



The Branch

| KEY THOUGHTS

- **God always keeps His promises:**
 - He promised judgment for sin—and He delivered;
 - But He also promised that Abraham would be the father of a great nation; to rescue Egypt from slavery in Egypt; to lead Israel into the Promised Land. God always keeps his promise - He never fails to do what he says he'll do.
- God promised David that one of his descendants would be king forever, and in Jeremiah, God reaffirms this promise: a righteous “branch” would spring up for David, who would execute righteousness and judgment.
- The short definition of **“righteous” is living in a right relationship with God under His terms**—and Jesus fulfilled that perfectly. He always lived in right relationship with the Father under the Father’s terms and never once failed.
- Jesus’s life was also marked by justice; not only was he always just and fair, but also, He became the object of justice:
 - He, who never failed or fell short, faced God’s justice in our place
 - **He took the wrath that we deserve.**
- Jesus never worshipped another god, but he took the punishment for those who do: He always lived in right relationship with the Father, but was exiled to death on a cross for those of us who don’t. Through Christ, justice for sin was served.
- Jesus took on our identity as adulterers against God, and gave us His identity as righteous. That’s why Christians can stand before God in right relationship with Him under His terms; when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the identity of the one who never failed.
- God kept His promise: Jesus executed righteousness and justice.
- God reminds His people to hold onto Him and His promise, even when there’s significant suffering and there’s no way to get out.
- Hope in God has all of eternity past to back it up; it’s **trust in His character**, His power, His goodness, His plan, His love for you, His commitment to you.

| SCRIPTURE

¹⁴ Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁵ In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Jeremiah 33:14-16 (ESV)

¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

2 Samuel 7:12-16 (ESV)

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)

| PRACTICAL

- During the holidays, many of us will be sharing meals with people whose hope is crumbling under them; we'll play games with people who feel decimated and alone despite their smile. We will have the opportunity to share the hope we have and why we have it. It will be an opportunity to let them see that God always keeps his promises.
- One of the best ways to prepare for these opportunities is to know God's promises—and the only way to know them is by reading and studying the scriptures.
- You can't live off someone else's hope in God; you have to have your own. It begins with knowing His promises for yourself.
- Once it's real in your own life, you're ready to share it with others; you own it, you're not just parroting what someone else says.

| REFLECT

- When we're in Christ, as Jeremiah said in v. 14, "The Lord is our righteousness." That is, we're not righteousness because of what we do, but because of what Jesus did.
- The difference between putting your hope in God and putting it in anything else is that God is the only one who will stay true; only He can stand up under the weight of who you are; He is the only one who will never fail or leave you; the only one who will always keep His promise. No one and nothing else can do that.
- Hope gives stability to the Christian life—it isn't simply a wish, but a confidence that latches onto the certainty of the promises God has made.
- You have the secret to a life of hope, and you can share it with others; the secret is simply that God always keeps His promise. Hold onto Him, and never let go.

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