

Take Another Look...At the Promises of God

Leader's Notes and Bible Passages
All references taken from the ESV

(Please do NOT use the "if time permits" sections when your study session time is limited. These sections could possibly be done by the participant in private.)

Identify two important promises that you have made in your life. Have they been difficult or easy to keep? Why? Share with a partner or your small group. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. You might need to set the example. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group throughout the study.**

God gives many promises throughout His Word from Genesis to Revelation. 2 Timothy 3:16a reminds us that *All Scripture is breathed out by God...* Scripture contains the promises of God and all His promises are true. Psalm 86:15 says that our God is...*merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.* We know that our God is faithful to all the promises He makes. Jesus perfectly fulfilled all of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, and God will be faithful to fulfill all the promises to His people into the future. During this study of God's Word, we will take another look at some of these promises of God.

Opening Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, You are a God of promises. We thank You for preserving us and keeping Your promises to us daily. We are especially thankful that you saw our need for a Savior and in Him, Your promises of redemption, salvation, and eternal life have been fulfilled. We thank You for the Holy Spirit who works through Your Word, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper to call, gather, enlighten, sanctify and keep us in the one true faith. Please be with us in our study of Your Word today. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Promise of Grace

Read **Genesis 3:15**.

¹⁵ **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."**

The words of Genesis 3:15 were spoken by God to the serpent in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve's fall into sin. It speaks of conflict between enemies. Who is the conflict between? **The woman**

and her offspring and the serpent and his offspring; ultimately the conflict was between Jesus and the devil.

Take another look: This verse is often called the "protevangeli-um," or the first promise of the Gospel. How can conflict result in promise? What is God actually promising in these words? **It was promised that the conflict between Jesus and the devil would result in the defeat of the devil; Jesus would free mankind from the curse of their sin through His saving work for us. He would crush the head of the serpent!** Identify God's grace in this promise. **Because of Jesus, we receive God's undeserved love, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life.**

This promise in Genesis reveals God's plan for the salvation of mankind. The devil (serpent) would...*bruise the heel...* of the descendant of Adam, but that same descendant would...*bruise the head...* of the devil, thus annihilating him. How was this promise fulfilled? See **Galatians 4:4-5**, **John 3:16**, and **Romans 5:6-11**. **When Jesus came in the flesh to live a life of perfection, to endure hardship and suffering for our sake, and to die for the sins of the world. Praise be to God that He died for us, even when we were still sinners! Because He lives eternally, we can look forward to life in heaven with Him.**

Galatians 4:4-5: ⁴ **But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born** ⁵ **under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.**

John 3:16: ¹⁶ **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**

Romans 5:6-11 ⁶ **For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps** ⁷ **for a good person one would dare even to die—** ⁸ **but God shows his love for us in that while we were still** ⁹ **sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we** ¹⁰ **be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are** ¹¹ **reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

If time permits: Read **Genesis 3:21-24**. Take another look and find God's grace in these passages. **"garments of skin" = God clothed them and to clothe them,**

He had to sacrifice animals for their skin; points to the sacrifice that Christ will make for us – Christ clothes us in His robes of righteousness. “drove out the man” and “guard the way to the tree of life” – If the man and woman had remained in the Garden, they would have been tempted to want to eat of the tree of life and as a result, would have forever lived in their sinfulness, with no hope for redemption.

²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife ²² garments of skins and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he ²⁴ was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or in a small group what Jesus’ perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection mean for your life here on earth each day. **Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.**

Promise of Restoration

Jeremiah has sometimes been called “The Wailing Prophet.” He was sent to preach to the people of Judah a message of judgment from God, exile to Babylon, and the destruction of Jerusalem. God, speaking through Jeremiah, pleaded with His people to repent and to return to God’s Word. Jeremiah’s message was often not a very popular one with the people of God and they refused to listen to his warnings. What judgment of God is Jeremiah prophesying in **Jeremiah 25:8-11? The Israelites will be taken into exile in Babylon for 70 years.**

⁸ “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you ⁹ have not obeyed my words, behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and ¹⁰ an everlasting desolation. Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹

This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

The Babylonian captivity was a 70-year exile. It would be long and many would die while in

captivity. However, Jeremiah offers the people God’s own promise in **Jeremiah 32:36-44.**

³⁶ “Now therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and ³⁷ by pestilence’: Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to ³⁸ this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And ³⁹ they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their ⁴⁰ children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in ⁴¹ their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this ⁴² land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon ⁴³ them all the good that I promise them. Fields shall be bought in this land of which you are saying, ‘It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the ⁴⁴ hand of the Chaldeans.’ Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed, in the land of Benjamin, in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb; for I will restore their fortunes, declares the LORD.”

God promises restoration to His exiled people. Identify the blessings that they would experience after their exile. **The people of God would have a restored relationship with God. He would establish an everlasting covenant with them. He will rejoice in doing them good. They will prosper and their fortunes will be restored.**

Now, take another look: Even though exile would normally not be considered a positive situation, what were God’s instructions for His people *during* exile in **Jeremiah 29:4-7? They were to establish themselves; have children and multiply; and be concerned with the welfare of their exiled country.** What blessings could this long exile have for the people of God? **The exile could be a time of repentance and introspection about their relationship with God. They could come to realize that He was with them even in exile.**

⁴ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from ⁵ Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in

them; plant gardens and eat their produce.⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there,⁷ and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Read Jesus' words in **Acts 1:8**. How does God restore His people today? **He restores His people by giving them His Holy Spirit – the power of God!**⁸

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

What restoration “means of grace” does the Holy Spirit use to sanctify and keep us in the faith? See **Colossians 3:16**, **Romans 6:4**, and **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**. **The Word of God, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are the Means of Grace that the Spirit uses to engender and keep His people in faith.**

Colossians 3:16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **Romans 6:4:** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26:** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Faith Talk: Think of a relationship that needs restoration in your life. What are some concrete actions or words that you can use to help accomplish restoration of that splintered relationship? Share with a partner or in a small group. **Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.**

Promise of The Child

God's promise made in Genesis 3:15 is fulfilled!

Read **Luke 1:26-27, 30-33**. **In the sixth month the**

angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

This promise to the young unwed Mary was truly an amazing one! She had found favor with God and was to be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. However, what were some of the possible consequences that accompanied this promise? See **Matthew 1:18-23**. **Joseph could have rejected her for unfaithfulness – she could even have been killed. Society could have been very cruel to this young unwed mother.**

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

Faith Talk: Mary's response to the angel's announcement in Luke 1:38 is simply and profoundly, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” How would you have responded? Why? **Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.**

Promise of Hope

Read the following passages and identify the promises in each one.

Jeremiah 29:11 (spoken to the Israelites in exile) **God has only the ultimate good in mind for His people; He gives us a future and a hope for that future.**

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a

future and a hope.

Romans 5:1-5

We have peace with God through Christ; we have faith and grace; we rejoice in the hope of eternal life. We will have sufferings, but we are loved by God who gives us His peace through the Holy Spirit!

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ² More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ³ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁴ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 6:23

We will die physically because of our sin, but will live eternally because of God's free gift of salvation in Jesus.

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 1:6-9

We will have trials that will test and refine our faith. We are saved in Christ and live with an inexpressible joy.

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Take another look: According to the above promises, how would you describe the life of a Christian? Do the blessings outweigh the trials and sufferings? Why? **Answers will vary.**

Read **Hebrews 10:23** and **Revelation 22:20**. What promise do we look forward to as believers in Christ?

We look forward to that hope of salvation. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²³ **Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is

²⁰ **Revelation 22:20** He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Faith Talk: How does living with the hope of eternal life in Christ shape your daily actions and attitudes? Share with a partner or in a small group. **Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.**

In closing, read together the words of **2 Corinthians 1:20:**

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

Faith Walk:

1. Each day thank your faithful God for fulfilling all His promises to you in Christ Jesus.
2. Participate daily in the study of God's Word.
3. Search the Bible for God's many promises. Make a "top ten" list of your personal favorites.
4. Keep a "Promise Journal" and note how God keeps His promises to you every day.
5. By the power of the Spirit, share with at least one person the promise of the hope that you have in Christ Jesus.

Pray together:

Dear Lord, You have given us Your Word with many promises. We thank You that the greatest promise You made and fulfilled was sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life, suffer, and die for the sins of all mankind. Because He lives, we, too, will live with You forever in the glories of heaven. Help us to live lives that reflect the hope and confidence that we have in You. Be with us, Holy Spirit, as we witness to those around us of the Good News of salvation. You are faithful, Lord, and we believe You hear and answer our prayer, just as You have promised. We pray in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

Sing together *I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus* (LSB #729; LW #408; TLH #428).