TITLE: KEEP YOUR PROMISES"
MATTHEW 5:33-37
IN OUR MINI SERIES OF PRACTICAL LIVING WE BEGAN WITH TRUST GOD, TELL THE TRUTH, KEEP YOUR PROMSIE.
I can remember as vividly as if it were yesterday.
My best friend Jappy and I living in Hutchinson county.
We did everything together even stayed over at each others farms
And one day at our farm we sat down and
Overlooking the river bottom.
Promised that we would be friends forever.
But circumstances beyond our control pulled us apart.
Years passed, as I went on to high school, college, seminary.
But I have never forgotten him and our friendship.
No one makes promises quite like children.

Don't we all remember promising: "cross my heart and hope to die."
Stick a stick in my eye.
We meant our promises sincerely.
I'll be your friend forever.
I'll write every week until we meet at camp again next summer.
I'll never forget you.

We all felt great betrayal if someone broke a promise to us.
"But you promised!" we'd protest
stamp our feet
or shed some tears,
and hold a grudge.

Teenagers seal their promises in my day with
an exchange of Class ring or lettermans jacket.

Adult make promises too.
Some public and formal
military service and membership in clubs.
Some promise are private whispered at the bedsides
of an ill or dying loved one,
promises of love, forgiveness, loyalty.

Breaking promise today can
rub calluses on our hearts,
to tear holes in our trust.
Rob us of our intimacy.
Because every promise that is broken
makes the next promise a little less believable,
Until, you grow old, cynical, suspicious
And now you make your promises with your fingers crossed.

Horton the elephant In Dr. Suess book,
promised Lazy Mayzie to sit on her egg and hatch it.
Week after week Horton keeps his promise sitting on the egg up in a tree.
All his friends encourage him to forget his promise and play with them.
Horton said: "I meant what I said, I said what I meant.
An elephant is faithful, 100 percent."

Today I challenge you to be faithful 100 % and KEEP YOUR PROMISE
What are the promise you need to keep.

I. PROMISE TO YOUR BAPTISM

When you were baptized as an infant
your parents made a promise to God.
To bring you up in the Lord.
Did they keep that promise?

When you completed confirmation
You were asked to make your own promise to God?
To accept Jesus as your own Savior and Lord.

Or maybe as an adult you make your own profession of faith.
You stood before a group of people and said:
"I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
and I accept Him as my Lord and Savior."
and Today are you living up to that promise?

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

We live in a world of broken promise.
We don't mean to break them
Its just that the lodge and the civic club meetings
Our Wolves membership and Soccer, Wrestling, and Swimming, hockey, hunting,
Quilting, and cards just take so much time.
That our business becomes more important than Gods Business In our lives.

Keep the promise to your baptism

II. THE PROMISE TO YOUR MARRIAGE

If you had a Christian marriage
You promised to live it as God has called it.

Mark 10:6-9 But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

We are not to let better or worse
Richer or poorer

Sickness or health Separate us.
But to love and to cherish
Until death parted you.

Jane Smiley writes in At PARADISE GATE:
You know what getting married is?
It's agreeing to take this person who right now is at the top of his form,
full of hopes and ideas, feeling good, looking good,
wildly interested in you because you're the same way,
and sticking by him while he slowly disintegrates.
And he does the same for you.
Don't be weak. Have some spine! He's yours and you're his.
He doesn't beat you or abuse you, and you've made about the same bargain.
Now that you know what it's like to be married,
And all the gold has worn off,
you can make something of it,
you can really learn to love each other. —Jane Smiley from *At Paradise Gate*

A newly married woman wrote:
after Tom and I were married during World War II,
he was shipped off to Pearl Harbor.
In one of his first letters, he wrote,
"I'm going to have a Navy battleship tattooed on my chest."
She said: I was dismayed but instead of pleading, I answered simply,
"Send me a picture of your tattoo, and I'll have a duplicate put on my chest."
We have been married for 51 years. Neither of us has a tattoo.

I don't think it's a coincidence that Jesus follows His section
on divorce with the challenge to keep your promises
Yet, almost 50% of all marriages in the United States end in divorce
And the Percentage of Christian marriages are no better.
Jesus is simply saying that we shouldn't take the easy way out.
Sometimes promises are tough to keep
but we need to keep them to the best of our ability.
Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Each of you must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:21, 33
KEEP YOUR PROMISE TO YOUR MARRIAGE
III. THE PROMISE TO YOUR CHURCH.
If you had the courage to join a church then keep your promise to it.
You promised to support it with your prayers, presence, gifts and your service.
You didn't promise
To be fed and served at church
To be prayed and blessed
To get all inspired at church.
All those are good things.
But the promise was
For what you can give in your

prayers your presence, your gifts and your service.

Accountability demands responsibility.
If your church is keeping its promise
To offer Christ to the world,
Providing Bible study, Sunday school
support groups, meal, tapes for shut inns
and lunches and services for funerals and wedding,
Classes on how to be a better Christian citizen
Then we need to get on board and start rowing
Or get out of the boat.
Our Presence—that means attendance
Our Prayer—mean for the church its leaders and families
Gifts—means our income. Are you getting any Nearer to 10%
Service—your tine and talents where you can.

The church isn't Kiwanis, or Shiners, the YMCA or Soccer or
Athletic club or even Capital Theater and Johnson Fine Arts programs.
Yet People support and give more to those program then
they would even thing of giving their church.
God calls us to the tithe of our time, present, gifts and service to the CHURCH.
When the church is alive our families and community can be safe.

Did you hear about the pastor visited a member who was the city's most successful lawyer who hadn't given anything to the church. The Pastor said: our records shows that though your income is over two million dollars you don't give a penny.
Wouldn't you like to give something back to your church. The lawyer says,
"First of all, did your research also show you that my **mother** is dying after a long, painful illness and she has huge medical bills that are far beyond her ability to pay?"
The pastor Embarrassed, "Uh... no, I didn't know that."
"Secondly," says the lawyer, "my **brother**, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair and is unable to support his wife and six children." Pastor said: I'm sorry to hear about that.
"**Thirdly,** did your research show my **sister's** husband died in a dreadful car accident, leaving her penniless with three children one of whom one is disabled and another has learning disabilities?
The humiliated Pastor completely beaten, said: **"I had no idea."**
And the lawyer says, "So... if I didn't give any money to them, what in the world make you think I would give you any?
KEEP THE PROMISE YOU MADE TO THE CHURCH
IV. THE PROMISE YOU MADE IN DAILY LIVING
We make promises every day for loans on cars, houses, our education.

So whatever ou eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. …For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. I Corinthians 10:31-11:1

KEEP YOUR PROMISES…EVEN WHEN THEY SEEM INSIGNIFICANT
Give you great witness in our world.
When you start to justify a little dishonesty because it seems insignificant,
you're one step closer to doing what you never thought you would do
The little areas test our integrity

We are all familiar with the little broken promises.
I only need 5 minutes of your time
Your table will be ready in just a few minutes
The check is in the mail
You appointment is at 3:00
We service what we sell
And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

KEEP YOUR PROMISES…EVEN WHEN YOU REGRET MAKING THEM
Maybe you regret making a promise because things didn't turn out the way you had hoped. Maybe when you made the promise, you'd hoped that you would have:
More time, money
More knowledge, energy
Or you thought you would get something in return:

We must keep our promise whether we like it or not.
Because it is **our commitments that define who we are**
And it shows to the world our integrity and fortifies our witness for Christ

KEEP YOUR PROMISE EVEN IF IT COST YOU MORE THEN YOU EXPECTED.
Maybe things have not turned out the way you had hoped, but you keep your commitment anyway

C. S. Lewis **suffering because he kept a promise**
he had made to a buddy during World War I.
This friend was worried about the care of his wife and small daughter,
so Lewis assured him that he would look after them if he was killed.
As the war dragged on, the man was killed.
True to his word, Lewis took care of his friend's family.
Yet no matter how helpful he tried to be,
the woman was ungrateful, rude, arrogant, and domineering.
Through it all, Lewis kept forgiving her.
He refused to let her actions become an excuse to renege on his promise.
Look at :
Psalms 15: describes a righteous person as one who is blameless and who speaks the truth from his heart and who keeps his promise even when it hurts.
((((Ps. 15:1&4 He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue…. Who keeps his oath even when it hurts.)))

KEEP YOUR PROMISE EVEN IF YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS.
Promises to ourselves are sometimes the hardest ones to keep
There is no accountability and seemingly no consequences
Once you start breaking promises to yourself,
it becomes much easier to break a promise to others

Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 5 that whenever
we make a promise we do so in the presence of God.
Jesus ssaid in vs. 34-35 – "But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King."
When we break a promise, we're not just lying to others or ourselves
We're also lying to God

Where would our world be if Jesus had not kept his promise?
God had been promising for thousands of years to send His Son
to save the world through His death and resurrection.

But when the moment of truth came in the garden of Gethsemane,
Jesus felt the weight of the difficulty of keeping this promise.
In fact, He asked His Father,
"If there is any other way, please let this cup pass from me."
Jesus knows what it's like to face a promise
you don't want to keep
But in that moment of truth,
He realized there was no other way to save us,
Jesus became the ultimate promise-keeper.
Jesus kept His word to die in our place,
to absorb all of our sin, to be cut off from the Father,
so that we could live and be forgiven and be reconciled to the Father
I John 2:25 ***And this is the promise that He has promised us – eternal life.***

Will you become a promise keeper in all areas of your life?
If you do you will enjoy integrity and wholeness
And be a Christian witness to your family and friends
Church and community and
Even the nation and our world.