

A Promising Year
(Week 1)
RECEIVE God's Promises

SMALL TALK

1. When was the last time you felt wrung out, and you had no joy, energy, or motivation?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Romans 8:18-39.** What does God promise to us that can make any suffering bearable? (You can list more than one.)
3. What is the world waiting to see (8:19)? For what are the children of God waiting (8:23)? What is and is not genuine hope (8:24-25)?

GETTING PERSONAL

4. In what circumstances of your life do you need to wait patiently for God to act?
5. How can a person be sure that bad times aren't a signal of God's displeasure with him or her?
6. For what can you ask the Spirit's help this week?

PRACTICE!

7. What promise would you like to "receive," hang on to, and build your life on?

January 9, 2022

A Promising Year

1-RECEIVE God's Promises

How many of you experienced difficult levels of discouragement last year?

Have you ever felt like your life's joy, energy, and motivation was wrung out of you?

- There have been times I felt like I was in the spin cycle of a Mega-Washing-Machine. Circumstances were spinning and this was completely out of my control, unrelentlessly pinning me to negative changes in human attitudes and behaviors all around me, on and on it went, draining away my joy, energy, and motivation. Can any of you relate to that word picture? **THERE IS A PLACE OF PROMISE TO BE FOUND** in that washing machine!

How many of you would like a teaching series that helps you experience a promising year?

That is what this series is all about.

God's promises are powerful for those who receive them, rejoice in them, remember them, and rehearse them. This is how believing God's promises builds a promising life.

Let's begin with this fundamental concept: Many of God's promises are conditional!

If you don't believe the promises, your life will drift and your faith will become wrung out and dried up! If this happens, God's promises are not the problem, our failure to receive them, rejoice in them, remember them, rehearse them, and build our life upon them is the problem.

Hebrews chapter 11 lists out the Old Testament HALL OF FAME of those who believed the promises. It is an amazing chapter. After quite a faith hero list, we read this:

Hebrews 11:33 (NLT) “By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them...”

Receiving the promises requires faith.

Faith in God’s promises is NOT just something that takes place in your heart and mind. Believing God’s promises produces a changed perspective, attitude, and actions.

EXAMPLE: AN old Jewish Rabbi stood before a powerful King. He was bent, and scarred from mistreatment over the years. The last two years were in prison. He was looking weak and gaunt.

The contrast between the King in all his pomp, and the old Rabbi, could not be greater! But don’t be fooled. When the Rabbi stood before the powerful King, the advantage was not where the onlookers believed it to be.

Who were these two? Paul, standing in trial before King Herod Agrippa. The difference between them was that Paul had received what God had promised, and Agrippa was striving to hold what the world held out as promising, but at what price?

You have probably heard about King Herod, but you may have forgotten that there were a number of King Herods.

Herod Agrippa’s great grandfather was the Herod who attempted to kill the Christ child by killing off all the baby boys 2 years old or younger in Bethlehem. He wielded evil power.

It was Herod Agrippa’s great uncle who had John the Baptist beheaded to save face at a party.

It was Agrippa’s father who executed James the disciple.

And now Paul was facing this Herod Agrippa in court. What would be his statement of defense? What would Paul say?

Paul did not derive his strength of position based on his pedigree, his education, or his circumstances. Paul built his life on God's reliable promises! And Paul stands unafraid!

Acts 26:6 (NLT) "Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made to our ancestors."

Paul goes on to preach about the resurrection of Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises.

I. **God's promises are GIFTS**

The power of God's promises are experienced only by those who receive his gifts.

What opposes you today? Circumstances? Challenges? People? Fears?

Here is a promise.

Romans 8:31 (NLT) ... If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

This promise does not mean we have no one ever standing against us. This promise simply means that *if we are on God's side*, how can we lose?

Say it with me: IF WE ARE ON GOD'S SIDE HOW CAN WE LOSE?

All the heroes of the faith built their lives on the promises of God. And here stood Paul, seemingly weak, facing down Agrippa. God's promise puts Paul in a more powerful position than this evil King. We all need to find that place of promise in whatever the circumstances we find ourselves in.

II. **HEIRS of PROMISE are secure and confident**

Hebrews 6:17–18 (NLT) God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise [NIV: the heirs of what was promised] could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. ¹⁸ So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us.

If you are an heir, how do you become perfectly sure you are an heir? Do these two things: Read the will and spend the money! Heirs of promise have access to the family fortune!!

- we have the “riches of his grace” Ephesians 1:7 & 2:7
- “the incalculable riches of Christ” Ephesians 3:8
- “the riches of his glory, to be strengthened in your inner being through his Spirit” (Ephesians 3:16)

III. For every **PROBLEM**, apply the **PRESCRIBED** promise

Make it your aim to become so familiar with God’s promises that you can write yourself a prescription for the promised outcome.

God’s Word Is DEPENDABLE

From the first chapter of Scripture, the Bible makes a case for the dependability of God. In the creation narrative, nine times we read, “God said.” And without exception when God spoke, something happened.

When there was darkness. God spoke and there was light!
God spoke and there was land, and beaches, and creatures.

God needed no collaborators. He needed no consultants. He needed no architects or contractors. From nothing he spoke everything into existence. He breathed life into every creature. He is our source and supply.

He needs no assistance. Yet he invites us to participate. As heirs of promise, he treats us as loved children.

He spoke, it happened. When he speaks a promise, it is as good as done. He may have plans for specific timing, but we can depend on his promising words to deliver what he promises.

The question is not, will God keep his promises, but, will we receive them and build our lives on them?

It is my hope that this series will help us want to

- learn the promises,
- claim the promises.
- rejoice in the promises.
- pray according to the promises.
- live by the promises
- hope in the promises
- worship in the promises
- rejoice in the promises and live with confidence

This series will help us do just that! I believe it will help you to experience

- a faith that is growing stronger,
- a peace that is growing deeper,
- a life that becomes a blessing, and
- a gratitude that spills over.

Am I over promising? No. If we don't experience what God promises, we are under believing and we have not learned to receive them, rejoice in them, remember them, and rehearse them. This is how believing God's promises builds a promising life.

Next week is "REJOICE in God's promises!"