

**G**reat is Thy Faithfulness is one of the most famous hymns of the faith in the modern era, but its background is very ordinary. Worship pastor/songwriter Bob Kauflin says it well: “it’s just the fruit of a faithful man with simple faith in a faithful God.”

Thomas Obadiah Chisholm was born in Kentucky and came to saving faith in 1893 at age 27. He felt called to ministry, but he was only able to serve as a pastor for a year. Multiple health issues prevented him from continuing both physically and financially, driving him to get a job as a life insurance agent to provide for his family. He did this until his retirement decades later.

Whether in calling, health, or finances, from a human perspective, Chisholm had ample opportunity to complain and despair. Instead, he wrote over 1200 poems of worship to God, most of which will never be read. He is said to have wanted to write poetry that contained “as much Scripture as possible and to avoid flippant or sentimental themes.”

When he was 57, he decided to send a poem called “Great is Thy Faithfulness” to his friend William Runyan, a musician at Moody Bible Institute and a publishing editor. Runyan was so moved by the poem, he immediately set to writing a worthy tune called “Faithfulness.” The hymn became popular at Moody, then at Billy Graham crusades, and then churches around the world. Ordinary faithfulness, extraordinary impact.

Near the end of his life, Chisholm wrote honestly: *“My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. But I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness.”* As we consider the magnitude of God’s faithfulness to us, so might we.

**Scripture to consider:**

Psalm 19:1-6	Lament. 3:22-24	Revelation 2:8-11
Psalm 36:5-10	2 Thess. 3:1-5	Revelation 19:11
Proverbs 3:3-4, 20:6	James 1:17	

# Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1. Great is Thy faith-ful-ness, O God, my Fa-ther;  
 2. Sum-mer and win-ter and spring-time and har-vest,  
 3. Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth,

There is no shad-ow of turn-ing with Thee.  
 Sun, moon and stars in their cours-es a-bove  
 Thine own dear pres-ence to cheer and to guide;

Thou chang-est not Thy com-pas-sions they fail not;  
 Join with all na-ture in man-i-fold wit-ness  
 Strength for to-day and bright hope for to-mor-row,

*Chorus*

As Thou hast been, Thou for-ev-er wilt be.  
 To Thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy and love. Great is Thy  
 Blessings all mine with ten thousand be-side!

faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new

mer-cies I see; All I have need-ed Thy hand hath pro-

vid-ed; Great is Thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me!