God’s Promises

by John Bradshaw

IT IS WRITTEN

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important discoveries in American history was made during the middle of the 19th century, along the banks of the American River near Placerville, at Coloma, California. James Marshall was operating a sawmill when he noticed shiny flecks in the bed of a narrow channel, and soon realized the flecks were nothing less than gold. Within a short period of time, a gold rush was born that would change life in America for thousands of people.

Who knows how long the gold lay in the riverbed—undisturbed and unrecognized. This metal of great value was simply waiting to be discovered. Gold was recovered worth tens of billions of dollars in today’s value. While this brought great wealth to some, James Marshall did not profit from his discovery, dying a poor man.
Just as the goldfields of the Sierra Nevada yielded enormous riches, the Bible contains “exceedingly great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4). Speaking of the blessedness of God’s Word, David wrote, “More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold” (Psalm 19:10).

The promises of God are sure. Jesus said in Matthew 21:22, “whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” God invites us to believe His promises. The Bible contains literally hundreds of promises made by God, which, if claimed, can bring into your life great blessing and spiritual riches. As James Marshall toiled on the banks of the American River, many people are toiling today without realizing that they have access to a source of immense spiritual wealth.

In God’s Promises, I want to share with you some of the promises of God that I have found to be a blessing in my life—promises that are certain and sure. I hope you’ll be blessed as you read, and encouraged to take God at His word and claim His powerful promises.
Philippians 4:13

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

This verse doesn’t mean you’ll suddenly be able to “leap a tall building in a single bound” or “run faster than a speeding bullet.” It means far more than that! The reality is that life presents us with some very real challenges. Often, a person feels as though life’s burdens are too much to bear. Illness, financial challenges, struggles in parenting, a bad temper, or a cherished sin can sometimes seem like mountains far too high for us to climb. Medical school, a class project, or even mastering a musical in-
instrument often brings discouragement, leading a person to quit, when with God’s blessing he or she might be on the verge of a great breakthrough. The reality is that if God has called you to a certain position, task or circumstance, He provides grace enough to see you successfully accomplish His purpose.

God doesn’t simply call those who are equipped for a particular task. He equips those He calls. He doesn’t call us and then leave us to flounder. He calls us so that His will may be accomplished. If you find yourself in a place God has called you to be, but you feel powerless to continue through to completion or success, take this promise to God and ask Him to keep it in your life: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

This powerful promise contemplates a relentless reliance upon God’s ability to do in our lives that which we cannot do ourselves. You might think you cannot accomplish the thing to which God has called you. On your own, you might be right. But through Christ, you are able to do all things. If you claim it, this one short sentence will change your life. He has promised!
Luke 11:13

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Between 1955 and 1960, CBS television aired a program called The Millionaire, in which a millionaire named John Beresford Tipton, Jr. gave $1 million to someone he
didn’t know and who would never discover the identity of their generous benefactor. Who would do something so incredibly generous?

There is Someone willing to give you a lot more than $1 million, right now. In Luke 11:13, Jesus said, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” The personal presence of Jesus Christ is worth infinitely more than any amount of money you could ever accumulate. God is willing to give the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, freely to you. You can’t pay for it or earn it, yet God will give you this great blessing, as undeserving as you might be.

How do we receive this extravagantly generous gift? As Jesus said, simply by asking. Jesus has promised the Holy Spirit to you, and the Spirit will bring peace into your life during life’s trials, and power for daily living. There can be no greater gift.

Are you asking God each day to pour His Spirit into your life? If not, do so today, and be confident God will keep His promise and give you this great Gift. He has promised!
Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.
Very often, a person comes to faith in Jesus and then realizes life’s challenges aren’t magically washed away in the waters of baptism. The bills still need to be paid, jobs need to get done, children need to be raised, and there are aging parents to care for. Discouragement often sets in when bad habits linger and temptation doesn’t disappear. The question might be, “How am I ever going to be the sort of person God wants me to be?”

God says in Philippians 1:6 that “He who has begun a good work in you”—Jesus—“will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” In other words, the work that Jesus started in you when you first came to Him, He will continue to do for as long as you have faith in Him. Simply understood, Christianity is nothing more than the believer allowing Jesus to do His will in the believer’s life. If you’ll allow Him, Jesus will continue the work He started in you when you first reached out to Him. The power needed for transformation is found in Jesus alone. He will do the work that needs to be done in your life. He has promised!
Jude 24

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

There’s no question that God understands the needs of the human heart. The book of Hebrews says that Jesus is able to “sympathize
with our weaknesses” (Hebrews 4:15) and “aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). And in one of the smallest books of the Bible, we find a promise of God especially calculated to encourage the weak and the tempted. The book of Jude, found just before the book of Revelation, says in verse 24, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” Take a moment to let that sink in. He is “able to keep you from stumbling.”

This means that if you’re prone to lose your temper, Jesus is “able to keep you” from doing so. If you’ve been sorely tempted by alcohol or tobacco or some other habit that continues to get the best of you, you can know that Jesus is “able to keep you” from yielding to that vice. The Spirit of God is powerful enough to clean up a corrupt mind and smooth away the roughest edges on the hardest heart. God really is able to help you love what you used to detest and hate what you used to love. Through the power of Jesus, you really can be kept where He wants you. He has promised!
Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
One of the great longings of the heart of the child of God is to know God’s leading. There are times when God’s leading can seem mysterious, and His will hard to know. What should I do with my life? Which college should I attend? Should I marry this person? Which house should we buy? What does God want me to do in a given situation? It is encouraging to know that God promises to lead us. Here is what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5, 6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

“He shall direct your paths.” There is no question that God has a plan for your life, your family and your career. It isn’t always easy to know just what God’s plan is. But if we trust God with all we have, choose not to trust our own wisdom and acknowledge God in all our ways, the promise is that “He shall direct your paths.” God doesn’t always lead at the speed we would like, but He leads. And if you’re looking for direction in your life, expect God to make it clear to you. He has promised!
Philippians 4:19

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

In a certain sense, God puts His reputation on the line in Scripture. He frequently makes promises that are emphatic in nature and broad in scope. But sometimes these promises call for careful consideration on the part of the one who reads them. The Bible says in Philippians 4:19, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Notice what it doesn’t say. It doesn’t say God
will provide “some” of your needs or “most” of your needs. It says God will provide all your needs. That has to include food, money, companionship, direction and peace of mind, to name but a few of our basic needs. So we can therefore trust that God will do what He says He will do. The God who opened up the Red Sea and fed His people with manna in the wilderness knows your needs and can provide them in abundance.

But also notice what this verse does not say. It says God will supply all our needs, not necessarily our wants. It is easy sometimes to get the two confused. You might think you need an extra few thousand dollars to buy that “certain thing,” whereas God might know you don’t actually need it at all. You might be certain you need a spouse, when God knows that perhaps—for reasons you might not discern—you need no such thing right now. This suggests to us that His promise calls for trust on our part—trust that God will do what He says, and trust that He knows what we really need and what we really don’t. As you trust God to do only the right things in your life, you can be certain that God will provide your needs. He has promised!
“Come now, and let us reason together,” says the Lord, “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”
One thing I love about God’s promises is that they are all-encompassing. God makes large, sweeping, all-inclusive promises that connect any believer with His goodness and grace. In Isaiah 1:18, God makes a remarkable statement: “Come now and let us reason together...though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

In its immediate context, this promise is addressed to Judah, a prodigiously wicked group of corrupt evildoers who had narrowly escaped the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. And yet God says to this sinful people that their sins can be washed away and become “as white as snow.”

I’ve met some people who have done some very bad things—people in prison cells who will remain there for the duration of their lives. Yet they may obtain the assurance that while they must pay their debt to society, God can consider them to be clean from their sins. If you’re carrying burdens brought about by sins and bad choices, you can know that no matter what you have done, God is both willing and able to take away your sin and make you completely clean. He has promised!
Hebrews 13:5

*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

I once read about a man convicted of a terrible crime who spent 35 years in prison. He was finally released when DNA evidence
revealed he was innocent of the crimes with which he had been charged. His elderly mother said that while her son was in prison, he turned away from God because he thought God had abandoned him.

Does God do that? Does He abandon people? I can understand why an innocent man in prison might feel as though God had forgotten all about him, but the Bible says in Hebrews 13:5, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” If you find yourself going through something difficult or unjust, if you’re tempted to ask yourself, “Where is God?”—remember this verse. He has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” When confronted by job loss, when affected by domestic discord, when suffering serious illness, or when distressed by grief or injustice, you can be certain that in spite of appearances, God is still with you.

The man who had been wrongly imprisoned came back to faith in God before His release from prison. But if you’re tempted to quit on God because of your circumstances, don’t do it. He will never leave nor forsake you. He has promised!
Revelation 21:4

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

This world is full of sadness—death, illness, loss of many kinds. So many people today are burdened by grief and pain. God
makes us a wonderful and hopeful promise in Revelation 21:4, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Imagine a world without grief or loss, a land without funeral services or cemeteries, a place where nobody will shed a tear. That’s what eternity will be like! God did not create us to experience death or to grieve. Before sin, the Garden of Eden was a happy place, and God intended that His children be content and satisfied. But the fall of Adam and Eve resulted in sorrow and bereavement.

The illnesses and aches we experience, the tears of sadness that we shed, and the difficulties we endure are the result of sin. But in a new world where there is no sin, we will never again have to experience the bitter side of life. A time is coming when God will wipe away all tears, and there will be no more death. If it seems too good to be true, remind yourself that you can look forward to this new life with confidence. He has promised!
1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
When a four-year-old girl lost her favorite stuffed animal out the window of the family car, her parents mistakenly thought they would be able to find a replacement toy she would be happy with. But the little lady made it very clear that nothing her parents could do would make up for the loss of her special dolphin. So Mom and Dad contacted the local police and explained the situation, and within minutes a rescue operation began to retrieve the lost dolphin. The four-year-old girl was jubilant, and her parents were greatly relieved.

It was just a stuffed toy, a little thing, yet it was important enough in the eyes of someone to search for and return. Small things in your life matter to God. 1 Peter 5:7 urges you to cast “all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Another translation says, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.” No matter how trifling they may seem, or how enormous they appear, God invites you to bring your cares to God, with the assurance that He cares for you. You can be confident that there is a God who cares about you and the things that are important to you. He has promised!
1 John 2:1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

A billboard I once saw offered this advice to people in legal trouble: “Get Lawyered Up.” In other words, if you’re in a bind, you need good legal representation. If you were
charged with a crime, you’d want to make sure you have a good lawyer representing you. The old adage states that a person who chooses to represent himself or herself in court has a fool for a client. Everyone on Earth is in serious legal trouble. According to Romans 3:23, “all have sinned,” and Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death.” How does a person get out of that sort of legal trouble—a death sentence?

In 1 John 2:1, it says, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” In other words, if anyone transgresses God’s standards and principles, that person has an Advocate—a Lawyer. That Advocate is Jesus. If you had Jesus as your legal representative in a trial here on Earth, you’d likely feel confident that your case would turn out well. We have a date in God’s heavenly court. Even though we are as guilty as—well, sin—with Jesus as our lawyer, we can be certain that we will receive the most favorable judgment. You can be confident knowing you have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus, the Son of God. He has promised!
Isaiah 26:3

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

In 1735, John Wesley was bound for the United States aboard the sea vessel Simmonds when a violent storm broke out. It seemed to the man of God that the ship would be swal-
lowed up by the raging waters. As he feared for his life, he noticed that a group of Moravian Christians remained calm, singing hymns in the midst of the tempest. Later, John Wesley asked one of the German believers if they had been afraid to die. The man replied, “I thank God, no.” He reported that the women and children in their group were likewise unafraid of death. These humble Christians had what was not possessed by John Wesley—who was an Oxford graduate and ordained Gospel minister, and who with his brother, Charles, was a founder of the Holy Club. The Moravian believers exhibited simple, unshakeable trust in God.

God promises that sort of assurance to everyone. Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” The storms of life can be rampant around you, and God is able to give you peace. Crises, disappointments, failures and stresses can be pressing upon you, and yet God is able to give you peace. The next time you are faced with difficulty, look to God and expect Him to give you peace. He is well able to do so. He has promised!
1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
When I was a little boy, a television commercial that advertised a cleaning product said to contain the cleaning power of “liquid lightning.” When the commercial showed the cleaner being poured into a bucket of water, lightning would flash dramatically. My mother has never let me forget the day I watched with great expectation as she poured some of the cleaner into her bucket, and asked her in full disappointment, “Where’s the lightning?” Unlike the TV commercial, there was no flash, and I was utterly deflated.

Although not marked by anything as dramatic as a flash of lightning, the Bible says that God has a cleansing agent so strong that it can wash away the stains of our sins. In 1 John 1:7, it says, “…the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” There’s only one thing that can remove the dirt of our sin, and that is the blood of Jesus. Christ’s death on the cross is a great enough sacrifice to purchase our eternal pardon. No matter how dark the spot, no matter how deep sin has penetrated, Jesus is able to forgive and cleanse us. Take your sins to Jesus. Even though there might not be a flash of lightning, you can be sure His forgiveness will be real. He has promised!
1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins,
He is faithful
and just
to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us
from all
unrighteousness.
A lady asked me one day if God would forgive her for a certain sin she had committed. When I assured her that, yes, God would forgive her, she said, “But it was a terrible thing I did.”

“That’s okay,” I told her, “God will forgive even the terrible things you’ve done.”

She explained to me that what she’d done was “really, really bad” and that the weight of this awful sin had been pressing upon her ever since she committed it—more than 50 years ago! I asked her if she had confessed this sin to God.

“Yes,” she said, “I’ve confessed it every day since then, sometimes many times a day.” Every day for more than 50 years, sometimes many times a day...I figured she had confessed this sin to God at least 20,000 times!


“Well, it seems to me that you actually think that God is a liar,” I answered. “Let’s look at a verse in the Bible together.”

I opened my Bible to 1 John 1:9 and read, “If we confess our sins...You’ve done that, right?”
“Yes, many, many times!” “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins... Do you believe that?”

“If it’s in the Bible, I believe it,” she said without any hesitancy. “...and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“If you really believe the Bible, then you can accept what God says here and you don’t need to confess that sin ever again. In fact, to confess it again would be to tell God that you don’t believe what He says!”

The next time I saw her, she told me that on the night of our conversation, she had the best night’s sleep she’d had in more than half a century. If you’ve sinned, God is willing and able to forgive you. You should never doubt for a moment that God will pardon you. He has promised!