

# A Promise Kept

by Ralph Sexton

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*God's promises are significant because they give us hope and assurance of His love and faithfulness in our lives.*

**Duration:** 31:18

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:15, Micah 5:2, Matthew 6:33, Luke 2:11

**Topics:** "Moral Responsibility", "Family Values"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how our society has cheapened our promises and the value of life. He highlights the violence portrayed in television shows and movies, as well as the availability of rental videos and DVDs that showcase real deaths for entertainment. The speaker also mentions the prevalence of violence and murder in the world of abortion. He emphasizes that our children are being exposed to immoral and violent themes through video games, which is polluting their minds. The speaker calls for parents and grandparents to take responsibility for loving and guiding the younger generation.

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## Transcript

In Micah 5 and verse 2, But thou, Bethlehem, Thethra, through, if you look at this scripture, it says, Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting. Now, when we think about this little town of Bethlehem, we find it mentioned in the Old Testament in Micah chapter 5. Keeping a promise is very important. When you tell someone you're going to do something, you ought to try to keep your word.

It's important that when you make a promise, I promise that you especially go out of your way to keep your word. The fact that we have such a wonderful and a great God is the fact that He made a lot of promises, and God has kept His word. And in Micah 5, He promised that there would be a ruler coming forth, and His promise was kept.

But before Micah 5, there was a promise when we look at Genesis chapter 3 in the Old Testament in verse 15. And God made another promise. He said, And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.

It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Way back in the third chapter of Genesis, God promised there was going to be a cure for sin. In Micah 5 and verse 2, God promised a Savior would be born, and He even told the city that He would be born.

There's three things that God has promised us. He's promised that there would be a cure for sin. He promised, secondly, that a Messiah would be born.

And He said, I'll tell you the city of the Savior's birth. It appears today, in the world and the culture that we're living in, that when we have a God that's promising to cure sin and to send a Savior, and to be so specific about keeping His promise, that in our world that we're living in, not only is a promise not very valuable anymore, not only do people lie and not keep their word anymore, but we find out that life itself has gotten very cheap. We don't value life, let alone our word, like we used to.

When I go to keep a promise, or you go to keep a promise, it's very important because of our family and our friends. But you think what it means to us today that we can believe the promises of God. You think what it means in today's world that when we read, He said, I promise I'll never leave you, and I'll never forsake you.

What that means. You think about what it means when He says, I will not put on you more than you're able to bear. What that means.

I like that promise. He said, and if I go away, I will come again. I like that promise.

Promises bring a blessing, and they bring great joy. But today's culture, we're not seeing a lot of joy. We're not seeing a lot of blessings, because we've cheapened our word, we've cheapened our promises, and we've even cheapened life.

Think about, for just a moment, the violence of our television. Think about the violence of our movies. Think about how we're feeding on the bottom of the things of this world.

We've lost the very values that made us a great nation. Killing and the taking of life has actually become entertainment in our culture. The violence and murder that we see playing out on our television, playing out in the movie screen, playing out in the rental movie, that we now even have rental CDs, rental DVDs and movies with such titles as The Faces of Death, where you can actually rent a video or a DVD and watch human beings die for over an hour for your evening's entertainment.

Murders, executions, tragedies, watching people die has become a part of our culture. The violence and murder that we're seeing take place in the world of abortion. One evidence that our society has cheapened is that every year, 1,500,000 little babies are aborted.

One of the most graphic testimonies I've ever had given to me. I was preaching in the Tri-Cities area of Tennessee and a charge nurse came up to me during the invitation of the service and she was so broken and weeping. She said, I'm about to lose my mind.

I can't go on. I can't take it. And finally, one of the ladies there, the pastor's wife, sat her on the front row and we began to talk and I said, what is the problem? And she said, I have to work with the general hospital in my city and we're having to assist with the abortion process.

And she said, I just keep hearing those little babies. She said, they're still alive when we put them in the trash can. She said, how can we be so cruel? You know, we have gotten so callous that we're not even keeping the promise that we made to our own children to love them and to protect them and to take care of them.

The internet death sites, the suicide pages, and even the death clubs where you can join. You can find a place where people are actually uniting on the internet and saying at a certain time, we'll take our lives together. Or they'll encourage other people.

We're seeing in our culture the war and rumors of war. The roadside bombs and the suicide bombers. They don't value their own lives and they cheapen the life of others.

Whether they walk into a wedding or whether they go into a subway or crash a plane into an office building field with innocent people. But besides cheapening life, we're seeing that our children are now being polluted. The video games of today.

The grand theft autos. The remakes. These actual games that are becoming so realistic with sight and sound.

They're seeing the mutation of morality into the murder and violent themes. The stabbing. The wrecks.

The violent destruction of the human body brought to vivid color on the screen. Nudity. Lust.

Passion. Shootings. Mayhem.

Chaos. And murder. Has become entertainment for our children.

We're feeding our kids no longer Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. No longer do they have the innocence of some cartoon character. But now we're taking them to another level.

Literally opening the doors to the darkness. The halo has evolved into the occult. Where we take them to the darker side of life.

We've seen the news 24-7 explosion. We wake up to news. We go to bed with news.

We get in our car listening to news. And it's filled with shocking and spectacular headlines of crime and violence and man's inhumanity to man. As we find that the life that God gave has been cheapened over and over again.

Most of the headlines, just think about it, that lead the story, lead the telecast, lead the newspaper, are those that are the most violent. The most deadly. The most spectacular.

The TV and the radio and the paper. You know, we don't even carry the real good news of a town. You see, the real good news, I believe, would be over at the hospital when those little boys and girls are brought into the world.

Natalie, how old is your baby? Six weeks old. Would she write with a preacher a minute? Maybe, maybe. The day she was born, the paper didn't carry a headline.

Channel 13 didn't do a story. Tracy, when your babies came into this world, CBS and NBC weren't there. Sometimes we miss the big news.

God gave a life. God gave a treasure. He gave us little boys and little girls.

Brought them in to the household of faith. Get this passage, Mama, before it falls. I would be in big trouble if we dropped the passage.

There we go. A gift. Life.

You and your wife cannot have the power of creation. God gave life. If you're here and you're a parent or a grandparent, you know and I know that God is the miracle giver.

How could we cheapen the value of one child, one boy, one girl? How could we take from our world that we're living in and say, we're going to throw this little child away or we're going to throw this little boy away? How can we throw away a 20-year-old? How can we throw away a man that's 45 and a woman that's 58? How can we throw away a woman in a nursing home that's having her 95th birthday? But if we don't have revival in America, that's exactly where we're headed because now they're already talking about, well, we just need to get rid of our old people. We can practice euthanasia when they're no longer able to hold down a job. The cheapening of life is deadly.

But when I study history, I find out that history really does repeat itself. We never pay attention to what really matters. We're watching the headlines today of Iraq.

We're watching the leader in Iran say that we ought to drive the Jews into the Mediterranean and eradicate the nation of Israel. And we're finding out that we're talking about North Korea and South Korea. We're finding out we're talking about the events and the politics of Washington, D.C. But no one's covering the story of the babies being born today.

The children that are at our feet. The two-year-old and the three-year-old. And the responsibility that we have as moms and dads and husbands and wives and grandparents to invest our lives in loving another generation.

The year was 1809. And the world was doing the same thing as we're doing today. They were watching the newspapers of the day.

Watching the nation of Austria. They were not watching Great Britain and its English-speaking world. They were not even watching across the Atlantic the United States and its English-speaking world.

They were watching Europe and the nations of Europe. They were watching a French leader named Napoleon Bonaparte as his armies were ripping through Europe. And they were finding out as he went through the villages of the countries and his bloody battles and death scenes.

Those were the headlines of 1809. Napoleon was invading. And he was now in 1809 in the campaigns of Austria and the battles that were being held there.

Who cares about the births of babies? Who cares about babies and milk bottles when Napoleon's mighty army is marching? What significance could come out of the cradles and the cribs of 1809? Life is cheap. Europe was the focus and the headline. Who cared about any baby born in the English-speaking nations of Great Britain and America? The whole world's watching France.

Europe, that's the headline of the day. The violence of men. But my friend, in 1809, if someone would have checked the cribs and the cradles, they would have seen a host of leaders and scholars and thinkers and scientists were coming into the world that year.

William Gladstone was born in Liverpool in 1809. Alfred Tennyson began his life in Lincolnshire in the year 1809. Oliver Wendell Holmes made his first cry in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1809.

And just a few miles away, Edgar Allan Poe started his tragic life in Boston, Massachusetts. Oh, by the way, 1809, there was a doctor, a physician named Darwin and his wife and they had a little son. And he was born in 1809 and they called him Charles.

Also that year, we have the appearance of Robert Charles Winthrop. And over in Hardin County, Kentucky, there's an illiterate farm laborer that has a rustic log cabin. And in that log cabin, 1809, to parents who could not read or write, a little baby boy was born.

They named him Abraham Lincoln, 1809. Many times the devil and the world gets people looking in the wrong direction. The treasure of a local church is not what's happening in Raleigh or in Washington, D.C. The treasure's back there in the nursery over in the K-4, the K-5, and the first grade class, and the seventh grade class, and the college and careers.

It's a young married couple that we ought to be investing our life and resources in that we would know that we'd love some senior saint that's gotten down to where they can't even be in the house of God anymore because the little old tabernacle is worn out and the legs and limbs are weak. And they've been faithful to love God in this local church, and they've faithfully prayed and given that there'd be a light over the lighthouse. There needs to be someone to love them today and say, yeah, it's a mean old world.

Yes, the headlines are filled with violence, but we still believe in the good news, the Lord Jesus Christ that takes away the sins of the world. And He's still the great shepherd for all of His people. You see, many times we're given the idea of looking the wrong way.

The newspaper said the history of the world in 1809 was in the Austrian campaign. But truly, the historical events of 1809 came out of who was born that year. What they thought was super significant to the world was Europe and Napoleon.

But what really they thought was insignificant were a group of babies born in England and in the United States who had the power to change the world. There's a reason we have a church. There's a reason we're investing in a place to teach and disciple and to mentor.

There's a reason that we want the children to have the right kind of music and the right kind of fellowship. There's a reason. The reason is that that is the treasure that God has entrusted to us.

When you've been married 20 years and you have a week that rips the very heart out of your chest, that you can walk in to the church on Sunday morning and hear the congregation sing, Does Jesus Care? Oh, yes He cares! I know He cares! When your very faith has been rattled that you can walk into the house of God and hear the choir singing, How Firm a Foundation! Ye saints of the Lord that you know your God is alive and well. Your world may be melting down, but God's got first aid for your faith at the house of God, the promises of God, the power of God, and the presence of God. We can only introduce part of the study today dealing with the promises, keeping a promise.

But you can be rest assured that God keeps the power in His hand as well as His promise. And what I cannot do and what you cannot do, we can find through the promise of God and the power of God and the presence of God that we have access to this God in prayer. And we can pray and we can call upon this God and He will not turn a deaf ear to your need.

You see, the day and hour that we're in, we're feeding on the wrong things. We're feeding on the things that do not lift us up spiritually or emotionally. We need to get back to feeding on the things of the Lord.

God even tells us in His Word that we ought to think on those things which are good. And I'm afraid our whole society is thinking on anything but what is good. The world didn't notice when God promised a Messiah in the book of Micah.

Have you noticed they didn't pay any attention? He said He's going to be born. Genesis 3, God said there's a Messiah coming. Micah 5, He said He will be born and He'll be born not only on earth.

He said I'll tell you where He's going to be born. He'll be born in Bethlehem. The day and hour of that world's media, that world's buzz, they were all preoccupied with the great Roman Empire.

Two thousand years ago, the world was talking about the powerful and the rich, the great Caesar and the wealth and the splendor of Rome. They were talking about all of the Colosseums. They were talking about the aqueducts, the architecture.

They were talking about the vast and the vicious. They were talking about the Roman Empire. They were talking about the political intrigue, et tu brutus.

They were talking about the crime and the passion and the immorality, the military might. That's what they were all feeding on. Jerusalem, Israel, the house of God, even the temple was controlled by mighty Rome.

Rome had the power. All eyes were on Augustus. He ruled the world.

Augustus had the power. No one even thought about the prophets. No one even talked about what they had recorded.

No one remembered Genesis 3.15. Rome's in power. They were actually living the life of wealth and prosperity. No one was talking about Micah 5. They were talking about how Rome was building a superhighway, the Roman way, the Roman road, that all roads lead to Rome, that they actually started in Rome and went north, east, south, and west, went one mile and put down a road marker.

You thought that a mile marker was something new that the North Carolina Department of Transportation had put up. The DOT's good, but they're not that good. The Romans had mile markers before we had them in North Carolina.

Say amen, Jeff. You know that. And here we are.

We're living and seeing the might and the power of Rome. And they went north, east, south, and west, and went mile one, mile two, so that when you got anywhere in Europe, you got down in Jerusalem, you got down in Egypt, and there'd be a mile marker telling you how many miles it was back to Rome. All eyes were on Augustus.

And Augustus had the power, and he demanded that a census be taken so the whole world could be taxed. He had an ulterior motive. Who would even notice a little couple living way up in Nathras? Sort of a strange story about them.

They were sort of a gossip of Nathras. They were only engaged, and yet Mary already was showing she was going to have a baby. Did you hear about them? Joseph, did you hear what she said at the well yesterday? She said, I've never been with Joseph.

Yeah, right. Who would believe such a thing? He said that an angel came to him and told him to love her and to take care of her. I think they're sort of spooky myself.

I think they've gone to church too much. I think they've read the old prophet books way too much. No one's paying any attention to Mary and Joseph.

As they travel 80 miles from Nathras, headed down to the city of David, to be enrolled in the census and to be taxed. No, no, the world's too big, it's too bad. While the gladiators are in the Colosseum, the mighty armies of Rome are marching in with the treasures as they conquer nation after nation.

The whole world's talking about Rome and its power. The gladiators and the animals are entertaining the people. They're caught up and intoxicated on the pleasures of life.

Never been a better time to live. Never had more wealth. Never had more free time.

Never had more entertainment than any generation. No one's thinking about a little couple up in Nathras that's traveling to be taxed, ruled by a justice, who would pay any attention. What's more important? Caesar? Rome? Or a Jewish baby? Or a little town in the middle of nowhere called Bethlehem? The world is still rocking from the life of Alexander the Great.

The world is still reeling from the effects of Herod the Great. They're still living under the ruling power of Augustus the Great. Who even noticed that Mary had a little lamb? No one.

Jesus was His name. And the Bible said that God kept His promise. Genesis 3, 15.

He said, help is on the way. Micah 5, 2. He's coming. Here's where He's going to be born.

Luke 2, 11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, glory to God, which is Christ the Lord. If God promises to help, He always does.

And He always will. God keeps His promises. For unto you is born this day.

Would you please join with me in saying this powerful verse together? Let's say it together. For in the city. Unto who? You.

Is born this day in the city of David. Let's bow our heads. Father, the very plan...

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