

## A PROMISE YOU CAN COUNT ON

### Hebrews 6:9-20

We live in *an age of broken promises*.

People promise to be faithful “till death do us part!”

5 yrs later, when spark dies, we lay promise aside, hoping to find something better.

People sign contracts they never intend to keep.

Words become meaningless.

However unfaithful *people* may be, there’s Someone we can always count on.

Even though we *know* we can count on God to keep His promises, it doesn’t always *feel* that way.

Swindoll, *Stress Fractures*: **3 X doubts creep in** to haunt us because **it doesn’t *feel* like God is keeping His promise**:

**1. God surprises me by saying yes, when I expect Him to say no.**

When things I believe should never happen occur.

*When Bad Things Happen to God’s People*

**2. God says no, when I expect God to say yes.**

When things I believe should happen don’t occur.

When people trust God for a cure, but God says no.

**3. God keeps us waiting longer than we expect.**

When things I believe should happen now occur much later.

Heb believers in 1<sup>st</sup> C are struggling with doubts.

They know God keeps His promise;

we can trust Him to protect us.

But these 3 causes for doubt kept cropping up.

**What do we do when trusting God doesn’t “work?”**

We’ve missed point of what trusting Him in the dark is about.

We have OUR idea of how it ought to work;  
 God's plan doesn't agree with mine.

## **OUR INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND 5:11-6:20**

Hebrews directs our attention to reasons we should trust God & hang on to Jesus, rather than throw in the towel & go back to Judaism.

He interrupts teaching to point out the problem of trying to explain this doctrine because we aren't able to understand  
 ...What God says.      What God's doing.

### **Problem 5:11-14**

While they've believed long enough to be teachers, the basics penetrate their minds,  
 but they're not *applying* truth they've heard in their daily lives.  
 We need exercise (*practice*) to get spiritual muscles in shape.

### **Exhortation 6:1-3** He urges us to grow up.

- leave baby food and start developing muscles,
- start working on solid food–tough steak builds strong bodies,

### **Explanation 6:4-8**

Faced with adversity, we must learn to trust God & keep walking,  
 even when we can't understand what He's doing.  
 They should keep moving forward–not turn back to Judaism  
 They'd be identifying with generation that rejected & crucified Jesus.  
 They'd face judgment coming against condemned generation.  
 He *urges us* to keep moving in same direction.

God will keep promises, if we patiently wait on Him. 6:9-20

**Confidence based on past 9-10** *"Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things–things that*

*belong to salvation. <sup>10</sup>For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work & the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.”*

After issuing warning, he expresses confidence in them.

He warns of risks, but doesn't expect they'll fall into that trap.

**They've been faithful in the past;**

**He's sure they'll continue to trust God & remain faithful in the future.**

They've given reason to believe *they have the real thing*.

He expects them to exhibit fruit that's consistent with salvation.

God isn't going to forget evidence already seen that we're His.

Their work & love, their past & ongoing service, witness to the reality of their faith.

**Exhortation to persevere 11-12** *“We desire each one of you to show same earnestness to have full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup>so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith & patience inherit the promises.*

Tendency in adversity to give up, take path of least resistance.

**Don't take easy way out!**

Take stand for truth, waiting on God to accomplish His work

Be diligent in our work & love for others, as we wait on God

That's what those who through faith & patience inherited promises did.

**Imitate those who trust God & wait patiently.**

Follow example of the faithful who've gone before us.

They bear witness that it's worth waiting for!

**God's faithfulness assured 13-20**

**Illustration from Abraham 6:13-15** *“When God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to*

swear, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup>saying, “Surely I will bless you & multiply you.” <sup>15</sup>& thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise.”

Abraham & Sarah had been married a long time. She was 65; he was 75.

**God makes a promise**—though they have no children.

God *promises* that Sarah will have a son.

Then comes the hard part! God tells them to trust Him —then wait ..., and wait ....

A yr passed. Then 10. Then 10 more. Nothing happens.

*“Maybe we misunderstood the message?!!!”*

When Abraham reaches 100 & Sarah 90, God repeats promise.

“Now, trust me! & wait again!” This was a bit too much!

**Abraham trusts God, & waits patiently.**

**God keeps His promise!—after Abraham waits patiently!**

A long time passes before he sees evidence that God’s *doing* what He promised.

Nevertheless issue’s settled by promise God made.

**God’s blessing comes to those who *trust Him & wait patiently!***

**Principle of the Oath 6:16-17** “People swear by something greater than themselves, & in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. <sup>17</sup>So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath”

God affirms His promise with an oath in Gen. 22:15-18.

**When people take oaths, they swear by someone greater.**

**Our oath is our guarantee** that we'll fulfill what we promised.

*"Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, & nothing but the truth, so help you God?"*

In a society that accepts the reality of God, that oath assures - that we'll tell the truth.

***Who does God swear by?*** Who is greater than Him?

**God can't swear by someone greater!**

*There's no one greater to swear by!*

So He swears by Himself.

**God's integrity is His guarantee!** That's enough!

Nothing could be surer!

**God always keeps His promise.**

It's impossible for Him to lie.

**The certainty of the promise**

**Two unchangeable guarantees: 6:18** *"So that by 2 unchangeable things, in which it's impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us."*

**God's unchangeable purpose: to bless His people.**

**God's unchangeable promise (His oath) — based on His Word.**

Because of this unchangeable basis for hope,  
we can handle hard times.

We have an absolute guarantee.

Paul tells us *"this hope never disappoints!"*

The One who *cannot* lie has given us His personal guarantee.

That ought to encourage us when we try to hang on in the midst of a storm!

**Implication for us 6:19-20** *“We have this as a sure & steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup>where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”*

**We have a hope as our anchor.**

If it worked for Abraham, it will work for us.

God is still faithful.

We can trust Him in our storm.

This hope is **OUR anchor** too!

Our certainty is permanently located in God’s presence— behind the veil, in the Holy of Holies—which takes us back to the truth we were talking about before:

Now we can see why this truth is so important!

**We have a High Priest,**

**Who serves** in God’s presence, **on our behalf.**

He’s our guarantee!

Our High Priest is in God’s throne room.

Since He’s there, we have an anchor. It’s secure.

We’re safe, as long as He’s there.

He *is* there forever, as our High Priest.

All we have to do is trust Him—& wait!

David Needham, *Close to His Majesty*: describes **Bonneville Dam**:  
Once I took a tour deep inside where gigantic generators sit sedately in a long line. I couldn’t see any movement! ... no thunderous roars or mechanical screams. Just a steady rhythmic hum.” “I thought ‘... What about when the Columbia is brown and swollen with storm water.’” “That thought came back one winter night as I drove down the gorge during

one of the worst storms I can remember. Icy east wind had been blowing for two weeks; piled up massive chunks of ice in the reservoir. Millions of gallons thundered over the spillways.”

“Power crews worked frantically to maintain service to over a million people depending on the current. Ice-laden wires would snap, exploding nearby transformers in bursts of eerie, blue lightning. It was a dramatic, suspenseful night.” “Up the river... what was it like deep in the concrete bowels of Bonneville Dam, down where generators were? Was it dramatic & suspenseful there? Not a bit. Even at the peak of the storm! They were made for this. No stress, no strain, no frantic scurrying about....”

“I’ve thought often of that night, esp. during times of inner storms... nights when I couldn’t sleep... nights when churning clouds of problems seemed too big to handle... nights when surging fears drenched hope. How could God dispel darkness?

“If only in times like these we could pause long enough to imagine ourselves at the power source—the throne room of our omnipotent God. What would we see? No stress, no strain, no frantic scurrying about there. We would see that **all is well.** “

### **What’s God’s part of the process?**

- \* God doesn’t forget our work and our love 10
- \* God keeps His promise 13-18
- \* God blesses those who trust Him 14

### **What’s our part of the process?**

- \* Keep up good work—Continue faithful service. 9-10
- \* Be diligent to the end. 11
- \* Don’t take easy way out. 12a
- \* Imitate those who remained faithful & inherited the promise. 12b

- \* Flee to our refuge. 18a
- \* Hang on to our hope 18b
- \* Trust our anchor 19

When we find ourselves on stormy seas,  
we focus on wind & waves rather than on the Lord.

Like Peter, we look the wrong way.

God says, *“Trust the anchor I’ve provided!”*

***So, how do we respond when faced with those nagging doubts?...***

- \* When God says yes to what we thought He would say no to?
- \* When He says no to what we were sure He would say yes to?
- \* Or, when He says, “Wait, wait, wait, ...”?

Are we learning that God, who can’t lie, has plans to bless *us*?

*“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare & not for evil, to give you a future & a hope” **Jer 29:11***

Follow Abraham’s example: **WAIT PATIENTLY!**

Keep trusting God. **He won’t fail us and He can’t lie!**

THAT’S an anchor we can trust to hold us in *any* storm!

**When the bottom drops out of our life,**

when hope begins to wear thin,

go back to the basic truth of Heb. 6:

**REMEMBER 3 things:**

- 1) God’s unchangeable purpose is to bless His people**
- 2) God’s unchangeable oath guarantees the fulfillment of His purpose**
- 3) Our part is to trust God, & WAIT on Him!**

**PRAYER:**

In His time, in His time,



He makes all things beautiful in His time,  
Lord, please show me every day,  
As you're teaching me your way,  
that you do just what you say,      **In Your time.**