

# Promise Believers #3 - a God of Promise (New Testament)

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The promises of God are a foundation for our faith and a source of hope and encouragement for living a life that honors Him.*

**Duration:** 50:31

**Scripture:** Psalm 42:11, Habakkuk 2:4, Matthew 16:18, Hebrews 10:16-17, Hebrews 10:19-20

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Church Building"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the fundamental promise of eternal life with God. He highlights that this promise is not just about avoiding hell and going to heaven, but it is about knowing and experiencing the God of life. The preacher emphasizes that this promise is made by a God who cannot lie, making it trustworthy and reliable. The sermon also touches on the importance of the church and how Jesus promises to build it based on the confession that He is the Son of the living God.

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## Transcript

Lord, again we come seeking you. You're the one who has words of eternal life. We have no place else to go.

Lord, we don't want to go any place else. We've gone too many places already. We ask you now to speak to us your words of life.

Give us direction, understanding, insight. Work that new heart in us, Lord, we pray. We open ourselves up to what you want to say and want to do deep within us now.

Lay before us again your great promises, Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to look some more at this great matter of serving a God who is a God of promises, just basic to his very character and heart, the way he works, the way he builds his kingdom, the way he touches lives.

He is a God of promises. He makes his promises. He keeps his promises.

It's fundamental to his ways and to how he wants us to learn to walk with him. We considered such realities in the Old Testament primarily. Now we'll do the same for a while in the New Testament.

Promises of God, 1 John 2.25. And this is the promise that he has promised us eternal life. This is the fundamental, the central promise that God has made to all who believe in him. It's the promise of eternal life.

And though it does include existing forever with God, the key issue in that is with God. This is not just a promise of unending existence. Listen, everyone God has ever created will exist eternally.

And for some, that's the agony of it all. It's called everlasting death, everlasting judgment, separated from God forever. Eternal life, the glory of it is not just its unending aspect.

It's not just the quantity that is the glory of it. The glory of it is the quality of it. It's eternal life.

It's everlasting dwelling with God himself. This is the fundamental promise that now and forever we get to know the God of life. The God who is life, who gives life.

The God who makes our life on earth really living, not just existing in self and sin and darkness and alienation. And this is the promise that he has promised us, eternal life. We who once were dead to God are now alive in Christ.

What a great promise for all who believe. It is so beautifully put in such a familiar verse, maybe one of the most familiar in all the scriptures. One even our little seven-year-old granddaughter can recite.

That's pretty fundamental and basic, isn't it? Kids can get it and get excited about it and keep it and share it. John 3.16, For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, should not eternally be separated from God in death and alienation, but have everlasting life. And Jesus, if you want to add to your notes, another verse, John 17.3, told us exactly what eternal life is all about.

What is it anyway, eternal life? Some might say, well, it's missing hell and getting heaven. Well, it includes that, praise God. Some would say, well, it's once being guilty, now being forgiven.

Yeah, praise God it includes that. But none of that gets right to the heart of it. You can't say this is eternal life.

Yes, those things are included in eternal life. But what is it? John 17.3, And this is eternal life. Here's what it's all about.

That they may know you, the only true God in Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Eternal life is all about knowing God. And we are promised eternal life.

For all who believe, this is his promise. Eternal life. What is that? Getting to know God who is life.

Getting acquainted with him. Knowing God. That's what eternal life is all about.

And it's promised to us. Once believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, God will fulfill that promise of letting us get to know him. How long is that going to take? To properly get acquainted with God? You know, some people it doesn't take too long to get acquainted.

Sufficiently. How about with God? How long is it going to take? Forever. The only appropriate framework in which to get acquainted with God is forever.

But the glory of it is, we're to be starting that process right now. It doesn't have to wait until then. It's for now.

You have the Son, you have eternal life. What is eternal life? Knowing the Lord. Now is the time to walk in the fulfillment of that promise.

That's the basic, fundamental, central promise of God to those who believe. Eternal life. Matthew 16,18 For those who believe and receive that life, here's another promise.

Here's part of knowing God and what he wants to do with those who are getting to know him. A promise to build his church. And I also say to you that you are Peter, name meaning a little piece of a major rock or bedrock, and on this rock, another word, bedrock, mother load rock, I will build my church.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. What a wonderful set of promises. On this rock I will build my church.

The rock of the confession that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, makes all of us little chips off that rock. And through our confession that Christ is the Son of the living God, God in the flesh, the Lord Jesus promises, I will build my church. What a great promise.

That promise stirred my heart earlier this year, in fact. We did another six-part study. The church, how Jesus builds it.

Early on as a pastor, started pastoring in Dallas, Texas, after I was three years old in the Lord, really in many ways, certainly from man's perspective, too early to pastor, certainly probably from the congregation I pastored, their perspective. He's what? Three years old. And I've often behaved that way.

But oh, how I loved the Lord. I was so delighted that He would forgive me. Not only forgive me, He'd use a guy like me? Oh, Lord.

What can I do for you, Lord? Oh, I preach. Oh, I tell you what I'll do, Lord. I'll build you a church.

Oh, Lord, you're going to be blessed. I will build you a church, was my promise. I'm sure heaven was filled with anticipation.

This might be the best church ever built. Look at that devotion. Look at that fervor.

Nobody laid out the promise in a stronger fashion. I will build you a church. Well, I went hard at it.

The amazing thing is it took me two years to get worn out. There is an unusual tenacity to the flesh, you know. After two years, discouraged.

One of the early times. The last time was earlier this week. After two years, so discouraged.

Oh, Lord. I quit. I think that's when heaven got expected.

Okay. Now we'll see something happen. Oh, it's about then I began to get interested in God's promise to me.

I will build my church. That's heaven's church growth program. That's what we need to sweep America.

Not the American church growth program. Packaged, polished, shiny, 12 colors of ink. Seminars that dazzle.

This is what we need to sweep the church. Caught up in the promise of the Lord. I will build my church.

Not might. Not will try. Not may get around to it.

I will build my church. And I will build my church. Jesus is the builder of the church.

Boy, that changes everything. You can go through ten tons of discouragement and then fall back on that promise. And everything is made new.

My goodness, my goodness. Why am I so downcast? Oh, my soul. Put your hope in the Lord.

I will build my church. That's the promise of Jesus to those who have eternal life. Then Acts chapter 1. Acts 1. Another promise.

The promise of empowering by the Spirit of God. Acts 1 verses 4 and 5. And being assembled together with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. Which, he said, you have heard from me.

For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days from now. Then verse 8. But you shall receive power. When the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. What tremendous promises. Our Lord who promises to build his church, he is committed to using us.

Let's realize, though, we're saws and hammers and such things. We're not the carpenter. We're not the builder.

It's a fantastic thing to be an instrument in the hands of the church builder, Jesus Christ. What a blessing. But let's not forget, we're the tools.

He's the builder. When I went out of seminary, they told me, now you got all the tools, go do it. It took me a few years to realize I didn't have the tools, I was a tool.

I kind of got fooled there for a while. What a difference. I've got the tools.

House of cards, it must fall down. But oh, to be a tool in the hand of the builder. And to realize that the empowering of that instrument comes from the Spirit of God himself.

Promised, the promise of the Father to those who believe, they'll not only have a quality of life rich and abundant in getting to know God, there'll be power there. Not human power, not will power, not name it, claim it power. Holy Spirit power.

Actual, real, heaven-sent power. Not hype power. Not numbers power even.

Holy Spirit power. It'll work with one like it'll work with a million. Promise of the Father.

You shall be baptized with the Spirit soon. Then you'll receive power. Then you shall be my witnesses.

These are all promises of the Lord based on what He would do. And He does it by His Spirit. Burnout in Christian life and ministry.

Midlife crisis. Let me ask you. When is the middle of eternal life? When does it hit? How can you measure halfway if you can't measure the whole thing? It's the flesh that suffers all those things.

It runs out of power. It runs out of strength. It runs out of vision.

It runs out of hope. It runs out of encouragement. We who have the promise of eternal life, we who are involved in the building of the church, we have this promise.

You shall receive power. That power comes from the Holy Spirit. Power of God.

Power that can never be diminished no matter how much of it is spent. That's the power we need. It's the promise we have.

Another promise, Hebrews 10. Hebrews 10. The promise of this new covenant, which will operate in the church.

One might say, now wait a second. I thought we read about the prophets promising that to Israel. Yeah, we did.

Over half the book of Hebrews. Talks about, quotes, teaches, elaborates on that very covenant to New Testament Christians. You say, yeah, but they're Hebrew Christians.

Yeah. That was part of their struggle. Temptation to go back to the things of the law.

But in Christ there is no east or west. There is no male, female. There is no Jew, Gentile.

These are promises to the church. And in Hebrews 10, these promises of the new covenant are clearly applied to those of us now who are in Christ, walking in his promises of old. Hebrews 10, 16 and 17.

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds I will write them. Then he adds their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

Quoting the promises of the prophets of old to Israel. Verse 19 and 20. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he consecrated for us through the veil that is his flesh.

These promises of old, forgiveness of sins and God working internally, they would all come real in lives, not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is the new and living way, not the law of Moses, but the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The new and living way that gives us boldness to enter the holiest.

Think of the wonder of this. The promise that this new covenant is now consecrated for us and provides a way into the holiest. In the old covenant, the people could gather in the courtyard, in the altar in forgiveness of sins, praise God.

Typified there, the sacrifice of the Lamb that would come. Some, the priests could go into the holy place, closer to that very dwelling of God on earth, the holy of holies. And they could be busy about the service of

God.

Incense prayer and fellowship and feeding and the bread. And yet that veil. Oh, the intimacy of God still beyond arm's length.

Only one man once a year dared go in there. That was the old dead way, the letter of the law. It was a shadow of the things to come, but it wasn't the reality.

Now look at us. More access to God than the high priests of Israel. They went in timidly with a rope around their ankle.

If they were smitten dead, no one would come and get them. They'd have to drag them out. We, guys like you and me, brothers, sisters in the family of God, such as live today, have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

It's the new and living way. Tied into all these many quotes of the Old Testament, the promise of what God would do, and He's inaugurated it now for us through the blood of Jesus Christ. When He died for us, the veil was torn, the way is open.

Not only do we have eternal life, not only is there the promise that Jesus will build the church, not only is there the promise of empowering by the Spirit as He uses us, but there's this wonderful promise of the new covenant now applied to the church. Sins forgiven, verse 19, there's sins and lawless deeds. I will remember no more.

But more than that even, not just forgiven, there's more to it than that. Inside, verse 16, an internal life-shaping work of God. I will put my laws, that is my will, the declaration and revelation of my character, into their hearts.

And in their minds, I will write them. The old covenant of law, external standard to live up to on your own best resources. It kills because you always fall short.

What a promise this is for the church. This new covenant now inaugurated for us, this new and living way, this way of newness that vibrates, pulsates with the life of God. It's God working inside of us what formerly was written outside of us.

What a promise this is. Not there's the law, do your best. But God by His Spirit taking the law and writing it inside.

By His Spirit writing it upon our thinking, upon our desiring, upon our evaluating and prioritizing, upon our motivations. What a great promise this is. God forgiving us, then working on the inside of us to bring a life more and more like Christ out from us.

What a promise this is. What a hope it gives. Oh, how it deals with discouragement.

Oh, how it deals with helplessness and a sense of lifelessness. And then third, it brings intimate relationship with God, verses 19 and 20. Boldness to enter the holiest.

What a staggering thought. That this throne of grace that Hebrews 4 talks about, at the center of the universe, up over all of creation, a throne of grace. We can just boldly go there.

As it were, hop up on our Father's lap and say, Abba, Father, I need to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Oh, what father wouldn't respond to that? Well, some might not on earth, but this one in heaven always will. What a promise.

Sins forgiven, internal life giving, life shaping work of God, and intimate relationship with God now and forever. What promises we have. So He gives us life and He'll build this church.

He'll empower us by His Spirit. He'll forgive us, change us within, walk intimately with us, and when that has been worked out to its completion in time and space, He'll come back for us. John 14.

John 14. Oh, the whole package is tied up in the promises of God, from start to finish in every step of every day along the way. John 14, 1 through 3. Let not your heart be troubled.

It so often is, isn't it? You believe in God, believe also in me, Jesus said. In my Father's house are many mansions, many glorious dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you.

He only tells us the truth. I go to prepare a place for you. Oh, what will that be like? And if I go and prepare a place for you, and He has and He is, I will come again.

Oh, for the most glorious words ever spoken. Added to it, and receive you to myself. Why, Lord? It's exciting, but why would you do that? That where I am, there you may be also.

This promise includes, again, an astounding thought, that God wants us hanging out with Him forever. Are there people that you just love to hang out with? Some come to my mind right now. But, you know, even then sometimes you just feel like, you know, I think I need a break now.

We just run out of kind of relational energy sometimes. Lord, I need to be alone. Or, at least I've had enough of them.

God bless them, God bless them. This is astounding. God wants to hang out with us forever.

The other part of it is amazing. We get to hang out with Him forever. Why are you coming back for us, Lord? We're so glad you are, but what's it about? That where I am, there you may be also.

Throughout heaven forever the glory will be, not the golden streets, not the light without a light. I mean, how is this? In fact, He's there and we're there with Him. That's the wonder of it forever.

And He's promised that to us. And He cannot lie. What a great anticipation.

Acts 1, 9-11 Now when He had spoken these words, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men, two angelic appearances in human form, stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. Someday He's going to come, riding out of the heavens on a white horse.

And if we've gone on to be with Him, we'll be riding back with Him. If it's before that, we'll be caught up to meet Him. Be in the heavenly places, missing that tribulation, praise God.

Then riding that white horse beside Him, He who is faithful and true. He's going to come back. For us and then to this earth.

What a fantastic promise. From start to finish, the promises of God. 2 Peter 3, 9. It's been a while since the Lord promised this, hasn't it? Hey, the longer it goes, might not happen, right? That's the way people think with man.

Yeah, they said they were going to, but you know, it's been a long time. I think we can just about forget that. And often that's the way it is with man.

The longer it goes, between His promise and fulfillment, you kind of go, well, it's less and less likely that He'll ever do it. 2 Peter 3, 9. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness. Here's what it's all about.

But is longsuffering toward us. He's just patient. He's just willing to put up with this wicked world.

Why? Not willing, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Sure, it's been a long time since He said, I will come again. That doesn't matter.

That doesn't mean, you know, there have been a lot of promises that turned out just to be folklore, dead religion. Not this one. It was made by one who cannot lie.

Praise God, He's going to come back. We don't even know if we'll get through the retreat. Boy, what a bummer, huh? Went to retreat and ended up on eternal retreat.

We don't know if we'll finish anything before He comes again. Nothing preventing His coming except the timing that He has ordained. There's a promise.

He will return. It includes a new heaven and new earth. Verse 13.

Nevertheless, we according to His promise, because He promised, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Does that describe us? Is our gaze in life tied into His promise to come back and to take us to a new heaven and new earth wherein only righteousness dwells? Well, didn't that make you yearn for that day? The unrighteousness in the world all around us, even at times the unrighteousness in the church, the unrighteousness in our own flesh. How about a place in which just righteousness dwells? Does that sound good? Has it been great to be singing songs of praise and glory and victory and assurance to the Lord and honor? And yet we're doing that in a world where unrighteousness is all around us and even dogs at our own heels sometimes.

But we're headed for a place wherein only righteousness dwells. So according to His promise, we look for that. It's too easy to get caught up with a gaze that cannot see beyond time and space.

Time and space is so obvious. It's so obtrusive. It's so intrusive.

It just gets in your face all the time. Time. Space.

Fallenness, brokenness, pressure, impossibility, discouragement, heartache, decisions, crises, blessings, followed by crises. God wants us living through this time according to His promise. How would we do it then? Be looking for what He promised.

He's coming back and we're headed for there. And now is all to be lived in relationship to where we're headed and the promisor who lives with us every step of the way. Promises of God.

We just serve a God who is a God of promises. As basic and fundamental as it is to man to want to talk about himself, get the attention on himself, and bless himself, so much the more, it's just basic and fundamental to God to make promises. He's just a God of promises.

Left to ourselves, we would just, after the flesh, naturally serve sin and self and get caught up in the world. Left supernaturally to Himself, God will just keep making and keeping promises forever. He's just a God of promises.

That's who He is. Left to ourselves, we would just, after the flesh, naturally serve sin and self and get caught up in the world. Left supernaturally to Himself, God will just keep making and keeping promises forever.

He's just a God of promises. That's who He is. Just as last study, we let the scriptures tie together God's ability with His promises for a little while now, let's let the Lord link His faithfulness to His promises.

That too is exceedingly faith building. Hebrews 10.23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. On what basis? Why? What would enable us to do that? What reasoning can bring that to pass? For He who promised is faithful.

These promises of a way into the holiest, a way to dwell intimately with God now and before His very face, even looking upon Him, the Lord of glory someday. Promise, forgiveness, God inside working out this life that we can walk in. Him working it deeply within that we might pour it out.

We can hold fast the confession of our hope. Hold tightly to confessions like my expectations are in the Lord. My confidence is in Him.

We don't have to waver in it. Why? Because the One who promised us is faithful. He's reliable so we can rely upon Him.

He's dependable so we can depend upon Him. He's absolutely trustworthy so we can put all of our trust in Him. He who promised is faithful.

It is so critical that the One making the promises be faithful, be reliable, be dependable. In our culture right now at this season, we're getting a lot of promises culturally, right? It's the age of promises. Anybody planning their life on any of those promises? I'm not.

I don't care what flavor or what brand you want to put it on. I'm not. Why? Because man doesn't have the faithfulness, the reliability, the trustworthiness to back up those promises.

Some may be good intentions expressed. Okay, fine. But we're in another realm now.

We're talking about God. When God promises, we can say this, He who promised is faithful. You say, wow, what should I do with that then? Put your faith in what He says.

Count on it. Set your path by it. Put all your anticipations in just what He has promised.

Expectation. Confidence. Because He who promised is faithful.

Our hope in Him need never waver because He's everlastingly reliable. 1 Corinthians 10, 13. Another wonderful, well-known statement of His faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 10, 13. No temptation, no testing, no impossibility has overtaken you except such as is common to man. Do you ever find yourself doubting that? Hey, nobody went through this before.

Often we think that. It's not true. Of course, the enemy is right there to affirm our doubts.

Just like God affirms our faith, the enemy affirms our doubts. We go, nobody ever went through this. He goes, amen.

You're absolutely right. Consequently, there's no way out. Think where that leaves you.

Nobody ever blew it like you did. No temptation has overtaken you except as is common to man. Whatever we've gone through, thousands have gone through it before.

Not that every man's trials are exactly like everyone else's, but they're all common. They're ordinary. But, it's one of the great words of Scripture actually, but, so often it follows heartache, heartbreak, or a statement that's hard to believe, but God is faithful.

That's where we anchor everything. God is faithful. It's not that He tries to be.

It's not that He hopes to be. It's just His character. He is faithful.

It's His very being. Our faithful God will not allow you to be tempted, to be tested beyond what you are able. That's a staggering promise, isn't it? I don't know any Christian that's walked with God very long that hasn't staggered at that promise.

That God will not allow us to be tempted or tested or put in the fire, put in the battle, beyond what we're able to face. In fact, I really think God delights in almost bringing us to the edge of doubt on this promise. It's almost like that's where it really works.

Right where you go, Lord, I don't want to doubt Your Word, but I'm not able to handle this. Help! It's like heaven goes bingo. That's how you're able.

I see in your heart that willingness to cry out to me. You're able to handle this. You're not yet able because it's not impossible enough yet.

I'll just turn the heat up a little and it'll be very clear to you, you're able, as you just throw yourself upon my faithfulness. More of the promise, but with the temptation, with the testing, with the impossibility, will also make the way of escape. Oh, yes, Lord.

One of our favorite words is escape. Praise You, Lord. Well, it's part of the promise.

He will make the way of escape. If you liken trials and testings and temptations to plunging through the long sewer pipe of life, what's your favorite escape? My favorite one is this. When I cry out, the manhole is directly over my head.

God pops it and I'm up. I'm out of here, praise God. God does that sometimes.

Have you ever had Him do that? You're in something that looks like it's interminable and you just cry out and boom, you look around and Lord, you delivered me. I was anticipating 18 years of this maybe. What a great escape.

But this verse infers that so often the way out is where? Well, like through a pipe, through the end down there. See it in the end of the verse? That you may be able to bear it. So often the way of escape is not pop up and out, but through.

So often that's the way it is. And all along the way, every step of the way, He's fulfilling His promise, working on us, in us, sustaining us. It's all tied into this.

God is faithful. There may be a bunch of us right now in things that look like we are not able to handle them. But God won't test us beyond what we're able to handle in the heavenly sense.

Oh, He'll always put on us things our human natural resource can't handle. Because every day it's no to self and death to self that we might follow Jesus. And the Lord wants to crucify the flesh and self just daily.

But He knows our willingness. He knows when we'll cry out to Him. And that's when we plug into His faithful ability.

He's going to make the way of escape for us, even if it means enduring right through to the end. You know, that little tiny light at the end of the tunnel. He'll get us there.

He's faithful. 2 Thessalonians 3. 3. The faithfulness of God linked into His promises. 2 Thessalonians 3. 3. But the Lord is faithful.

Who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. These are two great things we need in our lives. Being established and being guarded.

What Christian doesn't need to be more stabilized? Really grounded. We all need that more. Well, the Lord is faithful who will establish you.

The world says, you know, take charge of your life. Get a life, you know. Make a life.

Doesn't work. Here's what works. The Lord of life in His faithfulness will establish us.

If we let Him, if we look to Him, if we count on Him. If we hinge the entire stability of our Christian life on His faithful promise. The Lord is faithful who will establish you.

He'll do it. Because He's faithful. We also need to be guarded.

In our kind of individualistic, pioneer, you can do it. Take over. Take charge.

American folkloric Christianity. We've kind of boiled spiritual warfare down to me butting heads with the devil. And man, he's going to be crying when I'm done with him, you know.

Boom. What a trap. What a farce.

What a phony promise of the flesh. Here's how to be guarded from the evil one. The Lord is faithful who will guard you from the evil one.

Don't be offended but I'd rather have the Lord guarding me than you. Can't you see it for yourself? Would you rather guard yourself from the enemy? Or just take this promise based on the faithfulness of God. Oh, we are so protected when we stand in the faithfulness of God.

It's when we get out there, we're going to handle, you know. We're out there. We're captain rebuke, you know, and the devil better hide, you know.

I just wonder if he starts salivating when he sees us coming, you know. Oh, yeah. I'm just shivering in fear.

Come a little closer. Here's the victory. Here's the protection.

The Lord is faithful who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. In American Christianity it says, what are you, a wimp? Defend yourself. No thanks.

You can call it wimp if you want. That's fine. God calls it humility, reality, wisdom, things like that.

What a hope of victory based on this promise. He will guard you from the evil one. And the one who says it is faithful, absolutely dependable.

One more, linking of his faithfulness with his promises. 1 Thessalonians 5, 23 and 24. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely.

May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you to himself and to this direction is faithful who also will do it. Boy, what a linking together of the promises of God with his faithfulness.

Right down to the most practical, personal, daily issue of the Christian life which is sanctification. Being sanctified. Being set apart more and more day by day, step by step, issue by issue.

From world and self and sin to God. His glory, His purposes, His use. Being made less and less like me in my natural Adamic life and being made more and more like Christ in His life.

Sanctification. Every day that's what God wants to be doing in our lives. We need to be, He desires that we be tomorrow less of self, more of Christ.

More like Jesus, less like Adam. More that new creature in Christ, less that old man in Adam. How's that going to take place? This is the kind of thing we ought to pray about.

Not try to make happen, pray about and expect to be happening. What a great prayer to pray for one another. For our own lives, for our households, for our churches.

Oh may the God of peace Himself. I love it when God emphasizes who He is in His work with that kind of pronoun, Himself. Now may God, not even indirectly, may the God of peace Himself sanctify you.

Make you more like Christ. Set aside your life more for His use and glory. To what extent? Completely.

Affecting us in what arenas? Spirit, soul and body. Even our body used more for His glory and less for self. And that walk be preserved, blameless as the Lord returns.

Wow! This is kind of exceedingly abundantly beyond what I could ask or think. What's our hope in this? He who calls you is faithful. The one who calls us to this path, He's faithful.

Well what does His faithfulness mean here? He's reliable to carry out this statement. Who also will do it. We can't affect these changes upon ourselves.

We can't promise God, ourselves or our friends or our family, I'll be better tomorrow. Honey, I'm sorry, I'll be different tomorrow. God, I'm through with that, I'll be so much better tomorrow.

Promise coming from the wrong source to the wrong direction. Look what God promises to do in our lives. Sanctify us in a thorough way.

Even up to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In conclusion, how do you respond to promises like this? What are promises for? To try and see if we can do better? Does God promise us so we'll be launching off on our greatest self effort ever? Why does He promise us these things? So we will believe Him. Depend upon Him.

Rely upon Him. Count on Him. Remember Romans 1.17 The just shall live by trying.

The just shall live by promising. What? We're on different pages here. The just shall live by an entirely new effort.

Well you said it, the just shall live by faith. You know, believing, depending, relying upon. Who? God.

In what arenas? Everything that He's promised to do. We serve a God of promises. It doesn't matter if you look in the Old Testament or the New.

Sure the Old is just a shadowy form coming forth. The New crystal clear and sharp. But no matter where you go, Genesis we'll see later right to Revelation.

We serve, we know, we walk with a God of promises. And praise God, He is faithful. Let's pray together.

Oh Lord, we praise You for Your great promises. We magnify You. Lord, even as we hear them, they just stir faith in us.

Lord, You present Yourself faithful and it's just so clear to us. We want to put our faith in You. Lord, You know arenas we're struggling with right now.

Areas of impossibility or failure or stumbling or difficulty. Or maybe a glorious vision that staggers the possibilities that we can even consider. May we look again at Your promises.

They cover it all. May we consider once more Your character, Your faithful. And as we see how trustworthy You are.

May we take these areas Lord and just trust You in them. Oh Lord, the areas we're striving in. Trying to make it happen on our own.

Making the arm of flesh our strength. Oh Lord, You've told us there's a curse there. But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.

The one who has the Lord as his hope. Lord, You're trustworthy. May we take these areas and just trust You.

Just depend on You. You are faithful. We rest in that.

We rejoice in that. We believe we can grow and abound in that. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

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