

“Promises, promises, promises; all I ever get are promises.” How many times have you said or thought something like that? Maybe more times than you want to think about! Who has made promises to you only to break them? A parent, child or spouse? A boss, teacher or coach? A friend, coworker or classmate? Maybe your marriage didn’t work out the way you hoped, your boss didn’t give you the promotion you expected, or your friend just wasn’t there for you when you needed help.

People may let us down and break their promises. But God always keeps His Promises. Jesus’ Disciple Peter tells us, “Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4 NLT) Not only are God’s promises great, but they are also precious promises that we can count on because we are loved by God.

The reality is there is a growing sense of hopelessness in our world today. Too many people have been sucked into the black hole of depression. The suicide rate in the U.S. has gone up 24% in less than 20 years. One person in the U.S. dies every 15 minutes from an opioid overdose. The book “*Hope in the Age of Anxiety*” describes nine forms of hopelessness today. These can be grouped into three basic categories:

- Alienation or Loneliness. This is the feeling that you’ve been cut off, you no longer feel like anyone loves or cares about you. You may feel abandoned and all alone.
- Powerlessness: This is the feeling you can get when your life just doesn’t work out the way you want and you don’t have the power to change things.
- Doom or Despair: This is the feeling like you need to throw in the towel and give up. It can be the feeling you can get when you are diagnosed with a terminal disease or when you feel exposed and vulnerable.

The Apostle Paul could have had these feelings. He had already spent two years in prison because of the Jews who rioted against him in Jerusalem when he was brought before King Agrippa. It looked like the King had all the power and Paul had none. Agrippa was the latest in the line of Herod the Great who tried to kill the baby Jesus. Agrippa’s granduncle ordered the execution of John the Baptist and his father the execution of the Disciple James. This family was out to get Jesus and His followers. But when Paul was asked to defend himself, he didn’t argue his case. He didn’t claim he was innocent. Instead Paul said, “It is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today.” (Acts 26:6 NLT) Paul believed in the promises of God.

God’s people have put their hope in Him for a very long time. Just before Joshua lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, God said to them, “I am making a covenant with you. Before

all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you.” (Exodus 34:10) God didn’t emphasize their strength. He emphasized His own. God didn’t underscore their ability; He highlighted His. God prepared them by headlining His ability to keep His promises. God does the same for us.

God’s promises are irrevocable because of who God is. God is unchanging so His promises will never change. God is faithful and always keeps His word. God is strong. He has the power to get things done simply by saying the word, by giving the command. God cannot lie, so God’s Word cannot be broken.

It is so easy to build our lives on things that aren’t strong enough to stand up to the storms of life or just don’t last. How many people depend on their health, education, occupation, resume or retirement fund? But what happens when our good health fails, when we get the wrong education or our job becomes obsolete? What happens when the resume that once looked great is no longer good enough or when the investment in our retirement funds goes bust?

Jesus tells us there are two different foundations we can build upon. “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. . . . But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand.” (Matthew 7:24, 26 NLT) The wise person builds on Jesus and His word. The foolish person loses hope when the things they build on slip away.

The letter to the Hebrew Christians in the New Testament tells us, “So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trust-worthy anchor for our souls.” (Hebrews 6:18-19 NLT)

Anchors have one purpose, to hold the boat safe and secure. Sailors will tell you to hook onto something hidden and solid. You don’t anchor your boat to another or to a buoy or to anything that is going to move. You want something stronger than the storm coming your way, something to hold you safe during the storm. When the storms of life hit, let God be your anchor. Stay connected to Him and He will give you the hope and peace that you need. Amen.