

“The Cost of Keeping a Promise”

Lord Jesus, grant me your Spirit that I would proclaim your word in Truth and Power and that all who listen would hear what you have to say to them. To the glory of the heavenly Father. Amen.

“I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly. . . I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant.”

Covenant. God Almighty, El Shaddai, made a covenant, an everlasting covenant. God made a promise to you and me through His promise to Abraham. He promised to be our God forever.

I have known some who refuse ever to make a promise and refuse to trust anyone’s promise to them. They know, they have experienced, bad things from broken promises. True but we live in a world full of promises, marriage vows, promise to care for child, for mother. Going into combat, obeying commanding officers, even going to school, our jobs at work means

keeping promises. Keeping promises can be very costly. For better or worse, sickness or health, richer poorer. We all know of people who have paid a heavy price for keeping promises and have known folks who have walked away from them.

Why bother keeping promises? Usually they answer is at they did what they were supposed to do. Soldiers in war have walked into certain death, firemen going in to rescue a child.

Do you ever wonder, would the man or woman have made the promise if they knew what would happen? People have gotten married when one was soon to die. Refused to have tests done on the child they were expecting. We will accept whatever God sends. His will be done not ours. The history books and the Daily news are filled with accounts of promise keeping and the stories, the law suits, about broken promises.

God Almighty, El Shaddai, made a covenant with Abraham, an everlasting covenant. The cosmic divine made a covenant at cosmic divine cost. Recently the astronomers cataloged the two hundred million stars in our Milky Way Galaxy. The government has four hundred million of us on the SS card lists. In the last hun-

dred years, since Mr. Hubble discovered and laid out the basic understanding of “red shift”, they have been counting and locating the other galaxies. They have found Billions of them and are still finding more. Our is rather average. Our sun in an average star. Hundreds of millions of stars in each of the many many billions of galaxies.

There was a video on the web I sent to the ministers around about the cosmos. I wrote, “If your God isn't big enough to do this you need a bigger faith.” Most people have a little God, one that is too small to be much good. Their god is doing the best he can, he just can't do what we need. All kinds of tragedies happen, war sickness, death, and the minor inconveniences of life. We pray, he is just doing the best he can.

The Lord God Almighty, El Shaddai, creator of the heavens and the earth, creator of all that is seen and unseen, all the host of heaven, spiritual beings in high and low places, is all wise, all powerful. He created the universe, not just this earth, not just this solar system, not just this Milky Way Galaxy. He is beyond, the furthest edge of the universe, before the big bang

and after. Beyond time, from everlasting to everlasting. Beyond all limit, all dimension.

The miracle is not how great God is. The miracle is that He loves us. He knows all Seven Billion people on earth He knows all about them, not just name and address. Everything about them, their family, their joys, hopes, fears, pain.

The miracle is that the Lord God Almighty knows you, loves you personally, knows you better than you know yourself, loves you more than you love yourself. He understands, He has plans for you and He will bring them all to pass, according to His will, perfectly.

He is Righteous, appropriate, the expression of His Divine character. I think when we see people make and keep great promises, we are seeing a reflection, a hint, of the divine in our world. It is very impressive and we have some understanding of our human weakness in completely fulfilling our promises as they could to be kept,

We all know of people who have paid a heavy price for keeping promises. Some are sitting here. Would life be better if we made no promises, kept no

promises? Looked out for number one, follow your own star, don't worry about other people.

We are where we are by God's will and plan. Our days are ordered by His divine purpose. He is God Almighty for Abraham and for all of us. He made a promise to be our God. "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant with you." God knew Abraham could not be blameless, we can not be blameless, righteous.

When God made the covenant with Abraham, He already knew, Abraham, all of us could never keep our part, never be blameless. He made the covenant with helpless imperfect sinful people, living in this evil lost world.

When God made the covenant with Abraham, He already knew, to keep it, it would cost, the cosmic cost of the the eternal Son, one with the Father and the Spirit. The Divine being, divine essence would enter this world as son of Mary. Born to die, rejected, receive human hatred in exchange for His divine love.

God almighty made the promise with full knowledge of what it would cost Him to keep the covenant.

He pours out His righteousness, holiness, eternal mercy, love on such as we are. Few of us say a prayer, spend an hour a week for worship. - Too much! He watches a world gone mad, running after evil, blind to what ails them and blind to the healing God puts in front of their eyes.

The greatest miracle of all is that He love us, divine Love, eternal mercy, Grace. Now considering all that take a look in a different direction. God is the potter, we are the clay. He makes some to be fine vases holding flowers that make this world beautiful. It is nice to see beautiful people, intelligent, talented, attractive. We are drawn toward them. We try to look as good as we can, act with kindness, avoid being stupid. Life is better that way.

But we know that pretty, smart, sweet talking folks do not count for much. God makes some who are not nice on the outside, just a useful pot. And He makes some who are smashed, lumpy, flattened. We are going to sing about the Pot and Potter, Mold me, shape me, use me.

Are you, am I willing to be used in any way the Lord God Almighty will? I want to be a fine vase, at-

tracting the attention and praise of the world around. Some who have been smashed require a life time of care. Their caregivers pay a high personal price. Some would say “Put them away, somewhere.”

Question, think about, God makes some beautiful, some plain, some smashed. Which one does God love most? Does He look down on the plain, the smashed. I have friends who are lumpy, feel the world, their relatives, judge them defective. I am impressed, I am sure God is impressed how well they have done with so little.

Luther said the reason we pray “give us this day our daily bread” is that God gives too much to some and not enough to others. God depends on us, gives us the honor, privilege to be His hands as we distribute our gifts according to His love and will.

The Lord God Almighty creates some to need care and some to give care. We see His Love, we participate in His Love. It forces us to depend on His love and spirit. Forgiveness - we never do it all as we should. Praise and thanksgiving.

When we stretch ourselves to keep our promises, struggle, go beyond ourselves, we realize that we do have the power of God’s Spirit inside, God is living in us. The people around look at us and get a glimpse of the divine, His love as we love. That is a powerful witness. We bring God praise, deeper praise than the songs we sing.

The greatest commandment of all is to love the Lord thy God with all your heart all your mind all your soul and the second is like it you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Keep your promise to love God and your neighbor as He kept His promise of Love to you. Do not mind the cost. Remember the cost He paid to keep His promise to be your God forever, your Redeemer, your Savior.

His love never ends it is peace that passes all understanding, your life, all you have are held in His hands, your hearts and minds are kept in Christ Jesus Amen.

2 Lent

Gen. 17:1–7, 15–16

Rom. 5:1–11

March 1, 2015

Psalm 22:23–31 LW p 320!!

Mark 8:27–38

Living Water Rosedale