



St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)

Worship Address : Cerritos High School Auditorium
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Theme: God Is Faithful to His Promises

Text: Various Passages

Last week we looked at various episodes from Abraham's life to build sort of a case study of a person who believed God and therefore received the preliminary fulfillment of those promises. I say "preliminary fulfillment," because Abraham did not live to see his descendents enter the Promised Land. When Joshua led the Hebrews into the Promised Land, he said, "Not one of the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled." God vowed to give Abraham's descendents the Land of Canaan and sealed that vow by making a covenant with him. In Romans 4:20, the Apostle Paul described Abraham as a man of unwavering faith.

There is a connection between faith and receiving what God has promised. Before I present some actual promises, I want to discuss the topic of doubt or unbelief. People sometimes ask me, "Is it a sin to doubt?" The answer is yes. The Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Romans that "...everything that does not come from faith is sin." The author of Hebrews writes, "For without faith it is impossible to please God..."

So then, we must exercise faith in order to receive the fulfillment of God's promises. There are four steps that I take to eliminate doubt: (1) First, I confess my doubt to God and ask Him to purify me of it. (2) Second, I pray this prayer, "Lord, I believe! Help me overcome my unbelief!" (3) Third, I study the Word of God, because God's Word creates faith. (4) I tell myself to stop doubting and to believe instead. When I take these steps, doubt disintegrates and I am able to trust.

The first promise that I want to present is God's promise to provide for our physical needs. In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus instructs His disciples not to worry about their physical needs. Jesus instructs His disciples not to worry five times in ten verses. This means that He is emphasizing the message not to worry. Jesus says that God feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies of the field. If He does that, God will surely feed and clothe those who are Jesus disciples. Jesus further teaches that worry cannot accomplish anything good. He summarizes His teaching with these words, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." We must trust God to meet our physical needs.

The next promise that I want to present is God's promise of an overflowing life. There is much that we could say about this promise; but I want to focus on three things: (1) The Living Water; (2) The Abundant life; and (3) Spiritual rest. The Living Water is a reference to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our physical bodies. Jesus said: "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I will give him



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will never thirst. Indeed the water I will give him will be in him a spring of water bubbling up to eternal life." Jesus promises the overflowing presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives to satisfy our spiritual thirst. The Spirit already lives inside is if we are believers. What we must do is to trust in God's promise that His power would overflow in our lives.

Jesus also promised an abundant life to those who would believe in Him. He said, "The thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy; I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly." The word, "abundantly," means "overflowing." God is certainly concerned with our eternal destiny; but He is also deeply concerned with the quality of our lives during our short stay on Planet Earth. We live in a society that lives for pleasure. Jesus calls us to find pleasure in Him. He gives us both a challenge and a promise. The challenge is to follow Him in genuine faith so that we might receive that overflowing life. The promise is that He offers the best of all possible lives to those who will follow Him.

Finally, God promises spiritual rest to His people. The author of Hebrews writes, "Therefore, the promise of his rest still stands; we must be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it." Some interpret this rest to be our entrance in to heaven. But Scripture teaches that this rest is for God's people during their lives on earth. Hebrews 4:3 says, "Now we who have believed enter into that rest." The word, "enter," is in the present tense, which means that it is referring to something that is happening right now in the present. Jesus also offered an invitation to enter into His rest:

Come unto me all you who labor and are burdened down, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)