

09.11.11 / John 14:1-5 and 18

**PLEASE NOTE:**

For the foreseeable future, the Curriculum Guide will be a little different from our typical format. We are trying some new approaches as we make the shift to match the schedules of the Durham and Raleigh East campuses in our weekly study of Scripture. The guide will be closely linked with the actual sermon and will include sermon notes, application questions, and a section on prayer.

**Sermon Notes**

Promises take many forms – I promise I'll take you to the park today, I promise to love you forever, I promise I'm telling the truth – but the one thing mankind's promises all have in common is this: they can all be broken. We can't see every chain of events that would affect our ability to keep our promises, we are limited in our capacity to direct these events, and we certainly can't see the depths of our own brokenness that would lead us to break promises simply by not making good on our word. Here's where God is different to us in two major regards:

1) He DOES see, know, and have the capacity to direct all things and in this way is never hindered from bringing to bear what He promises

2) He IS pure and good, and so He always makes good on His word – if He says He'll do it, He will do it

This brings us to look at the promises that God makes to us. By some counts, there are several hundred promises made by God throughout the Bible. For those who are in Christ, there are promises regarding the cleansing of our sin by the blood of Christ, God's presence with us in this life, answered prayers, God's provision, God's strength, God's instruction, God's love, freedom in Christ, forgiveness of sins, hope in the Lord, the holiness of God, His peace, unity of God's believers, an eternal future with Him, and more. Because of the grandeur of the statement, to say that God will forever fulfill His promises to us necessarily makes the statements that God is in control and that He is pure and good, and Scripture affirms both of these throughout.

Jesus is bold in the promises that He makes to us because He speaks with the authority of the Father, who lives in Him (John 14:10). In verse 2 of John 14 alone, Jesus promises to prepare a place for those who are in Him, in verse 3 He promises that He will return and take us there, in verse 16 He promises that the Father will send the Holy Spirit to be with us forever, and in verse 18, Jesus promises that He will not leave us as orphans. The Greek for orphans – "orphanos" – means desolate and fatherless, and Jesus promises that we are not to be in that state. We see in this a picture of our God that is affirmed countless times throughout the Scriptures, that He is gentle, kind, forgiving, everlasting, patient, pursuant, and utterly redemptive in all His ways. Romans 8:37-39 says that nothing in all of creation will even be able to separate us from this love of Christ because HE LOVES US. In other words, He gets the glory. When God is glorified, something miraculous happens. In Romans 4:20-22, Abraham is given God's righteousness as he gives glory to God, and this promise is for us as well, as we see in verses 23-25, where for those who believe in the God, who raised Jesus from the dead, thus giving Him all the glory for destroying their sins and justifying them before God, they too will be counted as righteous and adopted into the family of God.

In the earthly picture of adoption, we can see much of the Father's pursuit of and love for us, and when we see someone adopt, we should be reminded of our Father in heaven, who has given us an imperishable inheritance, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for us (1 Peter 1), and how Jesus will never leave us as orphans (John 14:18). We have a rare privilege as those who have been adopted into the family of God to shout the good news of God's available adoption to all who are in our lives. Our adoption and promise of God's current and future provision should free us beyond belief to joyfully and hopefully share this hope with others. Let us pray for the wisdom to see this and

to share freely this news with others.

**Application Questions (these suggested questions are in no particular order)**

- How can you give glory to God for the way that He has fulfilled His promises in your life?
- What keeps you from sharing the good news? What's the hope you have in Christ that can lead you to share it with others?
- Where does your picture of fatherhood need to be redeemed? How does WHO GOD IS show you what true fatherhood really looks like?
- What are some specific ways that you've seen God fulfill His promises in your life?

**Prayer**

- That we would constantly give glory to God for all things
- That we would taste and know the freedom of being in God's adopted family
- That we would know what it means to joyfully share the good news of God's love
- That the seekers / doubters among us would glorify God