

God's Unending Faithfulness

A Four-Part Bible Study

Study #1 – God's Faithfulness in Waiting

Main Idea

After being sold into slavery, Joseph rises up in power in Egypt, only to be thrown in prison for a crime he did not commit. After 2 years of waiting, Joseph is able to use the gifts God has given him to help Egypt and rise to a place of authority again. While we wait for God's promises in our lives, we trust in his timing, his plan, and the promise already fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Timer
- Optional:
 - Pens/pencils
 - Paper
 - Envelopes

Introduction

SAY: We all know what it is like to have to wait for something. Let's put that experience to the test!

Have students close their eyes. Tell students that you are going to set a timer for 1 minute. Students will also keep track of time themselves, but without a phone, watch, etc. When they think that a minute has passed, they will raise their hand. The person who raised their hand closest to the correct 1 minute wins. Repeat one more time.

ASK: How did you know when a minute had passed?

SAY: Some of you were close to the 1 minute time, but it was more difficult for others. The second time around, you had more of an idea of what the 1 minute time actually felt like. There are things in our lives that we all have to wait for. Things don't always come in the time that we would like. Today, we will learn about someone who had a wait a long time, but God was continually at work.

Lesson

ASK: Get in partners and share about a time that you had to wait for something. Allow students time to share with a partner. Then come back together as a large group and have some students share their examples.

ASK: What does it feel like to wait for something that you want? What happens when you do get it? What if you do?

SAY: In the book of Genesis, we see a man named Joseph. Joseph experienced a lot of waiting in his life, and it wasn't under the best of circumstances.



Leader Note – You will be reading small parts of Genesis 39-41 in this study. In order to understand what is happening, students will need to know what happened in the story of Joseph before this. If possible, ask a student to share a summary of the story of Joseph up until this point. The basics of the story are: Joseph has 11 other brothers, but his father Jacob loved Joseph the most. He had dreams where his other brothers were bowing down to him. Joseph's brothers became so jealous of Joseph that they sold him into slavery and told their father that Joseph was dead. As a slave in Egypt, Joseph rose to a position of authority in Potipher's house.

Read Genesis 39:11-20

SAY: Joseph was put in prison for a crime that he did not commit. He had spent time as a slave in Egypt and worked his way up to a place of authority and respect. Now, he was back where he started, and maybe even worse.

Read Genesis 39:21-23

ASK: What happened to Joseph in prison? *(He was put in charge of the other prisoners, God kept him safe in prison, he was respected there)*

SAY: God was with Joseph when he was in prison. Joseph continued to be successful, even in a place like prison. And in fact, God was still using Joseph there.

Read Genesis 40:1-23

ASK: How was God using Joseph in prison? *(Joseph was using his gifts from God to interpret the dreams of the baker and cupbearer. Joseph continued to give the credit to God and not himself)*

ASK: What did Joseph ask for in return of interpreting the cupbearer's dream? *(Verse 14-15 - He asked the cupbearer to tell Pharaoh what Joseph had done so that he could get out of prison)*

ASK: Did both of the dreams that Joseph interpreted come true? *(Yes)* What did the cupbearer do? *(Verse 23 - nothing. He did not tell Pharaoh about Joseph)*

SAY: As we get to Chapter 41, we see that Joseph remained in prison for another 2 years! How do you think Joseph felt during this time of waiting?

SAY: Joseph continued to wait in prison for something to happen to him. He probably remembered the dreams that he had back when he was with his brothers and started to wonder if those would ever come true. Would God ever rescue Joseph from prison?

SAY: After those 2 years, the Pharaoh had a dream that he needed help understanding. And this is when the cupbearer remembers that man from prison! He tells Pharaoh about what Joseph did and



Pharaoh calls Joseph to interpret his dream. Joseph tells Pharaoh that Egypt will have 7 years of good harvest, followed by 7 years of famine. Joseph comes up with a plan to help Egypt.

Read Genesis 41:39-41

ASK: What did Pharaoh do for Joseph? *(Placed him again in a place of authority in Egypt)*

SAY: Joseph was able to serve God and the people of Egypt after he was released from prison. But this was probably not in the way that Joseph thought it would happen. He had to be patient and trust in God's timing instead of his own.

SAY: God always has a plan for our lives, and it is always better than anything that we could imagine. From the beginning of the world, God had established the greatest plan for his people. It was a plan to rescue us from our sinfulness.

Read Genesis 3:18

ASK: How was God going to save his people? *(Through his own Son Jesus. This is the first Gospel proclamation – that God's Son would come to the world and defeat sin, death, and the devil once and for all)*

SAY: God's promise of sending a Savior came true in Jesus. He knew the exact right time and place for Jesus to come and save all people from their sin. God's people had to wait for the Savior to come. There were probably times when they were impatient and wondered how God was at work. Sometimes in the waiting, we are able to more clearly see God at work.

ASK: Share about a time where you had to trust in God's timing instead of your own. *(Allow time for students to share. To prompt conversations, share your own example first.)*

SAY: It is not easy to give up the control that we want in our lives. But we can trust that God always knows what is best for us.

Read Proverbs 3:5-6

ASK: Why is it important to trust in God's plans instead of our own? What can happen when we trust ourselves over God?

Wrap Up

SAY: God's timing for us is always better than our own. And oftentimes that means waiting. It might be waiting for a college acceptance letter, or waiting for a loved one to be healed. It might even be years like Joseph was waiting. In the waiting, we can trust that God is at work, just like he was in Joseph's life.



Read Micah 7:7

Optional Activity – If you have time, have student complete this activity

Have students write a letter to their future self to open at this time next year. In their letter, have the students write about some of the things that they are currently waiting on. Encourage them to write the future self some reminders that they learned from this study, including any Bible verses, main points, or questions to remind them of God's faithfulness in their time of waiting. When they are finished, collect the letters for safekeeping until next year.

SAY: We wait with hope for the things that God will do, trusting that he sees us in our waiting and is faithful to us.

Close in prayer.



Study #2 – God's Faithfulness in Unexpected Ways

Main Idea

The Israelites defeat Jericho not through a battle, but by walking around the city. God's promises always come true, but not always in the ways or means that we think they will. We trust that God's ways are always better than what we could imagine.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Empty cardboard box (2)
- Blindfold
- Various random items such as toys, dolls, kitchenware items, etc.
 - To make the introduction game more interesting, take a few items and tape them together to make an unusual or unexpected item
- Optional:
 - Pens/pencils
 - Paper

Introduction

Game – What's in the Box?

Before the game begins, have the items you gathered in one of the cardboard boxes. The other cardboard box should be on a table or a place where students can easily reach into the box. Invite a student up to the empty box and blindfold them. Then place one of your items in the box.

SAY: Your goal is to guess what is in the box by touch alone. You cannot take off your blindfold and the other students cannot give hints or clues. You must give as much detail of the item as possible. Allow each student a couple of minutes to feel the item in the box and guess what it is. Have them to remove their blindfold to see the item. Repeat the with new students and new items as time allows. The goal would be to have students unable to correctly guess some of the items because of how you combined them.

ASK: What did you find challenging about this activity? What did it feel like to be unsure of what you were going to find in the box?

SAY: Some of the items were easy to guess, but some turned out to be not at all what you expected. Sometimes in our lives, we find ourselves in situations where the unexpected happens, and it is all because God is at work!

Lesson

SAY: Moses had been the leader of the God's people, the Israelites, since they left Egypt all the way back in Exodus. Before Moses died, God chose Joshua to be the new leader of the Israelites. God led Joshua and the Israelites to the city of Jericho.

Read Joshua 6:1-2



ASK: What was the city of Jericho like? *(Shut up inside and outside, no one comes in or out)*

ASK: What did God tell Joshua would happen to Jericho? *(The Israelites would conquer the city and everything in it.)*

SAY: Notice what God says in verse 2 – “See, *I have given* Jericho into your hand...”. God speaks of what will happen in the past tense. It has already been given to the Israelites. What does this tell Joshua? *(It will happen because God has said it, it is a comfort knowing that God already has it under control, etc.)* But the way God makes it happen is probably not how Joshua was expecting it to be.

Read Joshua 6:3-7

ASK: How was the city of Jericho going to be conquered? *(Walking around the city for seven days with the Ark of the Covenant, blowing rams horns, and with a great shout!)*

ASK: How would you have responded if you were Joshua? *(take responses)*. What was Joshua's response to this? *(He got the people ready to go.)*

SAY: Joshua did not hesitate to follow what God said would happen. Joshua probably expected God to share a great battle plan for the Israelites to follow. But the way that the Israelites would defeat Jericho showed that God was the one doing all the work, not them.

ASK: Share about a time that something unexpected happened to you, and it turned out to be a good thing. Maybe it was moving to a new school that you were worried about or a change in plans that you had made. *(Allow time for students to share. To prompt conversations, share your own example first.)*

SAY: Joshua and the Israelites followed God's instructions. For six days, they walked around the city of Jericho one time each day and blew their trumpets. They would get up each morning and do the same thing, making sure that the Ark of the Covenant was in their midst. Then, they got to the seventh day.

Read Joshua 6:15-21

SAY: On this final day, the Israelites marched around Jericho seven times and made a loud shout. And “the walls came a-tumbling down”. Things happened exactly how God said they would happen. Joshua and the Israelites trusted God and his plan for the city of Jericho, even when it happened in a very unexpected way.

ASK: What are some other Bible stories where God worked in unexpected ways? *(Allow students time to think of other stories they know. Some examples to prompt them might be – Sacrifice of Isaac, David and Goliath, any miracles of Jesus, etc.)*



SAY: The most unexpected way that God's promises came true was through his Son, Jesus.

Read Luke 1:30-33 and John 3:16-17

ASK: **What was unexpected about Jesus as the Savior?** *(God's own Son became a human like us to save us, Jesus died on the cross but came back to life 3 days later)*

ASK: **What does this tell us about who God is?** *(He will go to any length to rescue his people from sin because of his love for us, God always know what is best for us even when we don't understand it.)*

SAY: We can be thankful for the ways in which God works. It is only through Jesus that we are forgiven and redeemed. God promises to work through water, bread, and wine in the Sacraments in ways we don't fully understand. Yet, we trust by faith that God is present and proving His gifts to us in those ways.

Wrap Up

SAY: God works in unexpected ways. Things might turn out differently than we thought they would or in a way that we didn't imagine happening. But we can trust that God's promises come true, because he says they will!

Read Ephesians 3:20-21

Optional activity – if time, have students complete this activity

Give students a few minutes to journal about this question: What are some ways that God works that we as humans might not expect? Then as a group discuss what they wrote. This might include using physical means in the Sacraments, working through the Bible as we read it, working through our many vocations to share the Gospel, or you could share stories in Scripture where God worked through unexpected people. Encourage them to be where God promises to be, in His Word and Sacrament, thanking God for continually being a work in their lives.

SAY: This week, take some time to think and pray about the ways that God is at work in your life, even in the things you don't expect. The ways that God works are always better than anything we could ask or imagine. Though they might happen in ways that we don't expect, God's promises are always good and he is always at work.

Close in prayer.



Study #3 – God's Faithfulness in Doubting

Main Idea

Gideon asked God for many signs to prove that God really would accomplish what he said he would. In our times of doubting, God is patient with us and continues to be faithful to his people.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Optional:
 - Craft materials such as: colored paper, markers/colored pencils, ribbon, stickers, permanent markers, scissors, etc.

Introduction

Game – True or False?

Read the list of true or false statements to the group. If students think the statement is TRUE, they will stand on one side of the room. If they think the statement is FALSE, they will stand on the opposite side.

True or False statements:

- The human body is made up of more than 200 bones *(True! It's 206)*
- Butterflies taste with tiny tongues *(False! They have small taste receptors on their feet)*
- The letter T is the most commonly used letter in the English language *(False! It's the letter E)*
- The Great Barrier Reef in Australia is visible from space *(True! It is the world's largest coral reef system)*
- Thomas Edison, inventor of the light bulb, was afraid of the dark *(True! He usually kept on all the lights in his house)*

ASK: How did you decide if the statement was true or false?

SAY: Sometimes, it can be hard to know if something is true or false. We have difficulty knowing what, or who, to trust, and that can lead to doubting. We can always trust God and his Word. Let's read about someone who had to put all his trust in God.

Lesson

ASK: What do you think of when you hear the word *doubt* or *doubting*? Do any Bible stories come to mind? *(Take responses)*

SAY: Because of sin in our lives, we find ourselves doubting things in the world around us, and sometimes even doubting God and his word. We see times of this in the Bible. One of them was a man named Gideon. Gideon was an Israelite during a time of oppression by the people of Midian. One day Gideon was hiding from the Midianites while doing his work, and the Lord appeared to him.

Read Judges 6:14-16



ASK: What did God say Gideon would do? *(Save Israel from Midian)*

ASK: How did Gideon respond? *(Gives reasons why he is not the one to do it – his clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and Gideon is the weakest of the weakest clan)*

ASK: What was God's promise back to Gideon? *(“I will be with you, and you shall strike Midian as one man.”)*

SAY: Gideon didn't believe what God said – that Gideon would be the one to save Israel from Midian. So he asked God to back up what he said. Gideon asked God to give him a sign to prove that this really was God. God does the sign, and Gideon knows that he is who he says he is. But this wasn't enough for Gideon, and he asked for another sign that God would use Gideon to save Israel.

Read Judges 6:36-40

ASK: What were the signs Gideon asked God to perform? *(dew on just the fleece and not then ground, then dew on just the ground and not the fleece)*

ASK: How do you think Gideon felt when God did both of these signs?

SAY: Gideon asked God for multiple signs to prove that what God was saying and doing was real. God could have gotten frustrated or angry with Gideon. He could have gone and chosen someone else to save Israel from Midian. But God knew that Gideon was the person to do it. Instead of being angry, God continued to show Gideon that He is faithful and sticks to His word.

Read Judges 7:19-23

SAY: God was patient with Gideon and used him to save the people of Israel from Midian, despite Gideon's doubts and fears. God still used Gideon to do great things for his people!

ASK: Share about a time that you have felt like Gideon. Maybe it was a time you were unsure about what God was doing or had a question about who God was. *(Allow time for students to share. This might be a deeper question for some, so share your own example first to prompt conversations.)*

SAY: Sometimes we can find ourselves in a place like Gideon. We know who God is and the great things he has done for his people in the past, and yet we still question if he can do those things for us. But our God is a loving God who always forgives our doubts, calms our fears, and stays true to his word.

Read John 14:1,6

ASK: What is one thing you know about God that can help you stand firm in your doubts? *(Allow time for students to share)*



SAY: God continues to call us to believe and trust in him, even when it is hard. In our baptism, we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who helps us to have faith in Jesus and trust in God's Word. We know that there is no other way to be saved than by Jesus. He alone can redeem us from our sins.

Ask: **When we doubt God, what are some things we can do?** *(We go to where God promises to be in Scripture and in Communion. We can pray honestly and opening with God. We can talk to faithful Christians that we trust to help us. We can look for answers to the questions we have using many different resources. We can ask for forgiveness and always seek answers to our questions.)*

Wrap Up

SAY: God used Gideon to do incredible things for the people of Israel. Even when Gideon questioned God and didn't think it was possible, he trusted that what God said he would do was true. God has called each one of us to a purpose to serve him as a child of God.

Read Romans 8:28

Optional Activity – if time, have students complete this activity

Have each student think of a Bible verse that has helped them stand firm in their faith. It could be a Confirmation verse, a verse from a favorite book of the Bible, or even a verse read in this study. Allow students time to create a bookmark or note with this Bible verse. Encourage them to place this item somewhere where they will see it often to be reminded of God's Word in their lives.

We can rest confident in the presence of God, knowing that his promises are true for us.

Close in prayer.



Study #4 – God's Faithfulness to Generations

Main Idea

The Lord first makes his covenant with Abraham – that he will be the Father of a great nation who will continue to serve God always. The covenant remains all throughout the people of God and is reestablished with David. The fulfillment of the covenant comes not just through David's son Solomon, but ultimately through Jesus Christ. God is faithful to all those who believe in Jesus Christ – all generations before and all generations after.

Supplies:

- Bibles

Introduction

ASK: Share about a time that you made a promise. Was it a small promise or a big promise? Did you keep it? If not, why? Allow time for students to share. To prompt conversation, share your own example first.

SAY: Promises made by humans are easily broken. Maybe something else comes up that is more important than the promise we made to someone. Maybe we simply forgot a promise that was made to us. But God always keeps the promises he makes to his people. He is the perfect promise keeper, because he is God!

Lesson

SAY: From the beginning of creation, God had a plan to rescue his people from their sin. And from that moment, God made a promise that he was going to send his people a Savior – Jesus (We touched on this in the first study of this series when we read Genesis 3:15). God wasn't done making promises to his people. God made a covenant with a man named Abram. A covenant is binding agreement between two people. It is much more serious than a promise.

Read Genesis 15:1-6

ASK: What was the covenant that God made with Abram? (*Abram will have a son and offspring as numerous as the stars*)

SAY: Sounds like a pretty good covenant! God says that he will bless Abram with a great family. But jump forward to Genesis 17. Abram is now 99 years old, and he still does not have a child.

Read Genesis 17:1-8

ASK: What does God add to the covenant that he originally made with Abram in Genesis 15? (*a multitude of nations, his name was changed to Abraham, kings will come from Abraham's line, God will give Abraham's offspring land*)



ASK: **Who is this covenant between now?** *(Abraham's offspring and God – the covenant is now reaching far beyond just Abraham. It is not a covenant made with his offspring. This offspring will be known as the Israelites, the people of God)*

ASK: **How does God describe this covenant?** *(EVERLASTING covenant). Why is this important?* *(God is saying that this covenant between him and his people will never go away. This covenant will continue for generations and generations. He is promising that he will always be their God and they will always be his people.)*

SAY: God's covenant with Abraham is now for all the people of God. The generations after Abraham are continually reminded of this covenant promise with God. It is reestablished through the Fathers of Israel – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is renewed with the Israelites in the Exodus when they are in the desert. It continues to remain through Joshua and the Judges. Through all the sufferings of the people of God, it is the covenant of God that remains the same. Then, we come to a man named David.

ASK: **What are some things you know about David?** *(He was a shepherd boy, the smallest of his family; he defeated the giant Goliath with a stone and a sling; he was anointed as the next king of Israel at a young age. He was a great king, but also did some not so great things.)*

SAY: David has now become king and goes on to win many battles for Israel. He wants to make a permanent home for God in Israel. But God has a different response for David.

Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16

ASK: **What is in the new covenant that God makes with David?** *(a king will come from the line of David. God's steadfast love will not depart from David's line. The throne that this king will sit on will be an everlasting throne that will be established forever.)*

SAY: God's covenant with Abraham is traced all the way to King David. The promise that the offspring of Abraham will become a great nation has definitely come true. And now, an even greater covenant is made – a great king will come from David's line. And yes, David does go on to have a son named Solomon who is in fact a great and powerful king who does great things for the people of Israel. But the king that God is speaking of is a the King of Kings, the one who will rule over all things.

Read Matthew 1:1-17, 22-23

ASK: **Who is Matthew writing about in these verses?** *(Jesus!)*

ASK: **How does Jesus fulfill the covenant God made with both Abraham and David?** *(Jesus is everlasting – like the covenant with Abraham, the work of Jesus is unending; Jesus is king – he*



reigns over all things because of his defeat of sin, death, and the devil. Jesus came from the line of David – his earthly Father Joseph was of the line of David)

ASK: What is the promise made to us as believers of Jesus? *(That God would send a messiah who would save us from our sin and redeem us.)*

SAY: In God's Word, we see the covenant promise of God traced from Abraham to David, and fulfilled in Jesus. Matthew doesn't hide sinner or scandals. Even the number of generations between Abraham to Christ show Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise.

Because of the saving work of Jesus, God makes a new covenant with us – we are called his children because of our faith in Jesus and the grace that he gives to us. God remained faithful to the generations of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and beyond. He remained faithful to the Israelites as they wandered through the desert and had prophets who were calling them to repent. He remained faithful to the generations leading up to Jesus. And he remains faithful to his people now.

God promises that through the gift of faith we can be forgiven and redeemed. We can be confident that we will spend eternity with Him. God working through us to be faithful means others will hear about the Good News of Jesus and be given the gift of faith as well.

Wrap Up

SAY: God has given us the scriptures to continually read and be reminded of how He worked in the lives of his people back then. He has also given us a cloud of witnesses around us right now. There are people in our lives who can attest to the work of God in their lives and in the world. We can go to these people when we need to be reminded of God's faithfulness to His people.

Optional Activity – if time, have students complete this activity

Together as a group, have students create a list of people they know that they can share with them about the faithfulness of God. Maybe it is a family member, a friend, or an older member of your congregation. Encourage your students to find time to meet with this person. Have the students engage in a conversation with this person and talk about these questions:

1. What are some important things about God that you want me to know?
2. What are some Bible stories, passages, hymns, or songs that help you to remember the work of God?
3. Students – share one thing that you learned from this Bible study series
4. Pray together.

SAY: We can thank God for his faithfulness to the generations of the past, the generations of the present, and the generations of the future. Psalm 119:89-90 says *"Forever O Lord, your word is firmly set in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands."* God's promises are true for his people, now and always.

Close in prayer.



