

Promises That Are Ours In Christ

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[0:00] 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and I'll read the 12th verse down to the 22nd. Now, this is our boast.

Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world! and especially in our relations with you, in holiness and sincerity that are from God.

We have done so not according to worldly wisdom, but according to God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand.

And I hope that as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you. First, so that you might benefit twice. I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia and then to have you send me on my way to Judea.

[1:10] When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, yes, yes, yes, yes, and no, no?

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not yes and no. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not yes and no, but in him it has always been yes.

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ. And so through him the Amen is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.

It was a very early morning in a garden, and Judas was proving the unfaithfulness of man.

[2:30] A detachment of soldiers, some officials, a hodgepodge of other people noisily made their way through the garden, through the trees, and Judas took the lead.

He knew where the prey was. Then Judas saw Jesus. And then Judas came up to him. He walked up to him and with a malicious smile, kissed him.

And said, Greetings, Rabbi. Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? With a kiss, he turned traitor, and with a kiss, he drove a dagger into Jesus' heart.

So, what was Judas feeling as he kissed Jesus, as he kissed our Lord? I'm pretty sure that Judas didn't do it with an innocent smile.

He had a detachment of soldiers behind him. There was a mob behind him. There was no hiding what this was about. He wasn't playing innocent any longer.

[3:40] I think it was malice. Because Judas felt, I'm sure, that Jesus had betrayed him.

That Jesus had let him down. Judas thought he heard of glory, and power, and money, when he first heard Jesus, and when he first joined Jesus.

But after a while, he saw that Jesus' kingdom wasn't going to be like that. And that initial excitement soon turned to disappointment. Judas' dreams were dashed.

dashed. Especially when Jesus started talking about, I'm going to die. I am going to die. We are going to Jerusalem, and I am going to die. And that disappointment started to fester in Judas' heart. And pretty soon, he hatched a plan. And now, the big moment had arrived. And with a kiss, his betrayal, his hypocrisy, his lies, everything that he had been living was exposed for what it was.

[4:50] And with a kiss, Judas gave him over to his enemies. And that must have hurt. Jesus knew that Judas was going to do it, but that didn't change the fact.

That didn't make it feel any better. The one he had loved had let him down so completely. And we've all known that pain to some extent in our lives.

At best, humans are fickle. And at our worst, we are liars. And some of you, I'm sure, have had bosses say, well, I'm going to do this.

It's going to be like this. I'm going to work this out for you. Then he doesn't. Things change. What he wanted to happen, he doesn't have the ability to bring out about. And maybe he was just saying things to get you off of his back for a time.

And it hurts. Maybe you've had a sibling say, yes, I'll help take care of mom. I'll help take care of dad. And then they don't.

[5:55] Or you've lent money to somebody. And with big promises, they promise they're going to pay it back. And then they don't. We're used to letting people down.

And we're used to being let down. And we learn that very early in our life. It's sad, but it's true. Children learn that very quickly. We say, we're going to go to the water park. And then something comes up. And the thing that they look forward to, the thing they were longing for, the thing that they were marking down in their calendar as a big day, it doesn't happen.

And our children learn it at our best. We're limited. We're small. And at our worst, our children find out that we're liars. We're used to unfaithfulness.

We're used to betrayal. We're used to letting people down and being let down. And it's easy for us to put our failures on God. To think that He is like us.

[6:59] Or at least to have that doubt come into our mind that, you know, I've heard promises before. I mean, 50% of marriages end in divorce. A broken oath.

A broken promise. And so, it can become very easy for us to think that He is like us. Yes, He makes promises. But can He keep them?

Will He keep them? That can be a struggle for us. And these questions matter to you. They matter to me because I have real problems.

I face real enemies. I need a faithful God. I need a God that keeps His promises. Now, some of you have older parents that you're trying to take care of.

Some of you have failing health. Some of you wrestle with sleeplessness. You have children with difficulties. You're busy. You have teens that are far away from God.

[8:05] There's spiritual dryness. There's marital problems. And on top of all that, we are sinners. One and all.

I am a sinner. You are a sinner. And no matter what kind of good face that we put on here, we are sinners. sinners. We don't understand what we do.

The good we want to do, we don't do. And the evil that we don't want to do, that's what we keep on doing. We have real problems, and we need a faithful God.

And that's where 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 20, is so powerful, is so encouraging, is so precious. I want you to look at that verse again.

2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 20, for no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ.

[9:06] No matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ. So all of God's promises, that's a lot of promises, and we don't have time to go into all of those things.

And even as we were reading them, I saw more in this passage that we could bring out. But all of God's promises are yes in Christ, and we don't have time for all of God's promises.

I just want to look at three. Three promises. You have real problems, you have sin, you live messy, difficult lives, that it's not always easy, and things are hard, you have real enemies, but God's promises are meant to lift you up, to encourage you, to uphold you, to sustain you while you're going through this pilgrimage to the celestial city.

All of his promises are meant to lead you to rest yourself on Christ, and rest as your salvation, to rest on Christ for all that he is for you.

So three promises that are yes, that are amen, that are yours in Christ, and they're all from Romans chapter 8. So I want to invite you to turn to Romans chapter 8.

[10:24] It's a couple pages back. Romans chapter 8, three promises, and here is the first. Romans 8, 1.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Your biggest problem is that God is good and that you are not.

The worst news in the whole world is that God is good and you are not. He is righteous from the core of His heart to the extent of all of His actions.

He is altogether good. When He makes this world, He makes it good. And He says, no, it's very good. All that I do is very good. God is utterly righteous. He isn't just a little good. He's altogether good. In all of His infinite nature, He is good. He's blazingly righteous. He is fiercely good.

[11:41] He is passionate about being righteous and holy. And if you think about it, hell is an exegesis, an overflow, an exposure of just how good God is.

Hell is just as much of a reflection of the glory of God's goodness as heaven is. He loves righteousness. He loves goodness.

He loves pure hearts. He loves pure motives. And because He is pure, the worst news that I could hear, that I could ever hear, is that He is good because I am not.

So God made you for His glory. He made you in His image. And what does the image do? It reflects the picture.

It reflects something. It's a mirror. And so God made you in His image. He meant for you to live and to shine and to reflect all of His goodness, all that He is.

[12:52] He meant that to shine out. And so He wanted humans to multiply and to fill the earth. And so He would have tiny little image bearers all throughout this earth and they would all be beaming His goodness and His greatness.

And so He put you where you are in your street, in your house, in your town, in your school, in your work, in your family, in whatever setting you are in. He put you there to image forth, to show His goodness.

He made you for His glory. But what have you done? What have I done? Well, we've exchanged the glory of God for created things.

We've worshipped idols. And most of all, we've worshipped that idol that we find in the mirror. So we're traitors. We're rebels. We're twisted. Instead of shining out, we are bent in.

We're unrighteous. We're perverted, bent things. We live in God's world. And yet, we stare forever at ourselves. And so we love ourselves.

[14:02] And we loathe our failures. And we dominate others. And we sulk and we pout when we don't get our way. And we're so in love with ourselves. We're so caught up in the glory of our majesty that in none of our thoughts, there's no room for God in any of them.

And yet, the whole time, we have the audacity to say, well, I'm pretty good.

I'm a pretty good person. So I defend my record. I don't live by the Ten Commandments, but I live by the six and a half commandments that I can sort of do well.

And then that makes me a good person. And so we drag God's glory, the holiness that the law shows us. We drag his goodness down to our levels.

His blazing, fierce, glorious, holy righteousness we say is nothing but our filthy rags, we think, are something. And I was guilty because of that.

[15:10] And you are guilty. God is good. He is righteous. He's holy, holy, holy, and I am not. And you aren't either.

And before God's righteous judgment, I couldn't stand. His goodness exposed my badness. His righteousness exposed my wickedness for what it was.

See, when I stand next to you dark sinners, I come off looking decent. I don't look so bad. But before his holy law, I was guilty.

Before his radiant goodness, I was lost, condemned. And I and you needed rescued. But God's goodness is so good.

It's so wonderful. It's so amazing that in his love, he reached down and made a way for me to be good again, to be declared righteous again, to be forgiven, to wash my guilt away wider than snow.

[16:20] And so he made a plan. And it was a plan of grace where he would provide what I lacked. He would provide righteousness that I needed. It would be his very own righteousness.

And so the son of God came down, became man, and he took on flesh and he lived a perfect life of obedience. And then he died as a propitiation.

That's a sacrifice of atonement. That's a sacrifice that appeases wrath, that satisfies God's holiness, his justice, his goodness.

And Jesus did it for me and he did it for you, brother or sister. And so now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

We stand before God justified, righteous, declared righteous. And this is God's promise to us. Romans 8 1. And Paul says that this promise comes to us, it becomes true for us, it becomes yes for us in Christ Jesus.

[17 : 34] And so we are joined to him, and the promise becomes ours. And that is good news. That is good news. And it's good news that the promise comes to us based on our connection to Christ.

The promise is true. It's solid. It will stand now and it will stand for all of eternity for me because it's based on my union with him. It's not based on my performance. It's not based on my goodness. It doesn't rest on who I am. And it doesn't rest on the fool's hope that God will never condemn sinners. That's what so many people believe.

This promise of no condemnation is no big deal because that was never a danger to begin with. Such a human view of God. W.H.

Odd in the 19th century British poet, that's last actually 20th century, last century. He said, I like to sin and God likes to forgive.

[18 : 41] Isn't the world admirably arranged? We all get what we want. And that's how most people think about God. If there is a God, then he's not holy.

If there is a God, then there's no condemnation. And so when Paul says, therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, that is no big deal. But our hope isn't resting on that foolish fantasy based on my view of God or a human view of God.

It rests on the fact that we've been joined to Jesus Christ. We've been joined to the one who lived and who died and rose again. Rose again for us.

So dear brother, dear sister, why can you never be condemned? Because you've already been condemned. Why can you not die for your sin?

Because you've already been crucified. Hell already came to you. God's blazing wrath has already broken out on you.

[19 : 51] You've already been condemned. You've already died for your sins. And you say, when? Where? How did that happen? Are you sure that's what you mean? And the Bible's answer is yes, in Jesus Christ.

You are joined to him. And what has happened to him has happened to you. You died with him. He wasn't dying for his own sins.

He was dying for yours. and it was just and it was right for that to be so because we are one with him.

He took the guilt of our sins and we take the righteousness of his obedience. And so now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So let this promise uphold you when you've sinned.

Let this promise uphold you and lift you up when you're wondering will he take me back again? When you're in the faraway country and you're sitting in the pig filth and you're wondering can I go back?

[21 : 00] Let this promise motivate you and get you up off your feet and come to him. And when you're saying how can he love me? Go to this promise. It doesn't depend on our behavior.

The grounds of it are all in Christ. And let it uphold you when you're wrestling with just some sort of perpetual guilt. Sometimes we just live in this low level slow burn guilt.

You never feel right. You never feel like God is for you. You always feel like you're sort of like bouncing along the bottom of God's displeasure. And Christians sometimes you should feel guilty. God has put that conscience in you. God has put that spirit, his spirit in you to point out your sin. And sometimes you should feel guilty. But to always feel that way, to always be afraid, to always feel like I'm just not good enough.

That's not God's will for you. You aren't remembering that in Christ there is now no condemnation. The promise of God is yes. It's yes for you in Christ.

[22 : 11] It's not yes and no. It's not maybe. It's yes. It's always yes in Christ. That's our first promise. The next two are shorter. Here's the second.

Romans 8, 28. And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

angels. So look at this promise, brothers and sisters, that is yes for you in Christ. In all things, God works for the good of those who love him.

In all things. Angels work for your good. The highest archangel, the lowest angel in all the ranks, work for your good.

All angelic activity is for your good. The book of Hebrews are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.

[23 : 17] Angels work for your good. All of God's attributes work for your good. So God's love is 100% working for your good.

God's faithfulness is working 100% for your good. God's patience, God's power, God's eternity, God's invisibility, God's immutability, God's kindness, God's wrath.

It's all now for your good. Even God's wrath. It's not turned for you. God is not using it against you. He is now using it for you.

So do you see this blazing, wild, free, amazing grace? God is all for you. All things are bent for your good.

All bad things are for your good. All your trials, all your sickness, all your weakness, all your persecution, famine, other people's sins, your sins, your weakness, your parents' weakness, your father, your mother's failure, your teenager's rebellion.

[24 : 25] Are any of those things good in and of themselves? Of course not. But God uses those things. He works those things. His hands are on them to bend them to your good.

Satan himself God uses for your good. So all things is a pretty big category. And so by faith we are going to put everything in it.

Because that's what God says. Everything goes in there, good and bad. So what are you facing tomorrow? Think about it. Think about it.

What are you facing? Might be good, might be bad, you don't know what it is. What are you, what's tomorrow going to bring? What are you struggling with? What fears do you have for the future?

Do you worry that you're not going to have enough money when it comes time that you can't work anymore? Maybe you're concerned about the path our country is taking. Maybe some of you are worried about your health or your parents' health.

[25 : 29] what are you facing? For all of us, life is always changing. Life changes. Circumstances change.

But God's promise doesn't. This promise that no matter what, I'll work it for your good. So God's absolute sure word to you is this.

I will work it out for your good. I will use it. I will work it to your good. And if we're thinking about that, that is an outrageous claim.

And how could anyone say that with a straight face? And to look at every situation everywhere, everyone, and say that is for my good.

How can we say that? Well, I'll say if it wasn't for Jesus, we might as well be wishing upon a star. That would be folly. That would be the stupidest thing in the world to believe.

[26 : 28] But we are the called ones. We're the chosen ones. Romans 8 28 says we're called according to his purpose. And haven't we seen in the last few weeks from Ephesians, from 1 Corinthians, what it means when God calls someone?

We've been chosen in Christ from before the foundations of the earth. We've been called to fellowship with Jesus Christ. In the next verse it says we've been predestined to be conformed to his image.

When God calls us, it's essentially a call to Jesus. And one way or another, God is calling us, is connecting us to Jesus. And so, why do heaven and hell bend to your good?

Why can we say that outrageous promise is yes? It's not because of you. It's not because of who you are. It's because of who Jesus is.

You're the bride of Christ. You're part of his body. You are joined to him. And so, how it goes for him is how it's going to go for you. We can know that this promise is sure.

[27 : 41] It's 100% sure. Because God's going to work out everything for the good, for the glory of Christ. Christ, he is going to do it.

So, we haven't earned this favor, but Jesus has. And so, do you think for a second that God is going to let something happen that isn't good for Jesus? Do you think for one second God the Father won't move heaven and earth to do Jesus good?

Jesus laid down his life in obedience to his father. The father is not going to dishonor him for one second. The father will give him the reward.

God will do him good. And we are in Christ. God can't treat Jesus differently than us. God can't treat Jesus differently than his bride. You know, you can't treat my wife badly and think that you're doing me a favor. Because how it goes with her is how it goes with me.

[28:47] God won't treat Jesus bride poorly because he loves his son too much. His son has obeyed so completely, has worked so wonderfully, has humbled himself so low, that not for a second will God treat his bride like that.

God can't treat the branches of the vine differently than the vine. He can't hurt the branches and not hurt the vine. And so he'll work out everything for our good because we're joined to Jesus.

And so the promise, this is the good thing, the promise doesn't depend on our goodness. It doesn't depend on our constant self-effort. It doesn't depend on your success or your failure or your obedience because that's going to be sinking sand.

You're going to disobey. You're going to sin. And does that upturn the whole promise? It says no. The solid ground of this promise is Jesus. And since we are joined to Jesus, the promise is yes to us.

Yes. So what should you do when you start worrying about tomorrow and Tuesday? What do you do? What should you do?

[30:01] Rest in Christ. Put yourself down. Lay yourself down there. Christ secures you heaven and earth. Christ secures all of God for you.

And so what should you do? You lay yourself down. You rest yourself in Jesus' life, his death, his resurrection. And repentance and rest is your salvation.

And quietness and trust is your strength. So trust the gospel. Hold on to this promise that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.

Now thirdly, go to Romans 8 38, 838. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So what is the third promise? Simply this, nothing can separate you from God's love. Nothing can separate you from God's love.

[31:28] You have real enemies. demons. You have demons that want to deceive you, that want to drag you into the outer darkness. They are stronger than you.

They are wiser than you. They are more cunning than you. They are more powerful than you. and they can't separate you from God's love. There are persecutors.

For your sake, we face death all day long. Persecutors at their worst cannot separate you from God's love.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors. through him who loved us. And we say, well, what about my sin? Certainly my sin would be able to separate me. What about my sin?

[32:28] Yes, what about it? If you are in Christ, let's go on a little trip. Let's go to, let's look for an accuser.

Let's look for someone who can legitimately honestly, truthfully bring a charge against you. So let's go and look on this earth and we go through the seven continents.

And we visit all the ships on all the ocean. And for good measure, we go up to the space station and we ask, can anyone bring a charge against this one? And no one speaks up.

no one says a word. And so let's go into heaven and we pass through rows and rows of fiery, holy angels who have never sinned.

Can you bring a charge? Can you bring a charge against this one? And they're silent. and then we stand before God himself.

[33:41] Can you bring a charge against this one? Your eyes are too holy to see evil. Can you bring a charge against this one?

And God over the silence says, no, this one is righteous. I've looked over his record. I've looked through her record. And this one is righteous, not just innocent.

righteous. Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? Whom God has chosen? It's God who justifies. It's God who justifies.

Christ Jesus who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God. He's also interceding for us. So how can I know that nothing in heaven and earth, neither height nor depth, nor any powers, nor anything, how can I know that none of that will separate me?

How can I know that God loves me? Because at the right hand of God is my advocate, my go-between, my intercessor. And it's not Moses.

[34 : 47] It's not the Pope. It's not my mom or my dad or anyone else. It's not the best lawyer that you can buy. It's Jesus. And Jesus, the just one, says, I live for this one.

I died for this one. I rose again for this one. I stand here for this one. I rose again to secure your smile. I rose again to secure God's everlasting love for her.

Death itself cannot keep me from loving her. I rose again to love her, to love him. So the promise is yes in Christ.

Christ. So it was very early in the morning in a garden. And Jesus was proving the faithfulness of God.

Now there was a detachment of soldiers. They were standing around the tomb. And the only sounds were the sounds of the night. And then out of the sleep of death, he came to life.

[35 : 57] And he rose right out of his clothes. He left the grave clothes right behind. He passed right through the stone. He walked out of the tomb.

And out of apparent failure, out of apparent loss, out of apparent defeat, Christ proved that everything God promised would come true.

Everything God said would happen, will happen. and so now he lives. And he's more alive than you are. He's more alive than any of us here, and he lives for you.

And so all of God's promises are yours if you are joined to him. They're yes in Christ Jesus. Christ's resurrection proves that nothing will, nothing can separate you from the love of God.

Death itself cannot turn his love away. So when you die, his love will be there, because when he died, he rose again to love you. Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

[37 : 06] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing songs, hymns, and spiritual songs.

And whatever you do, whether in word or indeed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. How do you apply this?

You talk to one another about it. How do you apply this? You live for the one who lived and died and rose again for you. And you live a thankful life. The Lord is on high.

He's praying for you. He's loving you. He's given you the key to all of his promises, all the promises of God. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for such an amazing gift of our Lord Jesus and of joining us and uniting us to him.

And so all of you is for all of us. All of you is for all of our weakness and our failure and our unrighteousness.

[38 : 16] you are working and you are loving to make us into something good again. Thank you that you have given us a good record. Thank you that you are going to give us perfect bodies in the resurrection and thank you that you are working out and working in us holiness by the spirit.

Thank you that all these things come to us through Christ Jesus, that we have all these glorious riches, all of these promises, whatever promises in the Bible. we can sign our name to it because Jesus Christ is ours.

I pray that we would avail ourselves, that we would believe these things and that believing these things would change the way we live, that would change the way we do tomorrow morning, would change the way our attitude as we go to work, as we think about the lost ones in our lives, that these promises, these good things that you have blessed us with, would so change us, that we would live a holy and a righteous life, that we would thank God through Jesus Christ for everything that you've done for us.

Help us to do all these things for his glory. He is certainly worthy. We ask it in his name. Amen.

Thank you. Christ the solid rock I may may