
Sermon Notes

December 8, 2019

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

BRIGHT HOPE FOR TOMORROW When Promises Get Broken Jeremiah 33:14-16

Promises, Promises

- ❖ All of us break promises at one time or another
- ❖ Breaking promises erodes trust and negatively impacts relationships
 - when you break promises you create stress for others
 - when you break promises you may feel guilty about disappointing someone you care about
- ❖ God's promises
 - some are about blessings
 - some come in the form of warnings
 - some are about consequences
 - all of them are kept!

The Prophet of Hope

- ❖ In the midst of a dark time in Israel's history, God uses the prophet, Jeremiah to "trumpet" the promise of better days ahead
- ❖ God calls Jeremiah to serve him around 627 BC (Jer 1:4)

- by 587 BC, Jeremiah is an important spiritual leader within his community
- Jeremiah speaks for God even though no one seems to be listening (Jeremiah 11:6-8, 11)
 - God promises that disaster is coming
 - God promises that He will not listen to His people
 - Jeremiah is "locked up" as a threat to national security
- ❖ from prison, Jeremiah proclaims some of the most powerful words of hope found in the entire Hebrew Bible
 - better days are coming (Jeremiah 31:31, 31:38, 33:14)
 - ***The LORD is our righteousness*** (Jeremiah 33:15-16)
 - bright hope for tomorrow is rooted in the promise of ***a righteous Branch***

A Promise Kept

- ❖ Hope comes wrapped in a person (not a season!)
 - when we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate a promise kept
 - the birth of Jesus fulfills the Lord's long-standing promise to provide this righteous Branch
- ❖ Jesus is the only fully righteous person who has ever lived
 - in exchange for our unrighteousness, Jesus offers us **HIS** righteousness
 - God promises that those who trust Jesus to trade His righteousness for their unrighteousness actually become the righteousness of God

- ❖ God's keeping of this promise is what Christmas is all about
 - what God says, God has done, is doing, will do
 - those who follow Jesus in faith inherit all the promises God has ever made (2 Corinthians 1:20)
- ❖ Why does God keep His promises?
 - because of what Jesus, the righteous Branch has done!
 - the Christian faith is not first and foremost about what **YOU** do for God
 - the Christian faith is founded on what **GOD** has done for you

Four Promises For You

- ❖ **God is faithful to forgive your sins** (1 John 1:9)
 - God does not make you jump through hoops or go through elaborate rituals to be forgiven of your sins
 - God waits for you with open arms and loving forgiveness when you come to Him with repentance
- ❖ **God is faithful to make you more like Jesus** (Phil 1:6)
 - if you belong to God through faith in Jesus, every day, God works to shape you and make you more like Jesus
 - God uses every circumstance, the greatest joys and the most painful sorrows to make you more like Jesus
- ❖ if you belong to God through faith in Jesus, nothing can stop God from accomplishing His glorious purposes for your life

- ❖ **God is faithful to work all things for your good if you love Him** (Rom 8:28)
 - nothing touches your life that God can't use to accomplish His purposes and bring about some good for you
 - God's plan for your life is invincible
- ❖ **God is faithful to meet all your needs** (Phil 4:19)
 - God meets all your needs: physical, emotional, spiritual, financial
 - no need is too great, no need is too small
 - God is a good Father who delights in caring for the needs of His children
- ❖ *If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.* (2 Timothy 2:13)

Personal Reflection

1. How have broken promises affected your life? Think both of promises you have broken to others as well as promises that others have broken to you.
2. Review the dark, tragic time during which Jeremiah ministered and consider the words of promise and hope God proclaims through him. How can these same words of hope and promise encourage you during your own dark times?
3. As you think of celebrating Christmas this season, how does the idea that "hope comes wrapped in a person" and that Christmas is all about "a promise kept" inspire you?
4. Review the four promises listed above. Which of these do you most need to hold onto in the midst of your current circumstances? What will you do to keep this promise "front and center" in your thinking?