

Sunday, November 30th

Sierra Vista Community Church, Las Cruces, NM

Advent Sermon Series: God's Promises Fulfilled

Hope: An Anchor For The Soul, Hebrews 6:13-20

Introduction:

"Christmas time is here. Happiness and cheer. Fun for all that children call their favorite time of year." These lyrics were written by Lee Mendelson and the music composed by Vince Guaraldi for the 1965 TV special: A Charlie Brown Christmas. When I hear these songs, I feel like a child again, experiencing hope, peace, joy, and love in anticipation of Christmas Day. Although I was raised in the faith, I couldn't wait to open up presents on Christmas morning, to be fair. Since I have accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior, I anticipate celebrating His birth with the same child-like excitement. This is my favorite time of year.

Today we start our Advent Series, titled God's Promises Fulfilled. At the beginning of the service we had the Advent Candle lighting that used the verse Hebrews 6:19. I asked myself, "Why this verse for this theme?" The Preaching Team and I worked on this Advent Series to answer that simple question. In the coming weeks we are going to learn why we use these specific verses in the Advent Candle lighting ceremony.

Through this series we will touch on the Advent themes of Hope: An Anchor For The Soul, Peace: To All Who Are In Christ, Joy: The Lord Is Near, and Love: Everlasting and Faithful. At our Christmas Eve service, we will focus on Light: Shine Out of Darkness. Before we head into the new year, we will look at the Future: The Glory Of God. Please join us for this series and invite your family, friends, coworkers, enemies, and strangers.

Stand and Read — Hebrews 6:13-20 [NLT]

For example, there was God's promise to Abraham. Since there was no one greater to swear by, God took an oath in his own name, saying: "I will certainly bless you, and I will multiply your descendants beyond number." Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had promised. Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and

trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Pray

1. Hebrews 6:13-15 — Actively waiting receives God's promises

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- A. From NIV Intro to Hebrews: We don't know who the author of Hebrews is, but we do know that it was written to Jesus-believing Jews who were in danger of falling away from the faith.
- B. The goal of the whole book is to show the superiority of the final realities God has revealed in the new covenant.
- C. Hebrews alternates between teachings and challenges based on those teachings.
- D. There are four teaching-challenge pairs:
 - a. Jesus and the salvation he brings are greater than the angels and the salvation they announced (the law of Moses)
 - b. Jesus is our "apostle" (someone sent by God on a specific mission), and he brings us into a greater rest and promised land than Moses and Joshua brought Israel into
 - c. Jesus is a more effective high priest than the priests appointed by the law of Moses
 - d. As God's faithful people have done throughout the ages, we must continue living in light of God's unseen heavenly realities and stepping out in faith. Through the Messiah *we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.*

E. In chapter 6, the author is spurring us to good works, acting in faith.

F. Hebrews 6:11-12 [NLT]

Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and endurance.

G. God's promises bring hope!

H. Hebrews 6:13-14 – We start by looking at God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:15-18.

I. Genesis 22:15-18 [NLT]

Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. “This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed – all because you have obeyed me.

J. What did Abraham do?

K. Hebrews 6:15 – He obeyed. He waited patiently to receive what God had promised.

L. Did Abraham sit on his hands? Did he do nothing while waiting? Of course not! He obeyed God’s commands and went where God sent him.

M. Waiting on God is not “passing the time”.

N. Waiting on God is being actively obeying and doing His work while time passes.

O. We must continue living in light of God’s unseen heavenly realities and stepping out in faith!

P. *We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken!*

Q. Romans 8:24-25 [NIV]

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

R. SVCC is currently waiting on God during this transition phase. Now is the time to be active in the waiting.

Illustration

I have been a musician all my life. I was raised Catholic and always knew about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. In college, I decided to truly believe in what I already knew. In 2008, God brought my family and I to SVCC. Without a doubt, He said this is your church home where you will serve. I joined the Worship Team as soon as we went through the Discovery 101 class and became members. God had placed in my heart a desire to lead the Worship Team, however, I had to wait patiently for His timing and training. Through Pastor Ruben’s and Gayla’s mentoring, I was able to carry the church in music through the lockdowns as a test of my commitment to God, His church, and His promise to me. I actively participated in the Worship Ministry and God has fulfilled this promise.

Application

How are you waiting on God, actively or passively? Are you working towards God's promise or standing still?

2. Hebrews 6:16-18 — God is serious about His promises

Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us.

- A. Hebrews 6:16** – The author is explaining how an oath works. If an oath is made, it is binding. The person making the oath will be held accountable to see it through.
- B. What is an oath? According to the Early Church, it is a formal promise made in the name of a deity or authority, which commits an individual to adhere to what has been mandated.
- C. Courtroom scenes have the witness place their hand on the Bible and raise their other hand and are asked, “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?”
- D. We invoke God's name to show the seriousness of our oath.
- E. Hebrews 6:17** – God bound himself with an oath to Abraham. We can be sure that God will not change His mind and that He will fulfill His promise.
- F. God gave us His promise and He made an oath to fulfill it.
- G. What more do we need to trust in Him; to place our hope in Him?
- H. Hebrews 6:18** – It is impossible for God to lie. His promise will be fulfilled. His oath doubles down and guarantees it.
- I. Rest assured. We can have great confidence in God fulfilling His promises to us.

Illustration

Jesus talks about us making oaths, or vows, in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:33-37 [NIV]

“Again, you have heard it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all; either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you

cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

GotQuestions.org gives a good background regarding what Jesus says about oaths: "The religious leaders of the day advocated keeping a vow if it was a public vow using God's name; however, if the vow was made in the course of everyday conversation, referencing only "heaven" or "earth" or "Jerusalem," it was not really binding. People had a loophole. They could lie or exaggerate in their conversations and lend themselves an air of credibility by saying, "I swear by heaven that this is true!" They could not be held to account because they did not specifically swear by God's name and the vow was private. Jesus countered that idea. If you swear something, it had better be true, He says. In fact, all you need to say is "yes" or "no." Your word should be good. There's no need for overwrought expressions to bolster your case. ... Oaths are binding, even when spoken frivolously or privately as part of everyday conversation. A promise is a promise, and there is no loophole in God's eyes to allow a person to renege on an oath. So, Jesus was not condemning all forms of promises, contracts, or agreements. Jesus was speaking of the kind of spontaneous vow made when a person says, "I cross my heart and hope to die" or "I swear on a stack of Bibles" or "I swear on my mother's life." Jesus warns against using those types of flippant oaths. His teaching in Matthew 5 is not meant to discourage careful, thought-out promises, such as wedding vows or a legal contract."

Application

Do you have confidence that God will fulfill His promise to you? Are you making oaths using a loophole? Is your word, your "yes" and "no", good enough?

3. Hebrews 6:19-20 — Our Hope is in Jesus, our eternal High Priest

This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

- A. **Hebrews 6:19** – This is the anchor for our soul: hope in God who guarantees and keeps His promises.
- B. God made a promise. God made an oath using His name to guarantee that His promise will be fulfilled. Therefore, we can confidently hope in God.
- C. That confidence, that hope, leads us into God's inner sanctuary, where only priests were allowed to go.
- D. **Hebrews 6:20** – Jesus is already in God's inner sanctuary. He is our eternal High Priest.
- E. Who is Melchizedek?

F. The author goes into detail in Hebrews 7.

G. Side quest: read Genesis 14 and Psalm 110.

H. Hebrews 7:1-3 [NLT]

This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means “king of justice”, and king of Salem means “king of peace.” There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors – no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.

- I. Melchizedek is Priest and king. He is greater than Abraham. He received a tenth of Abraham’s income. King of Justice. King of Peace. No beginning or end to his life. Resembles the Son of God. Sound familiar?
- J. Jesus is our eternal High Priest. He is God incarnate, in the flesh. We can confidently place our hope in Him, the Son of God.

Illustration

To help illustrate what it means to be in God’s inner sanctuary, I’m going to talk about Hawai’i. When I was young...er, I always thought of Hawai’i as one of those places I would never get to see. It’s too expensive. I would have to be a millionaire to fly out there and spend a few days on the islands, but it sure would be nice to visit. I knew I didn’t deserve to go there. Then one day while being employed at White Sands Missile Range, I was asked to support a mission on the beautiful island of Kaua’i in Hawai’i. It was an all-expenses paid trip and I was given money each day to spend it on food and things. Too good to be true. I was in disbelief as I boarded the plane in El Paso to start my 2-week long trip. The moment I stepped out of the plane into sunny Lihu’e, Kaua’i I was in awe. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be on a Hawaiian island. Can you relate to that feeling? Finally being someplace you felt you would never get to see? If you have experienced that, multiply that feeling by 100, or 1000, or more, because that’s the feeling you should have entering God’s inner sanctuary. Knowing that our Savior Jesus has already gone in there for us should give you an overwhelming feeling of excitement. It is our hope in Him that leads us there.

Application

Isaiah 40:27-31[NIV]

Why do you complain, Jacob?

Why do you say, Israel,

“My way is hidden from the Lord;

my cause is disregarded by my God"?
Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.
He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint."

"Those who hope in the Lord." In the ESV, it says "they who wait for the Lord". The CSB and NLT read, "those who trust in the Lord".

Have you placed your hope in Jesus? Are you confident that God will fulfill His promises for your life?

If you haven't placed your hope in Jesus, now is the time.

If you have placed your hope in Jesus but are in danger of losing faith, now is the time to trust in Him.

If you are fully committed to Jesus, now is the time to actively wait for His promises to be fulfilled.

The Crux

We are kicking-off the Christmas season. We are celebrating Christ's birth, His life, His teachings, His death, and His glorious resurrection. We have hope that God will fulfill His promises while we wait patiently and actively. God is serious about fulfilling His promises. We have an eternal High Priest in God's inner sanctuary: Jesus the Christ. Are you growing closer to Jesus here at SVCC?

Invitation

Now is the time to be active in your faith. Now is the time to come to the Son of God. The altar is here for you to take the first step. Put your faith into action as you wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.