

A Big Promise

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Date: 08 July 2018

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[0 : 00] So today we're going to end that series with a catch-all promise. This is sort of the catcher behind or the backstop behind all the other promises! And if we haven't talked about something that gets you downcast, and there's no way we could talk about everything, here's a promise for you.

And here's a promise for all of us, no matter the discouragement we're in. And it's Philippians chapter 4 verse 13. So if you would turn there, Philippians chapter 4 verse 13.

Paul says, I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Very familiar passage.

That's the catch-all promise that we have, though. It could be translated, or I will have strength to do all things through him who gives me strength.

So discouragement comes into our lives through all kinds of doors. We've talked about that. We get downcast for all kinds of reasons. We can have trials and difficulty and hardship and pain and all kinds of things.

[1 : 26] Maybe our own sin, the sin of others. And it gets into our lives and it punches us in the stomach and we get discouraged. We get downcast.

And we feel like, this is just, this is too hard. This is too hard. I can't keep going. I can't go on. I can't win.

I might as well quit. And there we are. We're discouraged. Everything looks black and hopeless. We talked about that cave last week where you're going to that cave and it feels like there's no, there's no going through it.

It's just a black cave. Have you seen those, that Thai soccer team stuck in that cave? A mile under the mountain.

And Lord willing, they're taking them out tonight today. But we can be in those kinds of caves where we're discouraged and there's no light.

[2 : 25] And maybe you're there right now. But Philippians chapter four, verse 13 is a truth. It's a truth. It's shining into that blackness, shining into that darkness.

That Thai soccer team spent 10 days in the dark. And then finally someone came in with a light and there was hope where there had been no hope before. So here we are.

This is truth. You need to hear. We need to quit listening to the slippery lies of the evil one. And they are slippery.

He's a very good liar. He's very practiced at it. And the key thing about being a good liar is you, you have just enough truth in there to make it so it's believable.

And so he's a slippery liar. And we need to listen to the one who has 100% truth. That liar is going to speak discouragement and defeat into your heart and into your mind.

[3 : 24] Maybe you remember in the Lord of the Rings, the two towers, there's one character. His name is Wormtongue.

And he is a courtier of the king, of one of the kings. And he has the king's ear, but he's secretly working for the evil king, evil wizard Saruman.

And Wormtongue's job is a very tricky, sneaky one. He has to appear to be for the king, and yet the whole time he has to be whispering words of despair and defeat and weakness.

And so he tells these lies so quietly and so subtly and so continuously that pretty soon the king is completely run down with helplessness. He's just stuck there in hopelessness.

And his lies have worked. Well, there is an evil one who is a Wormtongue that speaks into our hearts and into our ears and tells us, you aren't strong enough.

[4 : 29] Well, in the story, the final for that king, it comes around when Gandalf comes and he takes King Theoden by the side and he points him out the window and he says, now I have a secret hope to tell you about.

Something that you didn't know about. And when he heard that word of hope, when he heard that word of, wow, everything is not lost. There's something good. Hope began to revive.

That's what this morning Sunday school was all about. And so here we are again. There's hope.

And that's this verse. I can do all things. I have strength to do all things.

Every circumstance. That's a broad category that fits your life. Every circumstance. Rich, poor, plenty are in want.

I have strength to go through every trial. All things. And so you can put the greatest difficulty in here.

Because all things includes the greatest kind of difficulty. So put your greatest trial.

[5 : 35] That big iceberg in your life that it feels like you can't go around and it's there and you're going to go through it. Well, put that, whatever that is, put it out, pull it out, look at it, put it, pull it out of those dark depths and put it here.

And the promise is this. You will have strength to face it. You will have strength to face it. You will have strength to go through it. You will have strength to endure it.

You will have strength to overcome it. And so what I think unbelief just boils down to this one fear that I'm going to come to a place.

I'm going to come to a circumstance. I'm going to have to go through something and it's going to undo me. The Lord will abandon me. I will be stuck in it and this thing will destroy me.

It will ruin us. It will ruin me. It will take me to the place of just no return. It will throw me down and I won't be able to get up.

[6 : 36] That's what our greatest fear is. That's what unbelief just royally boils down to. The Lord isn't going to help me through this circumstance. But here is this promise. You will have strength to face it, to endure it, to persevere through it, to overcome it, to suffer it, and yet to stay believing, to stay hoping.

You will have strength to face it. You presently have the strength to face it. And as I present tense, I present tense can do all things.

And so look that, pull out your discouragement, look it in the face, the reasons why you're downcast, look it into the face, whatever those reasons are, line them all up, and you can say, based on this promise, I can go through this.

I can do all things. And we need to tell that into the face of that whispering worm tongue that's saying defeat, defeat, defeat, despair, despair, despair.

In the face of that lying devil that would just have us groveling on the ground, hopeless and helpless, paralyzed in our unbelief and our fear, we need to shout this promise, I can do all things.

[7 : 57] It's not in you to destroy me. It's not in you to destroy me. So Joshua looked at the walls of Jericho and they came tumbling down in front of him.

And this wall in front of me will come tumbling down. The Israelites looked at the Red Sea and the Red Sea writhed and rolled back in the face of the Israelites.

I can do all things. No enemy is too strong. That is one of the gifts, that is one of the privileges, that is one of the honors of being a blood-bought child of God, is that now we, those evil powers, have no authority and power over us anymore.

So no enemy is too strong. No trial is too hard. No sin is too great. No temptation is too strong. No circumstances are too difficult, too frightening. Because no, we are more, more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Whatever a conqueror is, we are more than that. We are, we not only conquer, we more than conquer. It's like there's a word there that Paul has in mind that is no word at all.

[9 : 13] It's whatever more than conquering is. He says that's what we are. And nothing will overcome us. He says, no, nothing. Not height, not depth, not death, not life, neither angels, nor demons, nor any powers.

Nothing will overcome us. Not with this promise of God in our hand. Not with this promise of God in our hand. Not with this wind behind our back and our sails.

I can do all things. And so we say, with the psalmist in Psalm 42, why are you so downcast, O my soul?

Put your hope in God, for yet, I will yet praise him. So discouragement paints this bleak, dark painting of a future.

There's no light. There's no hope. It's only this long tunnel of bleakness, only despair. And that's what discouragement says.

[10:21] But this verse tells us something different. It tells us the exact opposite. It says, this is what the future will hold. Victory. Victory.

God stores up victory for the upright. But, how? This is the great, this is the difficult question, or this is the important question.

How is this going to happen? I mean, like, up to this point, this might sound like, sort of like a Joel Osteen sermon, of you can do all this, and just, but, while he's pointing at whatever we are, Paul points us in a totally different direction.

How is this going to happen? Because, how am I going to come to this place where I am going to praise him? Because I have come through the Red Sea, I've come over the mountain, I've gone through the tunnel, I've done it, I'm going to come out to this place of, I'm going to praise him, but here I am, I'm weak.

And, the honest truth is, it's too much for me. It's not only how I feel, but this is, this is too much for me. This is why I'm discouraged. I look at myself, and I don't have what it takes.

[11:37] It hurts too much, it is too discouraging, I don't have what it takes, I'm not strong enough, no matter what this promise says. And that is all true, when I'm looking at me.

But, the how, the how of this verse, the how of this promise, is not found by looking at me, it's found by looking at Jesus Christ.

So the how is in him, through him, who gives me strength. That's where the how is. That's how this is going to happen. This is how it's going to happen in your life. This is how it's going to happen in my life.

It's not going to be because I've found some new great, well of strength within myself. No, it comes through him, through him who gives me strength. And, so, there Paul is, he's, he's in prison.

He's, he's in prison, and yet, he isn't alone. And, either are you. Either, are you. We sang it this morning.

[12:42] He stands beside me. He's beside me. And so, the moment of discouragement, is the moment, that Jesus Christ gives us strength. With the pain, with the affliction, with the heartbreak, with that felt sense of, I can't do this.

Jesus gives us strength. He gives us of his own strength. So, it's through him. Remember what Paul said in Galatians, I live, and yet not I.

I live, and yet not I, but Christ lives in me. That's like a whole other promise that we can do, but let's just use it for a moment. So, I'm still there.

I'm still in the circumstances. I'm still feeling the difficulty, and the hardship. I'm still there. But Christ, I'm not alone, but Christ is with me. Christ is with me.

And so, I'm never alone. It's I live. It's in my life. But yet, not I. Christ lives in me. One old preacher, he was preaching, and he was pretending to have this conversation between Paul and himself.

[13:56] And, and he comes to the point of saying, well, I don't understand how you have all the strength to do this. And, or, he was saying, in Galatians, well, I just don't understand how this works.

Where do you get this extra strength? And, and Paul says, well, it's Christ living in me. It's through him. And, he says, well, oh, I beg your pardon, Paul.

I didn't realize there were two of you. It's neither just me alone, and it's not Christ only. It's I, and Christ. Christ, and I, two of us.

And there, is your hope. There's your hope. That's why you have strength. That's why there's always encouragement. That's why no matter what, here's this catch-all.

Here's this, here's this promise that catches everything. And this is the ultimate reason we don't have any reason to be discouraged, because it's never just me. It's never just me.

[14:57] It's never just you, brother. It's never just you, sister. It's two of us. And so, there you are on the ground. And discouragement, and trials, and whatever has beaten you up.

And you're discouraged, you're heartbroken, there's sorrow, your sin, the sin of others, and there you are, beaten and broken.

But not all is lost. Not all is lost. Christ is there too. And so there was Paul. He's weak, and he's in prison, and he is waiting for the biggest court date of his life.

He's going to see Caesar and stand in judgment. Caesar's going to stand in judgment of him. And the situation was so tense.

It was so, the heat was so high that pretty much everyone left him. And there was Paul, by himself, in front of Caesar, answering, how would you feel?

[16:03] It would be bad. And yet, Paul says, someone stood by my side. Someone was there. It just wasn't me. It was me, and Christ.

The Lord stood by my side. And there he is, standing by your side. Standing by your side. And so your blood, and your heart, and your courage, and your hope, and your strength, are all running out of you.

And you need life. You need blood. And so Jesus Christ takes his arm, and he takes a needle, and he sticks his own arm, and he puts a tube from his arm to your life.

A line between him and you, and he gives you his life. He gives you his strength. The Holy Spirit is the line. He's Christ in me.

Christ's life flows through him to you. That's the Spirit gives us Christ. He gives us Christ's life. Not just in word or in theory, but in power. And in life.

[17:15] Everywhere in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is seen as someone who is doing things. He's full of life. He brings life. He brings power. He brings all of these things. Not sort of just in word, but in actuality.

And so Christ is there, and the Holy Spirit is giving us his life. And so now here I am on the ground receiving that life. And my eyes open.

And as I look up, I see Jesus. And it's him and me. And I'm waking up. And the dawn begins to break and the hope begins to grow.

And then I start to say, Oh, my soul, why are you so downcast? Put your hope in him. Put your trust in him. Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

And I look eyeball to eyeball with Jesus. And I take my life from him. And he looks down at me. And he says, My grace is sufficient for you.

[18:20] I'm enough for you. You're weak. But I'm the living one. I'm the living one. I am so full of life.

I am life itself. And here I give you mine. Take strength. Take life. That's the whole Christian life. On this side of glory, that's the whole Christian life.

Discouragements, difficulties, and trials. And yet Christ meets us in them all. And we're more than conquerors through him. Christ in me, the hope of glory.

So how can we stay discouraged? How can we stay discouraged? How can we stay discouraged? However we got there, whatever dark road we've been on, whatever dark challenge we've been, we're facing, here's hope.

Here's encouragement. I can do all things through him who gives me strength. Let's pray. Lord, this is one of those great and precious promises that are, that is ours.

[19:25] It's one of those great and precious promises through which we, um, participate. And the divine nature. This is where, this is how your life and your strength and your power and your love comes into our life as we believe these promises.

So I would pray for all of my brothers and sisters here that they would look by faith, keep their eyes fastened on Jesus. The winds are blowing and the storm, the waves are high.

And we look to you, Lord Jesus. When things are too hard, too difficult, too discouraging for us, help us to look again to you.

Help us by faith to get out of our boats and to walk to you. Help us by faith not to be afraid, but to wait for you, Lord Jesus, to say, peace, be still.

Thank you that we are safe in your arms. Thank you that our loved ones are safe in your arms. We pray that you would keep us in perfect peace. For those who, who don't know you, who have no hope for this life, for the next, Lord Jesus, be a sovereign king, and invade their life, invade their heart, and bring them to submission to you.

[20:53] I pray this in your mighty name, Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen