



Tauranga, New Zealand

THE DAY GOD SWORE

Message by Pastor Andrew Kulasingham 14th June 2020

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 6:13-19

Do you swear? The English language can sometimes be quite hilarious. A word could carry multiple meanings so different one from another. The phrase “to swear” is one example. Two completely different meanings in modern day usage.

- make a solemn statement or promise undertaking to do something
- use offensive language, especially as an expression of anger

This morning, I’m not here to tell you that God uses offensive language but he did make an oath. This week, in the final of a series we have been focusing on Hebrews chapter six, we will look at God making an oath and the significance of it for a believer.

Just a quick recap of last week’s message. We saw in Hebrews 6:12 two things that the men and women of the Bible had in order to obtain their promises - faith and patience. Faith must be accompanied with action. Biblical faith requires actions that reflect what you are believing for. It requires us to take steps of faith towards what we are believing for.

We also saw that the word patience in the text was the Greek word makrothymia. It is made up of two Greek words - makros (long) and thymos (passion). Long passion - extraordinary patience under provocation or trial. It carries the idea that the things we are believing for will come under trials and testing. The men and women in Bible inherited their promises because they had faith and a disposition, a temperament, a nature that was willing to keep at it no matter what, until they inherited their promises.

This week we will complete the series by looking at chapter 6:13-19.

Hebrews 6:17-18 (NKJV)

Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie

The Hebrews author talks about two immutable things - a promise and an oath.

The Promise

The Promise that was given to Abraham was “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” The NLT puts it this way: “multiply your descendants beyond number”. To believe in something like that required him to believe something that he wouldn’t see completed in his lifetime.

God dreams are always bigger than what we can comprehend or even fathom. God knew the challenge Abraham had in order to believe the promise so He backed it up with an oath.

The Oath

What is the significance of an oath? We are given an explanation of it's significance in Hebrews 6:16.

Hebrews 6:16 (NLT)

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.

In ancient times you reinforced a promise with an oath. Once an oath was made, it could not be broken. The oath involved a person greater than the two parties to act as witness to the promise and hold both parties accountable to what was promised. In the Old Testament, when an oath was made and it involved God – it was a serious thing.

Exodus 20:7 (NKJV)

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Leviticus 19:12 (NKJV)

And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.

So oaths were seen as legally binding. In fact the Hebrews author says an oath for confirmation is “an end of all dispute”. Oaths were like modern day contracts – a contract reinforces a promise. It is legally binding because it is contractual, backed by a legal system. In the context of a contract, when a person breaks their promise, it can be enforced by someone more powerful than the two parties involved – a judge.

A PROMISE + A PERSON = LEGALLY BINDING

A promise is based on a word - what is said. The one who made the promise is judged by the history of the one keeping to their word. Can he or she be trusted to keep the promise?

An oath is based on character - who they are. The person who holds the parties to account is judged by what you know of the person. Is he or she a good person or a bad person?

Drawing from everyday use of an oath to guarantee a promise the Hebrews author emphasises the efficacy of God's promises by saying - “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.” Perfectly sure. That's the invitation we are given as we embrace the promises of God. We can be certain, perfectly sure that God will not change His mind because He has guaranteed His promise with an oath.

GOD'S PROMISE AND GOD'S PERSON

1. GOD'S PROMISE – His word is His bond

Isaiah 55:10-11

“The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the

hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

When God says something it will come to pass. It may take sometime but once He has spoken, once He sends it out your way, it triggers a chain reaction – it will produce → it will accomplish → it will prosper. All throughout Scripture, God has a track record. He always does what He promises. You can trust Him. His word is His bond.

GOD’S PROMISES ARE BACKED BY A GUARANTEE THAT IT WILL COME TO PASS

2. GOD’S PERSON – His character is His surety

God binds Himself to His Person. His very nature reenforce His promise.

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

The NLT says “He never changes, as a shifting shadow does.” I love how the Message Bible puts it - “There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle.” God’s nature, His person is all good, all perfect, all light. At no time will God ever change. No variation, no shifting, no turning. God doesn’t back out from His word; He doesn’t change his mind. His very being, His unchanging nature, who He is – makes it impossible for God to change His mind. **HIS PERSON IS HIS SURETY.**

HIS PROMISE - IT WILL PRODUCE - IT WILL ACCOMPLISH, IT WILL PROSPER

HIS PERSON - ALL GOOD, ALL PERFECT, ALL LIGHT – HE NEVER CHANGES

Put these two together – **HIS PROMISE + HIS OATH = LEGALLY BINDING**

The two immutable things - “immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie”

- look at the strong language used by the apostle – immutable, unchangeable, impossible

Based on these two immutable things – God’s promise and God’s oath - the apostle says we can have “strong consolation”, we can “lay hold of the hope” and let it be “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (vs 18,19). That’s our hope in this uncertain world.

Let me close with this last verse

Hebrews 6:19-20 (NKJV)

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

WE ARE NOT OUTSIDERS – WE ARE ON THE INSIDE

After convincing us of the certainty and reliability of the promises of God, the author encourages to set our anchor on the inside of the veil – within the veil. When we are aware that we are insiders in God’s

plan and purposes, our attitude changes during times of difficulties. Are you uncertain of God's promises? It happens. As time goes by and His promises are still pending an outcome, discouragement can seep in. We may start questioning if we heard God right. In those moments talk to God from the inside. Don't question His word from the outside. Ask Him for clarity within the veil, as an insider, knowing that the Father is more than willing to reconfirm His promises again and again. That is the privilege of being on the inside.

We are also reminded that Christ our High Priest is also within the veil. Are you are struggling because it hasn't come to pass. Remember you are within the veil. You are in His presence, where Christ is interceding for you. There can be no greater prayer partner than the one who died on the cross for you and me. He is our dedicated intercessor within the veil.

DON'T STAND ON THE OUTSIDE AND HAVE A HISSY FIT. DROP ANCHOR ON THE INSIDE WITHIN THE VEIL.

REMEMBER:

HIS PROMISE AND HIS PERSON = MAKES IT LEGALLY BINDING

- God's promises are backed by a guarantee that it will come to pass. He always does what He says.
- God's person, who He is - is his surety, His guarantee. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is constantly good, always good. He is constantly light, always light.

HIS PROMISE AND HIS PERSON GUARANTEES YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR PROMISES

REMEMBER ALSO - WE ARE NOT OUTSIDERS – WE ARE ON THE INSIDE.