

The Rock of His Promises

I. Be a Doer of the Word

The Word of God helps us overcome sin. The Word of God helps us in our prayer life—forms our prayers, and then gives us power and guidance in prayer. Without the Word of God there is no obedience, and through the Word of God we have good works.

Matthew 7:24-27

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Both people being discussed are believers—one who does the Word and one who does *not* do the Word. Jesus is talking to His disciples as well as a multitude listening and is saying there are Christians who succeed and Christians who fail; Christians who weather storms, and Christians who do not weather storms. The difference is one *does* the Word, the other *does not* do the Word. Both heard the Word. Both sat on that mountain with Jesus and heard the Sermon on the Mount for three entire chapters, but Jesus said it's not just important to *hear* the Word, it's important to *do* the Word.

James 1:22

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

No matter how often we may fail, we usually blame the devil. Yet the Bible says *you* deceive your own self. It's one thing for the devil to deceive you; it's worse when you're self-deceived. Take the Word of God and become a doer of it—step out on it, practice it, and look for opportunities to put the Word of God into effect in your life.

Promises do not comprise the entire Word of God; only part of it. The Word of God also includes instruction, admonition, and end time prophecies. Promises are like stones we can stand on, but they're also like pillows we can rest on. They bring us strength and stability in life so we will not be torn down by the storms of life. On the other hand, they bring us great comfort and rest in the Christian life.

II. God Knew Your Days

Psalms 139:16

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Do you enjoy substance in life? Substance is *things*. Not spiritual things, but things in the natural. Do you enjoy living in a nice home? God gave you the home. Do you enjoy a nice car? God gave you the car. Do you enjoy having money in your pocket? That's substance. There are all types of substance in life and God is the One who gives it to us.

The word *imperfect* literally means being *unborn*. What he's saying is, "*Inside the womb You saw the substance of my being, yet being unborn, and in your book all my members were written.*" No! In your book all my days were written.

I don't know how people can read this verse and believe that abortion is okay. This verse is saying that even in the womb God saw you when you were just a mass of substance. On the other hand, he's saying that even while I was yet unborn, in His book all my days were written. Before your days were even here, God knew your days.

It says, *which in continuance were fashioned*, literally, *which you predestined*, when as yet there were none of them. He set my days out

before I even had any days. Before I was even born into this earth, He set your days out before you.

Psalm 139:17-19

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.

The word *thoughts* is the word for God's *promises*. Verse 16 states the fact that He knew us before we were born, and then in verse 17 He starts out with His promises to us.

David is reflecting on the fact that God saw him early, when he was just fleshly matter in his mother's womb. God saw him and planned out his days. God put them in His Book of Remembrance, and even before I had days you knew about those days and planned them out.

God's promises to us include plans for natural things *and* for spiritual things. God plans are for every spiritual blessing and for every natural blessing. This includes your cars, your homes, your food, and your clothes. But He also planned for you to be born again. He planned for angels to surround you every day. These are the unseen things. He planned for the visible things and for the invisible things. In fact, Colossians tells us that Jesus Christ created everything visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, and natural things around us—all things were made by Him and for Him.

God has supplied and planned every day, but when did this start? Actually, it started before the foundation of the world, but God knew me even in my womb and knew what I was going to do, had plans for my life for success, and planned for those natural and spiritual things. In verse 17 these are called His thoughts unto me.

It says, "When I am awake, You are still with me." Isn't it good to know God was there all night long? Isn't it nice to know that when you go to

sleep, God doesn't go to the other side of the world where its daylight; and then once you wake up, He comes running back to your side? Aren't you glad He's there the whole time? Aren't you glad when you wake up and pray, He hears you? He's with us at all times.

The promises of God are God's will toward His people to bestow good and to remove evil. It's what's found in this passage of scripture. It's not just to bestow good upon us, it's to remove evil. If God didn't remove evil, what would the good do?

Notice in verse 17, "His thoughts are toward us, and how vast is the sum of them?" He promises He'll be with us. He promises He'll supply for us, and then in verse 19 He promises He'd take care of the wicked that come into our life. In other words, each promise manifests God's thoughts and God's love toward us.

III. The Purpose of His Promises

2 Corinthians 7:1

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The promises help us in our Christian life to cleanse ourselves. Promises do two things. They cleanse us from the filthiness of the flesh, which allows the spirit to develop holiness in our life. You cannot cleanse your spirit. This verse is not correctly translated in the King James Version. Through the promises of God, we have cleansed ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh which then allows the Spirit to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

The promises allow the blessings of God to flow into our life and to cleanse us from the sins that are besetting us; cleansing us from the fears and things that come against us. The promises of God help us to cleanse ourselves. We know ultimately that cleansing comes from God, but we have to allow the cleansing of God to work in our lives. In 2 Timothy, Paul instructs Timothy to lay aside those sins of immaturity; throw away those childish things. We have to do the same thing to cleanse ourselves.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This something we do and then God can cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Having these blessings, these promises, we can cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh, and then the spirit can perfect holiness on the inside of us.

2 Peter 1:4

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

By these promises, first of all, we can be partakers of the divine nature and then escape the corruption that's in the world through lust. The promises of God help us gain the blessings of God as well as put away the things in our life that are wrong.

Remember, a promise is God's will toward His people to bestow good and to remove evil. Each one of these manifests the love of God. There are times you instruct your children, there are times you warn them, there are times you tell them about the future, but there are also those times you make promises to them. God's Word is the same way. When God makes a promise, it's even more secure than when we make a promise. God is not a man that He should lie. When you find a promise in God's Word, it's important that you understand it.

IV. Conditional and Unconditional Promises

There are conditional promises and there are unconditional promises. There is a verse of scripture in Ephesians 1 that tells us we have been given the earnest of our inheritance. The Holy Spirit has been given to us as the earnest of our inheritance. That is an unconditional promise. There are certain things that are going to happen to you whether you believe it or not. When the Rapture comes, you're going up if you're still alive. Some people say, "Well, I don't believe that." Well, fine, but I'm willing to

tell you while we're flying through the air, "See, I told you!" But until then, we can get along. We can be happy together. We can fellowship together.

When you get to heaven you're going to be dressed in white robes in heaven. It's part of the Word of God. We have mansions in heaven. That's part of those unconditional promises. There are no conditions attached to it. Jesus didn't say, "I go to prepare a mansion for you, if you'll live for Me, struggle and try every day; otherwise, it'll be a log cabin!" He says for every one of us there's a mansion when we get to heaven. I think God's making a mansion however you'd like it to be. I don't think any two mansions in heaven are going to look alike. The best things will be up there in heaven.

There are a number of things given to you unconditionally the moment you got born again. Righteousness is unconditional. The moment you got born again you became a priest. That's an unconditional promise. God said, "You're a priest." You also became a chosen generation. (1 Peter 2:9) That's not one of those things where you ask for it. In fact, the very second you got saved, all these things were given to you. I consider that the down payment on what is yet to come, but the down payment is just a small part.

There are a vast number of things God has prepared for us also, but those are the conditional promises of God. The conditional promises of God have to do with us doing something before the promises will come to pass. We often make unconditional promises for our children. *This Saturday we're going to the zoo.* It's an unconditional promise, but there are other things — *if you're obedient and a good child, we'll get you ice cream while you're there.* We have conditional promises and unconditional promises and so does God's Word, but the promises are only part of the Word of God. There are over 7000 promises in the Word of God; the rest is warning, instruction, and revelation of the future.

V. Three Parts to God's Promises

The first part of God's promises is His *purpose* in making the promise. God doesn't make promises indiscriminately; He makes them for a reason. This is what the Word of God refers to as having the mind of Christ, the thoughts of God. Isaiah tells us His thoughts are not our thoughts. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. If we stopped right there and didn't read any further or didn't read before that, we'd think,

“We’ll never know how God thinks.” However, that’s not true. He has given us His Word so our thoughts *can* be His thoughts. The good news is God doesn’t come down to our level. By studying the Word of God, we come up to His level. This is why knowing the Word is so important in understanding the promises of God. The more we understand the Word of God, the more we can think like God. I’m not telling you we’ll ever arrive, but we can get close, and we can start to understand why God does what He does.

The second thing about a promise is that He makes it known what His purpose is to us. Why does He tell us He’ll supply all of our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus? At first that sounds too good to be true. His thoughts are way up there. My thoughts are down here. As I study the Word of God, I discover He wants to supply all my needs so I can be a witness to all the world.

The third part is the fulfilling of the promise Do you realize God wants to prosper you? Not so you can run around and throw your money up in the air, but He told Israel, *I want to prosper you so that I can lift you up above all nations and they will know I am the Lord your God.* God wants to prosper you so the Gospel can be preached. Something that seems so foreign to our thoughts, such as God wanting us to be rich and adding no sorrow to it, runs contrary to our natural thinking. But after studying His Word and finding out the mind of God, we realize He wants to set us up on high so people will look to us and ask, “How did you get that?”

You can say, “Jesus got it for me.”

Then you can spread the Gospel with it. You can use the finances for spreading the Gospel. God delights in the prosperity of His servants—*those who delight in His righteous cause.* His *righteous cause* is souls. So when you favor His *righteous cause*, He promises His blessings will come, the inheritance of the earth. This is how God causes it to come to pass in the earth and in our life.

The promises give us something to stand on in life. We stand on the promises of God. Have you ever heard it said that Peter walked on the water? He didn’t. He walked on one word, “Come!” There was a promise attached.

Peter said, “Lord, bid me come?”

Jesus said, "Come. Come." He didn't step out on the water. You can't stand on water, but you can stand on God's Word, and even if the promise is one little word, it's big enough for you step out on and it will hold you up. When he forgot the Lord and looked at his circumstances, he began to sink. It's like stepping off of the promises, but Jesus reached down to pick him up and his feet got back on the promises of God. The promises are for us to stand on. They are sure and form a foundation under us, and they are for us to rest upon.

VI. Blessings are God's Intent for Us

Mark 4:34

But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

The most important parable that opens up all parables and helps us to understand the plan of God is the parable of the sower and the seed. Jesus said if you can understand this parable, you can understand all parables.

To *expound* means to *explain*. Not only did He teach it, He explained it. Teaching is not just throwing words out there. It is verse, explanation, word, explanation, phrase, explanation. Jesus told the parable and then explained it. In Matthew, we are told how he explained it, and at the end of the explanation Matthew tells us this. Jesus asked his disciples, "Do you understand?" And the verse says, they all said, "Yes." But I think they said 'yes' just to impress Him or just so they wouldn't look bad

Jesus turned the other way and they asked each other, "Did you understand that?" "

"No, I didn't understand that."

Mark 4:35

And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

That is a promise. He promised them they would go to the other side. He didn't say, "Let's *attempt* to get to the other side." He didn't ask them, "Agree with Me we can make it to the other side. Let's bind every devil between here and there." He just said, "Let us pass over to the other side." He didn't say they wouldn't have a storm. He didn't say they wouldn't face pressure. He said they were going to make it to the other side, meaning whatever Satan threw at them, they were going to make it to the other side. They were bigger through one promise—that's all He gave them. It doesn't take a Bible full of promises; one promise can deliver you. *Let us pass over to the other side.*

Mark 4:36-38

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

At this point, Jesus stopped the storm. He performed a miracle.

Miracles are only for the moment. They'll get you through, but blessings are something you can operate in all the time. God would rather you operate in blessings than miracles. Miracles are momentary. Blessings are eternal. Jesus gave them a promise, and if they would have stood on that promise, they would have had a blessing all the way across there. But because they wouldn't stand on the promise, He had to interrupt his nap and cause a miracle to happen. He would have rather them go to sleep with Him or sit down in the ship and think, "*If Jesus is asleep, everything must be okay.*" If Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, everything must be okay. What does He ask us to do?

"Just sit down. Pull up an easy chair."

"What easy chair can I pull up?"

"How about Philippians 4:19?"

“Ah! My God shall supply all my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Hallelujah!”

“How about, I’ve never seen the righteous forsaken nor His seed begging bread? That’s a great one.”

If Jesus is seated, He must not be concerned or worried. In this particular case, if He was asleep, He must have been all right. They proved they didn’t believe what He had just taught. They just faced this test and they blew it. Jesus proved what they should have been doing, sleeping. Were they following the teaching? No. Was Jesus following His teaching? Yes.

VII. His Promises Offer Rest

Mark 4:26-27

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

Once the seed is buried, go to sleep. It’s not up to you to figure out how God’s going to deliver you; just go to sleep. When it’s time to get up, get up. When it’s time to go to sleep, go to sleep. In other words, live your life, knowing the seed is working under the ground. What did Jesus do? He took the seed, buried it in the ground, and then went to sleep in the ship. Why? He planned on getting up when they got to the other shore. He was asleep in a ship that was being thrown all around and was filling up with water. The promises of God are so real you can fluff them up as a big pillow and lay down on them. I don’t care if your boat is filled with water, you’re going to make it to the other side. The purpose of the promises of God is to offer rest.

God’s promises, except for the promise of the new birth, are only for believers. Second Corinthians 1:20 says all the promises of God are in Him. Where do you get the promises? By being in Christ. All the promises of God are in Him. Yes, and in Him, amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Romans 9:8 says we are called the children of promise. Therefore, when we become born again, the promises belong to us. We're children of promise.

VIII. Mix Your Faith with His Promises

Ephesians 2:12

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

As a sinner we were separated from the promises of God. The time before we were saved and were without Christ, the promises didn't belong to us. We were strangers to them, aliens from them, separated from them because we were not saved.

First John 2:25 tells us that the greatest promise we could ever have is the promise of eternal life. The Greek says this is the *chief* promise, the greatest promise that He has promised us, even eternal life.

God wants us to study His promises, believe them, and act on them. God wants us to know all the promises—conditional and unconditional—but even if you know the unconditional promises, He gives you rest and peace. The rapture of the Church is an unconditional promise. The Bible declares He is going to come and the dead in Christ shall rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and we are to comfort one another with these promises. In other words, pull up a pillow and rest on it. That means that when the news gets really bad, when they are talking about great layoffs, wars, or nuclear weapons, you can get concerned and worried, but then you think about, oh, oh, Jesus is going to come back one day and solve the whole mess! You can rest on that pillow and realize the reporters are wrong! I have God's promises to rest on.

The promises of God need to be studied. They need to be believed. They need to be acted upon. Proverbs 13:4 says the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. There are certain promises that we will never actually gain in our life and put to use until we become diligent to study them and put them into effect in our life. John 6:27 says, "*Labor not for the meat which*

perishes, that's natural meat in this earth, but for the meat which endures unto eternal life." There is a labor that will endure and give us the great blessings of our eternal life.

Hebrews 4:1-2

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Them is the Exodus generation, the children of Israel who came out of Egypt into the wilderness. When it comes to conditional promises of God, we have to mix them with faith and believe them or they won't work. What was the problem with the children of Israel? God didn't unconditionally promise that they would all go into Canaan. He promised those who would follow after Him and be obedient to Him would enter into the Promised Land, but so many of them were disobedient that God became disgusted with that first generation and basically said only Caleb, Joshua, and the children born in the wilderness would be allowed to enter.

God has a sense of humor. In fact, the people who did not go in complained and said, "We don't want to go in there. We fear for our children."

God said, "Fine. You'll die here and your children will go in and take over the next generation." God looked down at the kids and said, "I like those kids. They'll trust me. They'll believe me. You old folks, all you can think about is Egypt and how great Egypt was. You'll die out here in the wilderness until the last one's gone and then you can all go over and enter in." He was talking about the next generation.

They couldn't go in because they did not mix the promises with faith, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua. What did they look forward to?

When the two spies came back with the good report they said, "Ah, we can possess the land. Yeah, they're meat for us. We can go take them." And they did. They went over and they took the land.

If there were no promises, there would be no need for faith. What we use against the devil are the promises God has given us against the devil, and we put our faith in the promises of God. I don't put my faith in the devil; I put my faith in the promises of God that I'm going to overcome the works of Satan. God's plans are worked out in our lives through the development of His promises. As His promises are developed in us, His plan is worked out in us. God uses all the other parts of the Word to develop our faith. All the admonition, all the teaching, and all the warnings God gives us are so we can take our faith that we gain from this and put it into the promises of God so that God can bring us through. This is the importance of knowing the promises of God.

IX. All of the Word is For Us Today

There's a teaching that says the Old Testament was only written to the Jews and the New Testament is for us, and you can't really get anything out of the Old Testament and you can't really live in the four gospels because those were written to the Jews and under the old dispensation. Therefore, we can only live from the book of Acts through the book of Revelation. Wrong! This is where we have to rightly divide the Word of truth. I'm glad some of those Old Testament promises are still real today. I'm glad I've never seen the righteous forsaken or His seed begging bread. You can't look at that and say, "Oh, that's Psalms! Throw it out! Throw it out!" When Jesus quoted verses, He didn't quote John. He didn't quote Paul. He quoted Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the prophets of the Old Testament.

I like Hebrews 13:5 that says, "I will never leave you or forsake you." That's a New Testament quote from Joshua 1:5. I like the verse of scripture that says to love your neighbor as yourself. James 2:8 calls it the royal law of the New Testament. James says if you'll follow this royal law, you can fulfill all the law—love your neighbor as yourself, which is quoted from Leviticus 19:18. When Leviticus 19:18 says, *thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself*, it was quoted but nobody could fulfill it because it takes the Holy Spirit to fulfill it and they didn't have the Holy Spirit until the New Testament.

Romans 8 says that *in us* the righteousness of the Law could be fulfilled. *In us* because we have the Holy Spirit and walk by the Holy Spirit. We can do something they never could do in the Old Testament. Promises

given to them could not even be fulfilled until today when the Holy Spirit was given and we walk in the Spirit.

There are some Old Testament scriptures we can read and get instruction from, but we don't live under the old covenant. Aren't you glad we don't bring heifers to church? But we sure can learn from those heifers. I'm glad you don't bring them, and I'm glad I don't kill them. I'm glad we don't have blood all over the front of the church.

Sometimes we pull a verse out and stand on it and we can learn from it; but as far as a promise is concerned, we have to look at it and see who it was directed to. Most of the promises of the Old Testament can apply to us because God has given it. Aren't you glad that the promises of the Old Testament weren't just for the Old Testament? Otherwise, Jesus would have never come because He was prophesied of in the Old Testament. Genesis 3:15 tells us He would come in the seed of the woman. That came to pass. We need to understand that so we can go through the Word of God and rightly divide the Word so the promises affect our life and rise up in our life.

I can go down the list of many, many verses that have to do with salvation and healing. Aren't you glad *with His stripes we were healed*? The Old Testament speaks of healing in the present tense—by His stripes we *are* healed, but the New Testament tells us by His stripes we *were* healed. I like what the New Testament says. He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. That's a quote from Isaiah 53 we can stand on for divine healing. I'm glad we can lay hands on the sick and they'll recover. Anoint them with oil. These are many verses that deal with divine healing. Jesus went everywhere, doing good, and healing *all* that were oppressed of the devil. God wants to deliver us from oppression.

Aren't you glad that God meets family needs? Ephesians 5 gives us wonderful promises of the uniting of husbands and wives and settling of family problems. First Peter tells us that God wants the husbands and wives to live successfully and have successful prayer lives together.

X. God's Promises are Bigger than Our Problems

These are promises that God has given, but what do we do? When we see the problem we need to apply the Word of God to the promise, and elevate the promise over the problem. The problem won't hold us up. In

fact, the problem may look like it will overwhelm us, as if we are in the midst of a storm. But I don't care how bad the storm looks. I don't care how bad the waves look. Step out of the boat on the promises of God and the promises of God will hold you up. I'm sure you have come through problems that should have drowned you, but the Word held you up. He'll continue to do that.

There are scores and scores of promises, Old Testament and New, that we can stand on and God will bring us through. There are seven thousand promises in the Word of God, and in an entire lifetime, we can be assured we will not have seven thousand different problems. There are more promises than there are problems. That tells me for every problem I face, I could probably apply fifty to sixty promises to it. One is enough to bring us through, but God has given us more so we can say, "Oh, yeah *that* problem. Here are fourteen different verses covering that one." No matter what Satan throws at us, we have a promise we can come back with and *the promises are greater*. We can look at Satan right in the eye and say, "It is written! It is written! It is written!"