

**"GOD'S FAITHFULNESS DOESN'T CHANGE WITH THE CALENDAR!"**

Joshua 23:14

Our God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home.

Dear Friends in Christ,

A common practice of the media at the end of the year is to highlight specific events from the past. They give an overview of those headlines which surprised us, saddened us, excited us, angered us, and downright flabbergasted us. They call it the "Year in Review". I checked a few online resources and they had lists which contained the **George Zimmerman trial – the birth of the Royal Baby** to Prince William and Catherine – **Obamacare** – the **Boston Marathon bombing** – and the **death of Nelson Mandela**.

If you were asked to write such an article, what would you describe as the most outstanding of the past year? Would your article be about some great accomplishment of a person? A tragedy? A heinous crime? A story of personal achievement? Or would your article be a litany of personal problems, declining health, several surgeries, broken marriage vows, or a sudden death in the family?

Yes, it is important to reflect upon these human interest stories, but Christians certainly cannot write an article about the year in review and omit what God has done for the past 365 days. And tonight, we do not want to do that either as we consider this very special verse from the **23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Joshua, verse 14:**

**READ THE VERSE...** Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

As we ponder these words this final service of 2013 and move to 2014, may the Spirit lead us to remember how....

**"GOD'S FAITHFULNESS DOESN'T CHANGE WITH THE CALENDAR!"**

This text takes us to the close of Joshua's life. Joshua became the leader of Israel after the death of Moses. Recall how God led Moses to the brink of the promised land and from there called Moses home. Moses closed his eyes in view of the Promised Land of Canaan and then opened his eyes to view the Promised Land of Paradise. Joshua then led Israel over the borders of the Jordan into the land.

Over those years of wandering, God's faithfulness never once changed. Israel was like little children, totally clueless as to how God wanted them to live. He told them in his law and still they, like children, disobeyed him time and time again. The people built a golden calf and God disciplined them. They complained about their daily provisions and God disciplined them. They fretted and fear the Pharaoh after them and God brought them through the Red Sea. They bickered and moaned about their desert travels and God sustained them with manna and water from a rock.

30 years have passed and God has been good to Israel. There were periods when Israel forgot God and worshipped idols. So God chastised them with judgments to bring them back to him. They would wander away from him and again the Lord would send his servants to bring them back. We could go on and on talking about the faithfulness of God toward Israel and never exhaust the topic.

Joshua got it. As he reached the end of his 110 year journey in life, he captures our theme in his final words to God's people: **NOW I AM ABOUT TO GO THE WAY OF ALL THE EARTH. YOU KNOW WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL THAT NOT ONE OF ALL THE GOOD PROMISES THE LORD YOUR GOD GAVE YOU HAS FAILED. EVERY PROMISE HAS BEEN FULFILLED; NOT ONE HAS FAILED.** God promised them victory, rest, the necessities of life and He did not fail in one of those promises.

Joshua reminded them that they had done plenty of grumbling and complaining. Yet God still blessed them. Now should they expect anything different from him, even if he, Joshua, was now leaving them? Not at all, for God's faithfulness never fails. God's people could be assured of his continuing presence, patience, love and blessings. Why? Because **GOD'S FAITHFULNESS DOESN'T CHANGE WITH THE CALENDAR!**

As we turn the calendar from 2013 to 2014, we too have to admit **THAT NOT ONE OF ALL THE GOOD PROMISES THE LORD YOUR GOD GAVE YOU HAS FAILED.** What did God promise at the beginning of 2013?

**God promised** nature's consistency by making sure **seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will not cease**" {Gen 8:22}

**God promised** to daily care for you by **opening his hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.** {Ps 145:16}

**God promised** to strengthen you in your physical or spiritual weakness being **your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.** {Ps 46:1}

**God promised** to turn bad into good and **work everything out for our good for those who love Him.** {Rom 8:28}

**God promised** his presence when you felt all alone and abandoned by nudging you with the truth that **never will I leave you or forsake you.** {Hebrews 13:5}

Has God kept these promises? If we are honest with ourselves, we have to **know with all our heart and soul that EVERY PROMISE HAS BEEN FULFILLED; NOT ONE HAS FAILED.** Just look at our congregation, our church/school/K2L, our families, relatives, homes, and lives. The only conclusion is **GOD'S FAITHFULNESS DIDN'T CHANGE.**

We can't forget the greatest of all his promises for another year: His grace. Think of all the sins we have committed for another year. Would we want to review that list? Would we like that list published in the bulletin or newsletter? Shouldn't we be held accountable for what's on that list and justly punished accordingly? Absolutely – with one sweep right into hell's judgment with no change of release!

But God's faithfulness doesn't change with the calendar. And neither does his grace. Another Christmas has just taken us back to the Bethlehem cradle to welcome our New-Born Savior and King. His birthday signals the fulfillment of centuries of promise and shows us again that **not one of his promises has failed.** Jesus secured our forgiveness with his spotless life and gave his body and shed his blood as payment for God's charges against us. Jesus paid the penalty, Jesus did the time, Jesus suffered and died as the Lamb of God to **wash, remove, and cleanse** our sinful souls from sin, death, and the devil. Tonight you are holy & pure before God through Jesus. Tonight you are forgiven before God through Jesus. As at the beginning of the year, so now at the end: **Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.**

For some Christmas is over. There are trees along the street. Outside light displays are growing dim in the night. Some have packed their Christmas stuff away for another 11 month hibernation. The Christmas glow is fading and soon it will be dark again. Such thoughts give us reason to pause as we stand at the brink of a new year. With 2014 bring with it more light, or will the darkness settle in and prevail?

There are 365 unopened pages of a mystery novel ahead of us to begin reading after midnight. We don't how this mystery will end. But we can be comforted and confident **because God is faithful.** That was God's promise to Joshua. That is God's promise to us. In Malachi 3, vs 6, God says: **I THE LORD DO NOT CHANGE.** {Mal 3:6} He is the same God. His grace and mercy is the same. His love for you never changes. There's no reason for any of us to fear or doubt as to God's keeping us, providing for us, forgiving us, or saving us in the New Year just as He did in the old.

As we say **"farewell" to 2013,** let us change the calendar to 2014 with the same trust and faith, and confidence as Joshua **KNOWING WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL THAT NOT ONE OF ALL THE GOOD PROMISES THE LORD YOUR GOD GAVE YOU HAS FAILED. EVERY PROMISE HAS BEEN FULFILLED; NOT ONE HAS FAILED.** May this be our comfort, our hope, and our joy knowing that **GOD'S FAITHFULNESS WILL NEVER CHANGE! AMEN**