

God is Faithful!

Psalm 146 Acts 2:22-36 Luke 1:5-25

December 3, 2023

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"Advent" is the beginning of a new Church Year; it is a 4 week preparation time before we celebrate Christmas and the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. **The word "advent" is a Latin word that comes from Church History and it means "coming, arrival."**

Advent is a time when we remember the **"coming, arrival"** of Jesus as He is born in Bethlehem to be our Savior; it's a time to remember the Old Testament prophecies which foretold the **"coming (advent)"** of the Messiah; it's a time of **expectation, anticipation, and preparation** for **who Christ is** and **what He has done** for us¹.

One of the major themes of **Advent** is **God's Faithfulness**. Throughout the Old Testament times, God made promises to send a Savior, the "Messiah", who would save us from our sins. **God kept His word and sent Jesus to be the Messiah and Savior.**

But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under Law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Galatians 4:4-5

God's Promises about the Messiah and Savior go all the way back to the Garden of Eden, and God kept those promises alive throughout the generations and the entire Old Testament times. In fact, the promises of the Messiah are the most important things in the Old Testament. For instance, some of those promises include:

- ⇒ **God promised Adam and Eve that one of Eve's sons would crush Satan's head**
- ⇒ **God promised Abraham that one of His descendants would bless the entire earth**
- ⇒ **God promised Moses that God would raise up a prophet like him who would speak the very words of life and salvation**

¹ Other themes that are specific to the word "Advent" include Christ's Presence for us in the Word and Sacraments (Means of Grace) and His final "advent" on the Last Day when He returns to Judge the World.

- ⇒ **God promised King David that one of His descendants would be a great King who will have an eternal Kingdom that will never end**
- ⇒ **Through the Prophet Isaiah, God promised that the Messiah will be born of a virgin and that He will suffer and die for all the people**
- ⇒ **Through the Prophet Micah, God promised that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem and He will be the King of the Jews.**
- ⇒ **Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God promised that there will be forgiveness of sins through the Messiah and that God will remember our sins no more**
- ⇒ **Through the Prophet Malachi, God promised to send a messenger to prepare the way -- that messenger was John the Baptist.**

There are a plethora of promises in the Old Testament that God kept when He sent Jesus to be our Savior. It is no wonder that one of the major themes of Advent is God's faithfulness: **God keeps His Word!**

God keeps His word and promises to you as well.

God's faithfulness is an important way to think about God's work in your life. It is an important way to think about how much God loves you. God is faithful to you: He keeps His Word and Promises. Think of God's Faithfulness in two ways today:

FIRST, all the Advent promises that God kept means that you have a Savior, sent by God Himself. Jesus is the One whom God promised to send in order to rescue you from sin.

[The angel said . . . "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His Name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end."] Luke 1:30-33

All of these descriptions of Jesus are promises from the Old Testament that are being fulfilled; they are messianic prophecies that apply only to Jesus. Even His Name, "Jesus" means Savior!

Mary's son is given the name Jesus -- which means "Savior"! Jesus is even called the Son of the Most High God! That is a divine title that shows us that God Himself has come into the world to rescue you from sin, guilt and death. ***It's as if God wasn't going to take any chances on your salvation -- He came down from Heaven Himself***

to do the work so that you can be **100% certain**. The life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ *guarantees* that you are saved, forgiven, and rescued from death. In Christ, you have the *assurance* of life and salvation --- God Himself *secures* it!

A second way to think about *God's faithfulness* is to remember all the other promises that God makes to you. If God makes a promise to you in Holy Scripture, **HE WILL KEEP IT.** *You can trust Him!*

Because of God's promises, we look to Him for all good things, and we turn to Him in times of trouble! *God's promises to comfort, strengthen, and guide you each day.* For instance, here is a sample of promises God makes to you *each and every day*:

- ⇒ Watches over your life (Psalm 121)
- ⇒ Defends you from all evil (Psalm 97:10)
- ⇒ Provides your daily bread (Matthew 6:11)
- ⇒ Makes all things work for good in your life (Romans 8:28)
- ⇒ Listens to and answers your prayers (Psalm 5:3)
- ⇒ Strengthens you when you are weak (Isaiah 41:10)
- ⇒ Comforts you when you mourn (Psalm 34:18)
- ⇒ Guides and directs every step of your life (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- ⇒ Empowers you for godly living (Romans 8:11)
- ⇒ Assures you of His love and forgiveness (Hebrews 10:22)
- ⇒ Gives you hope, peace and security each day (Psalm 62:1-2)

God is your refuge and strength – an ever present help in times of trouble! **God is Faithful to you: His promises comfort, strengthen, and guide you each day!**

The problem is that sin enters your life and *you start to doubt* or you *don't believe* or you even *forget God's promises*.

- You go your own way
- You listen to your sinful nature

- You let the world influence you
- You follow the devil's temptations

God, of course, calls you to repent of these kinds of things: confess your unfaithfulness, and trust that God is faithful and just, and that He will forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Through faith in Christ and the forgiveness of your sins, you learn to **keep God's Promises in front of you** each day, you learn them, write them down, memorize them. No matter what you are facing, no matter how much you stress you have; no matter how much worry and fear you are tempted with: **keep God's promises in front of you: God is faithful: He keeps His Word!** Turn to the Lord in times of trouble and look to Him for all good things!

No only do you learn them, write them down, memorize them; but you can also share God's promises with others. We live in a world of lies, deception, and broken promises. There are people in your life who need to hear about a God who keeps Promises; about a Savior who promises forgiveness of sins and eternal life. You know those promises --- you have seen God's faithfulness in your very own life. Go and share God's promises in Christ with others in your witness, in your encouraging words, in your prayers, in your counsel --- help other people to see that **God is faithful: He keeps His Word!**

We start Advent today by thinking through one of the major themes of Advent: **God's faithfulness!**

- God is faithful and He kept His Old Testament promises to send the Savior, born in Bethlehem.
- God is faithful and He promises that you are saved from sin, guilt and death: He Himself came down from Heaven and does the work of salvation **for you** --- His life, death and resurrection guarantees your salvation!
- God is faithful, and you can trust His Promises in Scripture to comfort, strengthen and guide you each day!

**God is faithful:
He keeps His Word!**

Amen

Lord God our Heavenly Father,
we thank You for Your faithfulness and that
You keep Your promises to us.

First and foremost we thank You that You
kept Your promise to send a Savior, Your
Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ.

We thank You for His work which has earned
our eternal salvation.

Send us Your Holy Spirit so that we may
always trust Your Word and have
confidence in all of Your promises, knowing
that You are faithful and true.

As we hear and learn Your Word and
promises, help us to remain faithful to You,
to love You with all of our heart, and to love
our neighbor as Christ has loved us.

We pray this in Jesus our Savior's Name,
Amen.

Psalm 146

Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

² I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³ Put not your trust in princes,

in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.

⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,

⁶ who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,

who keeps faith forever;

⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;

⁸ the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹ The Lord watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰ The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Hallelujah!

Acts 2:22-36

22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—
23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him, “‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’” 29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.”’” 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Luke 1:5-25

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

¹⁸And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²²And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. ²³And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, ²⁵"Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

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