

# Great is Thy faithfulness

*by Henny Derbecker*

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.*

## Refrain

*Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see.  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.*

## Refrain

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

## Refrain

Faithfulness means to be steadfast in faith, to have trust and confidence in God's promises of eternal life.

Faithfulness **from** God is a constant, but our faithfulness **to** God is often lacking. God is always faithful to us, even when we are not faithful to Him. He is there by our side, even when we do not think about Him. The faithful person is one who can be counted on to carry out their responsibilities and promises to the best of their ability no matter what the circumstances. How many of us could do this on our own? No one! It is only through the help of the Holy Spirit that we can be faithful. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Because God is always faithful to us, we can have the confidence to be faithful to God in all we do. Our need and prayer should be, "Lord, help us to be faithful to the gifts, abilities, and opportunities

you have given us according to the strength you give us."

When I hear the word "faithfulness" the hymn *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* springs into my head. This hymn was written by Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960). He wrote this poem because of his daily experiences and his realization that God is always faithful. Thomas had a difficult early adult life. His health was so fragile there were periods of time when he was confined to bed, unable to work. Between bouts of illness he would have to push himself to put in extra hours at various jobs in order to make ends meet.

Thomas found great comfort in the Scriptures, and in the fact that God faithfully was his strength in time of illness and weakness, and provided for his needs. Lamentations 3:22-24 was one of his favourite Scripture passages. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my

portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in Him.'”

Thomas went on mission trips, and often wrote poems to one of his good friends, William Runyan, a relatively unknown musician. Runyan found one of Williams' poems so moving he decided to compose a musical score to accompany the lyrics. *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* was published in 1923.

We know our Lord never changes; there is not even a chance or shadow that He will change. His compassion and love for us never fail. He is the same now and forever. God pardons our sin and gives us strength to face whatever befalls us and gives us hope and peace.

Lamentations is thought to have been written by the prophet Jeremiah. The city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and Jeremiah was lamenting about the terrible events that had taken place. The Babylonians had taken the people of Judah into exile. The people had sinned and God, in retribution, had used

the Babylonians to punish them. Jeremiah was grieving about the horrible acts that had befallen his people. Then Jeremiah remembered God's faithfulness and this brought about a change in the prophet's emotions. He realized God is good and He is the Lord of hope and salvation. In deep depression, Jeremiah could have thrown in the towel, but he put his focus back on the Lord. He found renewed confidence in God's compassion and the knowledge that He is always faithful to His promises.

When we have troubles, the more we dwell on them the worse they seem to be. We can see no way out. If we build our life on people or on the things of this world, we will have no hope or security, but if we focus on the Lord, He can help us rise above our troubles. Remembering and keeping one's focus on God's unchangeable character and His eternal faithfulness becomes one of our greatest resources for courage. “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and your

dominion endure throughout all generations. (The Lord is faithful in all His words and kind in all His works.)” (Psalm 145:13).

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