

God the Faithful Promise Keeper

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Date: 06 August 2023

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[0 : 0 0] our father thank you that you are the living and speaking god thank you that you reveal yourself to us we can know you and we can know you through the words that you've given us please would you speak to us speak as florence reads would these words go deep into our hearts and then help me to explain them and would you be speaking to each of us what we need to hear from your word from your life-giving truth by your spirit in jesus name we pray amen so today's reading is from psalm 89 we read a mascal of ethan the ezraite i will sing of the steadfast love of the lord forever with my mouth i will make no your faithfulness to all generations for i said steadfast love will build up forever in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness you have said i have made a covenant with my chosen one i have sworn to david my servant i will establish your offspring forever and build your throne to all generations let the heavens praise your wonders oh lord your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones for who in the sky can be compared to the lord who among the heavenly beings is like the lord a god greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones and awesome above all who are around him oh lord god of hosts who is mighty as you are oh lord with your faithfulness all around you you rule the raging of the sea when its waves rise you still them you crushed rahab like a carcass you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm the heavens are yours the earth is also yours the world and all that is in it you have founded them and the north and the south you have created them tabor and herman joyously praise your name you have a mighty army strong in your hand high in your right hand righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne steadfast love and faithfulness go before you blessed are the people who know the festal child who walk oh lord in the light of your face who exalt in your name all day and in your righteousness are exalted for you are the glory of their strength by your favor or our horn is exalted for our shield belongs to the lord our king to the holy one of israel of old you spoke in a vision to your godly one and said i have granted help to the one who is mighty i have exalted one chosen from the people i have found david my servant with my holy oil i have anointed him so that my hand shall be established with him my arm also shall strengthen him the enemy shall not outwit him the wicked shall not

humble him i will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him my faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him and in my name shall his horn be exalted i will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the river he shall cry to me you are my father my god and the rock of my salvation and i will make him the firstborn of the highest of the kings of the earth my steadfast love i will keep for him forever and my covenant will stand for firm for him i will establish his offsprings forever and his throne as the days of the heavens if his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my rules if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commands then i will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes but i will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness i will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth with my lips once for all i have sworn by my holiness i will not lie to david his offspring shall endure forever his throne as long as the sun before me like the moon it shall be established forever a faithfulness sorry a faithful witness in the skies this is the word of god thank you florence for reading a long psalm but uh yeah about god's covenant with david but we've been doing a series on the psalms we've been looking at the character of god and of course there's so much about god that we can explore right god is so big there's so much that we could think about um but do you have you ever wondered is there anything that's kind of like stands out that is really this is really what god's heart is like what uh should we from our perspective it's like so important and it's a bit slightly tricky question of course you know what god is like everything is important you know everything is essential anything but anything that stands out well one key candidate is what we've been singing about and as you've heard in the reading is god's well his steadfast love and faithfulness one time in the book of exodus mooses asks god god show me your glory show me what god what you are like and what did god tell him well exodus 34 verse 6 it's on the screen the lord passed before him and proclaimed the lord the lord a god merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness he didn't talk about his power didn't talk about his omnipresence didn't talk about his wisdom he told what you need to know about me is his grace his mercy his well his steadfast love and faithfulness those two are related is that he keeps his promises steadfast love is a covenant commitment you know a covenant it is not just any promise it's like a marriage right a formal commitment to someone where you say i do i'll be committed to you and that's that steadfast love that loving covenant commitment god says that's who i am now why do the people need

to hear that why do we need to hear that i guess everyone knows god is big everyone knows god is powerful did you know god is gracious did you know god is committed to you and isn't that what we need i mean if i look at myself one thing i know i'm a sinner right i know that i'm weak and i know i'm gonna let god down what i need to know is that he doesn't let me down right and so yeah god's steadfast love and faithfulness are celebrated throughout the bible and this psalm psalm 89 well you can hear what it's about right let me read verses one and two again i will sing of the steadfast love of the lord forever with my mouth i will make known your faithfulness to all generations for i said steadfast love will be built up forever in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness and all through the psalm you can keep hearing it steadfast love faithfulness this is who god is but faithful to do what well it's a covenant commitment so and there needs to be a covenant and so yeah it's as you've heard this psalm is about a covenant made which covenant which agreement i mean last week we talked a bit about a covenant but that was between god and the people but as you've heard this is different this is between god and david verse three you have said i have made a covenant with my chosen one i have sworn to david my servant i will establish your offspring forever and build your throne for all generations and he promised to david that yeah your your descendants your throne your kingdom will be forever now a few weeks ago if you were here we looked at psalm 2 and we looked at the same promise it's this is one of those key passages in the bible so let's uh let's have it up again this is what god promised to david to samuel 7 the people of israel they had struggles they had hundreds of years of difficulty with enemies and then they finally had a good king david and what did he promise what god promised to david verse 12 when your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers i will raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body and i will establish his kingdom he shall build a house for my name and i will establish the throne of his kingdom forever i will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son when he commits iniquity i will discipline him with the rod of men with the stripes of the sons of men but my steadfast love will not depart from him as i took it from soul whom i put away from before you and your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me your throne will be established forever you heard it right your throne will be forever one of your descendants will be king and he will rule forever and so there will be peace forever there will be justice forever because david was he was the greatest king israel had when he ruled everything was good and because he was such a great warrior you know all their enemies were under control and so the people had peace and the people had everything wonderful and now god promises well that's gonna last forever one day david one of your descendants he will be my son and he will reign forever and so in psalm 89 basically what this promise is just a meditation on that and a great praise of god for this incredible promise that was the great hope for the people of course it's not just about his faithfulness there's got strength as well right like in some back in psalm 89 verse 8 oh lord god of hosts who is mighty as you are oh lord with your faithfulness all around you verse 13 you have a mighty arm strong as your hand i mean god needs to be

powerful it's no point making promises if you can't keep them god needs to be powerful and he is but most of it yeah is about this this covenant about the reign of the king right verse 22 the enemy shall not outwit him the wicked shall not humble him i will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him verse 25 i will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers i'll make him the firstborn the highest of the kings of the earth and here is the king and god will be with him and no one will defeat him and he will rule over the whole middle east and and everything will be wonderful and and that's great but the thing is uh will it last it's always the problem right good things may not last right maybe you've had a summer holiday and now uh monday you go back to school and that's not great uh that's for our kids or friendships that don't last but no this promise as well it will last and last and last right you heard the permanence verse 28 my steadfast love i will keep for him forever and my covenant will stand firm for him i will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens 36 his offspring shall endure forever his throne as long as the sun before me forever forever like the sun right every single day that the earth has existed the sun has risen every single day right there's no doubt that the sun ever wouldn't rise the sun is always there and just as committed says god this promise this promise that god will be with this king and what if he sins of course sin is the big problem right what if he rebels well verse 30 if he if his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my rules if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments then i will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes but i will not remove verse 33 from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness i will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips once for all i have sworn by my holiness i will not lie to david his offspring shall endure forever you can hear the commitment i will not remove my commitment i will not remove my commitment whatever happens i will be faithful i will do this you know you heard the negatives right i will not be false i will not violate my covenant i will not lie to david once for all i i have sworn by my holiness if i don't do this then i'm no longer holy right that's basically what god is saying this is how committed he is so no wonder this is the people's hope right no wonder everyone was waiting for the son of david for the for this king this is how they felt right they felt secure in god's faithfulness they had the davidic kings they israel had the king from the line of david and god was with him and so everything would be okay they had rest in this king they had peace in this king they had justice in this king everything they want even if some of the kings weren't that good god was committed to the king and they would be blessed and for for hundreds of years they could see that in history yeah saul was the first king and when he sinned he got rejected and his family too but david when he sinned god remained committed right there was a coup but it failed and david remained on the throne and then solomon his son started good ended really badly the people rebelled but god protected the kingdom right most of the tribes rebelled but some of them stayed and jerusalem stayed and the temple stayed and the davidic line stayed uh 200 years later the assyrian empire came and all those rebellious tribes were destroyed and they destroyed a lot of judah but jerusalem did not

fall god protected jerusalem it stayed right because god was committed there was a good king hezekiah you know there were terrible kings in history ahaz manasseh but god always kept his promise odds of ups and downs but jerusalem never fell because of god's steadfast love and faithfulness isn't this wonderful can you can't you imagine even the psalmist just you know let the heavens praise your wonders you're so wonderful you're so faithful right god that is what this psalm is about except how did even feel in 587 bc because the thing is if you read on in the bible david's kingdom did end josiah was the last great king and he brought revival but after josiah came the babylonian empire and they were big they were powerful and they took over the middle east and they came to jerusalem and they took away the king and they took away the upper class and the middle class and the silver and the gold and sent them all into exile and they installed a puppet king uh zedekiah and after a few years he rebelled and then the babylonians yeah they sent their whole army and they besieged jerusalem for three years it was a horrific siege they ran out of food they ran out of water it was terrible now the king tried to escape he tried to run away but he was captured and what did they do with the king well first they made him watch as uh all his sons were killed it's like the end of the family line right no more sons no more descendants and then they well they gouged out his eyes and they took him as a slave to babylon and that was the king and what did the babylonians then do well they destroyed the city they burned the temple and they took all the people away into exile to babylon what has happened right no capital no temple no reign of david no house of david no family of david the kingdom that would last forever was gone how does it feel to have your only hope taken away well let's read the rest of psalm 89 because we didn't read all of it here is how even felt verse 38 onwards but now you have cast off and rejected you are full of wrath against your anointed you have renounced the covenant with your servant you have defiled his crown in the dust you have breached all his walls you have laid his strongholds in ruins all who pass by plunder him he has become the scorn of his neighbors you have exalted the right hand of his foes you have made all his enemies rejoice you have also turned back the edge of his sword and you have not made him stand in battle you have made his splendor to seize and cast his throne to the ground you've cut short the days of his youth you've covered him with shame how long oh lord will you hide yourself forever how long will your wrath burn like fire remember how short my time is for what vanity have you created all the children of man what man can live and never see death who can deliver his soul from the power of shale lord where is your steadfast love of old which by your faithfulness you swore to david remember oh lord how your servants are mocked and how i bear in my heart the insults of all the many nations with which your enemies mock oh lord with which they mock the footsteps of your anointed and you can hear his emotion right lord what happened where is your steadfast love what happens from his perspective or the covenant is is broken right verse 39 you have renounced the covenant with

[20 : 25] your servant servant yeah he doesn't blame the babylonians it's not that they were too strong for god no you right you have cast down his crown you've rejected him you've preached his walls you have laid him low you've exalted his enemies you you right he just feels betrayed how long oh lord how long will you be angry i'm going to die soon is this it where is your love right here is your king being taken away as a slave all his sons dead the city destroyed right you heard it the walls breached and plundering lord what happened i'm sure you can emphasize right and this is their great hope and it was taken away the thing they built their whole life on taken away i think it's so fascinating that this is in the psalms right the psalms you think this is all happy praise songs and it's not here is someone who just thinks god has been unfaithful who thinks it was he doubts everything and that is here in the psalms and clearly god is not embarrassed by that question that's why he gave us this book feels a bit like job right we just did a series in job and job just didn't understand what was happening why he uh why he suffered but for him it was just that god was bigger than he falls this one is is even worse right it's not that he doesn't understand god it's just that god is he thinks unfaithful to his promises right god i know what you've promised and you haven't kept it lord such a painful feeling maybe have you ever felt like that have you ever felt that's kind of you know you put all your hope in the lord and god didn't do it and you felt like he lied to you maybe there was this job that you really needed and you didn't get it or maybe you lost a loved one maybe even now you're going through some crisis and you wonder god where is your love can i still trust you that's the question here right god says he is faithful what if it doesn't look like that at all what if it looks like no one can trust him i guess we want to know the answer and i'm sure you know the answer right i'm sure you know god is faithful but the answer is not here in the psalm we need to read on in the bible we need to read on in the psalms now we as we read on we'll discover yeah of course god kept his covenant covenant kept now what was the problem why was even wrong why was even so despairing i can think of three things that we can think about first of all i think he misunderstood god's promise he misunderstood god's promise because you know solomon wasn't that king he thought you know david's descendants and from then on it will be great and surely that's solomon right his son god never said it was solomon will be one of your descendants it could have been a long time later right in some sense he should have read the small print he was just too eager you know it must have been solomon everything must be right no no it could be a long time later he misunderstood god's promise and also you know he couldn't see what god was doing second because david's family wasn't wiped out yes zedekiah and his sons were gone actually the previous king was still alive the previous king you know he became king at age 18 he was just a teenager when babylon came he surrendered he was taken to exile but because he surrendered he was treated well and he was in babylon and he got married and he got kids and the royal family was still there

they were not in power but they were alive you know even just couldn't see what god was doing but god was doing something but i think underlying everything underlying that actually it's not what they expected they didn't realize the scope of god's plan they didn't realize how big god's plan was they kind of thought you know david and solomon are good enough we just need a good king who can defeat our enemies they didn't realize what they really needed what they needed was a king who could deal with their sin that's why they went into exile because they were sinners facing judgment sin is our rebellion it is the big problem it's why the world is a mess it's why everything is wrong that is what need dealing with and as you read on in the psalms god says no you don't need an ordinary king you need a king who is also a priest a king who can deal with your sin a king who doesn't have his own sin a king who can die in your place that is what you need and they just didn't get that that is what god had to teach them that is what they had to meditate on but god knew what they needed and was god faithful did he send a descendant yeah of course right 600 years later from that family of that exiled king there was a carpenter named joseph and he was engaged to a virgin called mary and she was pregnant with child from the holy spirit it's christmas right i mean just listen to what the angel said to mary and you can hear the echoes right luke chapter one you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name jesus he will be great and will be called the son of the most high and the lord god will give him the throne of his father david and he will reign over the house of jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end you can hear it right the promise that david fulfills right now right in this baby is that right did jesus fulfill all god's promises it's it's complicated right because what happened actually it was still more complicated because jesus yeah he did all the miracles clearly he was god's king and then they went to jerusalem and did he start reigning as king no what happened to jesus he got arrested and crucified and you can imagine the disciples they're again confused lord what's this you know here's your king and they could almost sing psalm 89 again lord you are full of wrath against your anointed you know he's become the scorn of his neighbors and you've made all his enemies rejoice you've covered him with shame right here's your king and he's hanging on the cross what's happening well he didn't they didn't understand it was in their place zedekiah died for his own sin but jesus he died for our sin he died to take the punishment that we deserve but then three days later he rose from the dead and defeated death never to die again and he will rule over the whole world forever right all god's promise is fulfilled still not what happens jesus rises from the dead okay lord are you now going to restore the kingdom of israel no jesus went to heaven right can you see how complicated god's plan is you know jesus comes but then he dies and then he rises when he goes away and in one day finally two you know two thousand years and counting one day he will come back and then it will be fulfilled then he will reign over the whole world forever and then there will be world peace and then there will be an end to death and then there will be an end to suffering right god's plan takes just so much longer than we think it's so much more complicated than we think we don't think about that right we just think god's plan is easy it isn't but he is faithful he sent the king and he died for our sins and he rose from the dead and

he's reigning in heaven and he will come back and god will not be false he will not lie he will keep his promise all the psalm 89 is all true and we can keep going but i don't want to just kind of now celebrate that because this psalm is so depressing right this is a really depressing psalm so what do we do if we feel like even if we know this that actually you know god's plan is just it's longer it's more complicated what how about us what if we feel like god is not keeping his promise or what if we feel like this in the future right most of us we're young and we're happy and everything's okay what if in the future things are hard well let's look at those same three problems you know some of us maybe we are struggling because we misunderstand god's promises maybe there are things that that you've been told that are just not true so maybe you're single and you really want to be married and you're going to think well god has promised that there is a spouse for me somewhere and you know why doesn't he give me that spouse i don't see god promising that you know some people will be single their whole life you know god never promises it god never promises to save all your family members that can be quite hard right it's really hard that you maybe you have elderly relatives and they don't want to believe and it doesn't god promise that your whole household will be saved now people are saved by grace your whole household can be saved if they believe but if they don't believe and then it's really hard i mean my parents don't believe i find it really hard but god hasn't promised to save every person same for children maybe you're older and your children aren't christians and you thought well god promises you know train up a child in the way they will go and when they're old they won't depart from it well that's a proverb it's what's generally true it's good to raise your children in the faith but it's not a promise god doesn't promise to save every person and and that can be hard but we we need to know what god promises and what he doesn't he doesn't promise that every you know every ministry will be successful you know maybe you're trying something for god and it doesn't work out that happens and don carson tells this story about this this couple or maybe a hundred years ago they went to kenya in africa for for mission work and they you know they really went for it but there was just no fruit just no one believed there was just a local village one little boy who liked to listen to his wife but nothing happened and they had a young baby girl and and then the wife got sick from some disease and she died and after years of of working and it was so hard and no fruit yeah this guy just gave up and he with his daughter he went back to the u.s and yeah he lost his faith became an alcoholic why well because he just he thought you know we go for god and and he will bless it and god didn't right it's so important that we know god's promises that we're clear that we don't have false hopes and that doesn't mean it's not hard when these things happen it is hard but at least god hasn't been unfaithful right that's why it's important to make sure we don't misunderstand god's promise then again maybe sometimes we just can't see what god is doing right maybe we just need to trust that he is doing something maybe he's at work in your family behind the scenes or that story of that that missionary because you know that guy's daughter grew up went to church and you know like 20 years later there was a conference and there was someone speaking from kenya about the amazing revival happening there

and you know she wanted to speak to the speaker hey uh you know that this great church leader great evangelist hey uh do you perhaps know my parents they they ministered in kenya like 30 years ago and uh but they were in this village but they you know that they didn't have much success just this little boy who listened to my my mom and i guess you know the story right the guy said but i am that little boy and god had done an amazing thing through what they did this one little boy who heard the gospel you know sometimes we just don't know what god is doing you know this guy he he heard that that that what god has done and and he broke down in tears and he repented because he just you know sometimes that happens but not always we need to we need to get the balance right and and sometimes yeah that third thing i think often the big problem is just we don't realize the scope of god's plan we we we confuse when god does what because the christian life is hard if you think being a christian my life is now great i'm a child of the king everything will be wonderful it's not you will still have marriage trouble you know there will still be suffering and sickness because yeah jesus will come twice right he came once but he will come twice had jesus two comings we need to keep them apart i think the bible sees it as kind of two ages there's the old age of sin and death and there's there's the new age that jesus brings and he starts the new age when he first comes at the cross but the old age is still here that will only disappear when he comes back and so sin is still here and death is still here and and sin and death are huge right death and decay runs through me everywhere the only way that i'm gonna stop being sick and dying is if i die and get a resurrection body that's when there'll be no more death sin sin runs so deep in our hearts and in our bodies the only way you're gonna get rid of sin the way you're gonna have a perfect you know be perfect is if god if you die and you rise again and if you know that then yeah you don't have false expectations right maybe work is really hard maybe your boss is terrible and your colleagues are really annoying and your clients and you wish god please change this right would my wife have a perfect job think about what you're asking okay god can you can my boss please die and be raised from the dead and get my colleagues please die and be raised from the dead and all my clients as well and me god's not gonna do that right that's ridiculous but that's a fact if you want to get rid of sin in your workplace that is what needs to happen you all need to die and rise again so we just need to wait we need to realize how you had a scope of god's plan what a big thing it is to deal with sin and deal with death yeah it's it's it seems ridiculous now although again one day it's not one day jesus will come back and we will all have a resurrection body and if you and your boss and your colleagues are christians you can work together forever in the perfect workplace in the new creation right that will happen one day same for healing god can heal now he can but it was only temporary anyone he heals will still die it's only later but god promises to heal every christian from all diseases completely one day when when jesus returns when we die and have a resurrection body we just need to see beyond death i think even couldn't see that right verses uh in

back in psalm 89 yeah he you remember how short my time is what man can live and never see death you know i'm gonna die i'm not gonna see it well yeah you're not gonna see it now but even would see it when he would be raised from the dead then he will see the fulfillment and same for you maybe you won't see it now but you will see it later when god raises you from the dead so for now let's hold on when it's hard when you can't see the fulfillment when you wonder what god is doing hold on god will keep his promises he is a god of steadfast love and faithfulness and that is his character he will not lie he will not be false he will keep every promise we need to make sure we know them that we don't have false expectation but he will keep it and he will he said he will forgive all your sins and he will and he said no one can snatch you out of his hands and he no one can and he said he will raise you from the dead and he will and so we can persevere so let's keep going let's keep trusting let's hold on to god's steadfast love and faithfulness why don't we take a minute and just think about these questions on the screen and then i will pray for you pray for us for me as well after that you you you you you you you you you i will sing of the steadfast love of the lord forever with my mouth i will make known your faithfulness to all generations lord we thank you that you are committed to us we we are sinners we are weak but you are a god who is faithful and committed and we thank you for your love we thank you for your promises thank you that you will not lie you will not be false pray that we would hold on where each of us needs to hear hear this where each of us is struggling at the moment please speak into that and would we see your faithfulness would we hold on would we get through it no matter how hard it is because we know we can hold on to you we can hold on to your promises to your steadfast love thank you that you never change thank you that you always come through and we love you and we trust you in jesus name amen you you you you you you you