

The Promises of God • Handle with Care

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Hi everybody. This is a special edition of Through The Bible with Pastor Paul. I am Pastor Paul. I'm here with my wife Sue and we want to talk today about the promises of God.

This is something that we hear a lot about. We get a lot of notes, a lot of emails. People asking various questions about the promises of God. I even had somebody write to me at one point and just say, what are the promises of God? And Christians have been singing about the promises of God for generations, and talking a lot about them as well. And yet I think a lot of people have questions, sincere questions about the promises of God. Particularly, what promises can we embrace or claim? And is every promise in the Bible mine, right? Or are there some that are hands off?

First of all, when it comes to promises, the promises of God are very, very special. And the reason for that is because God doesn't change. And that's one of the coolest things about the promises of God. The One who made them is, and here's a theological term, He's immutable. And that's, a fancy word that simply means God does not change. Okay.

Now you have to think about this. I mean, the implications of never changing and being in total control of all circumstances, all situations. There's never a time when your promises wouldn't come to pass, right? If you're God and you say something, it absolutely will happen that way. That's exactly right. That's not been our experience in life. No.

I remember a lot of times making promises to our kids when they were growing up and then having to go back on it because as a pastor something might come up in the church or somebody's having a crisis and I got to tell the kids, hey, I'm sorry, we can't do what I promised we're going to do. Or we planned to go to the zoo on Friday and now sister has strep. Yeah, like that's not going to happen. Things happen. Things happen.

Well, with God, nothing ever happens to the point where He can't make good on His promises. And, it was the nation of Israel actually that made such a

wonderful statement about this. In fact, it's Joshua exactly. At the end of the Book of Joshua, which is full of promises about the people of Israel coming into the land, what the land was going to be, how God was going to bless them in the land, and so forth. How they would overcome their enemies. What a time.

It says in Joshua 21:45, *“Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.”* And that's incredible. And that's not really part of the fabric of our reality as human beings to human beings. But when it comes from God, the unchanging all powerful God, it becomes a reality, and something that we can talk about in very tender terms like Peter did.

Peter spoke of the promises of God. He called them His precious and very great promises. (2 Peter 1:4) And you know how we treat things that are precious, we treat them with special care. And I've always thought that the promises of God should come with a warning label and it should say, handle with care. And the reason I say that is because I haven't always seen the body of Christ handle the promises of God with care.

And what I mean by that is, are we looking at the promises of God with an honest eye toward understanding who these promises were given to? Because here's a statement that I need to make that I think really is the foundation of everything we're going to be saying here today. The statement is this.

<p>Not every promise in the Bible is yours to embrace.</p>

Not every promise in the Bible is yours to embrace. There are certain promises that were given to a specific people, for a specific time, regarding specific events they were going through, and sometimes regarding the future of what would happen to them, and the promises God decided to give ahead of time for that.

And it really, when I started really studying the Word of God, I began to notice that many of the promises of the Bible are connected to the various covenants that the Bible speaks about. And there are two main covenants. We have one in the Old Testament and one in the new that really take the majority of our time and attention. In the Old Testament, it's the Mosaic covenant. Now, that's not the only covenant in the Old Testament, but it's the one that takes up the most space for sure.

It's the covenant that God made with Israel, through Moses, and that's why we call it Mosaic. The Mosaic covenant. And it really is tied to the conditions of

the law and obedience to God's commands. And there were wonderful promises that God gave to Israel concerning how He would treat them and bless them and so forth. And those are the promises connected to that covenant but they're predicated upon Israel's obedience to the law of Moses.

Well that can be a problem because you see we as Christians today, we aren't under the Mosaic covenant. We're under what the Bible calls, the New covenant. And we call it the, it sounds almost like we weren't trying very hard to think of a nice name for it, but that's actually what God calls it. And He calls it that in the Book of Jeremiah. It's one of my favorite passages because in the Book of Jeremiah, God speaks to the nation of Israel about a time that is coming yet future, when He will make a new covenant with them, and ultimately with the rest of the world as we see in the New Testament.

But it begins in Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 31 and I want to read these verses. And I want everybody to pay attention to the promises that are given in this passage about the New Covenant. It says,

Jeremiah 31:31-34b (NIV)

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, (and then He tells them why) because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

He goes on to say this:

Jeremiah 31:31-34b (NIV)

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

This is interesting to me because here's a prophecy given during the time of the Mosaic covenant that speaks of a new covenant that God is going to bring about. And then He begins to talk to us about the characteristics and the promises that go along with that covenant, and there are four main things that we bring out from that passage.

- God promised a new covenant was coming

First of all, He promised that a new covenant was coming. Alright that's a promise.

- God promised a new covenant was coming
- It would not be like the (Mosaic) covenant

The second thing He said is that it would not be like the Mosaic covenant.

- God promised a new covenant was coming
- It would not be like the (Mosaic) covenant
- God would write His law on hearts

The third thing He said is He would write His law on our hearts and that's huge. I mean, that basically takes the law from the old covenant and makes it real and internal for believers.

- God promised a new covenant was coming
- It would not be like the (Mosaic) covenant
- God would write His law on hearts
- God would forgive and remember sins no more

And then the fourth thing He said was that He would forgive and remember sins no more. Okay? Four powerful things. I mean, wonderful, wonderful things.

But of these four, there's one, there's one thing the Lord said here that I just, I feel like Christians haven't paid attention to. And that is what He states in verse 32. I'll read it again. He says, concerning the new covenant,

Jeremiah 31:32

It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt,

It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt,

All right. God made it very clear that the New covenant is not going to be like the Old covenant. And the reason that's an important statement for us to really think about and understand the implications about, is because we've spent about 2,000 years as Christians trying to merge the Old covenant and the New covenant.

Whole denominations have risen up, attempting to try to make these two work together when God clearly said the New covenant won't be like it. It's going to be different. Very different. That's one of the reasons the early Jews had such trouble with this message of Christ that was being propagated by the apostles and so forth. They're like, oh, this is Christ, I can't, I don't get this. It was just too different. Well, God said it would be different. And because it's different, we have to be very careful looking at the promises that God made under the Old covenant and we have to ask ourselves some very important questions.

How do I know when I can claim a promise in the Bible?

Well, the first question that we have to ask is, How do I know when I can claim a promise in the Bible? And I'm going to particularly focus on Old Testament promises here because in the New Testament I don't really know of anything that we can't lay hold... Well, cause that is the New covenant. That is the New covenant. And the promises that are made surrounding that covenant are, they're ours.

It's where we read through the Old Testament: Genesis through Malachi, and we come upon promises. And by the way, there are a lot of them. I think it was when I was in Bible college, it might've been a little afterwards that I decided, as I read through my Bible, I was going to mark all the promises of God. And I underlined them and I also put a P and circled it for promise around every promise of God that I found, whether I thought it was applicable to me or not. And I found a lot of promises.

It's working your way through the promises and figuring out is this a promise that I can embrace that I, because there are some, that's the important thing to say. There are promises in the Old Testament that you and I can embrace, we can claim. We can say that's a promise from God to me or even to us because it's a general promise. Okay?

So what we're trying to do here is to sort out of the promises given under the Old covenant in the Old Testament, here's the category of ones that were just for them. Here's the category of ones that are universal that really haven't expired. Is that fair? Yeah. That really have a universal not just appeal, but application. Okay. Okay. Alright.

Is this promise connected to the covenant God made with Israel and conditioned upon obedience to the Law of Moses?

So the first question that people need to ask when they see a promise in the Bible is, first of all, Is this promise connected to the covenant that God made with Israel through Moses.

And the reason they need to ask that question is because He didn't make that covenant with the church, He made it with Israel. Okay. So since He made it with Israel, I have to ask the question, was this just for them or is this more of a general promise? And there is a lot of confusion, honestly concerning that.

You and I remember back in the early eighties when we were attending church, we were really just starting to really walk with the Lord in all seriousness. And we started attending a church, and I think you'll remember, there was a book study that the church was doing. There was a special class going on. And it was a book, I don't remember the author, but I do remember the title, and it was called, All These Diseases. Do you remember that? None of these Diseases. Oh, excuse me, None of these Diseases. Yeah, you're absolutely right. None.

And it was taken from a passage in Deuteronomy and that passage goes like this.

Deuteronomy 7:15 (ESV)

...the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will he inflict on you...

...the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will he inflict on you...

And the reason that book got so popular in the church we were attending at the time, is that the author and the people who were reading the book and studying it, believed it was for them. Right. And they were saying, this is ours. God made a promise that none of the diseases. And they would say things like, well, Egypt is a picture of the world so all of the diseases that the people in the world are experiencing, God has promised us that none of those diseases are going to

touch us. And as I recall it, there was a heavy dose of if you eat properly. Probably bringing in some of the Old Testament food laws. Exactly.

So here, you have this merging, this attempt to merge things that are written under the Old covenant and bring them into the New covenant. And you know that was Deuteronomy 7:15 that we just read. Here's what's interesting, if you go up just a few verses. Up to verse 11, you will see the condition of those promises because those promises were conditional. So what was the condition? What was required of the people? Well, in verse 11 it says,

Deuteronomy 7:15 (ESV)

“You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.”

“You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.”

Yeah, that's the condition. In other words, God is reiterating to the people of Israel, I have given you a covenant. It contains laws, rules, precepts, and statutes, and if you keep them, none of these diseases that you saw ravaging the people of Egypt will come upon you.

Well, so we realize as we read this promise in context it's tied to the Old covenant. It's tied to a covenant God made before and the historical context of what was going on right then. God's plan right in that moment. It was a promise of them coming into the new land and how their existence in that land would be different from what they had been experiencing in Egypt for the last 400 years. That is such an important thing to recognize.

Was the promise spoken uniquely to Israel concerning something they were going through as a nation?

Here's another question that I think it's important for Christians to ask. Was the promise that you read in the Old Testament spoken uniquely to Israel concerning something they were going through at the time as a nation? Because, the Bible gives us a historical overview of so many things that happened to the nation of Israel during their history and this and that.

And one of the most significant things that happened to the people of Israel is that they were ultimately conquered again and again and again by various nations. And probably the most significant conquering came in the southern kingdom of Judah when the Babylonian army came and flattened Jerusalem,

destroyed the temple, and killed many people. And then carted off the remaining survivors off to Babylon where they lived for a period of 70 years.

Here's the deal. The people didn't know that their captivity was only going to last 70 years. God told Jeremiah that, but the majority of the people didn't know that. And so God gave them a word through the prophet Jeremiah. It was a word of comfort and it was a word to tell them, I haven't forgotten you. And this is not going to be the way things end. You living in captivity in a foreign nation, a foreign land. I'm going to bring you home and I have good plans for you. And here's how He said it. It's in Jeremiah 29:11.

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, (they had seen a lot of evil) to give you a future and a hope.

This is a wonderful promise and it's recorded for us here in the Book of Jeremiah as a reminder that God spoke a word of comfort to the people of Israel when they were, I'm sure, feeling very hopeless. Like this was their future forever.

And so He spoke this word to them, but this was spoken to Israel. It's not a general promise, it is tied to a specific occurrence and event in the Bible that happened to Israel. It's a word to Israel and I think it's such a beautiful word. But I have to tell you, I get a little discouraged sometimes when I see Christians quoting this verse as if it is a general promise.

Now, God could make it as a specific promise. We'll talk about that in a minute. Well, I think that often to the way that sometimes people quote that verse, almost a get out of trouble free passage. I know the plans I have for you, you're not going to have to go through this trouble. And that's not its intention. In fact, in the context of that, God was telling him, settle down, build a house. Plant a garden. Raise your kids. Stay where you are. Stay where you are. I'm going to bless you.

And for Christians, we often need to be able to see the blessing of the Lord in the midst of our trouble and not take a verse like this as if we're saying God sees what's going on, off we go. He's going to get us out of every trouble. God delights to see us through troubles, I've learned in my life. Yes, he does. Yes, he does.

All right, here's another question that's I think important for people to ask when they're reading Old Testament promises is the promise I just read.

Is the promise a prophetic foretelling of Israel's life in the future?

A prophetic foretelling of something that God spoke to Israel for their future. Okay. Because there, and this is a completely different category of promises within the Old Testament. God made a lot of promises to Israel that frankly have not yet come to pass and will not come to pass until a time after we are living in right now.

Here's one of those promises. It's in the Book of Isaiah chapter 54, verse 17. It says,

Isaiah 54:17 (ESV)

No weapon formed against you shall prosper...

No weapon formed against you shall prosper...

Now, that is widely believed to be a promise that all believers can claim today. I hear it quoted all the time. It is sung as a lyric in songs and it is brought to the body of Christ as a general promise for all time, for all believers.

The fact of the matter is when you read that chapter in Isaiah, you'll find that whole chapter is about the Millennial Kingdom. That's that 1,000 year period of peace that God is going to bring upon the whole earth, and there will be no war, and very little difficulty. And this promise was made to Israel because their whole history had been one of submitting to foreign nations who came in to conquer them with their weapons of warfare. And concerning this Millennial Kingdom, also called the Messianic Kingdom, God said this, no weapon formed against you will prosper during that time. There will be peace because the Prince of peace is going to be on the throne. Well, we see as we read this in context, right, that this is a promise made to Israel.

Alright, one more question.

Is the promise one that is generalized and not conditioned on obedience to the Mosaic Law or given uniquely to Israel?

Is the promise that I just read in the Old Testament one that is more general in nature. In other words, is it not conditioned upon obedience to the law? Is it not

speaking of an event that Israel went through? And is it not about some future event that Israel will go through? These are promises you can embrace. These are the ones that you can say, this is mine. Promises like Proverbs 3:5 and 6. I love this passage.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

Trust in the LORD with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Trust in the LORD with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. (that's the condition) In all your ways, acknowledge him, (another condition, here's the promise) and he will make straight your paths.

Which is a biblical way of saying, He'll take away the crookedness of your path so that you won't get lost, confused, or stumble. That's a general promise. It's not connected to any specific event future or otherwise. It's not connected to the law. It's not something that is conditioned upon obedience to the law. He tells us what it's conditioned on. It's conditioned on trusting the Lord right with all of your heart, not leaning on what you think is best, and acknowledging Him in everything you're going through. Those are the conditions. He lays them out for us. That's general, that even works today.

Here's another one from Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 29. It says,

Deuteronomy 4:29 (ESV)

...you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

...you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

What's the condition of the promise? Seek after God with all your heart and soul. It's not the law. This isn't about a certain future or specific event. It is a wonderful promise that says, I will be found by you when you really look for Me. When you really seek Me. It's the same today, right?

James even says in the New Testament, draw near to the Lord and he will draw near to you. (James 4:8) So this is a general promise that we can accept for all time. And there are many of those promises in the Old Testament pages of your Bible. You don't have to look at the Old Testament, like it isn't applicable. What

you're saying is we just need to apply a little bit of thinking. Yeah. Yeah. Ask yourself these questions. What is the condition? Right? And who is this given to? That's a very important thing to remember. Read the context. Don't just read a verse, read the whole chapter. Find out what it's talking about and so forth.

Now, I intimated just a moment ago that God can speak a word to people individually. It may not be a promise that is applicable to all people, but God can apply it to anyone He chooses. This is an important thing to remember. There are two main words in the Greek language that define or speak of the word, word, okay. How we translate that word, particularly the word, W-O-R-D. One, is logos. And that word can also describe Jesus because He is the Word of God. And that also applies to the written Word. We call that also, the logos.

But there's another word that is given to us in the New Testament that speaks of a divine Word. It is the Greek word rhema, and that word is used in the Bible to speak of a message that is given uniquely to a certain or specific individual. We have an example of this in the Book of Luke when Mary and Joseph were bringing Jesus into the temple precincts, it was her time of purification. It was the naming ceremony for the child. We're told that there was a man named Simeon who was waiting there.

And here's what this passage says in Luke chapter 2, beginning at verse 25:

Luke 2:25-26 (ESV)

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit (that's rhema right there) that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

All right. God gave Simeon a divine word, a rhema. It was a promise. And he simply told Simeon. He didn't tell anyone else that we know and this wasn't a general promise for all people, but He told Simeon, you will not die until your eyes literally behold the promised Anointed Messiah. Okay. That's rhema.

What that shows us is that God can take any of His promises, even ones that were spoken directly to Israel, even ones that were spoken about an event in

Israel's history, even ones that were spoken about a future event in Israel's history, and He can speak it as rhema word to anyone He wishes. He can take the logos and turn it into rhema.

And I know that this has happened to many people. It's happened to me. It's happened to you. When I was in Bible college, I remember the Lord as I was reading through the Book of Isaiah, I read a passage about God's comfort toward Israel, and it was a word that was spoken directly to Israel. But the Lord quickened to my heart and mind that this was a message for me personally, and it had to do with some mistakes that I had made previously in my life, and how God was telling me, I'm putting all that behind you now, and I want you to move forward. And that was a wonderful thing.

Now, the verse I read in Isaiah, I knew it was, the context was clear. It was a word given to Israel but God spoke a word, rhema to me at that moment. And I know that He's done that to you several times when you've really sought the direction of the Lord. Explain how that happens.

And even, even just a year ago or so, I don't know, the Lord and I, we have this little thing that we do between the two of us, is when I really need to hear from Him. You know, we get in those places in life where we feel like, I'm not going to move, I'm not going to get up from this couch until I know that I am seen. I know that I am heard, that the Lord speaks to me. And, it's happened a handful of times in my life and usually for the Lord. And I'll just sit and wait and He impresses me with a book of the Bible, a chapter and a verse. I'm like, alright, let's go. And you don't know what that is at the time. And so I look it up and usually the context is so sweet and perfect to my dilemma in life.

And in fact, the one of the most recent ones was out of that chapter you just referenced, Isaiah 54, where you talked about no weapon formed against me. That wasn't the verse the Lord gave me. It was a different verse in that same chapter. But the words just fit the situation that I was dealing with, and I knew that the Holy Spirit was speaking a special word to me. And just like you pointed out, that chapter is about Israel and the Millennial Kingdom. Well, I didn't care about that at the moment when I... That wasn't your concern. No. I just needed to hear from the Lord. And the Lord has spoken to me honestly through out of Isaiah a handful of times. But it is really a great experience when we feel like the Lord just speaks directly to us. and it's usually a word of comfort or direction.

Another time recently when we moved into this house, the Lord used the story of Abraham's servant Eliezer going to get the wife for going to get Rebecca, for

Isaac and use that story in our moving experience. And it was just very sweet. I was just reading. I said, God I got to hear from You this morning. And I think, what is it, Genesis, is it 20 or, I don't know what it is, but anyway, the Lord says, just read this chapter. It'll do you some good. And it did, you know it was it's pretty special. Yes, it is. It really is.

One of the promises from the New Testament that people get confused about is about God giving us, or not giving us more than we can handle. I've heard so many times people quote that and say, well, God promised He'd never give you more than you can handle.

Well, that, that is actually a misunderstanding of a verse in the Book of 1 Corinthians. But it's only true if you're talking about temptation because what God actually says in that verse is,

1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

What God promised there in one Corinthians 10:13 is that you would not be tempted beyond what you can handle. Which means when we fall to temptation, it's because we chose to. God didn't fail us. But what's interesting is that people continue to believe and quote and quote that incorrectly and say, well, God will never give you more than you can bear. More than you can handle.

Well, if that's true, the apostle Paul got ripped off because he did get more than he could handle, and he even said so in 2 Corinthians chapter 1. Listen to this. I'm quoting it out of the NIV because I like the wording. It says,

2 Corinthians 1:8 (NIV84)

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.

That's a fancy way of saying we wanted to die. We would've welcomed the release of death. Paul said it was far beyond our ability to endure. Well, thankfully, even though God will allow things in our lives that are beyond our ability to endure, they're not beyond His and the grace that He gives, and that's the good news, but we got to stop misquoting promises in the Bible. We have to know what they say and not just take it from someone else who quotes it or quotes it incorrectly. But if somebody quotes something and it doesn't sound quite right, we need to say, hey, where is that? I want to write that down so I can look that up. And that's a good thing to do because you want to make sure you're getting it right.

Here's another Old Testament quote that people get wrong. You ready? Some people are going to hate me when they hear this. Isaiah 53:5.

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV)

By his wounds we are healed.

By his wounds we are healed.

That has been quoted to me many times when people are praying over someone who is sick or even over me when I've been sick. This is, by the way, a wonderful promise. "*By his wounds we are healed.*" I love this verse. We just have to understand the vocabulary. We have to understand the vocabulary and the context.

This verse or this statement appears two times in the Bible, in its original place here in Isaiah 53, and it's also quoted later on by the apostle Peter in his first letter. In both of those instances, it is referring to spiritual healing. It's referring to the chasm that existed between God and man, that has now been breached, covered, and the peace and healing that comes as a result of what Jesus did on the cross. And you can even see that when you read the whole verse in Isaiah. The whole verse says,

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV84)

...he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

...he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Transgressions, iniquities, peace, right? We can begin to put together the picture if we look at the key words there. Yes, we can see that it's talking about salvation, right? It's talking about forgiveness of sins. It's talking about a restored relationship with the Lord, and that's an important thing to remember because otherwise when people use the statement, by his wounds we are healed. Or some Bibles say, by his stripes we have been healed. What they're saying is in essence is through the suffering of Jesus we are, now, we have physical healing. Well, that's not how physical healing... It's not because He suffered on the cross.

Physical healing happened before Jesus suffered on the cross, and physical healing is still going on today, but not because Jesus suffered on the cross. It's because God is good. It is not a part of the covenant. It's not a covenant promise. Physical healing is not a covenant promise. And one of the reasons is, is because our covenant, our new covenant with God is not a physical covenant. It's a spiritual covenant. Paul talks about this in Ephesians chapter 1, that all of the blessings that we have in Christ are spiritual blessings. Now that doesn't mean God can't bless us physically. It doesn't mean that God won't occasionally heal people physically. He can. He does. He will. All I'm simply saying is, it's not a guarantee of the covenant we have with God through Jesus Christ as a result of His suffering on the cross. That's what I'm saying, and that's the important thing to remember.

So we've talked a lot about promises. There's probably one or two people out there who are thinking, all right, you told me what isn't. Let's get to the good stuff. Let's get to the—what about the promises that we can grab ahold of? Amen. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is passed away; behold, the new has come.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is passed away; behold, the new has come.

Very straightforward. Oh, I love this promise because so many people labor under their past mistakes. And I get a lot of emails about it and people ask, can God even forgive me? Can He love me? Is there a life for me in the body of

Christ after all the things I've done? Hey, listen, you came to Jesus and when you did, the old passed away, the new came. You're now a new creation, and that's all you need to know. So just walk with Jesus and stop letting the enemy accuse you about your past.

Philippians 4, 6 and 7. Take note of the conditions and the promises here.

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

I know that during times of difficulty, I need my heart and mind guarded and He promised that He would do it, but there were conditions attached to this promise. And they are, don't be anxious for anything, in everything through prayer, keep Thanksgiving involved there too. Let your request be made known. That means bring them to God. And then He says, the peace of God will guard your heart. Wonderful promise.

I read a devotion recently about writing out a to-do list for God. And this accomplishes what that verse is talking about, is all the things that are heavy on your heart, just write them out as a to-do list. Lord, You need to take care of this. Would You please take care of this? And then the peace that comes with that. It's like, well, we talked it over. God's got it under control. Yes, amen. Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses..."

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That's a promise. Now, this is not the coming of the Holy Spirit for salvation. It's the work of the Holy Spirit that happens repeatedly in the life of a believer

to empower, to empower for service. But it's a promise and if you feel powerless, God has a promise for you that when My Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power. Now walk it out, right. John 10:28.

John 10:28 (ESV)

"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."

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What a wonderful promise, you will... This isn't saying you won't die. It isn't saying that your body won't die. It's saying you'll never perish. That's different, right? Wow. It's called eternal life. Romans 8:28.

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

...we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

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And so we have a promise from God, whatever you're going through, commit it to the Lord. He promised you He will work it together for good. Now, be careful that you don't insist on your definition of good because God's definition of good is ultimately Christlikeness in your life, in my life. And He promises to do that. He's going to take everything we go through and use those things to make us more Christlike, and that's a wonderful promise. Matthew 6:33.

Matthew 6:33

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.

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You read that passage and you find out that all these things are all the things the world runs after and worries about. God says, don't worry about those things. Just make your focus My kingdom, My righteousness, and I'll take care of the rest. Wonderful promise.

And then finally, here's an Old Testament promise, just in case you wondered if there were any you could embrace. Isaiah 26:3 says,

Isaiah 26:3

You keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

You keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

So what is the condition of that promise? Our mind being stayed on the Lord, right? Trusting in the Lord. And then the promise. God will keep you in perfect peace as you stay your mind upon the Lord. That's hard. But it is a promise nonetheless. And it's something that we can, it points us in the right direction. Boy, it sure does. It sure does.

So there's a lot to think about when we're reading our Bibles and happening upon the promises of God. Is this a promise that I can embrace or was this uniquely spoken to the people of Israel? Is it something that was conditioned by the law? Is it something that God spoke to Israel about their future or about a specific event? Or is it just a general promise for all time and for all people? If you really apply yourself, you can figure those things out and we can handle the promises with care. Amen?

Alright, well thank you so much for spending time with us in this short study of the Promises of God. I really hope that you've been encouraged, even if we had to tear down some of the promises perhaps that you might have been quoting in the past. That's okay. Don't worry about it. We learn as we go and we grow in our relationship with Jesus. So let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the time that you've given us here today. We thank You for Your Word, and Lord, we thank You for your precious and very great promises. As we read the Word of God, help us Lord to rightly divide what we are reading and to understand that Your promises are a wonderful gift. And help us to understand all of the promises in the Bible.

We thank You for Your love for us, and we ask You to fill us with Your Holy Spirit as we go forward. In the name of our Savior, Jesus we pray, amen. Amen.