

“God Keeps His Promises”
Message by DD Adams
2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Providence Kemptown U.M. Church
December 10, 2017

The Newcomer family read for us Isaiah 40, 1 through 8. Here are verses 9 through 11 of Isaiah 40. Go up on a high mountain, messenger Zion! Raise your voice and shout, messenger Jerusalem! Raise it; don't be afraid; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" Here is the Lord God, coming with strength, with a triumphant arm, bringing his reward with him and his payment before him. Like a shepherd, God will tend the flock; he will gather lambs in his arms and lift them onto his lap. He will gently guide the nursing ewes.

The reading from the book of Psalms chapter 85, verses 1 and 2, and 9 through 13. Let me hear what the Lord God says, because he speaks peace to his people and to his faithful ones. Don't let them return to foolish ways. God's salvation is very close to those who honor him so that his glory can live in our land.

Faithful love and truth have met; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth springs up from the ground; righteousness gazes down from heaven. Yes, the Lord gives what is good, and our land yields its produce. Righteousness walks before God, making a road for his steps.

The Epistle lesson is from 2 Peter, chapter 3, verses 8 through 10 and 13 through 15. But according to his *promise* we are waiting for a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, dear friends, while you are *waiting* for these things to happen, make every effort to be found by him in peace—pure and faultless. Consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation. This is God’s word for God’s people.

Please pray with me. God we pray blessing on your word today. We pray for anointing on the hearing, reading, understanding, and doing of all that’s whispered in every heart and mind. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Peace be with you! During this season of Advent we wait and anticipate in order to celebrate the coming of Christ. We also watch and stay alert for the Second Coming of Christ too. All four lectionary scriptures for Advent 2 provide a sneak peek of what that will be like.

Isaiah 40 pictures a shepherd who comforts his sheep and reassures them that the comfort they feel is from the Lord. Sin—it can weigh us down. The loss we can experience in the world feels heavy, and yet, here we catch a glimpse of our future. Christ will return with power and bring a reward with him for those who have waited in patience while they continued to serve him.

The verses from Psalm 85 speak of how Christ, our Shepherd protects his people and forgives their sin, and because we turn our hearts to him in faith we feel the *promised* peace of Christ. Steadfast love and the faithfulness of Christ surrounds us because the Lord gives to us what is good.

In showing His kindness and goodness we know that in and of ourselves we aren't good. There's none good but God, yet He's taken our sin and done more than just cover it, he's removed it, never to be brought up again. He has paid for the injustices of our wrongdoing in himself.

Verse 10 of Psalm 85 reassures us that he's bringing restoration to the world. Even though our faithfulness is short-lived as it fades and withers, His faithfulness is eternal. We have become the recipients of God's loving *promises*.

We think about God restoring the earth. We think of no more tears, only joy, no more death only life, no more war only peace, stomachs that are full and hearts that give without hesitating, but . . . they'll be no need. They'll be only love because we serve a God who keeps His *promises*.

In second Peter we're reminded that some may think the Lord will never return and that He's slow about his *promise* to return, but this isn't so. If the Lord seems slow in his return as He has *promised* we should be thankful—because this shows the love of God is His desire that all would be ready, waiting, and prepared.

We're waiting for a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Just as He *promised*.

We're to be at peace with one another, as far as it depends on us. Our hearts and minds are to be connected in harmony and love. Yet, the most we can do is to strive to be a peace with God. Doing that, we stay accountable for our own spirituality. I can't be accountable for your peace—that's between you and God. I can only be accountable for my own.

Only at Christ's Second Coming will there be peace. Only at Christ's Second Advent will God's people experience love and righteousness; it's a *promise* He's made to us. And God keeps his *promises*, but until that time when Christ does appear, let's be at peace with one another.

Isaiah predicted the coming of John the Baptist. He came as a messenger, crying out in the wilderness and preparing the way of the Lord. The Lord kept that *promise*. That time is past and gone; however, God *promises* in 2 Peter of the Messiah's return, but *promises* that he will come like a thief in the night, unexpected and without warning.

John came preaching our need for repentance, to be found right with the Lord, to let go of things, to forgive and accept others without judging. Let God do the judging. But one thing God's word tells us is that loving and forgiving one another means we're prepared for the Second Coming of Christ.

God's word requires a response from us. In the lectionary scriptures for today all four point to two strong proclamations. First, that God keeps his *promises* and second, make sure you're prepared. 2 Peter puts it like this. "Therefore, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found by him in peace—pure and faultless." This is God's word for the people of God.

Please pray with me. God strengthen and reassure us of your unchanging goodness, your inexhaustible power and your indestructible love. Continue to pour your sustaining grace into our hearts and all around us. Help us to trust in the *promises* you've made by making an active commitment and responding to your word as we wait with much anticipation for your expected Second Coming. Until that time, make us messengers for your Second Coming to teach and show the way to those who haven't heard the good news.

Amen.