

Assembly on Faithfulness

<http://www.myfishbites.com/assemblies-faithfulness.php>

Animal Faithfulness

From <http://www.rusticgirls.com/animals/most-faithful-dogs-in-history.html>

Bobbie, the Wonder Dog was a Scotch collie and English shepherd mix that managed to find his way home after getting lost on a family trip. Bobbie traveled at least 2,800 miles from Indiana to Oregon in just six months in 1923. The Braziers identified the dog upon his return by three unique scars that he obtained before he was lost. His monumental feat of faithfulness did not go unnoticed. He was featured around the world in a series of newspaper articles and received hundreds of letters, ribbons, collars, and even keys to various cities. He was also given a silver medal, engraved with the record of his long-distance journey by the Oregon Humane Society.

Greyfriars Bobby is another dog who came to fame after his master died. John Gray died on February 8, 1858 in Edinburgh, Scotland, leaving very little behind except for a little Skye terrier named Bobby. The day after the burial, the curator noticed Bobby lying on the fresh mound of dirt. He immediately chased the little dog away, but the next day he was back. Again, the curator chased him away, but on the third day-despite the cold and the rain-Bobby was back. Finally, the curator took pity on the poor dog and allowed him to stay. For the next fourteen years, Bobby kept constant watch over his owner's grave, rarely leaving except to take his noontime meal at exactly one o'clock. After a while, he came to be known as Greyfriars Bobby, after the cemetery in which his master was buried. Bobby outlasted his master by fourteen years. When he died, he was buried just inside the gate at Greyfriars Kirkyard. He could not be buried with his master because it was consecrated ground. His headstone reads, "Greyfriars Bobby - died 14th January 1872 - aged 16 years - Let his loyalty and devotion be a lesson to us all." Shortly after his passing, a statue was resurrected in his honor. His story was also passed down and eventually a fictional version of the tale was published in a book titled Greyfriars Bobby by Eleanor Atkinson. In 1961, the book was made into a movie.

THE DICKIN MEDAL - from Wikipedia

The Dickin Medal was instituted in 1943 by Maria Dickin, to honour the work of animals in war. It is a bronze medallion, bearing the words "For Gallantry" and "We Also Serve" within a laurel wreath, carried on ribbon. It is awarded to animals that have displayed "conspicuous gallantry or devotion to duty while serving or associated with any branch of the Armed Forces or Civil Defence Units". The award is commonly referred to as "the animals' Victoria Cross".

The medal was awarded 54 times between in WW2, to 32 pigeons, 18 dogs, 3 horses and a cat, to acknowledge actions of gallantry or devotion. The medal was subsequently revived in 2002, to honour three dogs for their role responding to the September 11 attacks; it was also awarded to two dogs serving with Commonwealth forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq.

In December 2007, 12 former recipients buried at the PDSA Animal Cemetery were afforded full military honours.

The first recipients of the award, in December 1943, were three pigeons, serving with the Royal Air Force, all of whom contributed to the recovery of air crew from ditched aircraft during the Second World War. The most recent animal to be honoured is Treo, a black Labrador, honoured for his "heroic actions as an arms and explosives search dog in Afghanistan". As of March 2010, the Dickin Medal has been awarded 63 times.

Simon the Cat - from wikipedia

Simon was found wandering the dockyards of Hong Kong in March 1948 by a member of the crew of HMS Amethyst. Hickinbottom smuggled the cat aboard ship, and Simon soon ingratiated himself with the crew and officers, particularly as he was adept at catching and killing rats in the lower decks. Simon rapidly gained a reputation for cheekiness, leaving presents of dead rats in sailors' beds, and sleeping in the captain's cap.

In 1948, halfway up the river Yangtze the ship became embroiled in the "Yangtze incident", when Chinese communist gun batteries opened fire on the frigate. One of the first rounds tore through the captain's cabin, seriously wounding Simon.

The badly wounded cat crawled on deck, and was rushed to the medical bay, where the ship's surviving medical staff cleaned his burns, and removed four pieces of shrapnel, but he was not expected to last the night. He did manage to survive however, and after a period of recovery, he returned to his former duties in spite of the indifference he faced from the new captain. Whilst anchored in the river, the ship had become overrun with rats, and Simon took on the task of removing them with vigour, as well as raising the morale of the sailors.

Following the ship's escape from the Yangtze, Simon became an instant celebrity, lauded in British and world news, and presented with the "Animal VC", the Dickin Medal, as well as a Blue Cross medal, the Amethyst campaign medal, and the fanciful rank of "Able Seacat". Thousands of letters were written to him, so much that one of Lt Stuart Hett was appointed "cat officer" to deal with Simon's post. At every port Amethyst stopped at on its route home, Simon was presented with honour, and a special welcome was made for him at Plymouth in November when the ship returned.

Hundreds, including the entire crew of HMS Amethyst attended his funeral in Ilford in East London.

What's all this got to do with anything?

Well, being faithful is one of the best things you can do. You're faithful when your friends are feeling down and you're there for them; you're faithful when other people reject your friend, but you stay close; you're faithful when you keep doing what is right, even when it feels wrong and seems to cost you.

The Bible is full-on for faithfulness. In fact, it says that you can see if someone's a Christian by how faithful they are. But why does that matter to you? Well, because God is faithful. That's what Christians believe and that's been my experience. God isn't someone who's out to get you, judge you or whack you round the head with a Bible. Instead, he's longing to be kind, show his love and do good.

Psalm 86.15 - But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

This is my experience of God and maybe you'll be able to experience that too one day.