

2013: A Year of Promise

By Denise Siemens

At this time of year many of us make promises, also known as resolutions. We promise to eat healthier, to exercise more, to cut down on TV viewing, to use our time more wisely, etc. We're promising ourselves that we will stop our bad habits and start some good ones.

We don't have a very good record. More than 75% of us break our New Year's resolutions, and January 10 is the day on which most people have given up. That's just nine days of fidelity! Based on my personal experience—I'm still trying to grow at least one muscle—I'd have to agree with those statistics since I've never made it much past mid-January in staying with my weight lifting regimen.

God's Part

We're not very good at keeping our New Year's resolutions or the other promises that we make throughout the year. But, there is One who is completely faithful, who does not lie, whose word we can trust, who always keeps His promises. Our God is a faithful God!

His promises come to us in different ways. The greatest promise ever kept was when He sent Jesus to redeem the world in order to grant us eternal life. Salvation comes to us when we say, "I believe that the promise of eternal life was fulfilled through Jesus' death and resurrection." We now live in the realm of that promise—on earth as it is in heaven—which can never be taken from us. His promise became our reality.

Our God
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The Bible is also full of God's promises to us. During difficult times, a certain Bible verse may jump off of the page as we read it. When that happens, it

is the Holy Spirit telling us, "This promise is for you! You can believe this and hang onto this as you walk through your current situation."

During a very painful period in our life, God gave me three bible verses that I prayed every day for over eight years. I had settled in to read my Bible and when I flipped it open, it landed on those verses. (They weren't part of my regular reading.) He gave them to me the night before a horrible turn of events—He knew what was about to happen—but that passage gave me hope to believe what was promised. After eight years, the promise and destiny contained within those verses came to pass. His promise gave me courage.

A prophetic word given to us through others is also a promise from God. It is a very personal, intimately-shared promise directly from the heart of heaven. He is saying to us through the gift of prophecy, "I see you and I know what you're going through. I know the destiny that awaits you and I'm going to let you in on part of it." His promise gives us hope.

Our Part

"...may it be done to me according to your word"
(Luke 1:38)

Mary spoke those words to the angel Gabriel over 2,000 years ago, and they continue to speak to us as we consider the God of Promise.

I've read those words countless times, and have even sung variations of that phrase during worship. I would picture Mary submitting herself to whatever God was going to do to her because He was God and she was not. Of course, that's true, since in the preceding phrase she said to Gabriel, *"Behold, I am the bondservant of the Lord."*

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In reality, Mary was giving us more than just an example of submission to God's will. She was also grabbing hold of the promise, the prophetic word that was given to her. She was saying, **"I'll take that!"** You say I've found favor with God and He wants to use me to bear the Son of the Most High whose kingdom will have no end? I don't understand how this is going to come about—you know, the overshadowing part and all—but I receive the promise you're giving me right now. *'May it be done to me according to your word!'*"

After receiving this promise, Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant at the time with John the Baptist. Elizabeth exclaimed to Mary, *"Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord"* (Luke 1: 45).

The blessing is in the believing. Believing something is more than just mental agreement with an idea. To believe is to take possession with our spirit and to proclaim our acceptance in prayer. Promises, like gifts, can be accepted, rejected or ignored. Mary accepted the promise that was given to her and was assertive in claiming her destiny.

What promises have been given to you? What Bible verses have spoken

deeply to your spirit as if God had written them just for you? What prophetic words have been spoken over you that have not yet come to pass? Let's respond by praying: "I submit, agree, and accept the fulfillment of the promises you've given." It may look impossible, it may seem like you're asking for too much, you may not know how God's going to accomplish it, but you can trust in Him and in His faithfulness to keep His promises.

We proclaim that 2013 will be a Year of Promise in your life. You will enter into a new realm of rest and trust in who God is for you. Your belief will rest in the faithfulness of God, not in your ability to believe. You are no longer going to wonder about His care for you, because He's going to show Himself as "Father" to you in new ways. You will walk with confidence in your place as a child of God. You will not doubt or fear the future because your hope is in Him. You will walk in joy knowing that your Father has good gifts waiting for you. You will meet every obstacle, every turn, every difficulty with peace and hope. You are going to believe the promises He's already given to you. You will not only believe that you will receive those promises, but you will say to Him,

"I'll take that!"

Denise Siemens is the Administrator at Lutheran Renewal and the Team Leader of Arise! Women. She and her husband Dan live in Minneapolis, MN, and have two adult daughters.



Arise! Encounter Rooms (for women only)

Date: January 10, 2013

Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Place: Redeemer Lutheran

61 Mississippi Way NE; Fridley, MN 55432

Including:

- Individual prophetic prayer appointments
- Individual physical healing appointments with trained teams from Healing Center, Int'l.
- Worship all evening
- Pre-registration not available. On-site reservations only.

Next event in March. Check LutheranRenewal.org for details.



Plan Ahead!

Arise! Women's Conference

April 19-20, 2013

St. Paul, MN

"Living the Upgraded Life"

With Graham Cooke and others

Holy Spirit Conference

August 7-10, 2013

St. Paul, MN

"Come, Follow Me" (Mark 10:21)

with Rick Joyner, Larry Randolph, Leonard Sweet...

Complete details in May

The Art of Thinking Brilliantly

Equipping Conference • February 1-2, 2013
with Graham Cooke

The mind is both a battleground and a key to transformation. Seeing God in His majesty and splendor is crucial to Kingdom life.

See BrilliantPerspectives.com



Location:

North Heights Lutheran Church
1700 Highway 96 West
Arden Hills, MN 55112

Early-bird price: \$50.

Pre-registration closes on January 21.
On-site registration welcome.

Brochure and online registration: www.LutheranRenewal.org
For details, please call: 651-490-1517, ext. 13