



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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2 Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”*

This verse came to my mind yesterday. I was out driving about and saw a double rainbow. It was beautiful. Rainbows-they belong to God and are given as reminders of God's promise to never again destroy the world by a flood. God remembers. After a rain shower and the sun comes out and a rainbow is formed, God remembers.

There are two powerful thoughts here.

First, God keeps His promises. When God says something, you can count on it. That's how prophecy works. Prophecy was not a generic guess into the dark, it was God telling His people this is what is going to happen. Prophecy was certain and sure, it was just a matter of when. God said it, and it will be that way.

- God promises two things with every temptation. First, it will not be more than you can handle and secondly, there will be a way of escape. There always is. God promises.
- God promises to forgive if we believe and repent. It doesn't matter how long we've been in the wilderness of sin, nor how far that sin has taken us away from God, He will remove the sin and restore the relationship. God promises.
- God promises a home in Heaven for the faithful. Jesus has prepared that place. Heaven isn't a question mark for the faithful of God, it's sure and certain. God promises.

Our verse reminds us that God is not like us. We make promises and don't keep them. We promise to be better, do better, change our ways, and then when a crisis settles down, we forget what we promised. Many a marriage crashed on the rocks because someone failed to keep their promises. There was a time when business deals, real estate transactions and major decisions were made on promises and handshakes. That proved to be shaky grounds because people failed to keep their promises. Today, when you buy a house, you must sign a stack of papers. Handshakes don't mean

anything. Saying, I promise doesn't mean anything. Signed names on papers that can be backed up in court are the means to keeping us honest. God's not like that.

Second, God often sends reminders, such as rainbows, of His promises. God remembers. He wants us to remember. This builds trust. Good old Noah lived a long, long time ago, maybe 4,000-5,000 years ago. No one is around that would remember God's promises. God preserved His promise in His word and He continues to send signs, the rainbow, to remind us. Keeping promises builds trust and confidence. A person can believe that future promises will be fulfilled and kept because of the promises of the past were. God, by keeping and reminding us of His promises, is showing that He is trustworthy. You can count on God.

You can count on God to be there for you. You can count on God to hear your prayers. You can count on God to give you a second chance. You can count on God to trust His word and His ways. The promises of God show that.

Now, we can't leave this without mentioning that there ought to be a similarity between God and His children. The followers of God ought to learn something by observing how God keeps His promises. Maybe it would help if we promised less and kept more of what we say. Trustworthy in a marriage, family or congregation is built upon keeping promises. We make them, now do we keep them. God does.

Jesus said let your yes be yes and your no, no. Keep your word. Don't promise to be there for someone and then don't show up. Don't RSVP and then fail to show up. Don't show up without RSVPing. Don't promise to keep things between you and another person and then tell someone else. Don't promise to do things and then don't. That's what a credit card obligation, a mortgage or a car loan are all about. You promised to pay back. Don't make those promises and fail to keep them. Don't promise to give something to someone and then don't do it. It's better not to promise than to do that and fail. Your credibility and trustworthiness are questioned when you don't keep your promises.

God promises. God remembers. God keeps those promises. God can be trusted. This is key in our relationship with Him. This is why we cling to the Bible so deeply. We can trust it. It's true. God stands behind it.

Shattered relationships have trust issues. Trust is built by keeping promises. That's the starting point.

Roger Shouse

