



Week beginning Mar 19th

God's promises are unchanging

Because God does not change, God's Word does not change. We can trust God's Word to be as true today and forever as it always has been. Look up Isaiah 40:8 & Psalm 119:89. This is why Jesus could say, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." Matthew 7:24. Trusting in the words of others is like building on the sand, but God's words are a rock—a firm, unchanging foundation.

As we think about the unchanging nature of God's promises, we'll be thinking about i) the abiding nature of the love of God ii) God's promised presence with us and iii) his provision.

1. The abiding nature of the love of God

God who promised us eternal life is unchanging – so we can rest assured that nothing, not trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword can separate us from the love of Christ. It is because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever that neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, not even powers, height, depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Romans 8:35-39.

"Believing what God has promised does not inoculate us against the evil that others would do to us, or against the experience of heartache. It does though bring us identification with the tragedy & brokenness of humanity. It also brings us identification with the sufferings of Christ. It gives us a glimpse of the reality of what Paul wrote ... hard-pressed on every side. The binding up of our deepest brokenness is only possible through the work of God's love."

"Mary's story, Mary's song" Elaine Storkey

? Discuss this quote and the passage in Romans 8. What does God promise? And what does he *not* promise? We can hold fast to God because we are held fast by him.

2. God's promised presence with us

Read together Jesus' promise to be always with us by his Spirit:
John 14:15-18, Matthew 28:19,20.

- ? **How would you describe Jesus' presence with you to someone exploring the claims of the Christian faith?**
- ? **What do you find makes you more aware of him? What makes you less aware of him?**

3. God's provision

There are references right through the Psalms about the faithfulness of God illustrated, for example, in the ceaseless cycle of the seasons or of morning following night. It is God's world, and his resources are there all around us.

- ? **What is the difference between God's 'common grace' and his 'saving grace'?** (*"Common grace" includes all undeserved blessings that humans receive from the hand of God e.g. the seasons, air to breath, our natural abilities, human relationships, etc*) **Who are the receivers of God's gifts in each case?**
- ? **As God's children we can trust our heavenly Father to provide for our needs. Share examples of God's provision in your own life. What ways have you found to express to God our gratitude for the goodness that we have received from him?**
- ? **How should our understanding of God's being affect the way we pray about our needs? After thinking about this, turn to Psalm 139:23,24.**

Read Isaiah 55:10,11. God's word is like rain, not only quenching thirst but also assuring a future harvest by watering seed. **What does this mean for our lives?** It emphasizes the power of God's word, and the value of consistently drinking it in and making it part of our lives.

God is faithful to his word. So "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Hebrews 10:23

Give thanks together for what God has brought home to you through his word, and the potential of that in the future.