



Prophets Faithful To
GOD'S COVENANT

The Silent Moment

Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

— Romans 15:4



March-May 2021

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The U.S. Postal Service has a lost-and-found in Atlanta for packages and letters that are undeliverable. It is called the Mail Recovery Center (MRC), but at one time was known as the Dead Letter Office. In 2014 the MRC received 85 million letters into its recovery system, out of more than 60 billion first-class pieces. Those undeliverable messages didn’t get to the people who needed them unless the sender, intended recipient, or postal workers were able to recover the mail and get it going to its destination.

Of course, God has not relied on the U.S. Postal Service to get His very important message delivered. Rather, He has called faithful people to serve as messengers to communicate His messages.

The major prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel—quickly come to mind as God’s faithful messengers. So might the minor prophets—Hosea through Malachi. These people demonstrated courage to speak and exemplify God’s messages to people even when opposed and threatened by the very ones who desperately needed to hear and heed God’s message.

But God was delivering His messages through people long before those Old Testament prophets. Moses, for example, was one of God’s prophetic messengers. Moses spoke about God’s initiative to deliver the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and take them to their land. God’s message of deliverance must still go out today. Joshua served as God’s spokesperson for His instructions and announcements for the conquest of the promised land and how to move into peace and security.

Kings who remained devoted to God were also faithful messengers for Him, leading the people to God—or back to God after they had strayed into worship of idols that could not save them. This is another message needed today.

Jesus is the greatest of all those who deliver God’s message. He taught about the Father’s love and demonstrated it by sacrificing Him-self as the suffering servant to secure our place in God’s covenant. Because of Christ we can become children of God, members of His forever family, and have a place at the table of God’s goodness.

All these messengers are recorded for us in Scripture. All messages are pertinent and desperately needed still. The record of faithful prophets provides the platform for this quarter of devotionals. The devotion authors come alongside to help us receive these messages so we might know God and follow Him. We grow in faithfulness to God and His covenant of grace with us through daily Bible reading, devotional encouragement, and prayer. May this devotional guide help equip you to receive God’s message and to share His hope to a world that is in desperate need of Him.

Scott Stewart, Editor

March 1

Our Great God

Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God?
(Psalm 77:13).

Scripture: Psalm 77:11-20

Song: “How Great Is Our God”

The way that entertainment media showcases celebrities might lead us to think they are different from most of us and can do things that we would not be able to do. Through an experience I had at a meal with a celebrity, I discovered how much that well-known person, at least, is a regular human being with challenges, fears, and setbacks similar to my own.

Personal experience with God, however, will never reveal Him to be a “regular human being.” The more we know Him, the more clearly we will see how much “other than us” God is. The psalmist recalls this in Psalm 77:11, which points back to when God delivered the people from Egypt. That story alone is enough to declare in worship that there is no god like our God!

God reached out to Israel in their bondage, and He has reached out to us by sending Jesus to show His deep love for us. Through Jesus, God says, “I love you.” When we recognize God’s great love in His mighty act of raising Jesus from the dead and we receive His salvation, then we experience God’s mighty rescue from the consequences of our sin. There is no other god like our God, who is holy in all His ways.

Holy Father, please rescue me by the power You demonstrated in history and in resurrecting Jesus. In His name, amen.

The Reversal

“Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here [at Abraham’s side]” (Luke 16:25).

Scripture: Luke 16:24-31

Song: “I Will Rise”

We enjoy stories about underdog teams that win, especially in the last seconds of a game. There are countless sports movies with just that plot. The reversal is incredibly attractive and gripping. And maybe for ourselves, we like to imagine that one day we might experience such a reversal and rise from our own down-and-out situation.

Jesus’ stories also celebrate reversal. In His parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, Jesus juxtaposes a wealthy man with all he could ever want against the poor man who begs for scraps at his gate. But as both men die, we see that for eternity things are the opposite: now the rich man is in torment; Lazarus is comforted. Both of their lives on earth did matter—but not because of their finances. No amount of money could stop the rich man from entering Hell. His hard heart had not followed God’s path.

It’s too simple to say the lesson is about how we use money. Rather, Jesus’ reversal story offers hope to those who relate to Lazarus. While our earthly existence might be torment, in Jesus we are comforted. Bad experiences should not be downplayed, because what is important is that in eternity comfort is offered to those who are afflicted for His name. In Heaven, the righteous underdogs win.

Father, guide our hearts as we seek to live like Jesus. Remind us that in our lowest times, You promise us comfort. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Celebrate

“The whole community of Israel must celebrate [the Passover meal]” (Exodus 12:47).

Scripture: Exodus 12:43-50

Song: “Jesus, We Celebrate Your Victory”

My wife and I celebrate our wedding anniversary between just the two of us at a special dinner or favorite activity. It’s about us and our relationship, so no one else gets invited. But for birthdays we might invite family members and many friends. The one common attribute of all the people is some sort of relationship with the birthday person.

The Jewish Passover was more like our birthday celebrations. Israelites, slaves they owned (Exodus 12:44), and also foreign residents (v. 48) were included in the celebration—if they were devoted to God. Relationship with God and obedience to His commands were essential for an invitation to celebrate. It was a special gathering of the devoted around the Passover table. Everyone was there to remember God’s work in their lives.

God wants everyone devoted to Him to remember and to celebrate His work in their lives. We should celebrate regularly, even daily. We should celebrate that we have been set free from the eternal consequences of our sin, and we should celebrate other ways God is restoring us as His people. Let celebration of your freedom in Christ enrich and strengthen your testimony to other believers and to people who have not yet understood and accepted the invitation into God’s family.

Father, help us to celebrate all that You have done in our lives. Remind us of Your great works, and give us strong witness to the world for Your mighty name. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Everyone Can Be Included

“A foreigner residing among you is also to celebrate the LORD’s Passover in accordance with its rules and regulations” (Numbers 9:14).

Scripture: Numbers 9:9-14

Song: “All Who Are Thirsty”

I had a school classmate whom most kids did not like. He wanted to be included, but most thought he was “weird” and made him an outcast. However, the so-called outcast and I enjoyed each other and became friends. One of my other friends told me that he didn’t like my new friend, the outcast. Perhaps silly, but I told that friend that I couldn’t be friends with him unless he started being nice to my new friend. Apparently that was all it took because we three became good friends after that. The so-called outcast was slowly becoming included.

God does not make an outcast of anyone who will fear Him. The Lord gave Moses specific instructions to include residents from other nations in their Passover celebrations, if they held to the covenant regulations for Passover. God has rules but also amazing grace. He has always made a way for all who will come to receive His salvation, and a place at the table where His people gather. God has made a way for everyone to come into communion with the Lord. Since God welcomes everyone, we are called to reach out and welcome anyone into the family of God and to include in our faith communities all who respond.

Father, thank You for inviting me in and making me part of Your family. Strengthen me as I show Your love to others and guide people into relationship with You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Devoted to God

The LORD said to Moses, “Consecrate to me every firstborn male” (Exodus 13:1-2).

Scripture: Exodus 13:1-2; Deuteronomy 15:19-20

Song: “You Are My All in All”

God commanded His people to worship Him in festivals, special meals, and offerings at the temple. Today’s verse is God’s command to consecrate every firstborn son. Every baby boy that was a couple’s first child was to be set apart for God. This was an offering of dedication given out of the parents’ devotion to God. It was also a public declaration that God provides for, and protects, His people. There is a lot of significant meaning embedded in this command.

This instruction is given in the context of other commands for Passover. The consecration of firstborn males reminded the people of the blood of lambs that protected their firstborn sons in Egypt (Exodus 12:13, 29-30), just before they were released from slavery. In dedicating a son to God, the child became a living symbol of God’s grace in the people’s past and also evidence of their confidence that His grace would continue into the future.

All believers today are urged to dedicate ourselves to God (Romans 12:1). We do this in response to God’s mercy for us. Each day we are to look to Scripture and seek how we will give ourselves to Him and to others in His name—because we love God and enjoy the blessing of His grace and mercy in our lives.

Father, I consecrate myself to You. Please help me recognize how to give myself in service to You and the people I can help today. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Go Tell

“On [the day you celebrate the exodus] tell your son, ‘I do this because of what the LORD did for me’” (Exodus 13:8).

Scripture: Exodus 13:3-10

Song: “Shout to the North”

I enjoy telling stories about my travels and other experiences. Stories help people know about me and understand some of the events that have shaped who I am.

God shaped His people and formed their identity through many experiences of His mighty deliverance and provision. They remembered these events and told them to their children to help the children learn their history and be able to pass their faith to the next generation. Parents wanted to tell their God-stories, but God also commanded that they tell them. The stories were written in the Torah (Genesis–Deuteronomy) but also on their hearts because of their power. The most important stories are in Exodus about how God protected the Israelites’ firstborn sons from the final plague on Egypt at Passover, as well as during the Israelites’ subsequent exodus from Egypt. Children learned that God rescued them from slavery by His grace. God’s mighty actions for their freedom shaped their identity as individuals and as a nation.

Believers have stories to tell from Scripture and also from their lives. Our children, families, and friends will benefit when we tell them what God has done in the past, and especially in our lives. We are to tell the world what the Lord has done for us.

Father, I owe everything in my life to You. Help me share my testimony with others so they will know how beautifully You work in the world. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Listen Closely

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet. . . . You must listen to him (Deuteronomy 18:15).

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:15-22

Song: “Be Still and Know”

I quickly learned as a substitute teacher that my voice does not always gain the respect of the class. Students might assume that a substitute can't discipline them. But on a few occasions another teacher, one the students knew, stepped into the classroom and spoke. The students respected that teacher and listened. Authority rests on the ability to call people to account for their actions and to be able to give out consequences.

God promised the people a prophet who would speak the words that God would give the prophet to say. The prophet is a messenger; God is the authority behind the message. The validity of the messenger is proven when the prophet's message is fulfilled.

Israel gained a long record of rejecting God's prophets, even though they proved themselves valid. People also rejected Jesus, who prophesied that He would be crucified and rise again (Matthew 20:17-19). History validates Jesus as the Son of God. We can trust Jesus. He is worthy of our exclusive attention and full obedience. There is no substitute for Jesus. He cares so much about us. When we listen to Him and obey, we receive God's blessing and goodness in our lives.

Father, open my ears to Your voice and help me follow Your instructions on how to live. Guide me as I meditate on the sweet words of Jesus, then apply them to my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

God Has No Blind Spots

By faith [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible (Hebrews 11:27).

Scripture: Hebrews 11:23-31

Song: "By Faith"

The bay horse galloped toward the final jump. Its hooves thudded against the ground, sending up puffs of dirt. As its rider crouched low, the horse left the ground. Everyone cheered when the horse soared over the jump to land safely and win the prize. Once a horse takes off, it can no longer see the jump. Eyes on the sides of their heads give horses a wide-angle view to guard against predators, but they have blind spots in front and behind. Horses must trust their riders, who have gone ahead to check the jumps, and who go with them to guide them up and over to safety.

Perhaps Moses' feet sent up puffs of sand as he fled Egypt. Obstacles loomed ahead, and he couldn't see what lay beyond. But Moses chose to trust and follow God. He knew from experience that God went before him and would be with him to guide him to safety and his reward on the other side.

Many times we face obstacles that blind our way. But God has no blind spots, and we can trust Him to go before us in every situation and be with us through them all.

Father, help us trust You to guide us safely through every obstacle to our final reward with You. In Jesus' name, amen.

March 9

Darkness to Light

Jesus asked [a man who was born blind], “What do you want me to do for you?”

“Lord, I want to see,” he replied.

Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you” (Luke 18:40-42).

Scripture: Luke 18:35-42

Song: “Fairest Lord Jesus!”

Claude Monet, the French impressionist who saw and painted how light changed the colors of meadows and cathedrals and water, was going blind as he was working on his last and most famous series, Water Lilies. As a young man, Monet said that it was as if a veil had fallen from his eyes when he first painted outside and saw the effects of changing light.

Though in the early 1900s cataract surgery was often dangerous, Monet had two operations so he could finish the water lily paintings and give their beauty to the world. As fair as those flowers are, though, when Jesus stopped in Jericho to miraculously take away the veil from a poor man’s physical and spiritual eyes, the first thing the man saw was fairer than any flower or work of art, for he saw the eternal beauty of his Savior.

Every person in the world is spiritually blind before Jesus removes the veil from their eyes. Each of us must, like the man in Luke 18, boldly call on Jesus and humbly ask Him to open our eyes to see His beauty and His salvation.

Father, thank You for changing our darkness into light so we may see the beauty of Jesus, our Savior. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Shadowy Thoughts

The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land (Joshua 5:12).

Scripture: Joshua 5:8-12

Song: “Still, My Soul, Be Still”

We were squished into one motel room, and everyone else was asleep—my husband, two children, and a large dog who twitched as she chased squirrels in a dream. But my thoughts kept chasing after recent events: the going-away party, loading the truck, and the first day on the road with excited children and an anxious dog. The adventure had begun, but as outside lights made shadows on the ceiling, worry made shadows in my mind. My husband’s salary had stopped. Could my teaching job alone support us while he attended seminary? Would God help us adjust from a rural town to city life and new schools?

The Israelites were moving, leaving the desert for the cities of the promised land. Excited men, women, children, and anxious animals had crossed the Jordan River on dry land and camped near Jericho. The adventure had begun; but within days the manna, the visible sign of God’s care and protection, stopped. Could they go forward to meet the challenges ahead with faith that God would fulfill His promises?

We go through many challenging transitions in life—new jobs, marrying, having children, retiring. We often worry, but the Lord reminds us of His faithful care in the past and urges us go forward to meet the challenges, confident that He will be faithful to fulfill His promises in the future too.

Father, thank You for Your faithfulness that never fails to guide us through all life’s transitions. In Jesus’ name, amen.

March 11

Haystack Prayers

On the second day [the seven priests and the armed men] marched around the city once and returned to the camp (Joshua 6:14).

Scripture: Joshua 6:6-14

Song: “Jesus Shall Reign”

In 1806, five Williams College students prayed in a meadow in western Massachusetts. One student, Samuel Mills, wanted Americans to take the gospel beyond America, but some believed other lands might need to be civilized or even conquered by armies first. A sudden thunderstorm drove the students to take shelter in a haystack. They prayed and continued praying for God to open the way for foreign missions. Four years later they persuaded New England ministers to form the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, which soon sent missionaries to India. Within 50 years it had sent out over 1,000 more missionaries. Praying under the shelter of a haystack may seem strange, but God used this beginning to launch worldwide American missions.

God’s strategy to take Jericho seemed strange, too. March around Jericho for seven days, blowing trumpets without shooting a single arrow? But then, on the seventh day, God brought down the walls of Jericho and launched the conquest of the land.

Day after day, even year after year, we may pray for someone to accept Christ or for a difficult situation to change. If we see no result, we may question God’s wisdom. At those times we must remember the experiences of God’s people and trust that He knows the best way and time to answer our prayers.

Father, help us trust You to accomplish Your purposes. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Shelter in the Storm

“This oath . . . will not be binding . . . unless . . . you [Rahab] have tied this scarlet cord in the window” (Joshua 2:17-18).

Scripture: Joshua 2:15-24

Song: “A Shelter in the Time of Storm”

A Colorado blizzard raged outside. Wind plastered snow against our windows until only a gray light filtered through. Meteorologists had predicted the dangerous storm and warned people to stay home. But the day began with little indication of the coming storm, and many people went out to work or shop. By midday the pressure dropped rapidly, and the weather exploded into what is called a bomb cyclone. Snow and accidents blocked highways, stranding people in their vehicles. Thousands of frightened motorists had to be rescued and taken to shelters.

Outside Rahab’s house in Jericho, a battle raged. The day had begun like the past six, with the Israelites marching around the walls, but today the army circled seven times. And after a great shout, Jericho’s walls crumbled. Now sounds of clashing spears filled the streets, and frightened people found no safety. Rahab’s house, however, did provide safety because the scarlet cord identified it as a house where people trusted God for shelter, rather than manmade walls.

The walls of our Colorado house stood firm through the blizzard, but manmade walls do sometimes crumble. The promises of Christ’s protection will never crumble, though; they will stand firm through every storm. When we shelter under the cross of Christ, we can be confident God will watch over us through whatever life brings.

Father, thank You for sheltering us through the storms of life. In Jesus’ name, amen.

True Hope

Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring her out . . . in accordance with your oath to her” (Joshua 6:22).

Scripture: Joshua 6:22-25

Song: “Jesus Paid It All”

Emma Whittemore, a wealthy socialite, attended an evangelistic meeting at a city mission in New York City’s slums. There she committed her life to serving God and began helping in the mission. Still, when Emma felt called to ministry among prostitutes, she asked God for some other, any other, calling. She soon asked His forgiveness and began work that often broke her heart but also brought blessings to her and many women. In 1890, Emma opened her first Door of Hope home so women could leave the streets and find hope in Christ for a changed life. More homes soon opened around the world.

In Jericho God did not wait for Rahab to become “good enough” before changing her heart to believe in Him. Her faith led her to defy danger to help the Israelite spies. And when they returned to rescue her, she knew it was in fulfillment of God’s promise to open a door to her future as part of His family.

Over and over, God shows us that no one is too sinful to be saved. He can open the heart of even the worst sinner to believe in Christ’s sacrifice and be saved. Jesus is the door of hope that leads to a changed life.

Father, thank You for rescuing us and opening the door so we may live for You. In Jesus’ name, amen.