

Title : FAITHFUL FOREVER

By : Bishop Reniel Joel A. Nebab

Text : Daniel 1, 5 and 6

Prop. : Faithfulness to God is what counts in the ministry.

One of the questions I have for myself as a minister of God is, "will I be found faithful before the presence of God?" Will I be faithful forever as a minister of God? This question continues to linger in my mind even this very minute. I know that it will only be the Lord who knows the outcome of this lingering question, "will I be faithful forever" to my calling? I have been in ministry for almost 27 years now, but this does not yet guarantee my being "faithful forever" to the vocation I have chosen. There is yet a road ahead of me that I need to trod in order that I might be found faithful. It is going to be a long and winding road that will be full of challenges in order to test my faithfulness. I know, however, that at the end of my life it will be my faithfulness to the Lord that will be spoken of and remembered.

I know that you may also have the question of being found faithful before the presence of God although at this very juncture this question of faithfulness may not yet sink in your minds because of the ceremony that we will go through this morning. Your minds are set into this ceremony and the question of being faithful will be set aside for a moment. However, let us look at this question, "will we become faithful in the ministry that the Lord will entrust to us?" "Will we become faithful forever to God?" We need to talk about this question and perhaps linger on this for this time so that we will be alerted and will not be caught unaware.

I know of several pastors and pastoras who have not been faithful to the calling that they received from God. One pastor I know that he did not continue in ministry because of an involvement with the opposite sex. He failed in his vow towards his wife and above all in his calling as a servant of the Lord. We have many ministers who have not passed the test of faithfulness because they have allowed themselves to be tempted and they have yielded to the clutches of sin.

However, I also know of several pastors and pastoras who have been faithful in the ministry and until now we still see them serving the Lord. Some of them have gone ahead of us and we have seen them very faithful to their calling.

This morning, let me introduce to you a man whom I have known even when I was still a child. I see this man as one who was found faithful even in the midst of adversaries. I know you also are acquainted with this man. All of us are specially those that have gone through Bible School. Let us look into the word of God and find out about a man who was found faithful forever. This man was with a group of Jewish young men who were brought to Babylon as captives in order to serve in the courts of the king. Before they could serve, they had to go through a three-year rigid training in the language, art, and culture of the Babylonians. They also had to eat the king's food, but Daniel together with his three friends refused to eat the king's food and instead requested that they be given only vegetables for a period of ten days. The person in-charge and the guard obliged. Daniel and his three friends actually did not want

to be ritually unclean by eating defiled food. They did not want to be defiled. They set up their convictions and beliefs early in life and no one can bend them because they stood their ground. Daniel and his three friends did not compromise their beliefs. They were faithful to their godly convictions and beliefs.

Then we find Daniel also being tested. Other officials were jealous of him because he was given prominence in the court of the king. He was now in-charge of the whole empire. The governors tried to find something wrong with him or tried to find faults with him but they did not succeed. There was no corruption found in him. One day the governors devised a plan to pin him down and it was his religion that was at stake, primarily that of his prayer life. The king issued a decree upon the advice of the governors that in thirty days no one should pray to any god or man but only to the king. He signed it with his signet ring and it became a law. The punishment was for that person to be thrown into the den of lions. Daniel, however, was not alarmed. He continued his prayer life and was faithful in his relationship with God. He was caught praying and was thrown to the lion's den. The king was distressed over the situation and said to Daniel that may his God protect him. The following day the king went to the lion's den and found that Daniel was still alive. God vindicated Daniel and he was not harmed by the lions. The governors who devised the death plan together with their families were instead thrown into the den of lions. His faithfulness to God resulted in his protection from the lions.

Then we also find another instance where King Belshazzar saw a handwriting on the wall during a party. He called his wise men in his courts to interpret the writing, but no one could interpret it. Someone remembered Daniel and mentioned his name to the king. The king summoned Daniel and promised him a high position and offered him gifts if only he can interpret the writing on the wall. Daniel was not interested in the gifts and even the position of power. He said that he will interpret the writing without the position and gifts. He was not tempted by the color of money. Daniel was true to his calling and vocation in life. He was faithful to what God has entrusted to him and he could not be bribed, deceived and tempted with gifts and positions of power.

#### TRUTH:

Faithfulness is what counts in the ministry. A life of faithfulness will usher you into the joy of the Lord.

My dear interns and graduates, being faithful forever to the Lord is what counts in ministry. Being faithful to your Christian convictions and principles is what is needed in ministry. Never trade your future joy with fleeting happiness today. Stand firm in your convictions and never be dissuaded by defiling your being and body. Preserve your purity and walk blameless before the presence of God. Be faithful and live a holy life. Furthermore, be faithful in your relationship with the Lord. Develop a consistent devotional life where prayer and bible reading are of utmost importance. Never be entangled with the tyranny of the urgent, but be careful in doing the most essential things in life, our love passion for the Lord. In addition, never exchange your calling with positions of power and of the love of money. Your calling in the ministry of the Lord is the highest that one can ever get. Never give it up for the sake of power and of money. Be faithful to your calling or vocation in life.

What would happen if we all will be faithful ministers of the Lord? I believe that we will leave a legacy of “faithfulness” to those who will come behind us. We will become role models and examples before all ministers and all believers. People will talk well of us, not only for a few months, but even for years to come. The culture of faithfulness will be communicated for generations to come and people will learn to be faithful to God. Faithfulness is what counts in the ministry. A life of faithfulness will usher us into the joy of our Lord.

Note: This message was delivered at the Commissioning and Commencement Exercise of DABC, March 27, 2009.