

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Our God of Promise

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 10:23 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 12:1-3 | Exodus 15:26 | Numbers 23:19
Deuteronomy 28 | Psalm 103:19; 139:1-4 | Jeremiah 32:17 | Malachi 3:6 | Matthew 7:7 | Luke 11:9 | John 14:3, 6
Romans 10:9 | 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 15:17 | 2 Corinthians 5:8 | Philippians 4:19 | Titus 1:2
Hebrews 4:12-13; 13:5 | 1 John 1:9; 4:7-10

SUMMARY

A promise is only as reliable as the one who makes it.

Because of circumstances beyond our control, we can't always keep our promises, but the sovereign Lord of the universe has never failed to fulfill His word.

In order to understand how important the Lord's faithfulness is, we must recognize that the Christian life is totally dependent upon His promises. For example, the only reason we're certain we have eternal life, a home in heaven, and resurrection bodies awaiting us is because Jesus guaranteed these things to His followers. The Bible is filled with God's promises. But the most important thing to remember is not how many there are, but the fact that He keeps every single one.

SERMON POINTS

Two Types of Promises

A promise is a spoken or written commitment to perform a certain act or to refrain from doing something. Therefore, a divine promise is God's assurance that He will do what He says. In the Bible, the Lord makes two types of promises:

■ **Unconditional.** This is a commitment made without exceptions. The Lord's covenant with Abraham is a great example of this (Gen. 12:1-3). God committed to make him a great nation and bless all the families of earth through him. As his descendent, Jesus Christ fulfilled this blessing because salvation is available to everyone who believes in Him.

■ **Conditional.** This type of promise is subject to certain mandates. For example, the offer of salvation in Romans 10:9 is conditioned upon faith in Christ. Although God makes both kinds in Scripture, we can only make conditional ones because we can't control every circumstance.

Our Misunderstandings

Sometimes we become disappointed in God because we think He's failed to keep His word to us. But the problem is our understanding, not His faithfulness. There are several reasons why we don't always receive what we expect.

For example, desiring something and believing God will do it doesn't mean He's promised it to us. Sometimes we misunderstand His will. Also, the hindrance could be the result of unconfessed sins that create barriers in our relationships with the Lord. Finally, because God's Word needs to be considered in its entirety—all the way from Genesis to Revelation—we can't pick certain verses and claim promises outside their context. Many of His promises are conditional, and we may not meet the requirements.

God's Trustworthiness

The validity of a promise is dependent on the character and ability of the one who makes it. People can always fall short, but thankfully, the Lord has both the willingness and the power to do everything He says. To truly understand why God will do what He says, we must fully understand His character and the attributes that prove He is trustworthy.

For example, He is:

- **Truthful** (Titus 1:2)—Since truth is the very essence of His nature, it's impossible for Him to lie. Therefore, we can believe in His promises because He always tells the truth.
- **Faithful** (Heb. 10:23)—If the Lord ever breaks a promise, our Christian theology falls apart because He would cease to be who He says He is. But since God has never failed to keep His word in the past, we can trust Him for the future. However, we must remember that He might not do so according to our schedules, in the ways we desire, or through the people or situations we expect.
- **Immutable** (Mal. 3:6)—This means He never changes. Therefore, we don't have to worry that He will alter a promise. If conditions are attached, it may seem like He's had a change of heart, but the truth is we just haven't met the requirements set before us.
- **Love** (1 John 4:7-10)—His promises are always based on our best interests. The cross is the ultimate proof of His love for us. Jesus said He would die for our sins, and He did. If He loved us enough to keep that promise, we have no reason to doubt Him.

God's Ability

We must also understand just how able and powerful He is. God is always able to fulfill His promises because He is:

- **Omniscient** (Heb. 4:13)—God knows every detail of a situation. From His perspective, He can see all of our lives from beginning to end. Every promise He makes is based on His infinite, perfect, and complete knowledge, which means He never makes a mistake.
- **Omnipresent** (Heb. 13:5)—No matter what we're going through, He will never leave nor forsake us. His continual presence guarantees the fulfillment of every promise.
- **Omnipotent** (Ps. 103:19)—Because the Lord is completely sovereign over heaven and earth, nothing is out of His control. He has absolute

power and authority, and nothing is too difficult for Him (Jer. 32:17).

Our Responsibility

Because the Lord is absolutely adequate and faithful, we have perfect assurance that He will keep His promises. However, we must position ourselves to receive what He wants to provide. We must:

- **Obey God**—Throughout the Old Testament, the Lord issued covenants conditioned upon obedience (Deut. 28). If we've asked God for something and He hasn't yet provided it, we need to search our hearts to see if we've failed to obey Him in some area.
- **Believe the Lord**—Faith is an indispensable requirement. Always ask yourself if you sincerely trust Him to fulfill His word. Many people are close to receiving God's best, but they can't get over the obstacle of unbelief.
- **Claim the promise**—When we believe the Lord will do what He says, we can confidently claim the promise for ourselves. He'll never change His mind and will be faithful to complete every promise. But if we have doubts, we'll feel concerned and worried even after praying about it, and His will is hindered.

RESPONSE

- Have you experienced any promises of God in your life recently?
- What deters you from trusting that God will hold true to His word in situations you're concerned about today?
- How can you go to the next level in your faith, believing that God will continue to provide His promises as He has in the past?

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