

## The Faithfulness of His Mercy

By Ginny Larsen

*“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.’ The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.”*

(Lamentations 3:22-26 ESV)

It was from these verses that one of the most beloved hymns was written in 1923: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” by Thomas Chisolm. What a hymn it is! What encouragement to our hearts to know our God and Savior is a God of faithfulness, with character unchanging, perfect in every way. Because He is faithful to the character of Who He is, we know He is faithful to His own children in everything.

### Can We Be Shaken?

Have you ever struggled with trusting what you believe? Have you ever wondered, “What if our theology is wrong? How do I know my theology will keep me through the real test?” These questions made me realize our faith can be shaken, if it is built on anything less than His faithfulness, His salvation bought by His blood, and His righteousness.

God may shake our theology at times, in order to draw us to the Word itself for confirmation and true understanding, so that our faith is not based on a system of theology but on Him alone and His living Word. My theology was shaken at several points in my life. It was shaken till I felt as though the rug was pulled out from under me. What it did was eliminate the “dross” and purify in my heart a more clear faith in my Lord to confirm and establish it in me.

We know of His faithfulness to us because of His Word. This is where our hope is built and kept. His Word tells us Who He is, what He will do, and His plan for complete salvation and full redemption. His Word tells us of all His mercies towards us. He does not change. We change, and our fears and circumstances change. Our knowledge changes as we grow in our knowledge of Him, and our faith changes and hopefully grows as we learn of His faithfulness. Our hope, our faith, our complete rest in every trial and loss must be in the cross of Jesus Christ, which will never fail. His mercies never fail...they are new every morning. His plan is set in motion. It will not fail. He accomplished a finished work, which brings complete salvation for all those who have embraced and put their trust in that work and Who He is that accomplished it. There is nothing new in Himself, yet He is new to us every morning as we learn of Him and how He has provided for all in our walk through this world.

It is HIS faithfulness, not ours, that gives us true hope. It is HIS faithfulness to His Word and to Himself that is our surety. It is HIS mercies, those of “the God of all mercy,” that are new every morning according to our need. It is Jesus Christ Himself Who can never change or fail that we cling to. If we cling to our own selves, our own ability to understand (Prov. 3:5-7), or our own feelings or experience, we are standing on sinking sand. There have been times in my life where I had to learn this. I had to learn that when I CANNOT, He CAN and He will. I had to learn that just because I did not understand everything in His plan for me, this did not mean that He would fail to carry out any bit of it. His working in our lives is not dependent on our “theology” because it may fail, but His Word will never fail. His mercy will never fail. He will

do all He said He would. The more we are in His Word, which is a living and powerful Word, the more closely we come to it ourselves, in our understanding of Him, His purposes in it, and His character. The more we read it, in faith, in seeking Him, the more we have a foundation that is unshakeable. Regardless of what comes to us in the way of hardship, persecution, or trial, our faith can be built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness, or it will fail. We do not need to ask ourselves if He will really do what He said. We know He will. He will never fail us or forsake us. His mercy is there in all our time of need. It is when we are brought to the place of humility that we recognize our need for it.

I will let the hymn speak to us...

*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 wilt be.*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

There is nothing more sure. There is no greater hope. There is nothing to give more confidence than His mercy and His faithfulness. Don't try to "interpret" it, allegorize it, or explain it away. Just read it in His Word and believe it.

## Dangers of Legalism

I used to live by my own set of "Christian laws," and *felt* God smiling on me, so I thought, when I followed my legalism well. When I didn't succeed, I felt under condemnation. I was up and down with my feelings in my *relationship* with Him. I thought my standing with God was based on my performance. But God taught me that it was based on Who He is and what He did for me. It was something far more sure than *MY relationship* with Him. It was based on *HIS relationship* with me – in His death and resurrection and my being in Him through grace alone, by faith. My standing before Him is based on His Word of truth and life to do His work in me with **POWER**, carrying it to completion. I am to walk through this life based on His power to keep me – His promises to carry me through all that He allows and brings to me. I am not to walk by "feeling." Feelings can be based on false concepts of God and false understandings of

His Word. They can be up and down, and we can even at times convince ourselves to feel right about something that is not right according to His Word. If our relationship is built on how we feel we're doing, or how happy we are, or how well things are going, then our relationship with God can sink at almost any turn in our lives. We can even deceive ourselves into thinking our relationship with God is good. That is why we need the Word, which is powerful and as sharp as a two-edged sword that pierces and divides soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12).

## His Strength, Not Mine

Sometimes I think of the very worst thing I could possibly have to face in life, and I cringe, KNOWING that I CANNOT endure it. This "knowledge" is too much for me to endure by myself, because it pleads to my flesh, and I cannot muster up enough faith, courage, or endurance to handle it. I KNOW I can't. But I've learned that He CAN. I've learned if God brings these things my way or allows them in my life, He already has been there and prepared a way for me. He is able to provide, strengthen, and establish the faith in me that is needed. His mercy fails not. He already knows what He will do. He already has a plan. He already knows how He will be glorified in and through me as I take His hand in faith and let Him lead me through it. And for myself, I know I can lean on His never-failing Word and promises to keep me through it. There is no possibility of failure with Him.

I've learned that it grieves God's heart when I focus on my deficiencies and fear my failure in what He wants me to do. It grieves Him because it shows how little faith I have in His ability to be faithful to me. Sometimes, it's an easy lesson for us to learn that we can't accomplish God's will, but it's so hard for us to learn with confidence that God can and will. We fear, correctly, that if it is up to us to persevere through trial, we would fail. When God allows us to fail this way, He is chastising us for correction to train us in godliness, so that our trust is in Him, not ourselves.

We must trust HIM! I don't need to fear that He will fail His Word, because my Lord promised that He is coming for me to take me to be with Him where He is: *"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also"* (John 14:2-3).

## It is a Sure Word

I don't need to fear that somehow I'm reading that wrong or that it won't happen. I can put my faith in His sure Word – His promise He will do exactly, literally, what He said He would do. I can see that His purpose in everything is our salvation for His glory, and that is all in Him, complete. I can see that I don't need to go through an evangelical type of "purgatory" (John 5:24) to be purified enough to measure up to Him before He comes for me to take me home. I can see by His Word that my being made "without spot or wrinkle" is not through myself but through His blood and righteousness. I must put my complete faith in Him as my righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). I can see that His faithfulness is a guarantee of that salvation and resurrection to be with Him. I can see that His Spirit given to me when I trusted in Him to be my Savior is a guarantee that I belong to Him and will be with Him! I was not appointed to the wrath that will come on this world in the day of His judgment (1 Thess. 5:9). It's a sure Word. It's a faithful Word. It's a faithful promise and blessed hope. His mercy is sure. Saints in times past have

given their lives for it, knowing their hope in it would not be disappointed (Heb. 11).

In trusting in the faithfulness of His mercy, I have a hope that not only keeps me in this walk and through whatever I suffer, also gives me a motivation to live for His glory now and to reveal that glory and that salvation and that faithfulness to all that are willing to hear of it and believe. I have a motivation to live pleasing to Him, not in sinful self-seeking and pleasure. I have an expectation that any moment on any day, I could be there with my Savior face-to-face. My perspective becomes eternal, not temporal. I see my real life as hidden in Christ with God. My love for Him grows deeper, and I live for that which He is making me into. I live for what I will become when I see Him face-to-face. I see the momentary pleasures in this life in their proper place and see all that He has given me to enjoy is only a small portion of what He intends for us eternally. I can give up everything of this world because I am not OF this world. Free of condemnation, I see myself under His merciful grace and as a new creation, made for a NEW country, as His own child, which makes my heart long to live up to that image more and more.

Great are those mercies He shows us each day as we learn of Him and trust in Him. Great is His faithfulness! It will never fail! I just have to add another hymn before I close that speaks again of our sure trust in Him alone and nothing else. These hymns give such hope and encouragement to us to look to Him that never fails!

### **My Hope Is Built**

(Words: Edward Mote, 1834)

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

*When darkness seems to hide His face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.*

*His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.*

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh may I then in Him be found.  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.*

May the Lord reveal to our hearts just how sure the hope is that we have in Him (Ephesians

1:17-2:9) and just how faithful He is to the hope that He gives. May we discover His mercies daily as we walk in faith in that hope. May we seek His mercies and grace in all our times of trial, to receive all we need from Him, that He may be glorified in us.