

It's All About Promises

All Saints Lutheran Church, Calgary

Promises Made- Promises Kept- Promises Yet to Be

October 20, 2024

Isaiah 46:6-11; John 14:8-12

Children's Messag?

Did you watch closely the baptism of young Asher this morning. I hope you listened very closely. We don't get to celebrate baptisms very often. So it's extra special, not only for those baptized in the service, but for all of us who are reminded of what was said at our own baptisms. We probably don't remember. But we are reminded.

Today is all about promises. The first promise goes back more than four thousand years! God said to the people, "I will be your God. And you will be my people."

What does this mean for us and for Asher?

First, it means that God says to Asher, "Welcome to my family!" God says, "I have great plans for you, like ... to love you no matter what... to provide for you and watch over you... and to give you gifts so that you will do wonderful things with your life."

Again, "I will love bless you and love you and forgive you and provide everything you need.... So that one day you will be a blessing."

“I will bless the whole world. But I can’t do it without you.” You may have heard that said over and over today. “I will bless.... But I can’t do it without you.”

To bless Asher, God needs parents who will love him and raise him, who will lead him into faith, and who will support him to have great opportunities in life.

But parents can’t do it alone. They need Sponsors – Godparents - who will share in the relationships and the nurture.

But even they can’t do it alone! They need the congregation – the whole congregation! That includes you!

You see, this same blessing was said over you. Maybe in a different place and in slightly different words. But it’s the same promise made to us all.

God says, “I will be your God... And you will be my child. I promise! Welcome to my family!”

Christ wants to bless all creation. Not just people. Not just Christians. But Christ can’t do it alone. Christ says, “I am preparing a place for you and something for you to do in the world. I promise! Welcome to my family!”

We might ask, “Really?”

And God answers, “I promise!”

And that promise begins with water... and then it continues with bread and wine. It’s a different event, but the same promise. Welcome to the table! This is the table for my family! Come. Eat. Grow stronger in who you are and what you and only you can do.”

Jesus even said – and it’s in the scripture this morning – Jesus said, “You will do even greater things than I... Because I live in you. I promise.”

“Really?” we might ask. And again and again Christ says, “I promise!”

But how do we know that’s true? Look around you! Look around at all the help Christ has to bless the world. Parents, of course. And Godparents. And congregations. And schools and hospitals and government buildings.

Christ can’t make a different world, a better world alone. Christ needs others. So there are teachers and lawyers and nurses and farmers... coaches and office workers and architects and engineers... truck drivers and grocery store workers and people who deliver the mail and people who take away the garbage.

Everyone to do everything to make this world a better place. I can’t wait to see what Christ will do with you someday!

Let's Pray... Tell me again ... that you have a place for me... in my family... in your family... in your world....

Tell me again... that you are blessing me.... and preparing me... to be a blessing to the world.

I know it's true for others... I see all the people ... every day... busy doing their part in the world...

But tell me again... that you have a place for me...

I know you promised... I just need to be reminded... Amen

Adult Message

Do you see a pattern here? The promise is first made by God. The promise is always first from God. "I will be... and You will be..."

God gives life to the world. And promise to the world. It's been happening for fourteen billion years!

But God can't forget. The promise is made new every day!

God gives life to the world. It's a promise to the world. A fresh start every day.
A new beginning every day.

But God can't do it alone. There are all those we've already listed. There are all those sitting around us this morning. And there's... you. God can't do what is needed in the world without... you!

Now, today, I want to remind you of someone. More than your parents and godparents. You have a family and you are welcomed into God's family. But I want you to remember someone special. Someone very close to you. A friend. A very special friend. I am certain everyone of you has one....

Remember, picture this person in your mind. Say their name quietly... This person encourages you... supports you...does favors for you... listens to your stories... laughs at your jokes...

This person is there for you when you need a good cry. This is your brother – not by blood but by choice. This is your sister – not by blood but by choice...

Sometimes this friend becomes a life partner. Yesterday Tracy and Isaac married their best friend, someone from high school, many years ago...

There was the same pattern yesterday in the wedding. God promises... and parents promise... and the wider circle of friends promise... and then they promised each other. "Behold my beloved... in whom my soul delights!"

Welcome to my family. You have a place in my life. I have a place in yours. We have purpose together. God has promised. We promise.

God still promises first. But God cannot do it without others....

In baptism today, it is the same pattern.

And in a few minutes the pattern will be repeated again at the family table. "This is my body... Take and eat.... This is my blood... take and drink...Now I live in you... and you live in me... I promise."

"This is my family. Welcome. There is a place for you. No matter what... No matter when...

"It cannot be my family without you... I cannot bless the world like I want it to be blessed without you.

"See all who are involved right now... an Assisting Minister, the Altar Guild,, Musicians.... Don't forget the farmers who grew the rice and the wheat... and the vintners who grew the grapes and made the wine... And the truck driver who drove to market and the teenager who stocked the shelves....

“I want to bless the whole world. But I cannot do it without others... I cannot do it without you....

The pattern will even be repeated one more time today as we make our commitment to Camp Kuriakos. And its capital campaign.

“I want to bless the world... I want to shape the lives and faith of children... and their parents...

“I want to nurture a little corner of creation... bless the trees and the water and the feathered creatures and the finned creatures... I can't do it without you.

“I have made a promise. There's room in that promise for you

Now, we need to be honest... The Holy One who makes the first promise has pierced hands and feet. There is a scar in his side because someone with lies and corruption resisted the promise and refused their place.

We have to acknowledge that sometimes we lose a child... Sometimes our life partner is taken from us far too soon. Sometimes our dreams and even our bodies are dashed by cruelty... and we cry out... “But you promised!”

And then those wounded hands and that body broken and that blood offered embrace us... And the Savior, forever true to the promise, says.... “But I’m not through with you yet.... I am with you... I will be your God... You are still my child... I promise!”

There is a pattern here. It’s as solid as the pattern to the time and the day and the season, a pattern we overlook and take for granted... as the sun rises... and the sun sets... and as solid as the turning of the seasons... as solid as preparing a meal and sharing a meal and cleaning up after the meal.... We belong... and there’s something we have to do....

”I will be your God... You will be my people....

“I promise!”

Closing Blessing

Our service now ends as it usually does. But maybe we hear it a little differently today.

The pastor sort of waves a hand and sends us off with a promise...

Go now... God will bless you... God is blessing you... Just as promised....

Go now and be a blessing. You can be a blessing. You will be a blessing. God promised!

What's your promise?

“I will be your God.... You will be my people... I will bless the world and all its creatures... But I can't do it alone. I don't want to do it alone!

Do what you can to be a blessing... Do what you can... Be who you are...
In my name... in my love... by my grace....”

Amen!

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