



Lesson 5: Promise

I. **LOVING (10 min)** ~ *Starter*

- A. Promises are made by us and to us all the time. When we get a product like a TV, the company promises to fix it if it doesn't work. Our job promises to pay us for what we do. If we complete all our classes with satisfactory grades, we are promised a diploma. We also make promises to others. To our children, that we will feed them, teach them, and put a roof over their heads. To a spouse or partner, that we will be faithful. To a friend, that we will be there in times of deepest need. To our church, that we will support it with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness. With this in mind, answer the following:
- B. Write down **three** promises you have made in the past.
- C. Write down **two** broken promises (broken by you or by another).

Share with one or two persons, then share with whole group:

1. What is the difference between promises made to you by companies or institutions versus promises made in a relationship?
2. How do promises kept ensure trust? How do broken promises undermine trust?

II. **LEARNING** ~

- A. **In the Know (15 Min)** ~ Read aloud, if more than 7, break into groups of 4 to discuss.

Where do we find strength for today? Where do we find bright hope for tomorrow? This week, we find it in the promise God sent through the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah some 2,600 years ago. And the amazing thing about this Scripture lesson is that the power of Jeremiah's words speak to us just as clearly and profoundly today as they did to the children of Israel held in captivity in Babylon all those generations ago.

The Lord is saying to them, and to us, "No matter what you are going through, no matter how much it hurts or how difficult it is to imagine a future with hope, I promise you, it will get better one day. And you are not alone. I am with you to the end of the age."



- One day, the Lord says, the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be restored.
- One day, you will be able to return to the land that the Lord gave to you.
- One day, your homes and businesses will be rebuilt.
- One day, you will have work again.
- One day, your divorce will be a thing of the past.
- One day, shame will no longer control your life.
- One day, your grief will become manageable, and you will smile and laugh again.
- One day, you will no longer be a slave to your addiction.
- One day, there will be a new covenant.
- One day, the sins of the past will all be forgotten and you will be given a fresh start. The slate will be wiped completely clean.
- One day, Christ will come in final victory and we will feast at his heavenly banquet.

One day. Some day. The days are surely coming, the Lord promises.

Do you think the people being held captive in Babylon found comfort in Jeremiah's words? Probably not at that point. Sometimes we just aren't in a place where we can hear any word of hope, not even from a prophet sent by the Lord God. But perhaps the one thing that we can do is put our faith in this new covenant, this promise of forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and even prosperity that is, because of Christ, offered to all of us.

This covenant will not be made with words. It will be inscribed on our hearts. It will come as an assurance in which we *know for certain* that God is with us and that God loves us whether we can feel it right now or not.

Share your thoughts about recovery.

1. How do promises lead to hope?
2. Reflect on how hard it is to believe in God's grace when you are in hard times.

B. Reflection on the Scriptures (20 Min) ~ One person read the following passages and another read the background.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Background:

Jeremiah contrasts the old covenant and the new. The old covenant, made with Israel, was based on Israel following the law—the Ten Commandments. But because the people were unable to keep the commandments, the covenant was broken. The new covenant rests solely on God's intentions, to offer wholeness and healing to all who follow. "I will put my law with them, and I will write it on their hearts" is a statement that is



fulfilled when God's sends the Holy Spirit to guide and heal us. His promise is from the least to the greatest, a promise of the forgiveness of sins that is found in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Questions for Discussion ~ If more than 7, break into groups of 4 to discuss.

1. Have you ever made promises that you know will not be appreciated or reciprocated?
2. What does it feel like to be forgiven?
3. How does forgiveness fit into a plan of rehab?

III. LEADING ~ Making it Personal (10 Min)

- A. Where does the desire for rehab begin? It is something we discover? Something we are told we must do? Or does it start when we pay attention to God's voice that calls us to health and wholeness?
- B. What is God's role in your rehab?
- C. How has this study helped you move through the steps of wilderness, intervention, program, recovery, and promise?

Close in Prayer (5 Min)