And listen to what God tells them in **Malachi chapter 3 verse 10**. He says, "Give me your tithe. Give me the 10% off of the top of everything you harvest. Bring me your offerings with a heart of thanksgiving. And I will bless you to overflowing!" Wow. What a promise.

I would like to ask Tom Mathias and Allen Cramblitt to come up at this time. I have been blessed as they have shared with me their experiences. They have put God's promise here in Malachi 3 to the test. And I would like them to share with you what God has done. Tom, I appreciate you coming up here. Please share with us what God has done for you and your family.....Allen, I know you have put God's promise to the test, too. Please share with us from your own experience.

Amen. Thank you, Tom and Allen. Thank you for sharing your own experiences. **Tom and Allen are thankful because God has been faithful.**

In closing, I invite you to turn to our Scripture reading today. Turn to Psalm 37 and we'll read verses 23-26. David is speaking here of how God takes care of a "good" and "righteous" person. This is someone who has put their faith in God. David says his whole life he has never seen God forsake such a person. He's never seen the children of such a person begging for bread. God takes care of His people. If you put your faith in Him, He will never let you down. **I am thankful today, because God is faithful.**