

Preached by Carl Rush
Bush Hill Presbyterian Church
Alexandria, VA 22310
Sunday, Nov. 29, 2009

I Thessalonians 3: 9–13
Luke 21:25–36

This sermon is transcribed from the pastor's notes, the tape recorder failed to record properly.

FULLFILLER OF PROMISES

I used to have a friend who was interested in many of the same activities I enjoy. My friend and I exchanged e-mails and kept in touch on the telephone. Then eventually over time we began to lose touch. It wasn't all at once, just a gradual drifting into different interests. We are still friends; and if I called today, my friend would gladly respond in the affirmative to any request I might make.

If I were to ask for a ride to pick up a car stranded at the mechanic's, "Sure," would be the response from my friend of many years. Can you come over and help me with a task that is too large for one person? "Absolutely," would be the first word out of my friend's mouth!

You get the mental image: our long history together won't let us completely abandon our friendship. There is one problem with our relationship, and it may be the cause of our becoming distant friends instead of connected! Ten times out of ten if my friend agreed to help or come by or lend a hand, something (legitimate) would come up. So my committed reliable buddy became a person who simply could not be trusted to fulfill his promises.

This is why Jesus encourages His disciples to guard their hearts against distraction—the slow but consistent wasting away or misusing of their resources, confusion caused by the handover of over-indulging in this world's intoxication, being drunk on this world's empty offers of joy and security.

Look to the future, Jesus says, hearts free from worry. Jesus fulfills the promise of 1st Thessalonians and Luke 21.

If I could decorate your souls with any gift this Christmas, I would offer you the confidence of friendship in Christ. A positive giving friend, Jesus will never disappoint, will never be a "no-show," a friend who is reliable and full of strength.

I know why my friend and I drifted apart. When we would make plans to do something or be somewhere, I would always worry he wouldn't follow through. I imagine he felt some heavy guilt for shucking his responsibility. We became divided—literally—we were divided in our thought and actions. To be divided in mind and to be strangled by fear—these are the definitions of worry!

Jesus tells his disciples when you are most afraid - resist your natural inclination to

worry. In essence, we are asked to believe in the fulfillment of promises. Who always shows up? Who always keeps his word? Jesus, a friend and Savior who does not require a back-up plan. With our friend and Savior, our future is certain.

Amen.