Connection with Unit Theme: *Stand Strong: God’s Promise of Faithfulness*
We live in a society in which commitments and vows are regularly broken. Circumstances and life situations change, and people walk away from a commitment or agreement. Sometimes we “break faith” in a relationship simply because we’ve changed our minds or our feelings. Fortunately, God is not like us. God keeps His word to us and Psalm 89 gives us cause to celebrate God’s faithfulness.

Introduction: One of the classic children’s books is *Horton Hatches the Egg*, by Dr. Seuss. In the story, a lazy bird named Mayzie gets tired of sitting on her nest, so she asks her friend Horton the Elephant to sit on her nest while she takes a “short break”. Naturally, the sight of an elephant sitting up in a tree invites ridicule from the other animals, especially when Mayzie stays gone for a very long time. Nevertheless, Horton refuses to break his word. I won’t spoil the story by giving away the ending, but I’m sure many people remember Horton’s recurring line: “I meant what I said and I said what I meant; an elephant’s faithful, one hundred percent!” I don’t know much about the faithfulness of elephants, I don’t know much about the faithfulness of an elephant, but I have learned that people are not always faithful. Some of them deliberately break their word. Others mean well, but end up letting you down in spite of their good intentions. Aren’t you glad to know that our God is always faithful? He never breaks His word, and He will always keep His promises. We may not always understand His ways, and sometimes the waiting can be hard, but we can rest assured He will come through in the end.

*Opening Question*
What comes to mind when you hear the words “always faithful?”
What helps you keep your promises?
What are some promises that you’re excited to keep?
What are some common promises people make?

“I’ll always be there for you.”/ “We’ll have your vehicle repaired by Friday.”/ “It won’t hurt a bit.”/ “The repairman will be at your house by noon.”

I. The fact of God’s faithfulness. 1-2
A. The psalmist wanted to sing of God’s mercies and faithfulness.
1. The word translated “mercies” can also mean “goodness” or “kindness”.
   a. God had shown His goodness to Israel by making the kingdom strong and prosperous during the days of David and Solomon.
   b. Though the nation was now in a time of spiritual trial, God’s goodness had not changed.
2. “Faithfulness” can also mean “firmness”, “steadiness”, or “steadfastness”.
   a. God’s goodness and faithfulness are intertwined. Because He is good, we can be certain that He is faithful.
   b. Because God is faithful, we can trust Him even in times of difficulty.
B. His faithfulness should be declared to all generations.
   1. Because God’s faithfulness will endure, but the younger generations must be made aware of His faithfulness.
   2. Do we praise God’s faithfulness when we gather to worship?

Psalm 89:1-2
What are some everyday reminders of God’s faithfulness to you?
How does living in an attitude of praise transform our lives?
What most reminds you of God’s faithfulness?
When do you most feel like celebrating God’s love for you?
When have you found yourself telling others of God’s faithfulness?

II. The features of God’s faithfulness. 5-8
A. The heavens themselves remind us of God’s faithfulness.
   1. He not only created the universe, but He also sustains it.
   2. All of nature’s forces are under His power.
B. God’s faithfulness inspires both fear and reverence.
   1. The mighty ones should fear Him.
   2. The saints should have a healthy fear of Him.
Fear can be a healthy emotion. Think about it: you’re driving down the highway and you happen to see a policeman by the road. What do you do? You either slow down immediately, or you at least look at your speedometer. Why? Because you fear getting a ticket!

Psalm 89:5-8
When have you felt a strong sense of God’s majesty and power?
What part of nature declares God’s wonders to you most strongly?
What can we learn about God from His creation?
What specific qualities does the psalmist praise God for in these verses?
How have you seen God’s faithfulness and might displayed recently?

III. The fruits of God’s faithfulness. 15-18
A. We can be joyful in all circumstances.
   1. This psalm was written during a time of national distress (vv. 46-52).
      a. The exact circumstances behind it are not clear, but many scholars suggest it was written when the kingdom of Israel split.
      b. The future of David’s dynasty may have been in jeopardy (vv. 34-37).
   2. Because God is faithful, we can rejoice even in the darkest times.
      a. Difficulties often put your faith to the test, but God is faithful even when your own faith is weak.
      b. We can trust Him to keep His promises (vv. 3-4). This promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

B. We can rejoice in His righteousness.
   1. His righteousness provides a moral compass for us.
   2. His righteousness has been bestowed on us through Christ (Rom. 3:24).
C. We can trust in His protection.
1. Because God is sovereign, we can be sure He is in control of our problems and circumstances.
2. Because God is faithful, we can be certain He will keep His promises.

Psalm: 89:15-18
How do we move toward trusting God in every circumstance?
How do we move toward trusting God even in the hard situations of life?
How can we join together to celebrate God’s faithfulness?
When have you been moved to praise God recently? What prompted that experience?
According to these verses, what is our role in experiencing the comfort and joy of God’s faithfulness?
As Christ-followers, what does God’s faithfulness protect us from?

Conclusion: My all-time favorite comedian is the late Jerry Clower. One night he was getting ready to perform at the Grand Ole Opry, and just before he went onstage, he was informed that the audience that night included a thousand retired U.S. Marines. Clower had a special fondness for military personnel, being a veteran of World War II himself, so he spoke a few words of tribute to the Marines from the stage. He spoke of the bravery and sacrifice of the Marines in keeping our country free, and he paid special tribute to one of the veterans that had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Clower reminded his audience that this is the highest decoration awarded by the U.S. government. He said he was in awe to be in the same room with a hero. After the show, Clower was told that the Medal of Honor recipient had asked if he could come backstage and meet the famous comedian. Clower was only too happy to oblige. The veteran thanked Clower for his kind words, and Clower thanked him for his service. Clower asked the Marine what he had done to earn his Medal of Honor. The Marine explained that he and some other men had rescued a group of Marines on the Chosin Reservoir in Korea. They had received communiques that the Marines were surrounded and the situation was hopeless, but he and a few others managed to make their way through the enemy lines to rescue them. Clower said, “I marvel at the faithfulness of God. The day before you went in, the East Fork Baptist Church had a special meeting for those Marines. The reason we prayed for you was because my brother was one of the men that were trapped! He was a communications person for the Marines at the time, even though he was Navy. I knew God answered our prayers, because He is faithful, but little did I know that forty years later He would let me meet the instrument He used to answer our prayers. God is faithful!”

Psalm 89 declares the faithfulness of the One who knows every circumstance you’ll face this week, next month, and next year. Dive deep into His Word and watch how He keeps every promise He makes there.”