



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

In God We Trust

Find Us Faithful — 1 Corinthians 15–16
Tim Badal | March 18, 2018

We're coming to the end of our series, "In God We Trust." In this series, we've been looking at how faithful God is and how we can rely on Him, not only regarding our eternal life, but also with our everyday lives—all of who we are. We can trust Him with all we have because He has promised to care for us and give us all we need.



As we've examined God's faithfulness over the past few weeks, a Scripture keeps coming to my mind. In Luke 18, Jesus told the story of the persistent widow who was concerned about a legal matter. We're not told what her problem was, but she was seeking assistance from a judge. She never stopped petitioning him until he finally took her side in this matter. Jesus used this story to illustrate what He wanted His followers to imitate.

Just as the Father is faithful, so we are called to be faithful in the sense of dogged persistence. When the going gets tough, faithful people get going. They don't quit. They don't cower in fear. They stand resolute, doing all they can, until God has sided with them.

Then in Luke 18:8, Jesus says, *"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faithfulness on earth?"* When Jesus returns to earth, will He find you and me to be faithful? We've spoken about His faithfulness, but now we need to turn the page to ask, "How faithful are we in return? Are we trustworthy in following His plan and accomplishing what He has called us to do?"

Faithfulness isn't a common word these days. We'll be voting soon and we've been promised a lot of things by our politicians. But if you've been around a while, you know that for whatever reason, a lot of these promises are never kept. They may have been disingenuous—or it may not be their fault—but often politicians struggle to be faithful to the promises they made on the campaign trail. Nevertheless, we still value faithfulness. When someone has worked in a particular job for many years, we celebrate their faithful service, often by giving them a gift or certificate. We might use the term faithful regarding a pet. "My dog is old and ugly, but at least he's been faithful." And who can forget one of the greatest landmarks in our country—a waterspout called Old Faithful? It's not especially big or powerful, but it's a famous geyser in the middle of Yellowstone Park. Its fame is due to its faithfulness, erupting like clockwork.

People desire faithfulness because it represents dependability, but all too often we find ourselves being faithless. I found myself there this week. I wasn't in the baptismal tank when I was supposed to be there. We can laugh it off, saying, "Those things happen." But there are times when we're faithless in larger matters. Some of us have let down others with whom we have relationships. Some of us have been unfaithful in our marriages or parenting. Some of us have been unfaithful in our jobs. Some of us have been unfaithful to friends. Some of us have been unfaithful in paying back loans or in keeping other promises.

Yet as important as these kinds of unfaithfulness are, none of those come close to our faithlessness toward God. The Bible says, "Though He is faithful, we are faithless" (2 Timothy 2:13). When God—Who always keeps His promises—looks at humanity, He sees a faithless people. We boast many things with our mouths, but we don't back them up with action.

Peter, who was one of Jesus' closest companions, promised that even if everyone else left Him, he would remain faithful—and we know how that turned out. But on the day when Jesus comes back to take us into eternity, He will ask this question: "When I come, will I find faithfulness on the earth?" Only the Father knows when the Son will return to earth, but Jesus is asking, "When I return,

will I find My people faithfully doing the tasks I called them to do?" If that's the question by which we'll be evaluated at the second coming of Jesus Christ, surely we should ask what faithfulness looks like. Some might say faithfulness is simply doing our religious duties— especially things we do on Sundays. But of course Christian faithfulness must apply in all aspects of our lives. So what does it look like for us?

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is talking to a church that is giving him a lot of problems. In many ways the church in Corinth is like a teenager driving his parents crazy. There's a lot of potential and opportunity, but they also are making what seems to be crazy mistakes—all of which are breaking Paul's heart. In one of his longest letters, he addresses a great variety of subjects in an effort to bring some order to this church. Then as he draws it to a close in chapter 15, he reminds them that the most important thing they need to remember is the gospel itself, because it impacts everything else. The heart of the gospel for them was whether or not they could trust God's faithfulness—that He has done what He said He has done and will do what He promises to do. All of this hinges on Christ's resurrection.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, Paul writes, *"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."* Paul goes on to explain that all kinds of people saw the risen Christ, then he says, "The gospel has no merit in our lives if Christ did not rise bodily from the dead."

Our question then becomes what does that resurrection mean for Jesus and for us? Beginning in 1 Corinthians 15:12, Paul also addresses the question, "What happens when we die?" Again, our faithful God has provided the answer. When any of His children die, they too will be raised. As Christ followers, we have the great hope that we won't remain in the grave, but He will raise us and receive us to Himself, reuniting our souls and our bodies. Even better, we will no longer have the lowly bodies we now inhabit, but resurrected ones.

How will all this happen? Between 1 Corinthians 15:50 and 16:4, we learn some things. In this passage, we're going to look at three aspects of what it means to be faithful to God in response to His faithfulness to us.

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

¹⁶ Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ² On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. ³ And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

As we look at three ways we are to be faithful, I want us to see how we might apply these personally. These aren't so much commands of things we must do as things we should recognize.

Being faithful involves recognizing God's mystery.

The first thing we need to consider is the mystery of God. In 1 Corinthians 15:50–53, Paul specifically says he is telling the Corinthians about a mystery, something that may have eluded them. He's giving them the "inside track," so they can be prepared for the future. If I can put it this way, on Wednesday, Paul will be giving them Thursday and Friday's NCAA results. They will know in advance the scores and the upsets, so they might prosper in the pool they've entered—or in the case of the Corinthians, in life itself.

He says, *"I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."* What does that mean? First, of course, it means there needs to be a resurrection. But regarding our being faithful, there are some other implications. What Paul was giving them was a mystery that others would not understand—which in fact went against human logic—about the way they were to live that contradicted the way the world lived.

When it comes to our journey, we must hold on loosely.

First, they were instructed to hold certain things loosely. When Paul says, *"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,"* we need to ask, "What is the Kingdom of God?" In some ways that Kingdom has already been inaugurated on earth, with people coming to know Jesus as Lord and with His Spirit now indwelling them. But there is an already/not yet reality to the Kingdom. On the great and glorious day of Christ's return, the Kingdom will come fully. Christ will be King, enthroned on the greatest throne in the universe, and for all of eternity we will be in fellowship with Him.

Yet at heaven's door there is a sign that says, "Flesh and blood cannot enter." There needs to be a transformation. If flesh and blood can't make it in without being changed, what else can't make it into heaven? We read in 2 Peter 3 that everything else in this world will be burned up. God will be creating a new heaven and a new earth where there will only be perfection. The old will be gone and the new will come. The only thing that will actually make it through that burning is our renewed bodies. Christ will rescue us and give us immortality, so we will enter eternity with our new, resurrected bodies.

The mystery is the fact that nothing else will be headed into eternity. In other words, we need to hold everything else loosely, all those things we clamor for in this world. Those things we work so hard to get, the things we might be coveting—whether clothing or cars or homes or vacations or money itself—all of these will be left behind.

We need to know what the church in Corinth needed to know, which is that all of us tend to hold on to the things of this world with a closed fist instead of an open hand. For this reason, when something we're holding seems to be slipping from our grasp, we use everything in our power to keep it—at times even to the point of doing something sinful.

Paul is reminding us we are aliens in this world; or in Peter's term, sojourners. We can't cling to our 70 or 80 or 90 years on earth so tightly that we forget we're really just passing through. What is of far greater importance than our things are the human lives, the souls that we influence. But if we're so preoccupied with those things that won't last, we won't have time to invest in what truly will be part of God's Kingdom: souls that have been washed cleaned by the blood of Jesus Christ. So if we have eternity on our minds, we can't simply live in the present.

Now understand—I'm not implying you should get rid of all your earthly possessions, find a mountain somewhere and just wait this life out. God gives us things for our use and enjoyment. We must not allow these things to displace our relationship with Him, nor should we see them as more valuable than they are. Jesus said it this way: *"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?"* (Mark 8:36).

I had a neighbor when I was growing up who used to say, "The one with the most toys wins." And yes, he was on track to be the winner. He had a boat, snowmobiles, 4-wheelers and a lot more. He made it his goal to accumulate as many things as he could. He was rich enough to buy anything he wanted. He still lives next door to my parents. I was there the other day and saw that he had a brand-new truck. When I told him how great it looked, he replied, "Well, the problem is it will be old in a year." He's still determined to have the best of everything. But at the heart of it all, his whole sense of worth and identity is wrapped up in what he owns.

But he, like the rest of us, will one day stand before Jesus—and will realize that everything we owned will be burned. There will be nothing left. For those of us who know God, we can realize it wasn't important anyway. We know our relationship with Him is the only thing of real value. We know that what is of value in our lives is our willingness to obey Him and share the gospel with others.

When it comes to our journey, we should hope in glory.

Rather than holding tightly to this world and its treasures, we instead should hope in glory. Because the world as it exists now isn't going to last, we must be very aware that we can't get every morsel out of our lives by pursuing the things of this world. Rather, he says, *"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed"* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

A moment is coming that will be glorious. It will be like no other moment we've ever experienced and it will come quickly, like the twinkling of an eye. In that moment, we will stand in our new bodies before the Lord to be judged for what we did in our earthly bodies. Christ wants us to live for that moment rather than for this moment. Every part of our lives should be evaluated in relation to eternity. We are not to live *carpe diem*, to seize the day. We are to do our best with each moment of our lives, whether working hard or enjoying the moment, always looking to that glorious moment that's coming soon. We should never focus on now and forfeit heaven.

Recently, we had just finished watching a super-heroes movie and my youngest son, Luke, said, “Dad, wouldn’t it be great if we all had super-hero powers?” So for about the next 20 minutes I tried to convince him that I was the Hulk, but he didn’t buy it. That’s what he wanted to be himself.

That’s when I brought up today’s passage and told him, “One day, we will be changed. And even though you’re wishing you were a super hero, what Jesus is going to do will take our breath away.” The Bible says, “*No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him*” (1 Corinthians 2:9). The best is yet to come. To quote a 1970s rock band, Bachman-Turner Overdrive:

You ain't seen nothin' yet
B-b-b-baby, you just ain't seen n-n-nothin' yet
Here's something that you never gonna forget
B-b-b-baby, you just ain't seen n-n-nothin' yet

Christian, recognize that this is not your home; this life is just a dot on the long line of eternity. We must look to what God has prepared for His people. Don’t grasp the lowly things of this world and forfeit the righteous glorious day our God has planned for us. That’s the mystery—we must live in light of eternity today.

Being faithful involves reveling in Christ’s victory.

Having asked us to look forward to eternity, Paul next asks us to look back into history. In 1 Corinthians 15:54–57 he says:

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But how are we to be faithful until the day we’re changed? How can we be faithful in this life until the next life? The answer is modeled in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. He put on flesh and made His dwelling among us. “*Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant*” (Philippians 2:6–7).

Jesus walked among us in the flesh yet lived a life of perfection in the middle of temptations and turmoil and tribulations. He then went to the cross to die for you and me. He has modeled what faithfulness looks like. I believe what He did enabled us to do certain things.

Christ’s victory means sin is conquered.

When Christ went to the cross and overcame death, sin was also conquered. Paul says, “*O death where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*” The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law—and they are both gone. What does sin have to do with our faithfulness? Sin is what keeps us from being faithful. It causes us to look at ourselves, not others. Sin causes us to pursue our desires instead of the decrees of God. Sin is what makes us faithless.

By going to the cross and gaining victory, Jesus has taken the sinner and made him a saint. He has turned that which is crimson into that which is white as snow (Isaiah 1:18). Our sins have been nailed to the cross, enabling those who are faithless to become faithful. Enabling those who are not trustworthy to become trusted. It allows us to fulfill all God requires, because He’s empowered us by His Holy Spirit to do those things. In short, Jesus has conquered our inability to be faithful. Now, in a new relationship with Him, we can accomplish those things He has for us to do.

Christ’s victory means we must be steadfast and not cower.

In light of this, what should be our posture? Because Jesus has brought victory, Paul says, “*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Now that Christ has taken care of our sin, we can be steadfast and not cower

When Christ was arrested right before His death, the disciples were unfaithful. His closest companions became afraid and fled. For three days they lived without any hope, filled with fear. These were men who in recent months had exorcised demons and healed people of diseases—men who had seen Jesus do things that could only be explained by the truth that He was the Son of God. They now found themselves disowning Jesus, even to young children. They were faithless.

But three days later those same disciples, after seeing their resurrected Lord, became faithful and bold. They were immovable in their confidence of God's work in their lives. No longer did they cower or run, because the great Savior of the world had changed them. They now boldly spoke to anyone, whether peasants or rulers, of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what faithfulness looks like. Faithfulness says that in the middle of any opposition, I will remain true to the One Who has done so very much for me.

Christ's victory means service becomes our calling.

The result of this is that we will be continually doing the work of the Lord and that service becomes our calling. To be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ in this life is not to hold on tightly to the things of this world, but to release our desire for things in order that we can focus on serving God.

That doesn't mean we have to volunteer for every church task. But we are to do whatever our God calls us to do. We're given 70 or 80 or even 90 years on this earth to practice serving God, then we'll continue serving Him throughout eternity. Paul speaks of "*abounding in the work of the Lord*," and here are three characteristics of this work.

1. The work of the Lord is essential. God has a certain work for you to do; He's called you to do it. This isn't a suggestion. This isn't something just to think about. God, our Master, says, "I have something for you to do." If you want to be in good standing with your Master, you'll do these things.

2. The work of the Lord is not easy. This verse is never translated, "abounding in the fun of the Lord," or "abounding in the vacation of the Lord," or "abounding in watching the TV of the Lord," or "abounding in the relaxation of the Lord." Paul uses the word "work." It's toiling and striving. It means you're going to sweat. You may need to work when others are having a good time. Because we hold things loosely and because we hope in glory, while the world is enjoying the party that is this life on earth we need to be busy with the work God has called us to do.

Yesterday as I was preparing this sermon, I went out to get the mail. Every year, two neighbors down from us throw a big St. Patrick's Day party. For a moment I felt a bit of jealousy, wishing I didn't have a sermon to write, because it sounded like they were having a great time. Then I heard, "Hey, Tim! Come on over. We're having a great time!" The next thing I heard was, "We have all kinds of food over here!" I said, "Lord, that's a sign. The sermon can wait, right?" But I knew it was Saturday, and Sunday was coming. I knew I couldn't stand before God and try to explain why my sermon wasn't ready. I'm not at all criticizing my neighbors—they're lovely people and very welcoming.

The world is inviting us to a party in this life. It's saying, "Hey, come on over! Enjoy life with us. Let's eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we'll die." We need to admit that the temptation is inviting, but we also know that if we die tomorrow we'll be meeting our Maker. And when we stand before Him, we'll have to give an account for what we've done. Now, don't take this wrong. Should we ever enjoy ourselves and have a good party? Absolutely. But we always have to do everything with eternity in mind. When the work God calls us to conflicts with the world's play, we have to make the good choice.

So I called back to my neighbors, "Send some food over. The preacher isn't done with his sermon yet." They didn't do it. They were faithless.

To review, Jesus has done the work for us and we can be faithful because of His finished work on the cross. God has given us the mystery of life, the meaning of life, that life is not limited to the decades we have here on earth but will extend throughout eternity.

Paul also realizes that as we abound in God's work, we might feel like we're missing out on something, so he finishes chapter 15 with this little phrase: "*...knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*" In other words, you and I will work hard in this life for the Kingdom of God. Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). There are other things calling us to seek them, but God wants us to seek His Kingdom first. If we do this, then everything else we need He will add to us.

If we make it our priority to follow Him—when we work for Him and live with eternity in mind—we will not be laboring in vain. We will not get to heaven and find ourselves disappointed. We will not wish we had "lived it up" on earth. Brothers and sisters, heaven will be so glorious it will take our breath away. Whatever we forfeited here in this life, on that great day we will say, "It was worth it!"

Being faithful involves responding with generosity.

So when we hear the question, “Will He find faith when He comes?” how should we respond? We need to respond with generosity. Paul had no chapter breaks in his letter but continues directly into chapter 16:

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

When we understand the mystery Paul has explained to us—that this life is not our home, nor is it the total of our existence—and when we remember what Christ has done for us, a response of generosity will well up within us.

Generosity should be connected to the gospel.

We need to realize that generosity is directly connected to the gospel. You may be thinking, “All right. The pastor has put a good guilt trip on us this morning, and now he’s going for my pocketbook.” No, I’m not. The only thing I’m going to share is that God is speaking to the followers of Christ. If you’re not a follower of Christ, let me make this clear: God does not want your money. What He really wants is your obedience. The first step of obedience is bowing your knee to Christ, saying, “Jesus, I’m a sinner and I need You to be my Savior.”

But for His followers, He desires that we give to others in the same way Christ has given of Himself. The Christian life is characterized in every respect by generosity, personified in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. We should first remember both the Father and the Son are involved in this giving. Back in 1 Corinthians 15:50, we read that God is going to give us an inheritance. We are going to inherit the Kingdom of God. On that great and glorious day, the Father will open His treasury and say, “All that is Mine will be yours. You will be able to enjoy it, not for a short season, but for all eternity.”

Jesus is a Giver as well. Verse 57: *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* God the Father gives. God the Son gives. He is modeling generosity to us. Why do we give? Why do we give a portion of our money to the church? Is it because the church needs it or to take care of the staff? The reason every follower of Jesus Christ should be setting something aside is that God the Father promises us an inheritance, and God the Son did what we could not do for ourselves. He rescued us from hell and has given us eternal life through His blood.

Now Jesus tells us, “I want you to be giving as well. Just as My Father and I are giving Gods, I want My people to be giving people.” So the reason we give is because we have been given much. That’s what makes our family celebrations at Christmas so glorious. It’s enjoyable to give. I thought that being a child at Christmas was the greatest thing ever—until I became a father. I love to give gifts. But I’ve also learned that my parents give many more gifts to their grandchildren than they ever did to their own children.

Generosity should be collected according to biblical guidelines.

Giving is fun. Giving is a blessing. Giving allows us to tell people we love them. But how is this giving to take place? Our gifts are to be collected according to biblical guidelines. God has revealed a mystery, so we can now see life through His lens. Jesus has given us salvation through His victory on the cross. Now we are to respond by giving back to Him.

One way we give back is through prayer, worship and Bible study. We also give back to Him through our acts of service. But at some point, because God knows how dear our treasure is to our hearts, we are also called to give of that. But how is that to be collected?

1. Giving should be a priority. Paul said there was a collection that would take place on the first day of every week. When God’s people in Corinth gathered together, they were to make giving a regular part of their gathering. When I come into God’s house, I’m not coming just to receive. I am coming to bring an offering to the Lord—an offering of my spirit, my time, my talents and my treasure.

Some of us might be willing to give our time: “I’ll stay an hour and a half.” Our talents: “I’ll volunteer once a year.” Some of us think, “You can have my attention, but don’t touch my money.” Listen, I don’t want to touch your money. But God is asking, “Do I have all of you? Will you be faithful in all things?” Our giving is an opportunity to tell God He is a priority in our lives.

2. Giving should be planned. Paul continues, *“Each of you is to put something aside.”* We know the first day of the week is coming, so we will be able to decide in advance what we will be giving. If you came this morning with no plan to give, Paul would say, “Don’t give.” Don’t give because I played on your heart strings and now you feel guilty. No, go home, then during this next week go before

God and ask, “Lord, in light of all You’ve done, what are You now asking of me—not just regarding my money, but in all my life?” God will make these things plain to you, then next week you can give willingly because you’ve planned.

3. Giving should be personal. Notice that Paul says, “Each of you.” He’s not talking to the pastors or the apostles, but each member of the church. I need to ask, “In light of all You’ve done, Lord, what are You requiring of me—and by proxy, the rest of the Badal family?” I say this with all humility, but Amanda and I decided early in our marriage that if we truly want to tell people God is our all in all, then our number one priority will be giving back to Him.

I’ve shared this before, but the largest expense we have in any given month is our giving back to the Lord. I don’t want anybody to ever look at my checkbook and think, “You know, he talked a good game, but when it really mattered, he didn’t live it.” Now, could I give more? Sure. Could I give less? Sure. But the Lord has honored that commitment and I will tell you—we’ve never gone hungry. The kids have clothes. Our family is planning to go on a vacation this week. God is good to us.

What I want you to pray is this: “God, what are You calling me to? I’m a follower of Yours—what is my place?” Our giving is to be personal.

4. Giving should be in proportion to our income. Let’s say God has given you a pie. God is saying, “I want a piece of your pie.” I would say, give in proportion with all the other pieces. So if you’ve cut your pie into ten pieces, then one of those should go to the Lord. If you’ve cut your pie into eight pieces, then one of those should go to the Lord. Some of you will say, “My pie tin is empty; there are only crumbs.” Well, you can say, “Lord, here are the crumbs.”

God promises to take care of us. If you’re faithful with the money you have, God will be faithful in meeting your needs. I can’t tell you how many people have been faithful to God to give, and they have testimonies to His faithfulness in return. I think of Greg and Audrey Torrence, who have a video on Facebook that tells how God has met them in the face of long-term hospital stays and other struggles. There are hundreds if not thousands of other stories here in our congregation.

5. Giving should be placed in the hands of proven people. In 1 Corinthians 16:3, Paul says, “*I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem.*” We want to be accredited by God. If we’ve not proven our faithfulness in how we use the gifts you’ve brought to the Lord, then tell us. If you can’t give here because you have concerns, that’s okay. Give it to someone who is accredited. Give it to God through another channel. God promises that when we are faithful to give, He will prove His faithfulness in ways we’ve never seen.

Let me close with this story of an 11th-century king named Henry III of Bavaria. He had grown tired of court life and the pressures of being a monarch, so he made an application to Father Richard in the local monastery, asking to be accepted into a contemplative life where he could spend the rest of his life in solitude.

“Your majesty,” Father Richard replied, “do you understand that the pledge here is one of total obedience? That will be hard for you, because you have been a king.”

“I understand,” said King Henry. “The rest of my life I will live in obedience to you as Christ leads you.”

Then Father Richard said the following: “Then I will tell you what to do. Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has put you.”

Some of us want to be closer to God and we think we have to go to far-flung places to accomplish that. The king thought he needed to become a priest to be right with God. But God wants us to be faithful right where we are, finding Him in what we’re doing. In this way, we will experience the love and blessings of God right where we are. That’s good counsel for us, if we will choose the faithful life instead of the faithless one.