

God's Harvest Promise

President Abraham Lincoln was once going on a fairly long journey with a military officer. Early in the journey, the officer offered Lincoln some of his whisky. Lincoln politely declined and they carried on talking. Later on in the journey, the officer took out some cigars and said 'Well Mr Lincoln, if you won't take a drink with me, perhaps you'll take a smoke with me'. Lincoln again politely declined. The officer wasn't offended, but was curious, so he asked Lincoln why – this was very unusual for an adult man in the US at the time. Lincoln said he was very pleased to be asked to join in a drink or a smoke, but then told a short story about when he was a child. As a nine-year-old boy, his Mum who was lying sick in bed summoned him and told him that she was not going to get better. She also asked him to promise her before she died that he would never take whiskey or tobacco in his life. He promised his mother he never would, and he had kept his promise until that day. The colonel was very impressed and said he wished he had been able to make promises to his parents and keep them.

Most of us have said 'I promise' at some stage in our lives. And we all know of people who have made promises, but then, for whatever reason, have not fully kept them. We really admire someone like Lincoln, who could so easily have said later in life, 'oh, but I didn't really understand then what I was promising.' But he was better than that. So I wonder if you've ever thought of God making promises. Well, one of the first recorded promises in the Bible is early in Genesis, when the rainbow appears after the flood, and God says to Noah, and by extension to us, "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease".

Whilst we do all that we can to mitigate the effects of global warming, which are clearly very serious, it's nonetheless extremely reassuring to know that God has promised that seedtime and harvest will never cease, that the seasons will continue, as long as the earth does. God's world is changing, change is with us to stay, as somebody once said, but those things will remain.

There are many, many promises that we can draw comfort and courage from. That is only one. But it reassures us that harvest will always happen.