

Faith and Faithfulness

'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Romans 4.3

What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3.6

God _____ this world with all of its turmoil, violence, aggression and hate! **God loves the world!** Even so, the spirit of the world is at odds with the Spirit of God; the world is at enmity with God.... In the place of the turmoil, violence, aggression and hate that defines the world, God offers the world eternal life, that is, life defined by His Presence, Peace, Patience and Love.

The _____ is a one-time historical event from the past that continues to offer salvation to the world in the present! How? God continues to love the world by calling unto Himself a people of the Cross who will follow Him and learn to be like Him, and love the world even as God loves the world proclaiming the message of the Cross in word and deed. Even this, however, is not enough, we must be God's love for the world; the messenger must be the Message!

...*born from above.* A pop theology has evolved from these words emphasizing a person's _____ of being "born again." But the emphases on human experience is a subtle shift from what Jesus is actually teaching, for the text is actually emphasizing God's action, not our experience.

To be born of the Spirit is to be living a radically different life by the _____ of the Word and Spirit.

Our faith is _____ of God's faithfulness.

The faithfulness of God is the issue of faith, not the size of our faith. For many of us, the god in whom we have faith is too small! The God revealed in Jesus Christ, however, is _____: infinite in love, infinite in mercy, infinite in compassion, infinite in goodness, infinite in grace, infinite in power!

When our faith connects to God's faithfulness, it is reckoned to us as righteousness, and we are reconciled to God and *filled with all the fullness of God*, the messenger becomes the _____.

We are gathered here this morning because we are _____ of the Spirit, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. But the question for us today is "In what ways am I still born of the flesh?" Let the Psalmist's prayer be our prayer of faith:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Psalm 139.23-24

And our _____ God, *the God of all grace, Who has called us to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, support, strengthen and establish us, filling us with all His fullness! To Him be the power for ever and ever!* 1 Peter 5.10-11, Ephesian 3.19