

Keep your promises

Courage to Continue

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Bible Text: Joshua 10:6,7

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Joshua 10. We'll read verses 6 and 7 and we'll come back to verse 1. Let's all stand and we'll read and ask God for his help on this glorious Sunday morning. Joshua 10:6, 7. The Bible says,

“6 And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand,” thy power, “from thy servants; come up to us quickly,” hurry up, “and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. 7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.”

We're going to talk this morning about keeping your promise or keeping your word.

Father, help us this morning. I pray and ask God as we look at these two verses and how it's important to keep your word and to keep our promise because perhaps somebody's life is dependent upon us following through on what we have said that we would do. I pray, God, that as we look at these verses, I pray that you challenge us by the Spirit of God and reveal to each of us individually and collectively what we need to see from you. I pray, God, that whatever you have shown us, I pray that we would respond when the invitation is given to come forward and to seal that thing, seal that thing with prayer, glue it with prayer by talking to you about these matters of the heart. Then, God, especially to help us in our time of hurt, our time of disappointment and our time of needing your help. With that, God, we'll praise you. I pray that not one soul will leave here this morning discouraged. Not one person will leave, God with their minds confused any longer but I pray, God, that we leave with a clear head, a head that's filled with the Holy Ghost. I pray, God, that we would implement those things that you will show us on this very Sunday morning. Help us, dear God. Why? Because we need your help. And help me to preach your word under your power and under your Holy Ghost might. God, we love you so much and if there is anything between us and you that would hinder us from giving you praise today, we ask God to wash us and then use us for your honor and for your glory. I pray that the Holy Ghost would fill in the blanks for it is in your Son's name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

You may be seated.

Keeping your promise or your word. A lot of times we will give out a word or we'll give out a promise and we'll say yes to something but then we won't follow through and because we don't follow through, that means this, my friends, folks can't depend on us. It's important to keep your word, to keep your promise. As we've already gone over this, my friends, if you remember, Joshua has promised Gibeon or the Gibeonites that he would protect him, he would take care of them and now they find themselves in a situation that they are surrounded by the enemy and are about to get whooped. Now, they call upon Joshua, they call upon him to keep his word or to keep his promise. I wonder, do we keep our word? All of us can. There is not one person here that can't keep your word if you go ahead and do what you say that you're going to do. Keep your commitments. Follow through.

Look at what the Bible says in Matthew 5:37, Jesus says, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of," what? "Evil." Let your yes be yes and your no be no. Amen. Because, my dear friends, anything other than that will come where evil comes from out of that. But now watch this, look at what the Bible says in Proverbs 21:23, grab a hold of this verse. This is going to help somebody, it's helping me. "Whoso keepeth," that means to guard, to watch, what? "His mouth," not anybody else's mouth, watch your mouth. "And his tongue," his language, "keepeth his soul from," what? "Troubles." If we watch our mouths, watch what we say, we'll keep ourselves from a whole lot of trouble or a whole bunch of adversity or a whole bunch of stress if we watch what we say from our lips. Watch your mouth. Guard your mouth. Protect your mouth. Protect what flows from out of your mouth. Sometimes we let anything come out of our mouths and then sometimes that comes back to hurt us, Amen. You've said something and then you say, "Well, I didn't really mean to say what I said like I said it," but yet you said it. That will last in somebody's mind for years to come. For years to come. "What are you saying, Preacher?" Be careful what you say.

Let me give you one more verse on that same thought. Look at Colossians 4:6. Look at what the Bible says here about your speech. Paul says to the church of believers, born-again, blood-bought, "Let your speech," let your word, "be alway with," what? "Grace," watch this, "seasoned with," what? "Salt." That word "seasoned" means "to be prepared." It also means "spice." I don't know about you but I like some eggs but I want some minerals: I want some salt, some pepper and Jolene puts some other stuff in there and it doesn't taste like my eggs when I make it but she puts some other little spices and some other little stuff in there. When we have hamburgers, she bought some of that hamburger spice stuff. What is it called? Hamburger spice, nonetheless, you put that on your hamburger and it does something to your hamburger. It makes it come alive, amen. Well, the Bible says right here, "Let your word be seasoned with salt." That word "salt" figuratively means "wisdom." Use wisdom when you speak. Think about what you're saying. Don't just say, "I'll say whatever comes in my mind. It comes up and it comes out." No, no.

Let's move on to another verse that talks about that. Be sure you watch what you say and make sure it's seasoned with salt. Salt makes things taste better. Now watch this, he also goes on to say this, "Let it be seasoned with salt," why? "That ye may know how," that word "how" means "in what way," "so that ye may know how," in what way, "ye ought," and that word "ought" there means "needs or must," "that ye may know how you ought," or need or must, "to answer every man." My dear friends, there's a way we should answer people. He says, "You season with salt," then he says, "that you may know or you may know how you ought to answer a person." "Well, I mean, I'm gonna answer the way I feel." That's not always good because sometimes you interact with somebody and you might feel like slapping them. Don't show them how you feel, Amen. Use wisdom in what you're saying. The Bible teaches this. It's important.

Guess what? Joshua gave his word to the Gibeonites. He says, "We're going to make a league with you, a covenant with you. Now, if you're going to work for us, we're going to look after you." Now it's come time for him to own up to that promise, to own up to that word. Have you ever had somebody tell you this, "Hey, whatever you need, you let me know. Anything, just let me know." You call them up on that. "I need, it's a small need." They're like, "What?" And you happen to know they can supply that need. They're like, "Well, you know, I mean, did you try....?" You told me to call you. I mean, what is going on here. You said... You told me to text you. You told me to email you. You told me to Facebook with you. You told me to communicate with you and now I'm communicating with you so you're not going to keep your word? "What did I say exactly?" We have to have a little recorder when we walk around and talk to somebody so that you can play it back because that's what you said. Listen my dear friends, it's important to keep your word. It's important. By the way, we've got somebody that always keeps his word and that's called God the Father.

Let's run back over to Joshua and we'll be done. Look at what the Bible says over here in Joshua 10, and now let's look at verse 1. Anytime you work some things out with the Lord or get things right with the Lord, the enemy is going to hear about it so the first thing we see is the enemy had heard. What had they heard? About where the second place in chapter 9. The Bible says in verse 1, "Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them." This king had heard how they destroyed Ai. This king had heard how they had defeated Jericho but now something caught his attention even more-so. He hears that Gibeon has changed sides. Gibeon was on their side at one time but now Gibeon has changed sides and now he's with Israel. By the way, my friends, anytime you change sides and you get on God's side, the enemy is going to hear about it and the enemy isn't going to like it when you change sides. And when you change sides, my dear friends, the enemy is going to turn up the heat and try to discourage you for going in that direction in which you have changed. The enemy doesn't like that.

This past week, this is awesome, we had a father get up ??? and this father came up and he had his wife with him and then his daughter was over here praying with somebody

else but he tapped her on the shoulder and then he got his other two kids and they all rushed over right here and they began to pray together. During prayer time, the pastor said, "Anybody want to say anything to God?" That man was one of those that stood up and said, "Preacher, the Lord has been dealing with my heart for about three years. About three years he's been dealing with my heart about leading my family and every time that he would deal with my heart," and he told us the first time he dealt with him was over in Ohio and he said, "You know what, Lord, when I get back, I'm going to get that thing worked out." He said, "When I got back, I didn't do it." He said, "Over those three years, God consistently dealt with me at different times about getting this taken care of and I'd say I'm gonna do that when I get to the house." He said, "But do you know what? I was standing up here tonight and the same thought came back to me and the Holy Ghost was saying to me, You either go over there and get things right with your family and start leading your family. I said this, I'm going to take care of that at the house. No, right now!" He said, "Do you know what I did? I got my wife, got my kids together and I got them all over here," and then this is what he said, "I apologized to my wife. I apologized to my children for not being the husband and not being the father that I needed to be in leading our home and our family." He was just weeping. His wife was just weeping. But now, my dear friends, you think the devil is happy about that? The devil will do his best to try to hinder him from following through, following up on his commitment that he has made to his God and to his family. My dear friends, when the enemy hears that you have changed sides, he'll get upset.

So we see that the enemy has heard and now the enemy is afraid. The Bible says in verse 2, "That they feared greatly," talking about the enemy, the Amorites, "they feared greatly because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty." What's going on here? What's going on is this, my dear friends, they say, "Hold on a second. The Gibeonites were bigger than Ai and now they're with Israel. Oh my goodness, now we are really in trouble because now the enemy is bigger than what it was before." Anytime that you or I decide to get on God's side, do you know what that means? That means there's trouble for the enemy and what happens is this, my dear friends, we're going to give the enemy a whole lot more trouble than we were before because now we've sided up with God's side. Amen. I don't know about you but I want to be on that side that's huge, that side that's going to be winning, that side that's going in the right direction.

But now watch this, then we see the enemy's alliance. The Bible says in verse 3, "Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it." So what has happened? These other folks weren't all together at one time but now the enemy is going to get together and what the devil will do is that he'll get all your enemies together and at one time they were fighting each other but now they come together. Wait a minute, we have

to come against them. The enemy will get together and they'll make an alliance and they're going to come up against you for war, for battle.

So what are you going to do? That's what we're going to focus on. The first thing you see is this: we see Gibeon's request. The Bible says in verse 6, "And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us." Man, they cried out for help. They said don't be slack about it. That word "slack" here means "to be still, to be slothful." Don't take your time. Look at what he says here: don't be slack, come up to us quickly in a hurry and save us and help us. That word "help" here means "surround us; protect us; aid us; support us." In other words, these kings have come against us and we're sending for help. What they're basically is this, "Joshua, keep your word. We are about to get destroyed, we're about to be defeated. Joshua, will you keep your word?"

I wonder how many of us have made a promise to somebody that we'd help them and when the time came, we keep our word? As I was standing there yesterday watching a marriage ceremony between Brother Ray and Sister Amy as they were getting married, they were going through the vows and Brother Mike did a tremendous job, as he was going through that, he was talking about how God did not take the woman from the feet, that means she's not to be trampled on. He said God would not take the woman from the hand. God would not take the woman from the head, she's not supposed to be ruler over her husband. He says that what God did was he took her from the side, from his rib. That was the closest to his heart. I mean, I had tears coming out of my eyes. I said, "This isn't my wedding." I had tears running down my eyes and I'm like, "You know what? This thing is important." This is a big thing. I mean, when we start talking about loving each other and talking about all these types of things, my friends, and you say to yourself that the Bible says something to me as a husband that I am supposed to be like Jesus. Jesus died for the church so a husband is to die for his wife. "You mean take a bullet?" Yes, but I'm not talking so much about a physical thing but dying to my selfishness, dying to my desires and saying, "What's the best thing for my wife?" I wonder when the times comes when we keep that commitment, husbands. Wives, when that time comes, I wonder if we keep that commitment?

One of the worst things that I could ever see in my life is my wife crying. I can't handle that. When I see that my wife's hurting or when I see my wife has tears coming out of her eyes, I can't handle that. That hurts me and I want to do whatever I can to make sure that she doesn't have those tears coming out of her eyes. Because one day, my dear friends, I stood in an office and there was a preacher named T. Moore who said, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or health. He said all of these things and with tears in both of her eyes, we made that commitment but the question is: when the time comes, will we follow through on that commitment? We may have our hearts broken, we may have hearts that are crushed, but will we follow through on that commitment? I don't know about you but I'm going to follow through on that commitment. That's why one day a week on Thursday is my wife's day. If she wants to clean the house, we clean the house. If she wants to go to the mall, we go to the mall. Do you get excited about going to the mall?

No, but she's excited so I'm excited and I go. But if she wants to spend some time with me...Do you know what I'm trying to do, brothers? I'm trying to keep my word. I'm trying to keep my fondness and I don't know about you but when you say one thing, keep the word, keep your promise. We're all in this battle and we are fighting and we are in a struggle that the last thing we need is to be fighting with one another. We have children fighting Moms and Dads and Moms and Dads fighting children. We've got husbands and wives fighting one another ??? keep on going at it. When God said, no, no, no, no.

Keep your promise to each other. Keep your commitment to each other because the time is going to come when we need more than just words, we need actions. We need actions. I'm going to tell you, my dear friends, we've got a God that's also given us his word. He's given us some promises and so he comes over here and he says, "Joshua, we're hurting, man. We're surrounded. We're about to be attacked. Joshua, are you going to help us?" Then we see next Joshua's faithfulness. We've already seen the enemy has heard, the enemy has been afraid, the enemy's alliance, the enemy has now approached. We see that Gibeon gets his request and Joshua ???. Joshua said, "I'm not coming. This would be a good time and a good way to get rid of you all." Because we weren't supposed to break that alliance in the first place so we're going to stand over here and go (whistle), "We don't see nothing. We don't see nothing." No, the Bible says, "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour." In other words, when Joshua got the news, he was there in Gilgal. They got up, they ascended. He said, "Alright boys, it's time to fulfill our commitment. It's time to follow through on our duty. It's time, my dear friends, to back-up that covenant that we made with Gibeon." We're not going to stay here and watch from afar but instead we're going over there to help them. Let's mount up and let's head forward." I wonder if we would do the same thing. Some scholar said he believes they traveled all night to get there. What were they saying? "Help is on the way. Help is coming near you. Help is approaching." We've got a God that does it the same way.

Look at this real quick. Look at Psalm 91:15, this is a promise. Psalm 91:15, the Bible says this, "He shall call upon me, and I'm not going to answer him." I'm sorry, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him." That word "answer" means "to respond; to pay attention." "He shall call upon me, and I will pay attention to him, I will respond to him, I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble. I'll be right there with him in that tight place, right there with him in that tight spot." Then look at what he says, I won't just stand there looking, "I will deliver him, and honour him." Now those two words "will deliver" is that Hebrew word which means "to pull off." Have you ever been in a fight and need somebody to pull off the other guy that was whooping you? Well, sometimes the enemy will get you down, he'll get you in that corner and God will come by there and he'll pull that enemy off of you. Now, I don't know about you but I'd be so happy. That's a happy day when God comes by and pulls the enemy off of you, my friends. He's sitting there throwing them hay-makers and ????? Help! Help! God ????? That's a good day. That's one of his promises because he says right here, "He shall call upon me,." The question is: have you called him? "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him,," at the same time. That's the kind of God we've got.

Watch this, run with me over to Isaiah 41:17, promise from God. The Bible says this, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” Glory to God. I get thirsty this morning. The Bible says, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst,” that term ??? be dry. Anybody here have your tongue, your mouth gets dry. It's dry. Look what the Bible says, “I the Lord will hear them.” That means they're calling out to him. “I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them,” I'm not going to leave them but “I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” If you've ever been in a dry place, God will come by there and make that place like water, a river. You could dive into that thing and do backstrokes in that thing. That's God keeping his promises.

What is your need this morning? He says, “If you call me, I'm going to take care of your thirst. If you're thirsty for revival, if you're thirsty to have your soul encouraged, if you're thirsty to be uplifted, if you're thirsty for wisdom, if you're thirsty for whatever it is,” God says, “I'll supply it. I'm not going to forsake you. I'm going to give you what you need. I'm going to give it to you if you call me.”

Watch this, run with me over to 1 John 3:22. Look at what the Bible says here, this is a good verse. The Bible says this, “And whatsoever we ask,” we beg, we crave, we desire, “we receive,” the Bible says, “of him.” Why? “Because,” uh-oh, “because we keep,” we intend to carefully guard “his commandments.” That word “commandments” here means “authoritative prescription and order.” “And do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” Do you want to get your prayers answered? Look at what God says to do and just ask him. You know what is what like when you were kids and they do something they're supposed to do. ??? If they don't, “You can have a piece of baloney sandwich. You can have that. I'll get you some peanut butter and jelly.” I want MacDonalds. This is what you want to do, “I want you to clean your room. I want you to pick up your clothes off the floor. I want you to do your homework. I want you to stop playing that game all day, all day, all day.” You stop doing those things so I can do some stuff for you.

Listen friends, what has God told you to do? “Why God? Why?” Stop saying “why.” You can ask my Momma, especially my Daddy, you can ask him “why.” “This is why, watch this.” No, that's okay. If you don't want me to do it... We have all this electrical stuff now but we used to have to edge the grass and I always think about that thing. We had to edge the grass and we didn't have any weed-whacker and what's that other thing? We didn't have an edger, we were the edger. We had that thing that had two wheels that were close together and had the little blade in the middle of it and you rolled it back and forth and you'd be edging. Now if you want to edge now you've got a machine. Lawnmower, self-propelled. Some of you know what I'm talking about, some of you don't have a clue. Listen, self-propelled means all you were doing was turning it on and just start walking. Man, we'd be crying over that. “I've got to cut this grass,” and that's the pace you're

going. We had a thing with the blades that turned like this and how do you make that blade firm? You had to push it. The blade only goes as fast as you push it. If you're going slow.... Then you had the rake. We had it rough.

I'll never forget I would do that edging, edge the grass up and I'd push that thing. It would take about an hour or whatever it was and I'd get done and my Daddy would come out there and he'd look at it. "Ah, you missed a spot." In my life, not a problem. "No, buddy, you've got to do the whole thing over." Now, I wanted to say, "What! Are you crazy? Why do I have to do the whole thing over? It's just one spot and I've got to do the whole thing? I don't want to do that." That's what I was thinking. What did I do? I just grabbed it and started over and go over the whole thing again. Do you know what he was teaching me? Do it right the first time. He says, "Time to clean the house." We cleaned house and, I mean, my room, I thought, "It's good." My Daddy would come by, "Oh, you missed something there." He would come by and move stuff. When you move stuff you find stuff. What was he saying? "Let's get it right, buddy." So, when you sweep instead of sweeping around this, you've got to pull it out. "What are you saying, Preacher?" When I would do what I was supposed to do, oh man, me and my Dad was alright. When I didn't do what I was supposed to do, it wasn't good days. With our Father in heaven, he says, "You know what? I've got some promises that I'll keep but they're based upon you keeping what you need to do or following through on what you need to do."

Look at what he says in this verse again, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Don't forget, the word "commandment" in this verse means "authoritative prescription or order," so whatever prescription that God has prescribed for you individually, God says, "You follow that prescription, you follow that order and you ask whatever you want to and I'll take care of it."

Now flip back over to Joshua and watch this. The Bible says this in chapter 10. The Bible says that Gibeon gives his request, we see how Joshua is faithful and we're seeing how God is faithful but look down at verse 7, "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee." What's about to happen? Joshua, 1. Is keeping his word. Joshua is keeping his promise to Gibeon and because Joshua is keeping his promise, because Joshua is keeping his word, we hear God telling Joshua that it's going to be alright, "You're about to whoop that enemy." You say, "Preacher, are we going to get into that today?" No, but tonight. Tonight we're going to see some miracles take place. Tonight we're going to see how keeping our word will cause God to cause miracles to take place and these miracles that will take place are going to be miraculous victories.

I wonder how many of us this morning need a miraculous victory? In other words, this is going to take a miracle of God. This is going to take a miracle of God. We have a God that performs miracles and we'll see those miracles take place tonight. For this morning, though, we see that Joshua keeps his word. Let me ask you the question: have you kept your word to God? First question: have you kept your word to God? Second question is

this: have you kept your word or your promise to someone else? If yea or nay, one thing is for sure, let's come and seal that with prayer.

God, help me to keep my word to you, my commitment to you. Help me to keep my commitment or my word to someone else. God, I need your help. What is God going to do? Just like here, God's going to help.

Father, thank you for your many wonderful blessings. I thank you, Lord, for your word and we're going to be stopping here, of course, Father, and we're going to pick it up later on tonight and see how that victory is going to take place. But Lord, perhaps there are some folks here this morning who say, "You know what? Father, I made some commitments to you in the past but I have not followed through. Lord, help me to follow through on that commitment that I made to you. Help me to follow through on that commitment I made to someone else." I pray, God, that you would help us this morning. I thank God for the folks who come to pray to you about matters that have nothing to do with this message whatsoever. They need to talk about other things. I pray, God, that they bring whatever those other things are to your throne of grace and, God, I ask you for thy help, ask you for your touch. Father, your children need your strength today and I pray that you supply them, Lord, that spiritual strength that comes from the power of the Holy Spirit that lives within them and with that, Father, we'll thank you. Then perhaps there is someone here this morning that's not saved. They need to come and trust your Son as their Savior. I pray, God, that they won't hesitate but come and say, "Preacher, I need to be saved," an it will be my privilege to show them or have someone else show them how to be saved. Father, help us for it is in your Son's name we pray, Jesus. Amen.