

Our Promise Keeping God

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0 : 00] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, this morning we come to you with complete confidence in your character,! Heavenly Father, this morning we come to you with complete confidence in your character,! In your sufficiency, in the word that you've given to us, in the word that you've given to us, in the indwelling spirit in the life of each believer.

In the promises that you have given to us that hold us and strengthen us in the moments of challenge and darkness.

And I, along with this dear people, trust you and call upon your name to make your word clear, convicting, strengthening, and Christ-exalting.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I'd like you to turn in your Bibles this morning to Isaiah chapter 60. By way of explanation, a reminder that the purpose of preaching is rooted in the great responsibility of making the word of God clear.

doing so through the power of the Spirit of God for the glory of Christ. And I read that to you not just to kind of give an introductory statement, but to tell you right up front what I'm here to do.

[1 : 50] My desire is to lift up Jesus and do so clearly that you walk out of here with confidence an abiding trust in His finished work on the cross.

Saturday. And I have been making numerous trips to Home Depot. Some of you know that I'm a permanent remodeler. When I die, I'm going to the place that's finished and somebody else did the work.

And I got to tell you, I like that idea. But I am checking out.

One young guy says to me, how are you doing? You know what I said, right? Any better than I'd be dead. Guy got this really quizzical look on his face.

He's like, are you saying that? Let me see. Are you glad you're not dead? I said, well, yeah, I was. I was okay. But I said, that's not what I said.

[2 : 52] What I said is, any better than I'd be dead. That just took it further into the dark. I mean, what do you mean? I said, well, the truth of the matter is, is when I die, I'm going to heaven and I'm going to see Jesus.

And today doesn't compare with that time. And, you know, the reason I could say that with absolute confidence, do you understand that?

Real confidence is because the God who is my Lord and Savior, the Lord Jesus who is my Redeemer, keeps every one of his promises.

He makes a promise. Now, by the way, you have to parse the fact that he doesn't make all the promises to the same people exactly the right.

But when he makes a promise to me, he keeps it. His unconditional promises, I rest on and I have confidence in. And that's the reason that Saturday when I was speaking to the young man there, I could say, any better than I'd be dead.

[4 : 04] Because when I die and I leave this place, I am going to see the Lord Jesus face to face and I will delight myself in his presence beyond my present imagination.

And when we come to Isaiah chapter 60, we're looking at a compressed portion of text that tells us about our promise keeping God.

I admit that one of the challenges of interpreting the book of Isaiah is dealing with the question of what happens to the nation of Israel.

And does God actually keep his promises to Abraham and to the people that he promised the things that we read of so often in the Old Testament? And so as we step into this passage, I want to kind of bring together, first of all, kind of the overview of the ugly reality of the nation of Israel's difficulties and hardness.

How many of you have ever read through the book of Judges and thought to yourself, really? Or just try this. You've worked your way through the care that God gave to the nation of Israel after he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

[5 : 30] Remember how willing they were to obey him in everything and how enthusiastic they were in following God and just really tender hearts towards God. Isn't that right? No. And you think to yourself, how in the world could God put up with them?

Until you wake up and look at yourself in the mirror and think, I'm really glad. You know, he was faithful to them. I can trust him to be faithful to me. And Isaiah gives us a reason to have confidence in our promise-keeping God.

Now, I want you to, by way of background, take a look at the point of hope for Israel by turning back just for a moment to Isaiah chapter 59. You're there in 60. You don't have to go very far back.

But look at Isaiah 59, verse 20 and 21. And a redeemer will come to Zion. Now, stop and think with me just for a moment about what we've learned so far in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah, namely in relationship to his prophetic utterances to the land of Israel, to the nation of Israel. What kind of people populated that land? A pretty disobedient, hard-headed group.

[7 : 03] Isn't that right? And he had every reason to deal with them. And eventually, he dealt with them with unbelievable firmness. And he sent them off into the land of captivity.

And he was very firm in his discipline with them. But here are promises made. A redeemer will come to Zion and to those in Jacob who turned from transgression.

There is something that's going to happen that is supernatural and something that is not earned or deserved. God's going to do something. And when you stop and think about it, when you think about the word redeemer, you're recognizing that it suggests to us that there's somebody who's in a mess and needs help.

A redeemer is someone who rescues. A redeemer is someone who delivers. A redeemer is someone who comes into the picture when all is lost and there's nothing that you can lean upon.

And then the redeemer arrives. The value of a redeemer is not seen when everything is going well and there are no difficulties. The value of the redeemer is seen in brokenness and in heartache and in difficulty.

[8 : 10] So here, at the cusp of the change between the history of Israel and the promises of God, we find here that this nation which had drifted away into idolatry and who had endured the firm judgment of God, nevertheless, is given this promise and this hope that there will be a day when God will do something spectacular for his people and according to his promise.

So here we have, we know, we know God will not break his promises. And that's kind of an underlying theme that I want you to hold on to this morning.

And really it's something that when you walk out of here, if you are here this morning and you are a believer, one of the things that should be an abiding confidence to you and an encouragement to your soul is this, is the one who has redeemed you is going to keep his promises.

He's not going to break them. I was thinking of illustration of dealing with little kids and one of the things I have a tendency to do, putting out my hand and they smack my hand and they smack my hand and they smack.

What do I do eventually? Pastor Andrew, you've got a good spirit. I like that. He's a little bit of a tease. I can tell that. He's tamped down because he's going to be a senior pastor in a couple months here.

[9 : 28] But, you know, you let him hit it three or four times and then what do you do? Atticus, you're right. You pull it away. God never does that to us.

Do you understand that? When he makes a promise, he follows through with it. He doesn't mess with us ever. Now, by the way, a little sidebar on that is that God's promises to his children are that he will get you home.

You like that, don't you? But a little part of that promise is he'll get you home if he has to put the hurt to you to get your attention. You don't realize that sometimes, but if you're sitting here and you're a child of God and you drift left of center, trust me.

He'll work to help you. And so my advice to you, kind of a little note on the side, is don't mess. Trust his promises and follow his word.

Walk in obedience and humility and don't mess things up. And the reason I bring that to you is because Israel had struggled with obedience and trust and they brought a lot of heartache into their lives.

[10 : 37] God dropped the hammer on them. And yet here he is letting them know that he will redeem them. It's interesting to notice that this passage, actually, that I read there in Isaiah chapter 59, appears elsewhere in the Scriptures.

And so I want you to...we'll be there for a while. So go ahead and turn to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. By the way, when you find a passage being recited in another place in the Bible, it's an indication that the previous passage has bearing on the argument or the case that is being presented in the next passage.

And so we're in Romans chapter...did I say 12? I meant 11. Romans chapter 11, verse 26 and 27. Let me read it to you. And in this way, all Israel will be saved as it is written.

And what you find next is the very passage out of Isaiah chapter 59. The Deliverer will come from Zion. He will banish ungodliness from Jacob. And this will be my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins.

The larger context of the ministry that Isaiah had prophetically. Now, it is important for us to recognize that when Paul recited this passage from Isaiah, he had a reason for doing it.

[12 : 07] The book of Romans is a book that lays out God's glory in salvation. And the starting point of helping us realize God's glory in salvation is the recognition of the absolute darkness and depravity of our hearts.

Do you realize that? People don't get saved without coming to grips with the darkness of their soul. And that's one of the reasons that you have the first three chapters of Romans argue very clearly for the reality of the hardness and darkness of men's souls.

So that they can hear also the message of salvation in Christ. You work your way through the book of Romans. And after Romans chapter 8, it begins now with this statement.

There is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Isn't that right? Hey, if you're saved, the case is closed. It's done. In the court of heaven, you are redeemed for all eternity.

And you can look forward to the day that you're going to see him face to face. The argument also follows on in beginning there in Romans chapter 8, verse 28. It says what? All things work together.

[13:17] How many of you going through things that you're wondering, is this good? Is this good? Yeah. It says all things work together for good to those that are called according to his purpose and those that love God or are loved by him.

So here we have this ongoing argument. God saves us. He grants us the blessing of peace with him. And he will never stop loving us.

I want you to think about that. I want you to think about that. God will never change his mind in relationship to you who have been called by him and loved by him.

That's a pretty neat promise, isn't it? But when you think about that, the very next thought that you have to ask yourself is, really? Paul takes three chapters to prove the unconditional, unchangeable love of God, and he does so by bringing your attention to the nation of Israel.

What? You really don't change your mind? You really continue loving people like them, like me?

[14:35] Three chapters give us a picture of God's love for the nation of Israel. And what you find in Romans 9, 10, and 11 is this clear argument that our confidence in our salvation can rest in the sovereign faithfulness of God to the nation.

Paul takes great pains to show us that though God has dealt with the nation of Israel and with their rebellious heart incredibly firmly, nevertheless, he's going to keep his promises and are going to redeem them.

Now, with that in mind, I want you to next look at a promise that was made to Abraham that we actually find over in Isaiah being fulfilled. And in Genesis chapter 12, I want you to mark the very first promise made in relationship to the nation of Israel.

Now, here, follow me. Why is it important to track the promises of God? Why is it? Because we find ourselves in a regular situation where we wonder, is God a promise-keeping God?

Is this going to work out well? Well, every one of us here, struggling with adversity and hardship and difficulty, and life is not the way we would like it.

[15:58] But do we know how the story ends? I believe we do because of who God is and because of the promises that he's made. So in Genesis chapter 12, I want you to mark the promise that God made to Abraham.

By the way, how did Abraham start out? Does anybody know? Hey, listen up. He was a really neat guy. He just, he had a heart for God. He was just all over being spiritual.

Is that the truth? He was just an ordinary pagan, and God called him. And so here, we work our way through the story. And in Genesis chapter 12, it says, Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse.

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. I want you to recognize here in these promises that is made to Abraham, they kind of break down into three different parts that I want you to recognize.

[17:06] Number one, God promised a land to the descendants of Abraham. This promise is explained more completely in Genesis chapter 15.

We're not going to look at it in detail, but recognize that in Genesis chapter 15, the boundaries of the land that God said he would give to Abraham are clearly stipulated.

You can Google it, and you can check and say, Hey, what is the land that God promised? What are the boundaries of that? And you'll get an idea of it.

Incidentally, the covenant that God made with Abraham was not conditional. It was unconditional. Let me make a distinction so you follow along with me here.

A conditional contract or a covenant is a little bit like the one you make with your mortgage company. What's that contract like?

[18 : 03] You make a covenant. Hey, I get to live in this house, but I have to make monthly payments. What happens if you stop making monthly payments? Eventually, they invite you to leave.

And if you don't leave under invitation, they will help you by moving your stuff out and setting it on the street or on the curb. Got that?

Same thing with a car. They say, You can buy that car. You make X number of dollar monthly payment. And what happens if you don't make the payment?

I was driving through my neighborhood a little while back, and I saw this guy working his truck up to the car that was sitting on the curb. And I noticed that he was a little nervous about doing it.

And I actually, being a conversationalist that I am, I said, Hey, what are you doing? He said, Well, I'm picking up this car. I said, Is there something wrong with it? He says, No, they just didn't make the payments.

[19 : 04] Ah. That's a conditional covenant. You keep your part. I'll keep my part. An unconditional covenant is one in which there's no two parties agreeing to everything.

There's one party that says, I'm going to do this. Let me give you an illustration of an unconditional covenant. Here's what I said to my wife. 48 years ago almost.

Yeah, 48. I said, I will love you in sickness and in health until death do us part. That's unconditional.

There's no qualifier in it. I'll love you so long as you love me and you bring me breakfast in bed and blah, blah, blah. You know, no. This is me. I'm doing it.

And here is God saying to Abraham, Genesis chapter 12, I am going to keep my promise to you and I'm going to give you a land. Has this promise been met completely?

[20 : 08] Not yet. Number two. God also promised a nation to Abraham. Going back there. Verse two.

I will make of you a great nation. By the way, Abraham at that point was 75. Now, I'm not going to get into biology, but 75 is kind of stretching it for being a daddy.

And here is God saying to Abraham, who had been childless for all these years, many years. Someday, you're going to be a great nation. His answer was, yeah, right.

Really? Really? Where's the start to all of this? And yet, we find that God kept his promise and made a great nation of Abraham and his offspring spread all over the world.

Furthermore, God promised that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through God's blessing to Abraham. How was that? How is that?

[21 : 19] Well, to help you think it through in broad terms, you understand that it was through the seed of Abraham that God brought David and brought ultimately our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He came through Abraham's line. And so here we have, and I want you to see the picture, against the backdrop of the ugliness of the absolute spiritual failure of Israel.

God says to his people that he is chastising and he's disciplining, I am going to keep my promise. I remind you, the promises of God are cast in particularly neat light against the backdrop of some of the hardest moments of our life.

Do you understand that? I want to say that to you who are sitting here today and your life is marked by difficulty and hardship and things you didn't choose. I encourage you to know this. God's promises are most precious against the backdrop of the hardship you're in.

And I want to remind you that if he keeps his promise to the nation of Israel, he'll keep his promise to you. So here we are. God says, you're going to have a land.

[22:36] You're going to have children. And you are going to be a blessing to other people. And the full range of God's promise to Abraham is yet to be fulfilled. But do we believe that God is going to keep his promise?

Absolutely. And it is because of that that we kind of step in now to the broad picture of Isaiah chapter 60. And I want you to look at the future blessings to the nation of Israel. You look there at Isaiah chapter 60.

And we're not going to read all through the passage. But in Isaiah chapter 60, beginning there in verse 1 and 2, it says, Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

I want you to recognize as you work your way through that, look at verse 4. Lift up your eyes all around and see they all gather together. They come to you. Your sons shall come from afar.

What is God saying to the nation here? And this is Isaiah making a promise to a group of people that are going to suffer great hardship. He says, I want you to understand that the day is coming that God is going to fulfill his promises to Abraham, and he's going to bless you.

[23:46] How? He is going to gather the dispersed people that he drove out because of the rebellion of their hearts. He's going to bring them back together again. God drove them from the land because of discipline.

He will regather them as a people from every corner of the world. That has happened only in part, and it will happen in its entirety.

And in doing so, people are going to look at this and say, wow, this is God doing something unbelievable, and he's doing it according to his promise. Why could I say to the man in Home Depot, my end is going to be better than the present?

It's because I know God keeps his promises. And here we are being reminded, God says, listen, there will be a regathering of these dispersed people. Wherever they've been sent to, I'll bring them back.

Secondly, you look there in verse 9. It says, There will be a rejoicing in God's care for his people.

[25:07] Not only is he going to bring them back, but there are going to be people that rejoice together in the reality that he keeps his promises. What value is it that God keeps his promises to other people?

Do you benefit from that? Yes. How do you benefit? Because you have assurance that if he did it for them, he will do it for you. I think about the song that we probably don't sing very often anymore.

It is no secret what God can do, what he's done for others. He'll do for you. And God, keeping his promise to the nation of Israel, reminds me that he will also keep his promise to me.

He is going to fulfill his promises. He is not going to back away from bringing blessing to me, despite the hardness of my heart and the similarity I have between my life and pattern and the life of the nation of Israel.

Furthermore, I want you to recognize in the passage that the nation will honor God by delighting in his work for his people.

[26 : 15] Mark what we find there in Isaiah chapter 60, looking at verse 19 through 21. Isaiah chapter 16, verse 19 through 21.

The sun shall be no more, your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light. But the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself, for the Lord will be your everlasting light.

And your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous. They shall possess the land forever. The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

And what will the response of others be when they see the hand of God in the life of his people? They are going to rejoice. They're going to mark the success and the certainty of God who keeps his promises, and they're going to find pleasure and satisfaction in it.

I want you to turn over to Revelation and see what the future is going to be according to the promises of Scripture. Go in your Bible to Revelation chapter 21, verse 23.

[27 : 33] Revelation chapter 21. Verse 23. There in Isaiah chapter 60, we have this assurance that God will keep his promises to his people.

In Revelation chapter 21, we find out what that future is going to be. And mark what we read there in verse 23. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

By its lights will nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night there.

They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. What's the future going to be like? Stop and think with me just for a moment of how messy the day is that we live in.

How unbelievably tense, marked by turmoil. Everywhere you turn, you see good reason to be reasonably anxiety, anxiety or have a reasonable anxiety with the messiness of life.

[28 : 50] Our government is not what you'd like. Am I right? The neighborhoods that you live in are not as safe as you'd like. The job that you have, it's not as certain as you'd like.

The health that you enjoy is not what you hope. And everywhere we live, relationships, a struggle. Well, guess what?

The day is coming when we will enjoy the fulfilled promises of God in every aspect of our life. And one of the proofs of that is what God did and is doing for the nation of Israel.

You mark there of how this story ends in Revelation. But I want you to turn to another passage to see a better picture of the promises God made to the nation of Israel in particular.

Go over to Jeremiah chapter 31. Jeremiah chapter 31. If you're in Isaiah, just kind of cut forward a little bit and go to Isaiah chapter 31 or Jeremiah 31.

[29 : 53] Let me remind you of something. We had communion. Was it last week, Pastor? Yes, it was, right? Yeah. And if you're looking at the passage in 1 Corinthians 11, Jesus speaks of the new covenant, right?

This cup is the new covenant in my blood. What is the new covenant? Remember, covenant is a promise. Basically, there are two kinds of promises.

There are promises. There are promises in which you agree and somebody else agrees. Or there's an unconditional covenant. I want you to look at Isaiah or Jeremiah chapter 31 and go to 31 through 34.

Now, stop for a moment.

God says the new covenant is going to be different than that covenant. That covenant is one that they failed to keep. A reminder.

[31:11] After God gave the Ten Commandments to the nation of Israel, if you were to go back into the book of Exodus, you would find there that after Moses read the covenant and the sacrifice was made, here's what the nation of Israel said.

All that you have said we will do. How'd that go? You read through the Pentateuch and you think, I can't believe it.

I mean, you stop and think about it. Every morning when an Israelite got up, he had food that came from where? Heaven. And every morning when he got up, he saw that there was a pillar of cloud, or there was a cloud over the tabernacle, or there was a pillar of fire by night.

Do you think they had any doubt who was in charge and who was leading them? No. And yet, in their stubborn, dark hearts, they kept on rebelling, and God kept on caring for them.

So here we are. Jeremiah, I'm going to make a different covenant with you. And in verse 33, Periodically, I end up in conversation with people who make professions of faith, faith, but they really have no evidence of faith.

[32:45] Do you follow what I'm talking about? I mean, it's still moderately popular to say, yes, I'm a believer, I'm a believer. But the truth of the matter is, there's no evidence.

This passage is indicating that one of the genuine characteristics of a person who is a believer is a connection with the Word of God. There's an affection.

Not always, but there is, remember it says, As newborn babes desiring the sincere milk of the Word, one of the things that I get into when I'm talking to a person about the authenticity of their faith, the question is, has there ever been a time when you were actually genuinely interested in the Word?

You were encouraged by it. You were strengthened by it. You were convicted by it. You were connected to it. You know, it's one thing to read a letter from somebody you don't care.

It's another thing to read a letter from someone you really love. Years ago, when we had a Christian school here, I remember walking across between the two buildings and finding a note folded up real small.

[33:59] Now, being a person who grew up in boarding school, there was a amount of a perverse curiosity in me, so I opened it up. Oh, it was drippy.

It was as sappy a note as I've read in some time. Of course, I haven't read many of those for a long time, but I remember reading it, and so I had the nerve to take it to the young man and say, Hey, this probably belongs to you because your name's on it.

When I read the letter, it didn't mean a thing to me. He turned all colors of red. You know, it was like, But it meant a lot to him.

So, coming back, here's God. Look at the passage. He says, Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to put my law within you, and I'm going to write it on your hearts.

Are there any of you here that have ever memorized Bible verses and they didn't mean a thing to you? You were just doing it because you wanted to play games in Awana or, you know, you got a prize in VBS or something like that, but then there have been those moments where adversity and hardship has just brought you brokenhearted to God, and the Word has touched and encouraged your heart and lifted you up, and it's found a place, and it's been revival and encouragement, right?

[35 : 26] God says, Hey, this is what I'm going to do. And here he is talking to a people who he gave them the Word, and it just didn't connect, and he says, Here's what I'm going to do.

You don't need to worry about it. I'm going to drive that business home. I'm going to get the Word in your life, okay? And verse 34, And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they'll know me from the least of them to the greatest.

And then mark the last part, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more. I have been reading through the Scriptures, and I'm in the Psalms right now.

And one of the things that I've been kind of struck by is the psalmist talking about the sins of youth, okay?

Forgive the sins of my youth. Don't remember my sins from my youth. And, boy, I don't know how many of you kind of think back. Some of you are fairly young, are still in that youth part, and are kind of stacking up the crowd or the tally.

[36 : 41] But some of you are older, and you can remember, Oh, that wasn't smart. That was wicked. I mean, yeah. Here is God saying to His people.

Look at that passage again. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. One of the undeniable pleasures, pleasure that I have in talking to people about the Lord Jesus is I can look them in the eye, and I can tell them this.

I know the one who can forgive all of your sins and take away the shame and guilt of the darkness of your heart.

You ever laid awake at night feeling bad about something, a lie you told, something you stole, a gross dishonesty, manipulating someone else and taking something from them, immorality, and the burden of that darkness just eats away at your heart at night, and there really seems to be no recovery.

You know what it says in the Bible? I will forgive all your sins. I will take away that burden and that sin.

[38 : 08] And here we are, understanding that God made promises to the nation of Israel and God is going to keep them.

Now, His unconditional covenant to Abraham and to the nation of Israel gives us confidence in His unconditional covenant with us.

We are a people that do believe in salvation being something that when we are saved, we don't have to sit in constant anxiety about whether or not we're going to make it home.

I bump into people periodically and, you know, hey, if you were to die tonight and God were to ask you why He should let you into heaven, what would you say? Well, I don't know. I'm trying the best I can.

Have you ever heard that answer? I'm trying the best I can. Well, I am thankful that my getting home does not have anything to do with me trying the best I can.

[39 : 12] My confidence rests in the finished work of Christ, not in mine. And Jeremiah reminds me of that work of God. Let me bring you to the last part that I want you to see.

Go back to Isaiah chapter 60 and see the blessing to the nations. Do other people get blessed when Israel is blessed?

Well, God told Abraham that that's the way it would work. Incidentally, as a corollary to that, over in 2 Corinthians, and we're just kind of a sidebar here for a moment, but in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 4, it tells me that the blessings I've received, in part, are to play out into the lives of other people.

Isn't that right? And so we look at Isaiah chapter 60 and look at verse 2 and 3, the latter part of 2.

It says, Think back with me again to the promise that God made to Abraham.

[40 : 31] Through you, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. I'm going to make you a great nation and I'm going to bless you and I'm going to make your name great and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you.

Now, do you see the similarity? God made a promise to Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his offspring. And that promise has had partial fulfillment in the coming of our Christ who died and rose again to be the Savior of all who trust in him by faith.

But there still is a portion of the promises that are yet to be realized and that is in the eternal reign of Christ over all the earth. I listen to our songs and I think about the things we sing about Jesus being king.

The day is coming that he will reign over all the earth and he will reign for all eternity. I am thankful that I see less on Facebook today about politics.

I'm not sure. It's just because I've excluded people that are obsessive about it. But, you know, I can only take so much. It does make me kind of think forward.

[41 : 59] I am looking forward to the day that Jesus is in charge. And that's going to be wonderful. And so you look here in the reality of the fact and you realize that the promise that God made to Abraham has had partial fulfillment in the coming of our Savior.

But the promise of blessing will be completed in the eternal reign of Christ. Are you looking forward to that? Are you longing for his coming? Are you anticipating it?

How many of you know what Maranatha means? It does not. It's not pronounced Marantha. In the old days when we had a school, I used to just die when they would go on the radio and they'd go on the TV and say Marantha Christian School.

But anyway, I stopped trying to correct people. Hey, it's good. What works for you? How do you spell it? You know, do you know what it means? Our Lord's coming.

It is to be something that characterizes the heart of the believer. I'm looking forward to it. Why? Because for one, I'm going to see him.

[43 : 10] For two, I'm going to be like him. And third, I am going to enjoy his perfect reign over all, all, the kingdoms of the earth and over all of creation for all of eternity.

That's the way I'd like every person's story to end. Do you understand that point? But the truth of the matter is all of eternity will be spent in one of two conditions.

Those who have come in humility and brokenness, confessing their sins and believing in the finished work of Christ will spend eternity with him.

That's good. If you were to go back to the book of Revelation and you don't need to go there this morning, you will find that there is another part to it. Those who refuse the offer of salvation through the finished work of Christ will spend all of eternity in hell, suffering forever for their rebellious and hardened heart.

And when's the time to come to grips with that? Now. Now. And so I would appeal to you if you are here this morning and don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, don't walk out of here saying, well, there will be another day because you don't know that.

[44:36] The fact of the matter is is Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And if you are here and you sense the burden of your heart and you realize that the darkness of your soul is not something that you can solve, I would plead with you, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ in whom alone is salvation.

Let's close in prayer. Father God, I'm thankful that you keep promises. You have promised to bless.

You have promised also to judge. And this morning you offer the gift of salvation to all who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that work of belief is a work of your grace.

And I would plead with you this morning that you would touch the lives of those that are here that do not know Christ, that they would be drawn to the cross. That believers who are under the burden and heartache and challenge of life would rest in confidence that you, who have done everything for our salvation, will bring them through the heartache and the challenge of this day.

You will not fail them. Help us to walk out of here victorious because of Christ and to display that joy and that victory to an unbelieving world with quietness and with gentleness.

[46:01] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.