

Sunday, February 6, 2022 am

STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD

Being the first Sunday of the month, I like to present lessons based upon first principles. For many of us, these are simply reminders of Biblical teachings we already understand. But we STILL need reminding from time to time, even of the basics (cf. Philippians 3:1, 2 Peter 1:13-15). This helps us focus on growing, but also helps us prepare to share God's word with others. Also, as I continue to remind you, this is a good time to invite your friends and others to hear a simple message from God's word. IF we have visitors, I will always keep that in mind.

My lesson today is 2-fold. It is a first principles lesson, but it also neatly fits into our theme for 2022 – Drawing closer to God. As we have been addressing who God is, understanding His promises helps us draw closer to Him.

We live in a time when we are used to people not keeping their word. It is no surprise when a politician makes promises and does the complete opposite. Expensive contracts are signed because they are more valuable than one's word. Often hidden in "fine print" are deceptive details that cause disappointment when enacted upon. Our news media and information sources do not have the integrity they used to have – usually spinning a story to their side. With all the deceit and half-truths around us, people wonder about whether or not God will keep His word. BUT one of the characteristics of God that ought to give us comfort is the fact that He DOES keep His promises. In this lesson I would like to talk about that.

I. God is a God of promise

a. *God has proven Himself that He keeps His promises –*

- i. The land and nation promise to Abraham an example. God made a promise to Abraham and His descendants (Genesis 12). He kept His promises. Recently, we showed this to be the case – where the land, and nation promises were fulfilled as Israel inherited Canaan (Joshua 21:43-45, 23:14). Hebrews 6:13-18 speaks of Abraham's faith at God's promises to him.
- ii. The seed promise to Abraham – Genesis 12:3, Abraham was fully confident that God would keep His promises –
 1. By faith he had Isaac - Romans 4:20-21
 2. We know the seed promise is fulfilled in Christ Jesus – Galatians 3:15-18, etc.
- iii. Promises were made to Israel – Paul reminds them of these promises - Romans 9:4, 8. His point in Romans is that Jesus IS the fulfillment of many of these promises – the seed and Messianic promises. Thus TRUE Israel, as he wrote then AND TODAY, are not necessarily physical Israel.
- iv. The promise of the Holy Spirit to the apostles – Jesus as He again told His apostles about His leaving, He promised them a Helper, the Holy Spirit - John 14:16-18, 25-26, 16:13, etc. In Acts 1:4-8 – Jesus commanded them to wait for the promise of the Father. He then instructs them to go to Jerusalem and wait for power from the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-4 – it happens. Acts 2:33, 37 – Peter declares this is exactly what happened.
- v. We could look at other examples, but these are sufficient to show that God keeps His promises.

b. *Concerning the promises God makes:*

- i. We read several things about God and His promises.
- ii. He is faithful – able to keep His promises - Hebrews 10:23 – He who promised is faithful. 2 Corinthians 1:18-20 – all the promises in Him are "Yes" as in He keeps His word.
- iii. He doesn't change – When makes a promise, you can count on Him to keep it AS He promised. God doesn't "change the rules in the middle of the game." James 1:17 notes there is no variation or shadow of turning. Hebrews 13:8 – Jesus is the same...
- iv. He cannot lie – Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18. That is how sure His word is!

- v. He does not forget – Jeremiah 33:14, *‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:* Contextually, this was a messianic promise. See also 2 Peter 3:9 – He is longsuffering, that is why He has not returned yet!
- vi. His promises are timeless – Titus 1:2 – promised before time began. We have discussed the eternal purpose of God in times past – cf. Ephesians 3:10-11
- vii. His promises are better – Hebrews 8:6 – a better covenant established on better promises. Everything about God is better.

II. **Some of the promises of God**

- a. We have promises from God – 2 Peter 1:4. This text is addressing spiritual promises we have in Him. What are some of the promises from God to us?
- b. The promises of nature –
 - i. Seed time and harvest – Genesis 9:8-17,
 - ii. Genesis 1:11-12, etc. – seed after its kind;
 - iii. Job 38:8-11 – the limitations of the sea, etc.
 - iv. Consider – Why is science able to so minutely determine physics, chemistry, biology, etc.? Because the world is constant and reliable. This is consistent with God of the Bible. It is INCONSISTENT with general evolution which relies on change and mutations to get a species to the next level. Romans 1:20
- c. The spiritual promises of God – again recall the seed promise as mentioned above.
 - i. We ALL have hope because of this promise – Salvation is available to all - Galatians 3:26-27, John 3:16, etc.
 - ii. The gospel – Romans 1:1-2 – the gospel of God was promised.
 - 1. We now have that gospel – Romans 1:16 – it is the power of God to save.
 - 2. 2 Peter 1:3, we have “all things that pertain to life and godliness”
 - 3. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – it is able to make us complete
 - 4. The point – God has given us His word as a guide to lead us through this life. It was in fulfillment of His promise to His apostles as previously noted – John 14-16 concerning the Helper.
 - iii. The gift of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:38. While there is much discussion about this “gift”, we know that the Holy Spirit has done His part to make salvation possible to us. We may not understand exactly how He works today, but we can take confidence that He does. And if we belong to God, we know that He is with us – Romans 8:1, 9-11. Etc. We find among other things that He makes intercession for us – Romans 8:26, etc.
 - iv. The promise of being heirs – Galatians 3:29 notes that if we are Abraham’s seed we are heirs according to the promise. Being heirs, we are part of the family of God – His children. 2 Corinthians 7:1 (6:11-18, 7:1) notes that because we have the promise of God as our Father, and we are His sons and daughters, we have reason to cleanse ourselves and live a pure life.
 - v. He will never abandon us - Hebrews 13:5. When we are faithfully serving God, we can have the confidence that He is with us. We need to be careful to not think of this in materialistic terms, but we can know that He is there for us. No matter what we face in this life, God is not forsaking us. Romans 8:38-39 notes that nothing can separate us from His love.
 - vi. Life which is in Christ Jesus – 2 Timothy 1:1. As Paul opens this letter He speaks of the promise of life in Jesus. Of course, this is reference to salvation or eternal life. Ephesians 2:1 notes that He has made us alive who were dead in our trespasses. When we obey the gospel and are faithful to Him, we have this hope and promise. James 1:12 speaks of the crown of life promised to those who love Him. 1 John 2:25 – this is the promise – eternal life.

Hebrews 9:15 appeals to Jesus our Mediator for the glory so that we may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

- vii. An eternal rest – Hebrews 4:1 speaks of the promise of another rest. This is reference to eternal reward (Revelation 14:13) in heaven. We are promised that our eternal rest will be most wonderful.
- viii. Godliness leads to life now and to come – 1 Timothy 4:8. The life of a Christian is to be one of godliness (living with due reverence for God). It is not always an easy life, but if we are willing to endure, we have the promise of life now (a better quality life) and in the life to come (salvation in heaven).
- ix. You can face whatever comes at you in this life – 1 Corinthians 10:13. We have God's promise that whatever comes our way, we can handle it. This is not always easy to grasp OR do, but it a promise of His nonetheless. Consider 2 Peter 2:9 – He knows how to deliver us.
- x. God will take care of us - Matthew 6:33 – seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you.
- xi. That He is coming again – continually Jesus promised that He would come again (John 14:1).
 - 1. Acts 1:11, as He ascended to heaven the angels pronounced this also.
 - 2. 2 Peter 3:4 & 9 & 13 – scoffers mock that He has not yet returned, but there is reason. We, as believers, ought to anticipate His return.
- xii. That He will judge us righteously – the Bible speaks of a day of judgment coming. John 5:28-29 speaks of this. 2 Corinthians 5:10 – we must all appear. Romans 2:5-8 promises us that it will be a righteous judgment. If we are saved and faithful we have no cause to fear that day.

III. **Conditional promises**

- a. Understand that promises can be conditional – one can give something with an understanding that certain criteria will be followed. Many of God's promises are conditional.
- b. In recent studies we have noted that God's land and nation promises to Israel were conditional.
 - i. He gave them the land and nation AS PROMISED, but keeping it was conditional (cf. Deuteronomy 4:25-26, 8:19-20, 28:1, 15, 36, etc.)
 - ii. Understand, how tolerant and patient God was with Israel.
 - iii. Their loss of the promised land and rejection as God's people was on them. They broke their covenant with God over and over until finally, He cut them off.
- c. Similarly, many of God's promises to us are conditional –
 - i. We have seen in this lesson many of the promises of God. But let us not be fooled into thinking we cannot forfeit these promises. God IS faithful always, but we CAN walk away from Him.
 - ii. Hebrews 10:36-39, we are not like that (we are not to be like that).
 - iii. 2 Peter 2:20-22, warns of those who return to the world – their latter end is worse than the beginning.
 - iv. In our lesson consider that our ability to handle whatever temptations comes our way is dependent upon our continued obedience to Him, our home in heaven is dependent upon our remaining faithful till death, the gospel giving us what we need is dependent upon us actually taking time to read and apply it.

And thus we have noted some of the promises of God. His promises ought to give us reason to faithfully serve Him and hope as we live in a world that does not want to serve Him. Are you standing on the promises of God? Think about it!