



“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,” II Peter 1:4.

Stand on the Promises

Lesson Aim: To aid believers in making personal applications of God’s promises

L346. Date: July 1976. **Text:** II Peter 1:2-11. **Topic:** God: Promises of.

Behold the promises of God! The Bible is filled with them. Consider the privilege of man's receiving the promises of God. There are no promises like God's. A promise is an assurance on the part of another of some good for which one is dependent upon him.

A promise is only as sure as the one who promises. Man is the recipient of the promises of GOD. His promises are sure. No other can offer promises which are so sure of fulfillment, so comforting in content, so expressive of grace, nor so wonderful in fulfillment.

What can be said about the promises of God? (1) They are reliable. **“Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise . . .”** I Kings 8:56. **“ . . . All the promises of God in him (Jesus) are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us,”** II Corinthians 1:20.

(2) They are great. **“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises . . .”** II Peter 1:4. (3) They are personal. Take each of God's promises to heart; apply them to yourself. They are meant for you.

Today's study reviews some facts concerning the promises of God. The aim is to help you to make personal application of God's promises. Open your heart for God to speak to you. Expect your faith to be enlarged. Determine to know and act upon God's promises as an expression of your increasing faith in Him.

I. HE WHO PROMISES (1:2, 3)

I believe God because of Who He is. Men sometimes promise with no intention to perform. Men sometimes promise with good intention, but are unable to perform. That does not affect the promises of God. **“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”** Numbers 23:19. Men will fail you. God will never fail you. **“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man,”** Psalm 118:8. Who is the God whom you trust?

A. He is a God who can be known, verses 2, 3. Twice the text affirms that spiritual blessings are received “through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.” It is evident that the God with whom men have to do is a God who can be known. What does it mean to “know” God? The Apostle Peter used a word which means “precise and correct knowledge; a true knowledge of God's nature, dignity, and benefits.” It is knowledge of the one true God which has illuminated the spirits of those who believe. Such knowledge is personal and experiential. It means to enter into personal relationship with another. That is how one can know God.

“. . . I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him . . .” II Timothy 1:12. That statement is not, “I know IN whom I have believed.” That would mean one knew facts about Him. Rather, the testimony is, “I know HIM whom I have believed.” That means personal acquaintance and continuing involvement. That is the way anyone can know God.

B. He is a God who confers grace and peace upon men, verse 2. What attitude does one face when he meets God? Is it a spirit of vengeance, judgment, and condemnation? Not at all. It is rather a spirit of grace through which peace floods the soul of the penitent believer — not merely “grace and peace” but **“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,”** verse 2.

Grace and peace are often related in the Bible. When mentioned together, they always come in the same order: grace is first and peace follows. They are related as cause and effect. There can be no peace in the human spirit unless the grace of God has already entered. It is impossible for grace to come without peace accompanying it. Imagine! God meets one in an exhibition of grace and it overflows his heart with peace. It is good to know a God of grace who gives peace to those who trust Him.

C. He is a God who is powerful, verse 3. All the good man has ever

received, or ever will receive, comes by the benevolent and providential will of God. His power is a “divine power.” His power resides in and issues from God alone.

How great is God's power? It is so great that it is the origin and source of all other powers. “. . . **there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God,**” Romans 13:1. When one meets God, he meets Him who is the power center of all the universe. **“God hath spoke once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God,”** Psalm 62:11.

D. He is a God who is benevolent, verse 3. “All things that pertain unto life and godliness” are provided for the believer by the power of God through Jesus Christ. Every thing that is needful for a life of true piety is provided for the believer. That is what Jesus meant when He said, “. . . **I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,**” John 10:10. The abundant life is possible because God, who knows all things necessary for life and godliness and who has sufficient power to provide those things, is committed to making them available to believers.

There is one prerequisite to your enjoying the fullness which God has to give. It comes only “through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue,” verse 3. The blessings of God are available through His Son, Jesus Christ. Coming to know Him, you witness the glorious manifestation of His goodness toward sinners. Becoming His child, you share His glory and perfection. Be sure you know Jesus Christ personally in a relationship established by repentance and faith.

II. NATURE OF PROMISES (1:4)

I believe God because of the nature of the promises He makes to men. They are described as “exceeding great and precious” promises. No particular promises of God are named because all His promises are “exceeding great and precious.” The context indicates, however, that the particular promises in mind are those which through grace bring peace and all things that are related to life and godliness.

The Bible is so full of promises that it might be called a book of promises. Pardon from sin, help in trials, guidance in uncertainty, strength in weakness, aid in need, protection from danger, comfort in sorrow, and the promise of His presence in life and in death are all “great and precious.”

God's promises are “exceeding great and precious” because they are made by a great and loving God. The things promised are precious because God gives only the best. Those are the promises God has given to men in

Jesus Christ. “. . . **All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us,**” II Corinthians 1:20.

All the believer needs is the promise of God that He is his sufficiency — all that pertains to life and godliness. What would the world be if there were no promise from God? The future would be so foreboding it would be unbearable. Consolation or hope would be impossible. The believer should be overflowing with gratitude to God for His “exceeding great and precious promises.” God's promises are so wonderful in content, so gracious in bestowal, and so certain of realization that they are great beyond all price.

III. BLESSINGS PROMISED (1:4-11)

A. God gives believers His own nature according to His promise, verse 4. Each Christian is a “partaker of the divine nature.” To be a “partaker” means to be a partner, to share, to be a companion. Each believer who is in Christ shares in the very nature of God. One has the God nature living within him, if he is a true Christian.

How is it possible for man to receive the nature of God? It is possible only because God, in Jesus Christ, received the nature of man. Jesus became a sin offering for man that man might become a child of God through Him.

There is no difference between saying that the believer is a child of God and saying that he has the nature of God. Each child bears the nature of his parent. “. . . **Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his,**” Romans 8:9.

Christian brother, you bear the nature of God. Act like a child of the Heavenly King. You received God's nature the moment you were born of the Holy Spirit in salvation. Let the nature implanted within you express itself in your day-to-day manner of life.

B. God enables believers to escape worldly corruption, according to His promises, verse 4. Sanctification is the other side of regeneration. Regeneration places the divine nature within; sanctification works the divine nature out in practical conduct. With the divine nature and divine power within, the believer need never be entangled with the pollutions of the world, II Peter 2:20. That is why Peter used the past tense when he said the Christian has already escaped the corruption which is in the world. The victory is already won! The God-like nature within enables believers to be pure.

C. God enables believers to grow to spiritual maturity, according to His promises, verses 5-7. God wants you to be a full-grown Christian, He placed in the church the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher in

order to mature you so that you could do the work of ministering so that the whole body Christ will be built up. He is not content until you are “no more children” in spirit but come to the full-grown manhood “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” Ephesians 4:11-16. Grow up to be like Jesus; that is all God expects of you!

Review the eight steps in spiritual growth as listed in II Peter 1:5-7. Begin with faith. It is the leader of the choir and every other virtue is a member. Faith must be followed by manly courage. Knowledge (spiritual discernment) is next for the believer must continually increase in the power to discern so as to choose the right and refuse the wrong. Self-control is next in line with its check on lips, heart, hands, and mind. The grace of endurance joins the blessed harmony of spiritual growth as one learns how to bear his problems energetically in the spirit of Christ. The next logical step is Godlikeness, which is true piety. A devotion and likeness to God will express itself in love to one's brother. Ultimate spiritual growth is reached when one begins to love with the God-love that always seeks the advantage of the beloved. The believer should never be content until he has reached the apex of the Christian growth. He will be growing so long as he lives.

Please, do not be content with reading that list. Go to the Bible. Read the list more than once. Ask God to show where you are on the growth chart. Seek to climb that ladder of spiritual growth that you may be full grown in Christ.

D. God enables you to bear fruit, according to His promises, verse 8. As those qualities listed in verses 5-7 are in you, and increasing as you grow spiritually, they will keep you from being either ineffective or unfruitful when it comes to the understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ. No other guarantee of fruitfulness is made in the Bible. Dear Christian, keep on growing!

Jesus said it is the Father's will that believers bear fruit. He said God is glorified when believers bear much fruit, John 15:1-8. One will bear fruit to God's glory as he cultivates those graces of the Lord Jesus (listed in verses 5-7) and grow to true spiritual maturity in Christ.

E. God enables believers to be rescued from emptiness, according to His promises, verse 9. The man who does not have the spiritual virtues listed in verses 5-7 is shortsighted even to the point of blindness, having no remembrance that he was purified from his former sins. He lives as if God has no claim upon him. His life loses all meaning and leaves no lasting profit behind. The only way for him to be rescued from such a fate is to grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ, as God desires him to do, Romans 8:29.

F. God enables believers to have assurance of acceptance, according to

His promises, verse 10. It is possible for a person to be saved and know it. It is possible for him to make his calling and election sure, even beyond all doubt. God's promises make it possible. He said that whoever confesses his sin (I John 1:9) by calling upon the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13), will be saved (I John 5:11, 12). His promises are certain. One who does what God has said can be absolutely certain of salvation.

G. God enables believers to enjoy victory, according to His promises, verses 10, 11. The growing Christian is promised that he will never fall, but will be triumphantly admitted into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The promise is to all believers. They should accept it, believe it, act upon it, and rejoice in it.

The promises of God are “exceeding great and precious promises,” are they not? They are true and faithful altogether. Do not question; listen. Do not doubt; believe. Do not argue; accept. Do that and the peace of God will fill your heart and mind.

To trust God is the height of sanctified common sense. To doubt Him is the depth of depraved foolishness. **“As it is written . . . whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed,”** Romans 9:33.

Questions

1. How is II Corinthians 1:20 related to the lesson?
2. How does Numbers 23:19 strengthen your faith?
3. What does it mean to “know” God?
4. What does it mean to trust Him?
5. How are God's promises “exceeding great and precious”?
6. How does one receive the divine nature?
7. In what ways is the Christian to grow spiritually?
8. What fruit does the believer bear to God's glory?
9. How can you learn to trust God more?
10. How can you share your faith with someone this week?