

### SMALL TALK

1. Have you ever been in a rehearsal? What kind of rehearsal, performing what? How did it go?

### VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Psalm 119:9-16.** What advice does the psalmist give to young people?
3. **READ Psalm 119:17-24.** What attitude did the psalmist want to have toward God's Word?
4. **READ Psalm 119:25-32.** When the psalmist was in trouble, what did he ask for?
5. **READ Psalm 119:33-40.** What did the psalmist ask the Lord to do for him?

### GETTING PERSONAL

6. How does your attitude toward God's word and God's promises stack up against what was described above?
7. What next step to where God wants you to be will be yours this week?

### PRACTICE!

8. What promise would you like to “receive,” “rejoice”, and “remember” and “rehearse”?

January 30, 2022

## A Promising Year

### 4-REHEARSE God's Promises

On a splendid April afternoon in 2008, two college women's softball teams—one from Oregon, one from Washington—squared off beneath the blue sky of the Cascade Mountains. Inside a chain-link fence before a hundred fans, the two teams played a decisive game. The winner would advance to the division playoffs. The loser would hang up the gloves and go home.

The Western Oregon Wolves were a sturdy team that boasted several strong batters, but Sara Tucholsky was not one of them. She hit .153 and played in the game only because the first-string right fielder had muffed a play earlier in the day. Sara had never hit a home run, but on that Saturday, with two runners on base, she connected with a curveball and sent it sailing over the left-field fence.

In her excitement Sara missed first base. Her coach shouted for her to return and touch it. When she turned and started back, something popped in her knee, and down she went. She dragged herself back to the bag, pulled her knee to her chest in pain, and asked the first-base coach, "What do I do?"

The umpire wasn't sure. He knew if any of Sara's teammates assisted her, she would be out. Sara knew if she tried to stand, she would collapse. Her team couldn't help her. Her leg couldn't support her. How could she cross home plate? The umpires huddled to talk.

We pause the story here .... to finish it later in this message. For now, we let this story set us up for the message.

You and I have a lot in common with Sara Tucholsky. We, too, have stumbled. Not in baseball, but in life. In morality, honesty, integrity. We have done our best, only to trip and fall.

Something hurts, something is broken inside, and so the distance between wherever we are and where God wants us to be seems like an insurmountable gap.

**GOD'S PROMISES** are how you take steps through that seemingly insurmountable gap. How you build a promising life is to **RECEIVE** God's promises, **REJOICE** in them, **REMEMBER** them, and **REHEARSE** them.

**As we consider the value of Rehearsing God’s promises today**, we will start with a promise stated many times, in many different ways.

- This promise is fundamental, and foundational for our faith.
- This promise is also counterintuitive.
- There is something within us that resists this promise
- The philosophy of the world contradicts it (with a constant barrage of messages).

### **What is this fundamental and foundational promise?!**

Here are three verses to get us started.

*James 4:6 (CSB) “God...gives grace to the humble”.*

There is a promise here.

*2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV) “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*

There is a promise here.

*Matthew 23:12 (NIV) For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.*

There are two promises here. Look at the last word: “*exalted*”. What does that mean? It means:

- God will lift you up.
- God will give you a promotion.
- God will raise you up.
- ULTIMATELY, This promise is about raising those who belong to Jesus to HEAVEN! But, (where God sees fit) it can apply earlier than that.
  - He CAN raise your sense of happiness and joy NOW.
  - He CAN raise you out of your turmoil now and give you peace.

## **I. Rehearsing a promised OUTCOME will shape you**

It’s always wise to look up occasionally while on your path. Then, you can look ahead to see where you are heading. If you think you are on a good path because you are so good, or great, **Watch out!** There is a promise for that. You are going down.

- That path is not going where you think it is going.
- That path leads over a cliff, or into a swamp.
- That path is the broad path that leads to destruction.
- It is the “*I do what I want*” path.

- That's a dangerous path.

**Matthew 23:12 (NIV)** *For those who exalt themselves will be humbled...*

This is the path of self exaltation.

This is the path of pride.

**James 4:6 (CSB)** *God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

Also translated, "God opposes the proud".

If there is someone I do NOT want as an opponent, it is GOD ALMIGHTY!

**1 Corinthians 11:31–32 (CSB)** *If we were properly judging ourselves, we would not be judged, <sup>32</sup> but when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned with the world.*

If we properly judge ourselves, we would humble ourselves before God. If we do not properly judge ourselves, God judges us, and humbles us.

You do NOT want to be humbled by God. The difference between being humbled by God and humbling yourself is huge. When God has to humble you, it is always more difficult and painful than when we humble ourselves.

Why does he make it so painful? It is NOT TO BE MEAN. He loves us.

WHY then? It might be because our hearts have become hard! When our hearts refuse to break over our pride and sin, it takes more pressure to break our hearts. We have become hard nuts to crack, and it takes a larger hammer to break a hardened heart.

God is willing to bring the painful discipline ...so that we will "*not be condemned with the world*". A Self- directed life is on the broad road to destruction.

This passage is in a COMMUNION CONTEXT : But REHEARSING the promise "*He gives grace to the humble*" is not only at communion.

I have a daily practice MEMORY CUE: use the word "humble" in your daily morning prayer routine.

- **You have a choice**—You can keep letting sin shape your life or let God shape you.

- **Even if you turn to God to shape you—YOU still have ongoing choices:** The easy way or the hard way. Humble yourself, or be disciplined and humbled.

## II. Rehearsing is worth the INVESTMENT

*Psalm 119:148 (NIV) My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.*

Rehearsing a promise is worth the loss of sleep.

*Psalm 119:11 (ESV) I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

Do you think it is hard to store up God’s word? It is.  
 BUT Life is much harder when you don’t store up God’s word.  
 Storing up God’s word gives you what you need to sin less and love life more!

We often don’t realize how hard sin is on our life.  
 We think, well just confess and receive forgiveness. ...true, but we forget how much joy we are missing out on ...  
 Had we NOT sinned, we would have experienced a happier and BRIGHTER life,  
 Storing up God’s word is WORTH the investment!

Imagine the day in your future when you no longer struggle with those same temptations. (happier and closer to God, fully sensing how you are being carried by Jesus and his strength!)

Jesus does for us what Mallory Holtman did for Sara Tucholsky. Sara, remember, is the girl who tore an ACL during her home-run trot. When we left her, she was lying on the ground, clutching her knee with one hand and touching first base with the other. The umpires huddled. The players stood and watched. The fans shouted for someone to take Sara off the field, but she didn’t want to leave. She wanted to cross home plate.

Mallory Holtman came up with a solution.

She played first base for the opposing team, Central Washington University. She was a senior and wanted a victory. A loss would end her season. You’d think Mallory would be happy to see the home run nullified. She wasn’t.

“Hey,” she said to the umpires. “Can I help her around the bases?”

“Why would you want to do that?” one asked. Before she could answer, the ump shrugged and said, “Do it.”

So Mallory did. She signaled for the shortstop to help her, and the two walked toward the injured player. “We’re going to pick you up and carry you around the bases.”

By this time tears streaked Sara’s cheeks. “Thank you.”

Mallory and her friend put one hand under Sara’s legs and the other hand under Sara’s arms. The mission of mercy began. They paused long enough at second and third base to lower Sara’s foot to touch the bases. By the time they headed home, the spectators had risen to their feet, Sara’s teammates had gathered at home plate, and Sara was smiling like a homecoming queen.

**Lucado, Max. Unshakable Hope (p. 78). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.**

All of us have broken something. When we humble ourselves before God, we position ourselves to receive God’s grace through Jesus.

You have a choice, keep going your way,  
or say “Yes” to Jesus who is the Way.

When you say “yes” to Jesus, God will gladly pick you up and carry you all the way home, because this honors his Son Jesus who gave his life for you.