



## Paradoxical Promises Bible Study

[**Please provide:** musical accompaniment; Bibles, hymnals, and copies of the Bible study for attendees.]

### Opening

Sing "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" LSB 765, TLH 514, LW 426, or "Children of the Heavenly Father" LSB 725

Dictionaries define a paradox in various ways:

- an apparent contradiction
- a statement that contradicts itself but is nevertheless true
- a self-contradictory statement, the purpose of which is to provoke fresh thought

Our faith life is sometimes like this. For instance, when a parent dies, we may experience both sorrow and joy at the same time. Perhaps you have known a similar paradox, such as God's peace even in the midst of a distressing situation.

### Paradoxical Promises

Psalm 50:15 is an example of what some call paradoxical promises: *... call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me* (ESV). The verse implies, perhaps "promises" one may say, that trouble will indeed come to God's children. But the verse also promises that God will deliver His own.

Read the following verses and note the "contradiction" – the problem and the blessing – in these paradoxical promises:

- Matthew 5:3-5
- Psalm 34:17-19
- Psalm 91:15-16
- John 16:33
- John 17:13-17
- 2 Corinthians 4:7-10

### God's People in the Bible

Scripture never paints a rosy picture of life. It is realistic about challenges and difficulties. Although God created a perfect world, sin came into it, and we all suffer its consequences. But our loving Lord is there for us when we call upon Him.

Divide into three groups (one for each of the following verses). Each group should read through the appropriate passage and answer these questions:

- What troubles did God's people experience?
- How did God meet their needs?
- Note other interesting points such as how long the trouble lasted, how many people were affected by God's deliverance, etc.

**Group 1:** Joseph in Genesis 39-41

**Group 2:** Daniel in Daniel 6

**Group 3:** Paul and Silas in Acts 16:19-34

Have each group report to the whole group. Summarize any principles you can glean from these stories.

Then together read 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10. What is different in these verses from the verses you read in your groups?

### **God's People Now – You and Me**

Psalm 27:13 says *I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living* (NASB). Our confidence in God's character – His goodness, His faithfulness, His loving kindness – can give us hope even in the midst of trouble.

Read all of Psalm 27 slowly. (Allow 5-10 minutes for participants to do this individually, listing below encouraging phrases that touch their hearts.)

### **Sharing**

Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts about how these phrases from Psalm 27 help them in whatever trouble or challenging situation they may be facing.

### **Closing**

Pray the following hymn verses together:

What our Father does is well: Blessed truth His children tell!  
Though He send, for plenty, want, Though the harvest-store be scant,  
Yet we rest upon His love, Seeking better things above.  
What our Father does is well. Shall the willful heart rebel  
If a blessing He withhold In the field or in the fold?  
Is He not Himself to be All our store eternally?  
What our Father does is well: May the thought within us dwell!  
Though nor milk nor honey flow In our barren Canaan now,  
God can save us in our need, God can bless us, God can feed.

“What Our Father Does is Well” TLH 571

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