

# Virtual Worship is Widening the Doors of the Church

8/2/2020

Dear Teacher,

The coronavirus pandemic forced churches to shut their doors and quickly move to audio and video worship services. As plans are made for returning to in-person worship, people are wondering about whether to continue their online services. The value and potential of virtual ministry, as well as its challenges and deficits, will be the topic of this installment of *The Wired Word*.

If you'd prefer a different topic, look at our second lesson, which begins with news of two friends who pledged nearly three decades ago to share any winnings either might get from the purchase of Powerball tickets. Our focus for this lesson will not be to debate the morality of gambling, but to discuss the making, breaking and keeping of promises.

You are welcome to email the student version of either lesson to your class members, depending on which lesson you prefer to use for your class time. To do so, click here (<http://www.thewiredword.com/subscriber/studentlist.aspx>).

May God bless you as you teach the scriptures this week.

The Editorial Team of *The Wired Word*



## Virtual Worship is Widening the Doors of the Church

*The Wired Word* for the Week of August 2, 2020

### In the News

"As this pandemic transforms faith communities, the national conversation among leaders has been too timid and tactical," said Baptist pastor Joseph Warren Walker to *Religion News Service* last week. He lamented that conversation has been mostly focused on questions related to in-person worship, such as, "How soon can we get bodies back into the pews? How many in the sanctuary at one time? How far apart should worshippers sit? And should we require masks?"

Walker believes that these are the wrong questions. Instead, he urged church leaders and members to wrestle with issues such as, "How do we transition fully and faithfully to virtual worship? How do we reintroduce in-person worship as part of a rich virtual experience once the pandemic is over? Most importantly, what can Covid-19 teach us about bringing people to God no matter where they are or where we are?" He is convinced that physical and virtual worship must coexist in churches that are faithful and relevant, both today and tomorrow.

Prior to the pandemic, services in some churches were already shifting from church buildings to virtual options such as streamed services and podcasts. According to Barna Group research, this "worship shifting" was being done by 22 percent of all practicing Christians and 52 percent of practicing Christian millennials, at least half the time.

Then, when the coronavirus arrived, most churches quickly shut down their in-person worship services and moved entirely to the online space. Pew Research reports that 82 percent of U.S. adults say that their place of worship is streaming or recording its services so that people can watch them online or on TV. Only 12 percent say their place of worship has not done this, while 5 percent say they don't know. The churchgoing Christians who say their church offers streaming or recorded services online or on TV includes evangelicals (92 percent) and mainline Protestants (86 percent). Most Catholics (79 percent) and Protestants in the African-American tradition (73 percent) say their churches are making services available remotely.

As of April 30, 2020, only 3 percent of all U.S. adults were gathering in person for religious services. Some churches began to reopen in May and June, but then new outbreaks of the coronavirus began to surge. According to *The New York Times*, more than 650 coronavirus cases have been linked to nearly 40 churches and religious events across the United States since the beginning of the pandemic, with many outbreaks occurring as Americans resumed their pre-pandemic activities. Many churches that were anxious to reopen their buildings are now being forced to close their facilities again.

Despite the shutdown of church buildings, 24 percent of U.S. adults say their faith has become stronger because of the coronavirus pandemic. Many say their faith hasn't changed much (47 percent), others say the question is not applicable because they were not religious to begin with (26 percent), and a few say their faith has become weaker (2 percent). Christians in African-American Protestant churches and those who describe themselves as "very religious" are particularly likely to say that their faith has become stronger.

Walker said, "The good news is that Covid-19, for all its trials, not only forces us to reimagine the way we will address the worship preferences of our congregations going forward but gives us room to transform our ideas into action." Although he says that he will not bring people back into church buildings until there is a vaccine for Covid-19, he will continue to offer robust ministry through digital platforms. The key to success, he believes, "is to accept that this transformation will be permanent and make the most of it."

For the past ten years, Walker's church has offered online ministry and the strategy has worked well. "Our congregation has grown into the tens of thousands," he reports, "not only inside our buildings but outside -- and, in the latter case, significantly on college and university campuses. Our youth-focused ministries, many of them online, are among our strongest and most popular."

*Fast Company* reports that some faith communities have found that moving online has helped them to attract new visitors or win back lapsed members. They are now reaching people who couldn't get to houses of worship because of distance, schedule conflicts or disability. While online worship is a challenge for some communities of faith, others report that it is making religion more accessible than ever.

Walker believes that "Covid-19 has merely hastened the arrival of a new world of worship that has been coming our way for decades." In his view, virtual worship is not a sign that the doors of the church will be closed forever. Rather, "it can open them wider."

More on this story can be found at these links:

Let's Stop Pretending That Virtual Worship Isn't Here to Stay. *Religion News Service*. (<https://religionnews.com/2020/07/24/lets-stop-pretending-that-virtual-worship-isnt-here-to-stay/>)

Few Americans Say Their House of Worship Is Open, But a Quarter Say Their Faith Has Grown Amid Pandemic. *Pew Research Center* (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/30/few-americans-say-their-house-of-worship-is-open-but-a-quarter-say-their-religious-faith-has-grown-amid-pandemic/>)

Churches Were Eager to Reopen. Now They Are Confronting Coronavirus Cases. *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/coronavirus-churches-outbreaks.html>)

Churches Are Closed, but Religion Has a New Home on the Internet. *Fast Company* (<https://www.fastcompany.com/90516325/churches-are-closed-but-religion-has-a-new-home-on-the-internet>)

### Applying the News Story

As you and your church community make plans for returning to in-person worship, think about whether you will continue your online services. Discuss the value and potential of virtual ministry, as well as its challenges and deficits, as you look toward the future.

### The Big Questions

1. What did your church do with its worship services in response to the coronavirus pandemic? How have these changes impacted your participation? What has been your experience of the services, pro and con?
2. What elements of in-person worship have you missed the most? When will you feel comfortable returning to physical services, and why?
3. Who has your church reached through its online services? What new participants have you gained, or former members have you regained, if any? Why do you think they were reached by virtual ministry? Where do you see value and potential in online services?
4. As you make plans for in-person worship, what will you do with your online services? If you retain them, what will make them even more effective? What are the challenges and deficits of online services?
5. What does worship in the online space say to you about the meaning of church membership? How can people be members if they are never physically present? When is in-person participation a requirement, if at all?

### Confronting the News With Scripture and Hope

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

#### **Exodus 4:2**

*The LORD said to [Moses], "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." (For context, read 4:1-6.)*

After God revealed his divine name, Moses became anxious about how the people would respond to him. He said, "But suppose they do not believe me" (v. 1), and then God asked him to throw his staff on the ground. When the staff hit the ground, it became a snake. Then God told him to grab the snake by the tail, and when Moses did this it turned back into a staff. This miracle occurred so that the people would believe that God had appeared to Moses.

**Questions:** *TWW* team member Liz Antonson says that the 2020 answer to God's question is not "a staff" but "a tablet, a smartphone, a laptop, a TV." What is in your hand, and what can God do with it? How can God use the tools we have to show that God is working through us, as God worked through Moses?

#### **Habakkuk 2:2**

*Then the LORD answered [Habakkuk] and said: Write down the vision; Make it plain upon tablets, so that the one who reads it may run. (For context, read 2:1-5.)*

Most scholars place the book of Habakkuk near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The second chapter begins with Habakkuk complaining about the amount of time he has to wait in order to receive justice from God. He says, "I will keep watch to see what [God] will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint" (v. 1). He raises the question of theodicy (from the Greek words for "god" and "justice"), which asks why wicked people prosper at the expense of the righteous.

Some might find it odd that the book is called the "oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw" (1:1), since English speakers tend to think that oracles are heard instead of seen. But the Hebrew word *hazah*, "saw," means "to have a vision" in the prophetic sense. This visual language continues when God responds to Habakkuk, "rite the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it." In the 21st century, this vision could be a video on an electronic tablet.

**Questions:** How can churches use modern technologies to share a new vision today? What is particularly effective about visions that are seen instead of heard? Why do we need to share messages in ways that runners can read them?

#### **Matthew 13:34-35**

*Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world." (No context needed.)*

One fresh approach that Jesus took with his teaching was the telling of parables. These short, pithy stories contained insights about God and the kingdom of heaven, and they were usually based in the everyday life of the people. These parables sometimes proclaimed "what has been hidden from the foundation of the world," and sometimes they had the effect of revealing the kingdom to Jesus' disciples while hiding the kingdom from others (vv. 10-13). To get a deeper understanding of the parables, consider reading the 2014 book *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*, by Amy-Jill Levine.

**Questions:** What sorts of parables can be presented effectively through online worship? How can audio and video be used in creative ways to take the message of Jesus beyond the walls of the church? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such communication?

**Acts 11:26**

... So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians." (For context, read 11:19-26.)

The first followers of Jesus were scattered because of persecution, and the leaders of the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch to support the believers in that place. Barnabas asked Saul (the apostle Paul) to help him, and for a year they met with the church in Antioch. The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*, which means "assembly." Barnabas and Paul taught many people and met with the church in Antioch, the place in which the word "Christian" was first used. Some scholars think "Christian" was first used as a pejorative about followers of Jesus, one which was later adopted by the church as a useful term.

**Questions:** In what ways do you believe that people need to assemble to be the church? Teaching can certainly be done virtually, but it is harder to meet as the church in the online space. How can assembling be done virtually, if at all? How can streaming services and other technologies be turned, like the term "Christian," into something that is useful for the church?

**For Further Discussion**

1. "We moved from snow day mentality to marathon mentality now," said the Rev. Rob Dyer, (<https://religionnews.com/2020/07/24/clergy-care-cope-congregate-in-new-normal-of-pandemic/>) senior pastor of a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation in Illinois. Church leaders are beginning to accept that many congregants won't participate in person anytime soon. What are the challenges of adopting a "marathon mentality" about virtual ministry?
2. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations," said Jesus in the Great Commission, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). Go, make disciples, baptize, teach: Which tasks can be done online, and which need in-person activity? How can the physical and virtual worlds be combined in ministry and mission?
3. Some smaller and lower-income churches struggled to go online prior to and during the pandemic. Studies suggest that racial and economic disparities (<https://theconversation.com/black-churches-have-lagged-in-moving-online-during-the-pandemic-reaching-across-generational-lines-could-help-132170>) could have been factors in why many Black churches struggled to offer online services, compared to non-Black churches. How can churches help each other to go online, so that congregations can survive this pandemic?
4. What can you do to stay connected to your fellow church members through online technologies? How can you use this time of separation to develop deeper connections, so that your congregation will be stronger when it is able to gather again?

**Responding to the News**

Support your congregation through this pandemic with gifts of time, talent and money. Use available online technologies to participate in worship, classes and fellowship events, and look for ways in which virtual ministry and mission can reach new people and open the doors of the church ever wider.

**Prayer**

Almighty God, we know that your purposes are never thwarted, even by a pandemic. Use us and our technologies to connect us to each other, and to reach new people with the gospel. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Other News This Week**

## **Man Honors Promise Made 28 Years Ago to Share Jackpot with Friend**

*The Wired Word for the Week of August 2, 2020*

**In the News**

In June, when Thomas Cook realized that he was holding a Powerball ticket worth \$22 million, his first call was to his friend, Joseph Feeney. In 1992, the pair had agreed to split the jackpot, if either of them ever won.

Their verbal agreement was never written down on paper, but sealed only with a handshake, according to Cook, who bought the winning ticket at Synergy Coop gas station in Menomonie, Wisconsin, for the June 10 drawing.

Every week for nearly three decades, the men bought tickets, never really believing they might strike it rich. So when Feeney, an enthusiastic angler, got the call from Cook, he asked, "Are you jerking my bobber?" Cook assured him that he had, in fact, purchased the winning ticket, and did plan to honor his word to divide the jackpot with Feeney, just as he promised.

The friends decided to take a cash payment option of approximately \$16.7 millions, or \$5.7 million for each after federal and state taxes.

Cook handed in his notice at his job after learning about the win, joining Feeney, who had already retired from an area fire department. The friends plan to take a road trip with their wives to celebrate.

"I can't think of a better way to retire," said Cook.

Wisconsin Lottery Director Cindy Polzin congratulated the men and their families in a news release: "The power of friendship and a handshake has paid off. I'm thrilled for them -- their lucky day has arrived!"

More on this story can be found at these links:

Wisconsin Friends Split \$22 Million Powerball Jackpot After 1992 Promise. *NBC12*

(<https://www.nbc12.com/2020/07/27/wisconsin-friends-split-million-powerball-jackpot-after-promise/>)Two Wisconsin Friends Split a \$22 Million Powerball Jackpot in Honor of a 28-Year-Old Handshake. *Insider* (<https://www.insider.com/a-wisconsin-man-splits-powerball-winnings-with-his-best-friend-2020-7>)

### Applying the News Story

Some people think state lotteries, raffles, games of chance and other such gambling are immoral. While that issue could be the basis for an interesting discussion, for purposes of this lesson, we have chosen to focus on making, breaking and keeping promises. We consider what is the value of our promises and the reliability of our word. That easily leads us to a consideration of God's promises and trustworthiness.

### The Big Questions

1. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted to keep their word? On what do you base your opinion?
2. Can you remember an occasion when someone broke a promise to you? How did that affect your relationship, and particularly your ability to trust that person?
3. Can others count on you to fulfill your promises? What might lead someone to break a promise? Are there situations when breaking one's word would not only be understandable, but moral? Explain your viewpoint.
4. What is the relationship between God's trustworthiness and our ability to believe God?
5. Do you believe God is a promise-keeping God? Give an example of a time when you expected God to keep a promise. What was that promise, and has God kept it? How has that experience affected your ability to trust God?

### Confronting the News With Scripture and Hope

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

#### **Proverbs 25:14**

*Like clouds and wind without rain*

*is one who boasts of a gift never given.* (No context needed.)

On occasion, people who are asked to explain why they play the lottery may say that they plan to give a portion of their winnings to charity or some good cause. Whether they actually would do so if they hit the jackpot, who can know?

As the saying goes, "A promise is a cloud, fulfillment is rain." Just because you see clouds in the sky, that doesn't necessarily mean rain will follow

Irish statesman Edmund Burke remarked, "Hypocrisy can afford to be magnificent in its promises, for never intending to go beyond promise, it costs nothing." It costs nothing to wax eloquent about what you might do with resources you don't have. But to follow through on a promise may well require the expenditure of time, energy, financial or material goods.

Fancy rhetoric may win fans in the short term, but unless words are accompanied by action, admirers may be disappointed and fall away. Even worse, "promises may fit the friends, but non-performance will turn them into enemies," according to American patriot Benjamin Franklin.

**Questions:** Suppose Cook had not honored the promise he made 28 years ago to his friend and refused to share the jackpot. How do you think that might have impacted the relationship between the two men? How would you interpret this proverb, in that hypothetical scenario?

#### **Numbers 23:19**

*[Balaam said,] "God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind.*

*Has he promised, and will he not do it?*

*Has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?* (For context, read 23:11-25.)

Moabite King Balak wanted the prophet Balaam to curse Israel, his enemy, but God told him to bless Israel instead. Balaam said he did not have the power or permission to revoke God's command. The fact that Yahweh is not a liar means we can trust in God's word and rely on God to keep his promises.

Author Stephen Richards said, "Promises are only as strong as the person who gives them." A human's promises are only as strong as that person's character; God's promises are as reliable and true as the God who made those promises.

Throughout the Bible, God's honor and faithfulness are confirmed. Yahweh is depicted as different from other gods, who were frequently arbitrary in their attitudes and actions. The psalmist says, "the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness" (Psalm 33:4). Joshua testified that, "Not one of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:45).

Later, at the dedication of the temple, King Solomon declared: "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel according to all that he promised; not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke through his servant Moses" (1 Kings 8:56).

These leaders, and others, reminded the people of God's faithful love, to encourage them to return that love by keeping their own promises to walk in God's ways and to keep God's commandments (1 Kings 8:57-61).

Michael Krauszer, the founder of ChristianLitReview Facebook page dedicated to analysis of literature, film and other culture, wrote: "God always keeps his promises and is incapable of lying or deceiving anyone. He is always true to his word and always delivers on it. ... we are to emulate him and strive to maintain that kind of candor and strength in keeping promises."

**Questions:** If you thought God could not be trusted to keep his word, how might that affect how you view the promises God makes in the Bible? How might that impact your relationship with God?

Why might some people find it hard to trust the God of the Bible? What could you say or do that might give them confidence that God is trustworthy?

### **Ecclesiastes 5:4-6**

*When you make a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your words, and destroy the work of your hands? (No context needed.)*

### **Proverbs 20:25**

*It is a snare for one to say rashly, "It is holy," and begin to reflect only after making a vow. (No context needed.)*

God instructed the Israelites not to break their word, but to fulfill their vows to the Lord and to one another (Numbers 30:1-2; Deuteronomy 23:21-23).

In Luke 14:25-33, Jesus speaks about the importance of counting the cost of following him, before one sets upon the path of discipleship. He compares becoming his disciple to building a tower and going to war.

A contractor gets all the plans, financing, materials and workers together before starting to build, to make sure all the resources are there to finish the project. A monarch who wants to make war against an enemy must first assess the relative strength of each army, to evaluate the likelihood of success in battle.

Even so, people who are thinking about following Jesus need to count the cost of discipleship. Before we pledge allegiance to him, we should ask ourselves whether we are prepared to pay the price that pledge could cost us. If we conclude that we are not ready, perhaps it would be better not to take such a life-changing oath.

Zeal is all well and good, as long as it is matched by action. As college football Hall of Famer Lou Holtz said: "Don't ever promise more than you can deliver, but always deliver more than you promise." Or, as Mae West said, "An ounce of performance is worth a pound of promises." In other words, "Under promise, over deliver."

Of course, even after careful forethought, we may still fail to live up to the promises we make. Jesus' band of disciples thought they would stick by him even if they were threatened with death, but when he was arrested, they all fled in fear (Matthew 26:35, 56).

If our salvation rested on whether or not we could keep the promises we make, our hope would be dim indeed. But the good news is that our salvation rests on God's ability and willingness to keep his promises to us, despite our failures, fickleness and frailty (Romans 3:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:13). The fact that Jesus returned to his disciples and commissioned them after his resurrection is proof enough that God is willing and able to transform our worst mistakes into new beginnings, by the power of his Spirit at work in us.

**Questions:** In what sense is it a snare to make a rash promise? How might failure to fulfill a promise prove foolish?

Have you ever made a promise you later regretted? What, if anything, did you do about it? What, if anything, might you have done differently before making an ill-advised promise, that might have helped you avoid regret?

### **2 Corinthians 1:16-20**

*I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judea. Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been "Yes and No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes." For in him every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through him that we say the "Amen," to the glory of God. (No context needed.)*

This part of Paul's letter starts off sounding like a simple discussion of his travel plans. But there is more to it. He theologizes a mundane topic to an extent that even something so simple is transformed into a doxology of sorts.

He begins by saying he wasn't flip-flopping about his itinerary. Humans might vacillate about their travel plans, making decisions depending on weather, season, personal preferences and a host of other factors.

But Paul shifts the conversation to the nature of God, who is faithful, and the gospel of Jesus Christ, which Paul, Silvanus and Timothy proclaimed to the Corinthians. That gospel, he says, "was not 'Yes and No'; but in him it is always 'Yes.'" In other words, the gospel of Jesus Christ is unchanging, always fulfilling the promises of God with a resounding affirmative!

Jesus, God's first and last word, is the solid foundation upon which our salvation is based. We need not worry that God is going to change his mind and capriciously pull the rug of his grace out from under us. That will never happen.

As Paul wrote elsewhere, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39). From a human point of view, we can change our minds about many insignificant matters, but about the promises of God that are fulfilled in Jesus (Matthew 5:17), God will never change his mind.

**Questions:** Which of God's promises mean the most to you? How are they fulfilled in Jesus? What does it mean that "in Christ every one of God's promises is a 'Yes'"?

### **For Further Discussion**

1. What do some marriages, New Year's resolutions and political campaigns have in common? You guessed it: broken promises. Thomas Fuller said, "Vows are made in storms and forgotten in calm weather."

What is the use of making promises, to ourselves, to others, or to God, if we find it so hard to keep them?

2. TWW team member Bill Tammeus asks what difference, if any, it makes to us, in the way we view games of chance, depending on how the winners will use their windfall. To buy more lottery tickets? To support a faith community or charity? Or perhaps to do what a farmer supposedly once said in response to the question of how he'd use his lottery jackpot: "Oh, I'll probably just keep farming until it's gone."

3. What promises are implicit -- unspoken yet expected -- from family, workplace, community, church, government, etc., upon which you rely? What is the basis of your expectation that these promises will be honored?

4. Respond to this: In her book, *The Nurse's Story*, nurse Carol Gino tells of being assigned temporarily to work in a pediatrics ward where there were a number of severely ill children. In one room, there was Derek, a 5-year-old boy with an inoperable brain tumor; Tammie, a 3-year-old with cystic fibrosis; Sally, a 4-year-old with leukemia; and 8-month-old Kerri, who had one of those rare but fatal diseases that doom a child to just a few months of life.

Gino was working there during the Christmas season. While she was on the floor, one or the other of Kerri's parents was there with their baby all the time. Gino became especially impressed with the baby's father, Paul, for not only was he tender and loving with his own child, but he also took time to play with the other children, and they responded to him.

Down the hall in another room was a 14-year-old boy named Jamie. He had been hit by a car and was swathed in casts. He was expected to recover, but he was lonely. His father was gone and his mother had to work so many hours that she had little time to visit. So, sometimes, when Kerri was asleep, Paul would drop in on Jamie and spend some time with him.

On one visit, a couple of weeks before Christmas, Jamie confided to Paul that his mother was going to have to work on Christmas day and wouldn't be able to come until quite late. On an impulse, Paul volunteered to bring in some videos, pizza and party favors for a Christmas party. Paul added quietly, "As long as we all gotta be here anyway."

When the other kids learned of the plans, they were all excited. One of the little ones even asked Paul if he *promised* to bring the party, and Paul said he did.

Before Christmas arrived, Gino was transferred to another floor in the hospital, but a few weeks after Christmas, she went back to pediatrics to see how the kids were doing. Derek and Jamie were still there. Tammie and Sally had gone home after Christmas.

And baby Kerri had died on Christmas Eve.

But Gino heard that on Christmas day, Paul, dressed as Santa Claus, came in to give the kids a party.

TWW team member Stan Purdum comments, "Promises, you see, are sacred things. And sometimes, even when our heart is breaking, even when all meaning is sucked from our lives and everything around us has given way, all we have left is what we have promised.

"And it is what carries us, and the people we committed to, through."

### **Responding to the News**

You may find it helpful to focus on one of God's promises each day. You can meditate on that promise throughout the day, thanking God for his promise and for his faithfulness. You can ask God to help you trust him to fulfill each promise.

Here's a link (<http://navtools.weebly.com/5-assurances.html>) to get you started on five Bible verses that highlight God's promise of salvation, answered prayer, victory, forgiveness and guidance.

### **Prayer**

You may wish to listen to this song, "Covenant Keeper," (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nRmTEgfyf8>) by Twila Paris, as you pray that God would help you to become a faithful promise keeper, just like God is.