

HE IS COMMITTED TO YOU
The God I Wish You Knew, Pt.3
September 27, 2026

Hi BSCC: It's great to be in worship with you today! = Everyone online: Hello, I am thankful that you are joining us!

We are in Week 3 of a 4 week series called *The God I Wish You Knew*. = Today we are going to learn about whether or not we can trust God to keep his commitments.

I want to give you a heads up that at the end of this message, there will be an opportunity for anyone that feels led to--To come down front and make a commitment to Jesus in baptism.

Many people have been wounded and deeply hurt because of a broken commitment. = It may have been a marriage commitment...a commitment from a parent...a commitment from a co-worker...a commitment from a pastor or fellow Christian.

We all depend on something or someone to come through for us--to keep us going, that we can depend on. = Even if it is just ourselves.

When that something or someone "fails to come through for us"...it leaves us feeling hurt, anxious, and angry.

On the other hand, when that something or someone does "come through for us"...We experience peace, joy, and optimism for the future.

Commitment is the stuff that makes us strong and helps us hold everything together. = Here is a picture of my parents with their great-grandson Milo.--They've been married 72 years.
(picture)

As they continue to care for and love each other...they have been an incredible model for me and many others what commitment looks like.

This morning I want us to consider this question. = **Can God be trusted to keep his commitments?**

I want to begin to answer that question by looking at a verse from a story in the Old Testament that has some humor in it--including a talking donkey. = The key character is a pagan prophet named Balaam.

The King of Moab, Balak, sees how powerful the Israelite army is...and feels threatened by them because they were camped on his border.

So he sends messengers with money to hire Balaam, a pagan prophet, to place a curse on Israel.--So that they could be defeated.

Balaam eventually comes, but instead of cursing Israel--God gives him words of blessing to speak about Israel on 3 different occasions. = The second blessing Balaam gives includes these words...

Numbers 23:19 God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?(NIV)

Balaam, even against his selfish intentions, is led speak God's truth. = In this verse he affirms that God is always truthful.--He does not lie and he cannot lie...

This the nature of God.--When God makes a commitment, he always keeps it. = Here's the quality of God that I am excited to talk with you about today...

1. God is a _commitment-maker_ and a _commitment-keeper_. (TV)

Story after story in the Bible illustrate that God is eager to make commitments...and he delights in being faithful to them.

God made a commitment to Noah that there would never be another world-wide flood. = Every time we see a rainbow we are reminded of that commitment.

God made a commitment to David that his son would build the temple. = And God kept that commitment, enabling Solomon to lead its construction as Israel's King.

God made a commitment to Mary and Joseph, that they would have a child conceived from the Holy Spirit. = And that that child would save his people from their sins.

More on that commitment a little bit later.

God promised the early church in Jerusalem that they would be launching pad for churches that would someday spread all around the world.

At first, such an idea may have seemed laughable--as laughable as a childless man becoming the father of many nations....

But God kept his commitment. = And today, from that church of about 120 in Jerusalem, there are churches in almost every country and city around the world.

**** Oswald Chambers calls this quality: God's 'Say So.' = He writes: "What God says, He will do. Sometimes it's positive, sometimes it's disciplinary. But God speaks with a tongue that never slips. He writes with a pen that never blots and He acts with a hand that never fails." --Oswald Chambers**

You and I can count on God to keep the commitments that he makes to us. = Whenever God makes a commitment, he never fails to act.--Whenever God makes a promise, he carries it through!

He is a commitment-maker and a commitment-keeper.

One of the things I am attempting to address in this series are times when from a human vantage point...It doesn't seem as though God is exhibiting a quality that he claims for himself in the Bible.

I have been using Tim Keller's book, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, to help me with this part of my messages. = I will do that again today.

This is a story written by a woman named Andi.--She writes.... (p.160)

As I said two Sundays ago in Part 1 of the series, God always has reasons and purpose for allowing suffering. = I do not want to minimize your suffering and pain when I say this...

Just because we cannot see any reasons God might have for permitting a horrendous act of pain and evil...Does not mean that, in his infinite knowledge--God couldn't have morally sufficient reasons for allowing it.

As illustrated by the story I just read, one of the main teachings of the Bible is that--Almost no one grows into greatness or finds God without suffering...

Like smelling salts, pain wakes us up to all sorts of facts about life and our own hearts to which we were blind.

In the story, Andi writes about the overwhelming awareness she had of God's faithfulness to her through it all. = God is committed to drawing us near to himself when we are brokenhearted and crushed in spirit...If we will put our trust in him, as Andi did.

The main reason we can be confident that we can trust God in the midst of suffering is that-- The means by which Jesus brought salvation and grace to us included his own infinite suffering on the cross.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.(NIV)

Isaiah, as led by the Holy Spirit, writes about the death of the suffering Servant, the Messiah would come hundreds of years later to save God's people from their sins.

Notice it says in verse 4 that the coming Savior would be stricken and afflicted for our sins. =

In taking on our punishment, Jesus was punished by our Holy God.

As our substitute, he took upon himself the bitter consequences of our sins. = Enabling God's judgment for our sins to be satisfied.--Bringing us, as it says in v.5, peace and spiritual healing.

In other words, our salvation and reconciliation to God. = Take a look at this...

2. God's commitment to me comes through Jesus. (TV)

Many years ago I heard a story of a man from China, who upon his arrival in the United States, shared the following testimony...

He said: "I had walked through the road of life and I had fallen into the great ditch of sin.

Buddha came along and said, "Here are 7 Steps by which you can get out of the ditch. If you'll climb and struggle, you'll get out." I climbed and strived but I could not get out...

"Then Confucius came by and said, 'Here are 10 Steps of Self-attainment by which you can get out of the ditch. If you'll come half way, I'll come the other half and help you out.' But struggle as I would, I was still in the pit of sin, hopeless and helpless.

"Then one day, Jesus Christ came by. Jesus saw my condition, without a word of advice, he stripped himself of his regal robes. He got down in the ditch, in the muck and mire of my sin. And he lifted me up. Thank God what I could not do for myself, Christ did for me."

Jesus graciously offers God's free gift of grace and salvation to any and all who will repent and choose in faith to receive him as their Savior.

But then he says to us, "As I have committed myself to you, I want you to make a commitment back to me...In fact, I want this to be the primary commitment in your life.-- the first and foremost commitment you make above every other commitment."

Jesus puts it this way in Luke 9:23...

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."(NIV)

"deny" – Deny means you don't even look in the direction of yourself. = It means you don't even consider yourself for a moment...It's a complete self-surrender.

"take up their cross" – When Christ said these words a cross was not something that was proudly worn as a piece of jewelry. = It was an instrument of torture and death...This is how they would have thought of the word.

A cross represented sacrifice, it represented death, it represented defeat. = If you and I are not sacrificing, if there's no suffering or any real cost at all to us in following Jesus...We've got to ask ourselves honestly, "Am I really carrying my cross?"

** Thomas a Kempis writes: "Jesus has many who love His kingdom in heaven but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire comfort but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share His feast but few His fasting. All desire to rejoice with Him, but few are willing to suffer for His sake. Many admire His miracles, but few follow Him in the humiliation of the cross." --Thomas a Kempis

The other word from Luke 9:23 that I want to highlight is the word "daily." = Jesus says we are to take up our cross daily in order to follow him.

It is an initial commitment to "die to self" so that I might live for Jesus. = That is then followed by a daily keeping of that commitment.

To commit yourself to Jesus means to deny yourself and surrender everything about your life over to Christ. = He is now in charge.

I made that commitment to Jesus back when I was 10. = I have certainly not been perfect in that commitment over the years...far from it.--I've needed to confess my sins to God often.

But God is faithful and just, as he promises us in 1 John 1:8. = That when we confess our sins, he forgives us and purifies us from all unrighteousness.

I have found living for Jesus the best decision and commitment I have ever made! = It is a life of freedom, peace, joy, power, and fullness!

When someone in the Early Church made a commitment to give their life to Jesus, the first thing they did was they were baptized.

As you read the book of Acts, and I would encourage you to do so.--it's the history of the Early Church. = You will find that every person who became a follower of Jesus was baptized.

Acts chapter 2 marks the beginning of the Church. = In that chapter Peter preaches a powerful sermon on the Good News of Jesus.

The people listen to the sermon and they are convicted.--verse 37 says "they were cut to the heart. = And they thought, "We need to do something with what we've heard... We can't just listen to this, we need to respond to it."

So they said to Peter, "What should we do?...what should we do to be saved?--We want to accept Jesus as our Savior, we need his forgiveness...We want to follow Jesus, what do we do?"

Peter didn't say, "I want everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes...And if you want to accept Jesus as your Savior, then just raise your hand." = That is not what he said.
And Peter didn't say, "I'm going to pray a prayer and I want you to repeat that prayer after me."--He didn't say that. = Here is what he said...

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."(NIV)

They were to repent.--which is a huge part of our commitment to Jesus. = To turn away from sin and turn instead to God.

And then they were baptized, as an expression of their faith. = And when people did that, every one knew: "This person has devoted themselves to Jesus."--Look at this...

3. Baptism is a benchmark of _my commitment to Jesus_. (TV)

There are several significant benchmarks in life that serve as an important point of reference that something really significant happened.

Your birthday is a benchmark.--Life begins at conception, but we point to our birthday as a benchmark for when we entered this world...

Graduation day is a benchmark.--There are a lot of factors that go into receiving a degree, but a graduation ceremony serves as a point of reference--"That's the day I got my diploma."

Your wedding day is a benchmark.--It's not the day you fell in love or decided to commit yourself to your spouse for life. = But it is the day the two of you began your married life together.--It's a benchmark that you better remember annually or you'll be in trouble.

Baptism serves as a benchmark for Christians that a significant transformation has occurred in our life.

It is an event where we put a stake in the ground and declare, "I am completely devoted to Jesus as my Savior and Lord.--I will do whatever he asks."

Sometimes when I teach on baptism, a person will ask: "I was **baptized as a baby**, do I really need to be re-baptized?"

The question I would ask is this: "When you were baptized, whether as a baby or a young child...did you make a personal decision at that time to accept Jesus as your Savior and to make him the Lord of your life?"

Because that is what it is.--Baptism is a personal decision. = We read in Acts 2:41...

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.(NIV)

Each person accepted the message, it was a personal decision. = Maybe you were baptized as baby or young child, but you were not personally committing your life to Jesus.

To be baptized now that you understand the commitment you are making, does not take away from the fact that your parents--from the beginning, wanted to commit you to the Lord and wanted you to have a relationship with the Lord.

In some ways, it affirms what they started. = Because now you are making your personal decision to commit your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Sometimes in these moments, a person will say, "Hey, I was **sprinkled**...Do I really need to be baptized the way you guys do it--by immersion?"...

My challenge for that person would be the same challenge I have for myself--and it can be hard for me. = But it is to remove myself from all the different traditions and teachings I've heard from people and just say: "Okay, what does the Bible say about this?"

The Greek word in the New Testament for baptism is *baptizo*, it means: "to dunk, to plunge beneath." = It means "to immerse", that's what it means.

There is a lot of confusion about this word because we didn't translate the word *baptizo*, we transliterated it in our English Bibles.

If we would translated the word, then John the Baptist wouldn't be called John the Baptist, he'd be called John the Dunker or John the Plunger.

But we transliterated it which means: You take the Greek word and turn it into a English word, so *baptizo* becomes baptized. = And that's created a lot of confusion.--There is a Greek word for sprinkle and that's not the word that's used.

Immersion is a beautiful picture of dying to myself and being raised to a new life with Jesus. = So if you were sprinkled, then I would counsel you to be immersed as a way of saying, "I am going to respond to a new understanding of Scripture with obedience."

Ultimately, for most people, the decision to be baptized comes down to this: "Am I willing to obey what God has asked me to do?" = I think that's what it comes down to.

Some of you have been coming to church for a long time, and you've been following Jesus for many years, but you've not been baptized.

And you know that as you sit here today that God is calling you to be obedient to that...but it is a humbling thing to do. = I get that.

It is a humbling thing to do, because you think people assume that you've done that. = Yet it comes down to obedience.

"Do I really need to be baptized?...I mean, I've been coming to church for so long." = If you want to be obedient to Jesus, then you need to be baptized.

I know it can be hard, but that's what it means to be completely surrendered and committed to Christ.

Maybe you're thinking: "I'm going to be baptized, but first I need to get my life together and gain control of the sins that I am struggling with."

No, the reason Jesus died on the cross...the reason we're baptized, is because we can't get it together. = It's because we're a sinner and we need God's grace.

You need to commit your life to Jesus, and receive the strength of the Holy Spirit. = Jesus loves you and he wants you to come to him just as you are.--You don't need to clean yourself up first.

Maybe you're thinking about being **re-baptized** because you're not sure?...

My wife Tammy was baptized as a child. = As a young adult, she realized that the purpose of baptism had not explained to her...She was just told she needed to be baptized is she wanted to take Communion.--So she felt led to be baptized again.

Now there's a difference between being re-baptized and deciding to **rededicate** your life to Jesus. = If you understood the meaning of your baptism, but you've wandered in your faith, and you want to renew your commitment to Jesus...You don't need to be rebaptized. One of our Ministers would be glad to have a prayer of rededication with you.

Maybe you're thinking: "I have family and friends who aren't here who'd want to see this." = We're filming every baptism, so you can share it with them later.
My encouragement to you is this: If you sense God leading you to take this step, don't put it off.

We've done what we could think of to care for your needs, if you'd like to be baptized. = If you have small children, we've arranged with our Children's Ministry workers to stay longer with your little ones.

We've got towels, hairdryers, the water is warm.--We've got hospital scrubs for you to wear. = If you're afraid to come down front by yourself, ask someone to come with you.-- But don't let that stop you.

I wouldn't want you to be baptized for the wrong reason. = But baptism is a defining moment where we put a stake in the ground that says, "I am fully committed to Jesus as my Savior and Lord!"

If you would like to make that commitment this morning then: While our band leads us in a worship song, I'm going to go over here in front of our baptistry. = You can meet me over there.--You'll go backstage, get ready, and be baptized before the end of the service.
Would everyone please stand: Let's worship the Lord in this song. = And if you want to make the decision to be baptized, please come on down front and join me.