

REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES TO YOU—AND YOUR PROMISES TO HIM!

INTRODUCTION:

How many people do you count on to keep their word; to fulfill the promises they have made? My guess is that at one time or another all of us have experienced the disappointment that comes when a promise *made* became a promise *broken*.

It may have been when we were kids. Maybe our parents promised to do something for us or take us somewhere and they were unable—or unwilling—to carry out that promise. Ever have that happen to you?

When I was growing up, we had a “Canada corner” of the garage where we kept all the extra camping and fishing stuff we would take with us to Canada. Not sure why my Dad liked to keep it a secret, but it seemed at least once a summer he would surprise us with: “Start packing, boys—we are going to Canada fishing!” One year—I think I was about 15—my Dad came and made his famous announcement. Needless to say, you didn’t have to tell my step-brother and I twice! We loaded up, jumped in the truck, and away we went! Only we didn’t make it to Canada—we only got as far as northern Wisconsin—and to this day I still do not know why. We made the most of it from what I remember, but northern Wisconsin is still no comparison to Canada when it comes to fishing....

Sadly, for some children in some homes, broken promises occur with such regularity that children get to the point where they not only don’t trust the promise “breaker”—they have a hard time trusting *anyone*. Our hearts break as we hear more and more of the abuse and neglect that those children in California suffered at the hands of their own parents. I can’t imagine the scars that these children and young adults will carry for the rest of their lives. How difficult it will be for them to associate the word “father” with love, provision, and protection.

1. Timeless Truth #7—**God keeps His promises** (verses Josh 1:3, 5, 6, and 9)

A. The Promiser: GOD

People may *lie* to us—but God cannot and does not.

--Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”

--Titus 1:2 “In hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began...”

--Heb 6:18 “in which it is impossible for God to lie”

The one whose name is Truth—who hates all manner of lying and will cast all liars into the lake of fire—can always be trusted to keep His Word. Psalm 119:89 “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” In Matthew 24:35, Jesus says “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

I’m glad God has declared unto us His thoughts. I’m glad God chose to reveal Himself to us through His Word and through His Son. But this revelation would be of no use—it would be worthless—if God could not or did not or would not keep His Word.

B. The Promises

i. The promise of His presence

--v 5 “as I was with Moses, so I will be *with thee*....”

--v 9 (last part) “for the Lord thy God is *with thee* withersoever thou goest.”

Promises of God's presence are not reserved for just Joshua, though. God says to His people in Isaiah:

--**Is 41:10** "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

--**Is 43:2-3** "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when though walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior."

Promises of God's presence are not reserved for just God's people in the OT either.

--**Mt 28:20** "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

--**Heb 13:5** "Let your conversation [lifestyle] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'"

How can God keep the promise that He will never leave us or forsake us?

--Because He **is eternal**; He will never die

Well-meaning parents promise their children that they will **always** be there for them, but that is a promise they ought not to make. Why? Because they can't keep it—at some point they will die! The most faithful husband will someday leave his wife because "death do us part." That is not true of God—He ever liveth!

--God can also keep this promise of never leaving us because He is **everywhere present**.

In Psalm 139 we read these words from the Psalmist David:

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

Not only is there the promise of God's presence, there is also—

ii. The promise of victory

--v 5 "There *shall not any man be able to stand before thee* all the days of this life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: *I will not fail thee*, nor forsake thee."

--The victory here, of course, is their ability to drive out the enemy and conquer the land. Notice Rahab's words to the two spies in Chapter 2, verses 9-11 (**read**).

--"I **know** that the Lord hath given you the land..." (v 9). The inhabitants of the land were scared to death—their hearts "melted" it says in verse 11—"because of you: for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." In other words, He is the Ruler over all!

Does God promise us victory? He most certainly does! It is not victory over physical enemies **outside** of us, however—it is the promise of spiritual victory **within** us!

--God wants to give us victory over sin and temptation; we don't have to continually lose that battle.

--I wonder if we believe God's **promises of victory** the way we should. Although it is true that the **sin nature** will remain with us until we die, I wonder if too often times we use that as **an excuse**. I wonder if we have erroneously adopted a "loser's mentality" and believe the lie that "I will never have victory over my _____ (fill in the blank)."

--Some think "I will **never** have victory over my "outward" sins of: abuse, anger, cursing, drinking, drugs, or smoking

--Others lament, "I will **never** have victory over my "secret" sins of: lying, pride, pornography, or stealing

Is that true? Can we **never** have victory over sin? Are we destined to be **slaves** to sin until we die? Not if we believe the promises of God! (See Romans 6:17; 8:31; I Cor 6:9-11; I Cor 10:13; James 4:7; II Pet 2:9; I J 4:4)

God **wants** us to have the victory and is **able** to give us the victory because there is no one greater or more powerful than He! There is no problem or sin or struggle that is too hard for God. Jeremiah 32:27 says, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" The answer, of course, is NO!

2. Timeless Truth #8—**Remember their promises**

A. First, their promise to God (verses 12-14)

--While Moses was still alive, land on the EAST side of the Jordan had been conquered and 2-1/2 tribes wanted the land on that side. Moses agreed with this arrangement on **one** condition—the 2-1/2 tribes that wanted the land on the east side had to come and fight with the 9-1/2 other tribes to help conquer **their** land on the west side. In Numbers 32:31 we read: "And the children of Gad and the children of Rueben answered, saying, 'As the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.'"

B. Their promise was not only to God; it was also to their brethren

--They had made a promise to God—and to their "brothers"—that they would help them with their battles. They had an obligation: their brothers helped them with their land; it was now time to return the favor, so to speak

--Isn't that part of what the church is all about? Just as older siblings help the younger ones in a **physical** family, those of us who are "older" in the faith need to help one another in our **spiritual** family. What does that look like? I can't decide what that looks like for YOU, but I can tell you what the Bible says.

--I Thess 5:11 says we are to comfort—to encourage—one another

Encourage one another **in what**? Living for God; being faithful to God in spite of difficulties

--I Thess 5:11 also says we are to edify—build one another up

Build one another up **in what**? Build up their bank account? Build up their self-esteem?

Romans 15:1-2 says "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." In other words, we are not only to encourage others to **live for God**—we are to show them HOW to do it!

--I Thess 5:14 says we are to "warn them that are unruly..."

The unruly are the "disorderly" and the Greek word was used of soldiers who were "not keeping the ranks." Barnes writes "The reference here is to the members of the church who were irregular in their Christian walk."

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

1. Are you saved? I would rather cast doubts in your mind so that you **make sure** instead of having Satan blind you into thinking you are saved when you aren't!
2. Christian, are you trusting God and His promises—or have you accepted **defeat** in your life? God promises His presence and victory—you don't need to keep losing your battle over sin, whatever it may be.
3. Lastly, how seriously do you take your obligation to help your brethren in their spiritual battle? It is easy to think that "that's the Pastor's job," but according to I Thessalonians 5 it is the responsibility of each of us.