THE SIGN OF GOD'S ENDURING COVENANT
Genesis 8:13 – 9:17

Let's pray – Gracious God, Creator of heaven and earth, the one who knows the deepest and most intimate thoughts and attitudes of our hearts and minds, would you open and illuminate our ears and our eyes, our hearts and our minds today, that we might see more clearly who you are from your word and surrender more fully to your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

INTRODUCTION – God as the ultimate Promise Keeper

Have you ever made a promise to someone? How did it go for you in keeping that promise? Was it easy? Or did it hurt you in some way to keep it? Did you give up and eventually break it, or did you persevere in keeping your word?

Most, if not all of us, at some point in our life, make a promise. And most of us have others who make promises to us in return.

But as most of us learned at a young age, not everyone keeps their promises. Isn't that what gives rise to things like the "pinky promise," in childhood and also to the ever so gruesome little poem, "Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye," Presumably these awful consequences we chant as children are meant to deter us from breaking our promises and encourage the one we are with to share the secret we are promising to keep.

But do these little ditties sufficiently incentivize everyone on the playground to keep their word? No. Perhaps that's why the old idiom says, "Promises and pie crust are made to be broken."

A pie crust is fast and easy to make up, and so are the words of a promise. A baked pie crust is fragile and weak – it breaks apart with the lightest touch. So too, a spoken word can often fall apart when we feel a little pressure, or it is not in our own self-interest to keep. This idiom serves as a warning to not simply trust a person's words but look at their actions to see if the person is trustworthy or not.

This warning is worth heading in our world today. Politicians constantly break their promises, compromising on what they have said to get elected but then failing to deliver on their commitments.

In the business world trade secrets are stolen and sold, employers might fail to deliver on promises regarding compensation or promotions, an employee might promise to help a co-worker on a shared task and then leave them to finish it alone.

Marriage relationships aren't that much better. Despite making promises to have and to hold in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, roughly 40 – 45% of first time

marriages end in divorce in the US, and even those that stay together may suffer through the pain of the experience of an unfaithful spouse.

The sad reality of our world is that many people don't keep their promises, even when they swear to do so. So where can we turn to find honesty, truth and faithfulness when the world around us has been dishonest, untrustworthy and unfaithful?

The obvious answer is that we can turn to God, his word and his promises.

The author of the book of Hebrews in the Bible tells us that there are 2 things in which it is impossible for God to lie – His word and His promise (Hebrews 6:18).

To lie or deceive would go against the very nature of who God is, it would violate his character, that is why it is impossible for God to lie with his word and with his promise. He just cannot do it. If God lied, he would cease to be God. If God broke his promise, he would not be God anymore.

That's why Jesus said of God, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

So, we know this to be true: What God says, He will do, because What God says is true. This is very good news. It means we can trust God. God is not just A promise keeper, He is The Ultimate Promise Keeper, who will never break his word.

With that as a backdrop, we are now going to look at one very amazing promise God made after the great flood was over. It is a promise God has kept from the first day he put it in Noah's ear until today, and it is a promise he will continue to keep through all eternity, for as long as the earth endures. It's an amazing promise, with some astonishing aspects. See if you can pick out any characteristics of this wonderful promise as we now read our scripture passage from Genesis 8:13 – 9:17.

Genesis 8:13-22

13 By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had
dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the
surface of the ground was dry. 14 By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the
earth was completely dry.

15 Then God said to Noah, 16 "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and
their wives. 17 Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the
animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the
earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it."

18 So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. 19 All the
animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything
that moves on land—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and
clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. 21 The Lord smelled the pleasing
aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans,
even though[a] every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never
again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

22 "As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease."

Genesis 9:1-7

9 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in
number and fill the earth. 2 The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the
earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground,
and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. 3 Everything that lives and
moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you
everything.

4 "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. 5 And for your lifeblood I will
surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from
each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

6 "Whoever sheds human blood,
by humans shall their blood be shed;
for in the image of God
has God made mankind.

7 As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon
it."

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 9 "I now establish my covenant with
you and with your descendants after you 10 and with every living creature that was with
you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark
with you—every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you: Never
again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood
to destroy the earth."

12 And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and
every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my
rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the
earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the
clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of
every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever
the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting
covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

17 So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me
and all life on the earth.”

So, what promise did God make when Noah and the occupants of the ark finally emerged on dry land?

God made a promise that He would never again destroy the world in a flood.

Moreover, he promised that

22 “As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease.”

This promise is about preservation and stability And God gave a physical, visible sign as a reminder of his covenant – a rainbow in the sky.

Those first steps off the ark would have been monumental for the 8 humans and all the land animals preserved through the flood. Having survived the trauma of God’s judgment on evil in the world around them, this remnant would have needed something to reassure them and comfort them and give them hope as they emerged into this newly remade old world of theirs.

Think of Neil Armstrong taking his first step out of his lunar module onto the surface of the moon in 1969. According to AI, estimates are that between 500 and 650 million people around the globe turned on their TV to watch these first steps. In the Us about 93% of households turned on their TVS. People gathered around store windows, in public squares, and at schools across the globe to watch the broadcast. Neil Armstrong’s first steps onto the moon were monumental, but in a very different way than Noah’s first steps out of the ark and onto the earth after the cataclysmic flood.

When God told Noah it was time to come out of the ark, there was nobody there to watch him take those first steps. A year earlier, when Noah had entered the ark, there

were lots of people and animals all around. But now as he stepped off the ark, there was no one there. Not a single person or animal was left on the surface of the earth to greet them or watch them emerge, or hug them, or listen to their stories about what they had gone through. There wasn't even a barnyard cat to come up and rub against his leg. I can't imagine what it must have been like to be one of the 8 surviving humans stepping off that big boat. All the people they had ever known on earth were gone, forever. Relieved as they must have been to get off the ark, it must have been quite eerie and sad.

They would need God's promise now to reassure them, so that the next time they saw raindrops fall from the sky they would not need to fear another cataclysmic flood was coming to destroy them all. God's promise to never again destroy the earth in a flood would give them the hope and reassurance they needed to build their lives anew. It would help them find courage to invest in rebuilding a new world and new lives for themselves.

Don't we still need God's reassurance about our world today? The TV screams at us about how bad things are in the world…wars, famine, plagues, floods, global warming, melting polar ice caps. So much of the news is doom and gloom. It seems like we too can use the reassurance of this promise from God to help ease our anxieties and give us hope for our future still today. We don't have to live in a state of anxiety about the future. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. God will make sure of that.

So was God's post-flood promise just one of these playground, "cross my heart, hope to die," pinky promise type of things made up rather impulsively on the spot?

No, it was something much more significant and pre-thought out. It was a covenant promise given in fulfillment of a prior promise God had made to Noah, decades earlier.

Back in Genesis 6, when God first revealed to Noah his plans to destroy the world in a flood, God had told Noah to build an ark, He had given him the blueprint for it, He had re-iterated his plan to destroy every living thing upon the face of the earth, then, in Genesis 6:18 God said, "But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark."

Now, roughly 50 to 75 years later, after Noah had built and entered the ark, after the cataclysmic flood had come and gone, after all life had been destroyed on the earth and Noah finally emerged from the ark, now, after all these years, and all these experiences, now God kept his word and fulfilled what he had promised to give Noah so many years earlier. Now, God made his covenant with Noah.

Why did God give Noah a promise decades in advance that he was going to give him another covenant promise down the road? Why didn't God just make his covenant with

Noah at the time he told Noah to build the ark? Or just wait until after the flood to make the covenant. Why the promise of a promise to come after the flood?

I can think of 2 reasons. First, God's covenant promise to never again destroy the earth would not have made the same impact on Noah if God had given it 50 or 75 years before the flood came. If Noah had never been caught in a flood before, he would not understand the terror that might come upon him when it started to rain again after the flood. Noah would have to live through God's judgment on the earth before the comfort of God's promises to never again destroy the world in a flood would make any sense to him. So it wouldn't be what Noah needed to have God make his covenant before the flood.

So why the promise of a promise to come? That way Noah would not have to go through the trauma of witnessing the flood and its effects on the world void of God's word. God gave him a promise that on the other side of the flood, God would make a covenant with him. That would have given him something to hold on to as he weathered the storm. If God was going to make a covenant with him on the other side, then God would deliver him safely through the coming judgment. There would be another day for him to live. God was telling him that no matter how grim things looked in the world around him, He would have a future.

By doing it the way he did, with a promise of a covenant to come, God took care of both places where Noah's anxiety would rise – as he went through the storm and then as he had to rebuild on the other side of it. Isn't it amazing that God thinks of all these things that we need from the beginning to the end of our journey on earth?

I can also see a second reason why God issued the 2 part promise. It has to do with another dynamic in play here. The interplay of God's word to us and our obedient response in faith. Noah had to step out in faith and build the ark based solely on his trust in God's word. But as he was complicit in doing all that God commanded him to do up to that point, God could fulfill his purposes through Noah and then bless him or reward him with more.

So there is an element of the increasing unfolding of God's promises to us and provision for us that happens as we step forward in obedience to God with what he has already revealed. Our obedience to what God has already shown us opens us up for God's continued work in our lives.

Sometimes people say, "I don't know what God wants me to do." My response is, "Have you read His word?" Because He has revealed in his word, a lot of things. And as we are faithful to put into action what he has already told us to do in the Bible, He can reveal more and more to us about his hopes and dreams for our lives.

God will give us enough direction and enough reassurance for the moment we are in and the tasks at hand. But rarely does God tell us the whole plan for our life and give us everything we need all at once up front for all the decades to come. He gives us enough

to take the next step in faith and obedience to him. And then as we do that, he meets us there with new promises and new provision of what we need to continue going forward to the next step. This keeps us from being overwhelmed and it helps grow our faith as we learn to trust God with each next step, leaving the larger plan in his hands.

Decades in advance, before Noah had any way to understand what a flood was, God had already anticipated what Noah would need in the future when he came off the ark, after the flood. And before Noah even knew what he would need, God had promised to give Noah a covenant in the future, at just the right time when Noah would need it to have reassurance and hope for his future.

So, we begin to understand that God's promises are not like pie crust. God's promises are not made to be broken. Rather God's promises are trustworthy because God is trustworthy. God's promises are what sustain us through difficult times and give us hope and courage for our future. They might take some time to be fulfilled, but when God promises to do something, he will deliver on it at just the right time for us. We can trust God to do that in our lives just as he did for Noah.

It might sometimes seem like God is slow in keeping his promises to us, but rest assured, He is working behind the scenes to bring things to a place where he can fulfill those promises to you in a way that will make sense, at just the right time, because you will be ready for them.

And just as he did with Noah, he can preserve you through whatever storm or trial you are going through until the time is right for him to make good on those promises in your life as well. Noah waited roughly 50 – 75 years to receive the Covenant God had promised to give him. Have you ever waited that long for God to fulfill a promise to you? It can be hard to be patient when the years stretch on, but will you trust that when the time is right, God will make good on his promises to you too? Before Noah had even started building the ark, God promised he would make a covenant with Noah on the other side of the storm. After Noah entered the ark, and the flood had receded, God made a covenant with Noah, just as he had promised to do decades earlier.

<u>And so we learn that in a world marked by broken promises and unfaithfulness, God keeps his word. God makes good on his promises.</u>

I said at the start of this message that there are some amazing and astonishing aspects to God's covenant with Noah. I'd like to briefly unpack a few of them.

Listen as I read it to you again from Gensis 9:8 – 17. See what you notice about this covenant.

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: **9** "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you **10** and with every living creature that was with

you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

17 So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

Did you notice who God made his covenant with? Listen again -

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 9 "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you 10 and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth.

Noah is the obvious and expected recipient. And certainly God makes his covenant with Noah as he promised. But God's covenant extends far beyond just Noah. The covenant is for Noah's sons, along with their descendants after them. That's you and me, and every single other person who has ever been born on this planet and who is yet to be born. We are all descendant from Noah and God has made this covenant with all of us.

But the astonishing thing is that this covenant extends beyond the humans. Repeatedly God says he is establishing his covenant with every living creature that was with Noah – and just to make sure he is clear, he lists them out – the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you – every living creature on earth. Repetition is a tool to help us understand something is important. We see this list repeated numerous times, both when Noah enters the ark, and when Noah exits the ark – God extends his covenant to all the various kinds of living creatures – the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you- every living creature on earth.

Isn't that astounding? Think about it. If God made his covenant with all living creatures, that means he made it with the kangaroos, the black mambas, the jaguars, the Emperor Penguins, the hippopotamus, the camel, the Koala, the eagle, the turkey, the sloth.

1. God's Covenant is all inclusive in its breadth.

God cares not only for the humans, but also for the whole created order – the animals and the physical earth matter to God as well.

And Romans 8 tells us that someday God's redemptive plan will include liberating from its bondage to decay the whole of creation which is currently frustrated and groaning in the pains of childbirth. (Roms 8:19-24). In fact, we are told that "The creation waits in eager expectation for" the freedom that will come when God's redemptive purposes are complete. After the flood, God made a covenant with the whole created order and his plan is to one day redeem all of creation, not just the humans.

So the message to us? Take care of the world, be kind to the animals, be good stewards of the earth, because all of creation belongs to God and he cares about it all.

2. The Covenant originates with God, demonstrating his sovereignty and his grace. Where do we see this?

In vs. 9 God says, "I now establish my covenant with you."
In vs. 11 God says, "I establish my covenant with you."
In vs. 12 God say, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you"
In vs 13 God says, "I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."
In vs 14 & 15 God says, "Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears, I will remember my covenant between me and you"
In vs. 16 God says, "Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant…"
In vs. 17 God says, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established…"

<u>Can you hear all the Me's and My's and I's in this? God is saying loudly and clearly, "This is MY covenant.</u> I establish it, I choose the sign or symbol for it, I set the rainbow in the clouds, I bring the clouds, I remember the covenant, I see the sign, I have set the sign in the sky and I have established this covenant.

Most covenants are bilateral agreements where both parties in the relationship have some responsibility to maintain and preserve it. If you think of a marriage relationship…there is a legal aspect to getting married, but there is also a covenantal relationship to it. Both partners have responsibilities and are expected to do their part in making the marriage work.

But over and over in these verses, God makes it absolutely clear that this is <u>God's covenant.</u> It originates with God and it is unilateral in nature. It is not an agreement that puts responsibility on both parties. It is a one-sided promise where all the responsibility for upholding it is placed exclusively on God.

That means, no-one can bring the world to an end, but GOD. Did people bring the flood on the earth? No, God brought the flood. Will anyone but God bring an end to this world? NO!

We are told that the world is being reserved for a day of judgement, when God himself will come and judge the living and the dead. But that will be God's doing. And that day will come suddenly, like a thief in the night (1 Thess 5:2).

It will not be because of some terrorist attack. It will not be because of Global Warming and the melting of some polar ice cap. It will not be because somebody set off a nuclear bomb. It will be because God has determined that it is time for him to come back and judge the earth. And until that day, God has promised that "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

God is responsible for the earth. God keeps his word. He will uphold his covenant as long as the earth endures. We don't need to live in anxiety.

[When Jesus' disciples asked him about the coming end of the world:

Matthew 24:4-8
4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. **5** For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. **6** You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. **7** Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. **8** All these are the beginning of birth pains.]

And so we see God's sovereignty on display in this covenant. But with his sovereignty also comes his grace. See, in establishing a unilateral covenant, God is telling us that there is nothing we can do to earn this covenant. There is nothing we can do to un-earn or nullify this covenant. It is not based on anything to do with us. It is solely and completely based on God and his word and his character. That sounds a lot like grace, doesn't it?

Why did God in his sovereignty establish a unilateral covenant of grace with us?

Because he understands that the thoughts of humans are evil all the time.

In chapter 8 vers 21, when Noah came off the ark the Lord said

"Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though[a] every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

In the original Hebrew language, the wording of this verse is almost identical to the wording of Genesis 6:5, which says:

5 The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. **6** The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.

This is when he goes on to tell Noah he is going to send a flood because of this.

The odd thing is that in Genesis 6 the commentary that every inclination of the human heart is evil all the time is what led God to send the flood, to stamp out the evil, to act against the corruption and violence in the world.

But in Genesis 8 the same commentary that every inclination of the human heart is evil all the time is what caused God to make a unilateral covenant that he will never again send a flood to stamp it out. How do we make sense of this?

In a sermon I read this week, Preacher Scott Hoezee put it this way:

"But how can our sinful weakness be both the reason for the original flood and the reason there will never again be another flood?

By way of analogy, suppose you heard me tell my teenage daughter on a Thursday evening, "You are grounded this weekend because you always talk back to me!" And so suppose my daughter was grounded, having to skip the Friday night football game and her friends' sleepover party on Saturday. But then imagine how confused you'd be if on the following Monday you heard me say to my daughter, "Never again will I ground you because I know you will keep on talking back to me anyway."

It's really not an exaggeration to suggest that this is pretty much what God says in Genesis 6 and 8. God sees the same problem in chapter 8 that he saw in chapter 6. But he reacts differently. [Flo – He is telling us a different plan forward.]

In Genesis 9 when God makes his covenant with Noah and with all the other creatures, he does not say, "I will never again send a flood because I know you have all learned your lesson. Don't get me riled up, don't get my divine dander up or else! But since you know that now, I know you will be good people from here on out and so never again will I have any reason to even think about a punishing flood." No, that's not what God says. He knows full well they are not going to be perfect people but even so he says he won't react to this with a flood ever again."

If it is not the human proclivity to sin that has changed. It is God's method of dealing with our sin.

God not know that we would sin again and corrupt the earth again after the flood? No, he knew full well, which is why he told Noah before the flood that he would make a covenant with him after the flood. Did you catch that? God already knew before he sent the flood that he was going to make a covenant after the flood to never again destroy the world this way.

The thing is, if God had not sent the flood, we humans might not have realized that we are hopeless to do anything to change ourselves unless God intervenes. God could destroy the world, he could give a remnant a fresh start, but the problem of human sin remained.

As we discussed in great length on July 12 in a sermon titled “Is God Mean?” that you can find on our website, we discovered that God’s driving force for sending the flood was not anger or wrath but grief. He was heartbroken over the way the humans had ruined his creation with their violence and corruption and evil. And in his love for creation, he had to act against that evil.

But as parents with wayward children often discover, grace must have the final say. So quoting Preacher Scott Hoezee again:

“sin is desperately deadly. Sin cannot be wished away. It cannot be waved away. It cannot be chalked up as “no big deal” or something that God can just forget about.

That’s why the flood narrative situates God between grief and grace. Both grief and grace are responses to human sin but at the end, grace speaks the last, best word. God is not going to stop being offended and grieved by sin, of course. But from now on, God says in chapters 8 & 9, grace is going to lead the way. God is going to find a way to see our sin yet without destroying us in that sin. God will find a way, in other words, to forgive. God will find a way, to quote the New Testament, to bring about a new truth: “While we were yet sinners, God loved us and saved us.”

That salvation is still going to involve death, though: its just that in the biblical long run the death will be taken up by God himself. These chapters from the very first part of the Bible are like a big red arrow pointing us straight to the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord. Because the cross is ultimately the place where all the grief and grace of God meet in a startling way one dark Friday afternoon on a hill far away.”

God’s grace is amazing. He demonstrated in the flood that he has the power to annihilate all life on earth. But by making this unilateral covenant, he has chosen to restrain himself, to self-limit himself so that he will never again use his power that way. His promise to never destroy the world in a flood again has stood the test of time. Because here we all are.

It does not mean God has resigned himself to evil. Instead, it indicates He is choosing different means of dealing with it. On the cross, God chose to take that grief upon himself and pay the penalty for our sin. When we believe in Jesus, he sends his Holy

Spirit into our lives to help transform us and deal with sin from the inside out. However, someday God will come again to judge us all and repay us for what we have done in this life. But that will be God's doing and in God's timing.

And just as God preserved Noah and his family through the flood on the ark, God will preserve a large number of people through the fire of his final judgement on this earth (2 Peter 3:7-13). For those who believe in him there is unending mercy and grace.

Judgment doesn't have to be the final word in our lives, for he says, “Mercy triumphs over judgement.” (James 2:13)

God is patient, not wanting any to perish. So, he holds out his hands and invites us, asking: - Will you come? Will you believe my word? Will you let me work in you? Will you receive my spirit? Will you receive my help?

CONCLUSION – The Rainbow around God’s Throne

The sign of God's covenant is a beautiful reminder of God's grace and mercy. When you see the rainbow in the sky, or in a puddle of dirty, greasy, oily water in the street, wherever you happen to see the rainbow will you take a moment and thank God, for his promise of mercy that endures forever.

We’re told in Revelation that the One seated on the throne is surrounded by a rainbow. It is a full 360 degree rainbow that encircles God’s throne, not just the half dome ones we are used to seeing. Isn’t that amazing? The promise God made to Noah, will be there in eternity, and it will never end. God’s mercy, and grace are infinite and eternal.

As God’s holy judgement comes from his throne, symbolized by lightening, rumbling and peals of thunder, this complete 360 degree rainbow reassures believers that God’s sovereign rule and judgement have been forever tempered by mercy and grace, demonstrated in His unchanging promises to Noah and all the created order after the flood.

Unlike piecrust, God’s promises were not made to be broken. Even if the world around us is untrue, God remains faithful. God’s word stands firm forever, and His promises will be upheld through all eternity. God delivered on his promises to Noah and he will continue to keep his word forever. You can count on that.

We don’t have to be anxious; we don’t have to be afraid. He gives us his word, he gives us his promise so that we can live life with courage and hope, and without anxiety. He invites us to come into relationship with Him, so he can deal with us individually and privately and help us with the sin in our lives. He offers us a pathway of salvation, based on his promises of mercy and grace that will never end. Will you open your heart to his word and believe in his promises today?

Let’s Pray –

BENEDICTION:

Numbers 6:24-26

24 "'The Lord bless you and keep you;
25 the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
26 the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.'