



## A ROCK IN STORMY TIMES

Millions of people all over the world watched as the United States of America welcomed Barack Obama as its 44th president. They listened intently, longing for words of hope and assurance from the new leader of the leading nation of the global community. As the dark clouds of a deteriorating economy and widespread instability loomed over the earth's horizon, humanity searches for a rock that will provide a safe refuge in the coming storm.

Stormy times always remind us of our need for something or someone that is rock-steady and reliable. In this constantly changing world of ours, we long for someone who won't change and who will always be there for us, someone who is dependable. We need a person who will be committed to us, no matter what. There is only one person who can fully satisfy this universal human need.

God is a faithful God (**Psalm 145:13**). We can depend on God to keep His promises. He keeps His word. What He says He does. The Bible says that not one of all the Lord's promises has failed; every one was fulfilled (**Joshua 21:45**). God has proven to be reliable time after time. When it comes to dependability, God has a perfect record – a 100% performance. There are 7,000 promises in the Bible that God wants to fulfill for us and they're all in writing. Why? So we can be reminded to depend on His promises in times of crises.

In stormy times, we often we ask ourselves, "What am I going to do?" When you don't know what to do and you need some guidance, who or where do you turn to? Some people look for guidance in astrology, fortune cookies, tea leaves, horoscopes and popular talk-show hosts. But God is the only completely reliable source for guidance. He's the only one who can really see the future and the only one who has the resources to help us completely.

I need His guidance everyday. I want His promises. It's very difficult to make decisions when you don't know what to do. I'm glad that we can depend on God to provide guidance and the resources to do what He wants us to do (**Proverbs 3:5-6**). And even when we make mistakes, as we always do, He doesn't abandon us. He is still there to guide us and to correct the mistakes.

God has called and chosen us to become like Jesus. He wants us also to be dependable in our commitments. Jesus invited people into His Father's family and Kingdom. He also challenged believers to re-examine their life commitments. Jesus told His followers, "*command you to love each other in the same way that I love you. And here is how to measure it – the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends.*" (**John 15:12-13**)

Some of us can become pretty casual about our relationships. We tend to discard relationships like yesterday's newspaper when they

start to fall apart. A little trouble and we say, "I don't need this, I'm outta here!" But Jesus is saying to us, "All of that must change now. As citizens of My Kingdom, I want you to be committed to loving every person in your life, in the same way that I loved you. I want you to be a rock in stormy times."

If in the past we have left a trail of broken relationships, that is over. We are now ambassadors of Christ. We're in the ministry of reconciliation and loving. We're to be Christlike. God is faithful and He wants us to be faithful to Him. He wants us to be faithful in our family. He wants us to be faithful in our work. He wants us to be faithful to our church. He wants us to keep the commitments we make, because our destiny is to be like Him.

Do you know that God's heart is broken when we break our promises? Often, in our relationship with God, He's the only one who is faithful while we are faithless. How many times have we promised, "God, I'm going to leave that sin?" "I'm going to take action on this. I promise I will this time." Time passes, and months later, we realize that we haven't stopped doing what we promised to stop doing and we haven't started doing what we said we would commit ourselves to.

How does God feel about our broken promises? God doesn't become indifferent to our unfaithfulness because He has gotten used to our disobedience and failures. Sure, there is forgiveness for our broken promises, but we should realize that our unfaithfulness breaks the heart of God. God grieves over our broken promises but He delights in our faithfulness.

Chapter 11 of **Hebrews** lists the names of individuals that pleased God because of their faith. These heroes made solid and thoughtful commitments to God. Many of them gave up their lives before they would give up on their commitments. And God was so delighted with their faithfulness that He made sure their names were recorded forever. These heroes were not superstars. They were just ordinary folks. Some have unsavory pasts. Others were plain scared. All of them had weaknesses that they could have used as an excuse for being unfaithful. But they overcame their weaknesses and they said, "God, I'll do it," and then they kept their word.

In these stormy times, there is a great demand for people who will be rocks of dependability. The heavenly Hall of Fame for Faith is still inducting members. We may never achieve great wealth or fame in the eyes of the world, but our commitment to God can place our names in the Hall of Fame of Faith, to shine for countless millennia. Our Lord invites us to become commitment-keepers by becoming more and more intimate with our commitment-keeping God. He is our Rock and our Shelter in the time of storm.