

God's Promises

#0134

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—October 10, 1975

I chanced to run across an expression from a disappointed heart that had been scrawled in a place where others could read it.

“In the dark I light a match and watch it fight for existence.
But it will never win, and I again sit in darkness.”

What a picture of hopelessness. As I was thinking about it my mind went to this expression:

“They shall roam through the land hard pressed and hungry, hunger driving them to rage. They shall look up to heaven, and look round upon earth, only to see distress and darkness, anguish, and utter gloom. Poor wastes of men” Isaiah 8:21, 22 (*Moffatt Translation*).

Jesus pictured it:

“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” Luke 21:25.

Looking at the darkness, we too might be driven to that hopeless frustration. But thank God we have something better. Jesus says:

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” Luke 21:28.

Look where? Look up. Instead of hopelessness, the Scriptures offer us hope. Instead of gloom, we are given joy. Instead of worry and frustration, we are given peace.

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” 2 Peter 1:2–4.

What a great constellation of truth shines in this text. Jesus says, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you." God multiplies as we add. That is why the Christian grows. Grace and peace are multiplied through Jesus Christ. Christ said in His last prayer:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent"
John 17:3.

To know God is life eternal. To know God is to have grace and peace multiplied to us. Notice that God does not say these things are coming someday. He says we have them. "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." What a wonderful commissary to go in and help ourselves. What a great storehouse filled with all things that pertain to life and godliness. How do these things come to us? By knowing God. They come through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." What is a promise? It is God saying, I will do this. I will do that. I will give you this. I will give you that. This is a promise, and Peter says that these promises are great promises. He calls them exceeding great.

When we study Daniel 8, we stress the fact that the ram, Medo-Persia, is spoken of as great. The rough goat, Greece, is spoken of as very great. But the little horn waxed exceeding great. Well, here is something that is a brighter picture than Persia or Greece or Rome. Here are some promises that wax exceeding great. They are not only exceeding great, but they are also precious.

What does precious mean? Valuable. Something important. Something that brings wealth to those who possess what is precious. We speak of precious stones. We don't find them in the gutter. A precious stone is rare. Thank God, in the Bible we have a treasury of precious promises. Notice what these promises will do for us: "That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

What does it mean to be a partaker? Take part. If when we come to the communion table, we each receive of the bread and the wine we are partakers of the Lord's table. We are partakers of His life ministered to us through those emblems. That same life is ministered to us through His holy Word through these exceeding great and precious promises.

Thank God we don't have to be malnourished. Here are promises that we might be partakers of the divine nature. Yes, we become like that which we feed upon. And if we will eat heavenly food, we will become heavenly minded. As the body is built up from what we put into the stomach, the mind is built up with what we put into our thoughts through what we read and listen to. I am glad that God has made it plain how we can be built up.

What does the world look like to you? Does it look like a place to escape from? I hope so. If you have gotten out of the world, thank God, you have escaped.

And the man who knows that doesn't look upon himself as a captive in jail. He looks upon himself as a ransomed captive out of jail. He got away from the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We have turned our eyes away from the corruption of the world. We have turned our eyes away from looking at it. Paul says it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done in secret. And there is too much parading before the saints the sins of this wicked, Sodom world. Those things don't help us. But there are given to us exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Can a man who is deep down in the cesspool of this world be lifted up? Can he escape all that? Oh, yes. It is the glorious news of the gospel.

“We have heard the joyful sound,
Jesus saves, Jesus saves,
Spread the tidings all around,
Jesus saves, Jesus saves;
Bear the news to every land,
climb the steeps and cross the waves,
Onward tis our Lord's command,
Jesus saves, Jesus saves.”

What does Jesus save from? From sin, and all the results of sin. So those who let Jesus in their hearts, those who received these exceeding great and precious promises, become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world.

We need to study more and more on how to appropriate these promises. We need to study how to use them, how to get the benefit from them. Unless we do that, they are simply words on the page. I like to think of these promises as traveler's checks. I happen to have a traveler's check in my pocket. It is from one of the companies that print them. This particular one is for ten dollars. It has my name on it, and there is a place for me to sign it. It is just a piece of paper, but I can take it to most any bank and get ten dollars. But what do I have to do with it? I have to sign it.

If I should present it to the store keeper, he would say, "Are you Mr. Frazee?"

Yes.

"Well, I notice you haven't signed it."

Would he take it until I signed it? No. Until I sign it, it isn't worth anything. But as soon as I sign it is worth ten dollars. I want you to notice how God wants us to use His promises:

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire,
when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall
have them” Mark 11:24.

Believing what we ask for is signing our names on the check. This is the appropriation of the promise. For example, God says:

“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:19.

So far that is just a promise in the Book. I can carry that around printed on a card. It is still just a promise printed. But suppose I run into a situation where I need something. I need things quite often—all kinds of things. And I don’t mean just material things. I need help to win the victory. I need deliverance from temptation. Do you? My need is to get that help. And here is a promise: “My God shall supply all your need.” Can I present that promise to Jesus? Yes. But notice. It isn’t enough to present the promise. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

That is what it means to sign our names. It means to present the promise to Jesus and say, I not only want Your promise fulfilled. I am accepting it, and I believe that Your word is being fulfilled.

Why do I believe it? Because God says so, and God cannot lie. He cannot fail. No matter how many checks are presented, no matter how many times there is a run on the bank, the bank of Heaven has plenty. The assets of some banks today run into billions and billions of dollars. But the capital in the bank of Heaven is infinite. There is no limit. But in order to receive the benefit of these promises, I must bring them to God to fulfill them, meet the conditions, and claim the answer.

There are some great facts concerning our Lord in the light of the verses we have read. This is the first one:

“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” Isaiah 40:11.

What does Jesus do for you and me? He feeds. Sheep are grazing every day. And my soul must be fed every day. God loves to feed those who come and let Him give them nourishment. Jesus said:

“I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst” John 6:35.

Jesus taught to teach Israel this lesson by feeding them manna from Heaven for 40 years. What food is to the body these promises are to the soul. But who is feeding us? God is. He feeds me day by day.

Let’s get a view of the heavenly land soon to be our eternal home. Here the One who has fed us day by day on earth will continue to bring us sustenance.

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” Revelation 7:17.

The prophet saw a silver table miles in length. You and I are seated there with millions of others. Jesus is going to feed us. Won't it be wonderful to have Christ Himself come to the table where you are sitting and put His hand on your shoulder? You look up into His dear face, and He says, What would you like? Jesus is interested in what you would like to eat. What is going to be on the menu? We don't know everything, but there are going to be some grapes there. There will be some figs there. There will be some almonds and manna. I think I will ask Jesus to bring me some manna. Wouldn't you like to taste some? Will there be enough? Plenty more in the kitchen. The Lamb shall feed them.

But those who eat with Him there will first eat with Him here. Those who sit down at supper with Him there will let Him sit down to supper with them here. That communion and fellowship is to begin here. God feeds me day by day, and He will feed me there forevermore.

Jesus is not only going to feed us but lead us. He is the One who gives us guidance. Will we need it up there? Apparently. Do we need it here? Oh, yes. Even more now. There won't be any way to get lost up there, but there is here. There will not be any devil to divert or distract or deceive us up there, but there is here. So if we appreciate the promise that He will lead us in the future, how doubly precious is the promise to lead us now.

Here, as we have just read, is the promise of feeding and leading. The two are linked together:

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake” Psalm 23:1–3.

So feeding and leading Jesus meets my needs. What a Shepherd, and how happy He is for those who follow where He leads. A leader can't accomplish much unless there is someone following.

“The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way” Psalm 25:9.

We have here a most wonderful promise of guidance. Let's look at it. And remember that it is by these exceeding and precious promises that we become partakers of the divine nature.

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” Proverbs 3:6.

There are conditions to a promise. Sometimes they are stated. Sometimes they are implied. But there are always conditions to God's promises. That gives us the opportunity to decide whether we want them to be fulfilled to us.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him." The promise is that He will direct thy paths. What is the condition? Acknowledge Him. What does that mean? It means look to Him for His direction. Stop and listen before you take a step.

Dogs love to take walks. As I have watched them, the dog will run ahead, and maybe take the wrong trail. Pretty soon he finds he is alone, so he comes running back and runs on again. Some people are like that with the Lord. But our text says not to do it that way. Before you decide which turn of the road to take, acknowledge Him. Say, "Lord, which way are you going? I want to go with You. Which way are you leading? I want to follow You." And if in all our ways, we acknowledge Him, He will direct our paths.

But suppose we say, I already know which way I want to go. Well, I may be like the dog. I may find myself all alone, for God has gone another road.

But how patiently He waits. How He sometimes lingers, hoping that we will retrace our steps and let Him lead.

"I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths" Proverbs 4:11.

Is that what God has done for you? Praise His wonderful name.

We have noticed that the Lamb will feed us and lead us (Revelation 7:17). The counterpart of that is the picture of the redeemed (Revelation 14:4). These are they which follow the Lamb. We are going to follow Him through Orion and on to the throne of God. We are going to follow Him through the trackless fields of space, suns and stars and systems. From world to world, we will go with Him. But those who follow Him there will have first followed Him here.

Jesus feeds me. Jesus leads me. Jesus needs me. This is the most precious of all. The inspired messenger wrote:

"We were brought into existence because we were needed" Signs of the Times, April 22, 1903.

Are you needed?

Somebody says, "I think things would be just as well or better if I weren't around."

If you say that, or even think it, it shows that you are hungry. The greatest need in the human heart is the need to be needed. You are needed. And the reason God put a longing in your heart to be needed is so you can understand how He feels about you. You not only need Him, He needs you. He needs you to be His friend, to share with Him the joy of companionship. We were brought into existence

because we were needed. Let's look at the wonderful story Jesus told to help us to understand this:

“And He spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” Luke 15:3–7.

How many sheep are lost? One. The least that can be numbered. What is Jesus seeking to tell us? That one soul that is lost is more precious to Him than all the world beside. He will leave the ninety and nine that have not gone astray, and He will come after you and me.

It was not thought of any gold that hundredth sheep might bring
That sent the keeper of the fold back into weariness and cold.
When home was beckoning it was His love that could not think
Of that poor willful one unmindful by the canyons brink,
Or in despair about to sink with strength and courage gone.
It was not any grace of mine that drew my Lord to me,
In heaven, spotless angels shine that vie to do His will,
And here was Calvary.

It was His love that could not bear to think of my distress.
He knew the pride of life would wear away
And leave me bleeding there in utter wretchedness.
Oh, if He had not come for me, forever I would roam alone,
And lost in misery, but up and over Calvary
The Shepherd bears me home,

Why? Jesus needed me. He wanted me. He couldn't bear to live without me. I am not just a sheep. I am a human being formed in God's image. And I say it simply, Jesus cannot live without me. He would rather die to get me than to live without me. That is love.

So tonight, the simple message is for each of you, God feeds you. God leads you. God needs you here and now and through eternity. My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Do you need food, physical and spiritual? He will supply all your needs. Do you need wisdom? Ask of God who gives to all men liberally. Do you need to be needed? That need He will supply. He comes close to assure you of His love and desire for your love. He says to each one of us, My son, My daughter, give Me your heart. He needs our choice, our decision, our response to all He has done for us. Let's send Him the word that we will meet His need.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org