

Devotions - July 13-19, 2008
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God's Promises

Sunday, July 13

God's Love

*"...I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you." Jeremiah 31:3*

The Bible is full of things that God has promised us. In fact, the whole Old Testament is full of proof that God does keep his promises. It helps us know that the promise of eternal life we receive through Jesus in the New Testament is true! This week, we will explore just a few of God's Promises, beginning with God's Love.

We often hear about how we should be faithful to God and love God. But faithfulness and love go both ways! God loves us and is faithful to us, too. These words from Jeremiah tell us that God will be faithful to us and love us with an "everlasting love." That means forever; without end; until the end of time. In the words of my neighbor's daughter, that's a "really, really, really, really, really long time."

What does that mean for our everyday life? It gives us something we can count on. It's almost as if we can look at the world around us in a different way, through a different pair of lenses, knowing that God is for us, that God loves us, that God will stand by us no matter what. There will be times when we mess up. But there can be an enormous sense of hope if we remember that God remains faithful in his love for us even when we don't.

Loving God, thank you for promising to love us with an everlasting love. It's good to know that you will remain faithful to us even when we goof things up. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Monday, July 14

Food and Clothing

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:31-33

My mom is a list-maker. She likes to see things in order and it helps her remember what needs to be done and who’s going to do it. Mom makes organized lists. When it’s a grocery list, she puts things in the order of where they are in the store. When it’s a menu for a family dinner, she puts things in order of when they need to be made. My dad teases her about these lists relentlessly.

But there is a lesson to be learned here. Things need to come in order. Jesus knew that people stressed about food and clothing, but he promised that if we focus on God, if we make that the number one thing on our list, then everything else that we need will be given to us. Do you have things in the right order?

Heavenly Father, it’s good to know that you have promised to provide us with all that we need. Help us to always put you first on our list. We ask this in your Holy name. Amen.

Tuesday, July 15

Fear

*“For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you,
‘Do not fear, I will help you.’”* Isaiah 41:13

I'm afraid of heights. When I watch a movie where people are out on the edge of a cliff or up on top of a tall building, my legs and feet go numb with fear. And yet, my brain knows that I'm not in danger. In real life, if I'm at a scenic overlook or climbing an observation tower, I'm OK if I have something to hang on to. It's just when I know I don't have anything to cling to that I have total terror.

When life gives us things that scare us, we can hang on tightly to God. If we fear for our jobs, our health, our loved ones, our future, or even the dark, God has promised that he will hold our hand and that he will help us. And that's something to cling to!

Dear God, thank you for promising to help us when we are afraid. Help us remember you are with us all the time. Be with all of your children in the world who are afraid. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, July 16

Prayer

*“So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer,
believe that you have received it,
and it will be yours.” Mark 11:24*

I heard myself screaming over and over “Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, God!” as my car zigzagged back and forth down the icy hill. Somehow the car righted itself and I did not slam into the snowbank or another car as I feared. My words were a prayer of desperation and it was answered as quickly as I sent it.

That scary winter night seems far away now in the midst of summer, and our prayers don't ever have to be far away. Jesus promised that whatever we asked for in prayer, if we believe it, it will be ours. Sometimes our prayers aren't answered in exactly the same way as we asked, but God always knows what we need before we ask.

Dear God, thank you for listening to my prayers. Help me remember to come to you with all things and grant me the faith to believe. In Jesus name, Amen.

Thursday, July 17

Our relationship with others

*“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn,
and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven;
give, and it will be given to you...*

For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” Luke 6:37, 38

There was an article on the news the other night about a young girl in Georgia who urged her parents to sell the mansion they lived in, move into a more modest home, and give the profit to those who needed it. The parents agreed and the younger brother documented the whole thing on video. When the real estate company learned what was going on, they also gave a large sum of money to the cause. Others did as well.

This young girl saw a need and acted on it. She is a living example of how Jesus has called us all to live. Treating others as we would be treated is what it's all about. We all have something to give. And there is an abundance of people less fortunate than we are. We have all been blessed, in various ways. Jesus promised us that the measure we give will be the measure we get back. How can we give to those in need both around us and across the globe?

Dear Jesus, we are so thankful for all the blessings you have given us. Open our hearts and eyes to those who are in need. Help us discover ways of giving. Give us the understanding that we have been blessed so that we can be a blessing to others. In your name we pray. Amen.

Friday, July 18

Guidance

*“And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left,
your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying,
‘This is the way; walk in it.’”* Isaiah 30:21

I remember clearly the day our youngest son Ryan, then 17, called us and said, “I had a car accident. Come quick.” He had taken our car into town and on his way home, he waved at some friends on the sidewalk. Unfortunately, Ryan didn’t see the car in front of him stop quickly and rear-ended it. Thankfully, no one was injured.

My husband had always told both of our sons to drive as if he were sitting in the back seat. If only someone would have been in the back seat on that day to remind Ryan to watch where he’s driving! Unfortunately, parents just can’t be with their children every minute of every day making sure they chose the best path.

But God has promised that he will be with us, no matter what paths we chose to follow, giving us guidance about which way to go. We have to learn to listen, though. The better the relationship we have with God, the easier it will be for us to hear his voice when we listen for it.

O God, guide us in your ways. Help us to listen to your voice as you help us along our life’s journey. We want to walk where you would lead us. We are thankful that you will be there with us along the way. Amen.

Saturday, July 19

Eternal Life

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.”

John 6:47

This is the greatest promise that God has given us. But sometimes it's hard to believe. The disciples weren't even sure it was true. We know what's in our hearts. There's a lot of good, but there's a lot of bad, too. We know we sometimes think unkind thoughts, say unkind words, act in unkind ways to those around us. And sometimes we go beyond unkind to harmful. How can we be good enough for Jesus to grant us eternal life? We can't! But our God loves us anyway, despite all the bad things we think, say, or do. His promise is for everyone! "...whoever believes has eternal life." Believe it!

Dear Jesus, we want to live with you forever. Help us remember your promise every day of our lives and help us believe that it is true. Take away our doubt. We pray in your holy name. Amen.