

## **“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”**

Lamentations 3:22-23

Thomas Obadiah Chisolm (1866-1960) had a difficult adult life. His health was so fragile that there were periods of time when he was confined to bed, unable to work. Between bouts of illness he would have to push himself to put in extra hours at various jobs in order to make ends meet.

After coming to Christ at age 27, Thomas found great comfort in the Scriptures, and in the fact that God was faithful to be his strength in time of illness and provide his needs. Lamentations 3:22-23 was one of his favorite scriptures, which we are studying today.

While away from home on a missions trip, Thomas often wrote to one of his good friends, William Runyan, a relatively unknown musician. Several poems were exchanged in these letters. Runyan found one of Williams' poems so moving that he decided to compose a musical score to accompany the lyrics. Great is Thy Faithfulness was published in 1923.

For several years, the hymn got very little recognition, until it was discovered by a Moody Bible Institute professor who loved it so much and requested it sung so often at chapel services, that the song became the unofficial theme song of the college.

It was not until 1945 when George Beverly Shea began to sing Great is Thy Faithfulness at the Billy Graham evangelistic crusades, that the hymn was heard around the world.

Thomas Chisolm died in 1960 at age 94. During his lifetime, he wrote more than 1,200 poems and hymns.

### **How Do We Face Life's Greatest Challenges?**

Life can get tough. Very tough. In Lamentations 3:16-20 there is a partial list of what life feels like at times:

Lamentations 3:16-24 (NLT)

<sup>16</sup> He has made me chew on gravel. He has rolled me in the dust.

<sup>17</sup> Peace has been stripped away, and I have forgotten what prosperity is.

<sup>18</sup> I cry out, “My splendor is gone! Everything I had hoped for from the LORD is lost!”

<sup>19</sup> The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words.

<sup>20</sup> I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss.

ILLY: Have someone bring in a cup of gravel. Ask for a volunteer to chew and piece and report!

Christians big and small have struggled with responding to God in times of challenge.

- Do we doubt Him, that He even loves or notices our pain?
- Do we become angry, resentful of how we think life *should* be, compared to how it *is*?
- Do we resign ourselves to being stuck with no hope of improvement?
- Or, do we immerse ourselves in God's Word, and discover, as the writer of this hymn did, that God is faithful, even during our darkest days? Do you "dare to hope" in the faithful love of God?

### **A. God's faithfulness isn't changed by our circumstances.**

Life changes. Ups and downs. But God doesn't change, ever.

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 will be.

Lamentations 3: 21-22,

<sup>21</sup> Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this:

<sup>22</sup> The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease.

### **B. Each morning brings us new mercies!**

[Refrain]

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!

Lamentations 3:23, Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

**C. Each season of life can bear witness to God's work in our life.**

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.

ILLY: Interview with Antionette Tuff. There are seasons to life, we can be a witness to God no matter the season! [Play Video]

**D. We have an inheritance of hope.**

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!

Lamentations 3:24, I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!"

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, our future is bright with you! We believe it. In the face of storms we believe it. In the midst of trials we believe it. Today, tomorrow, every day, we know we have an inheritance of hope with You! In Jesus' name, amen."