

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53:1-12

Promise and fulfillment is one of the most important themes in the Bible. Specifically, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament affirm in innumerable ways that God is the ultimate promise keeper. New Testament writers very intentionally demonstrate that Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection fulfilled the promises of Scripture. The Gospel writers -- and Luke in particular -- took great pains to demonstrate the fulfillment of Jesus' promises to his disciples. The point is: if we can see how God has kept promises in the past, we can have confidence and faith that God will keep promises in the present, and in the future.

We have journeyed with Jesus this week: from his last meal in the upper room, to his trial in Pilate's court, and to his death on a cross. With Luke's help we have been reminded of the meaning of these events, seeing that the crucified Jesus *is* the Son of God, God's Messiah-King. We have also been reminded that these events fulfill promises of Scripture. These are not random events, but are part of God's plan for saving the world.

We should not be surprised. But we are. God's ways continue to amaze us. We are conditioned by the ways of the world to be skeptical, to look for salvation in our own goodness -- our ability to take care of ourselves. So Good Friday shocks us. We do not want to think we are dependent upon the generosity of someone else. We do not think we need to be forgiven.

Spend time today reflecting on the goodness of Good Friday. Think not only about what Good Friday says about God, but what Good Friday says about you. Do you believe that you need what God offers on the cross? Do you really believe that God works this way? Do you believe that God *still* works this way (transforming the world through forgiveness, grace, and sacrificial love)? Do you believe that God keeps His promises?

As you prepare for Easter, please pray for pastors, musicians, worship leaders, sound technicians, Sunday School teachers, nursery workers, and everyone else who will help you celebrate tomorrow.

As you prepare for Easter, remember these words of Jesus (found in Luke 9):

*"The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."*

God keeps His promises.