

Claiming the Promises

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I. Introduction: a host of promises.

- A. The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)
- B. The remnant will be restored during the second time. (Isaiah 11:11)
- C. The broadest promise - you will seek and find God when you seek Him with all your heart.
- D. Preview: promises for the church and promises for all.

II. Characteristics about claiming the promises.

- A. They have conditions attached to them. (e.g. John 3:16, bringing the tithe in the storehouse)
- B. An example of what it is to claim a promise: Moses is persistent with God based upon his previous promises. (Exodus 32:9)
- C. Hezekiah drew on what the Lord said and he acted on Hezekiah's behalf against Sennacherib. (II Kings 19)
- D. Prayer is a pouring out to God through Christ for the strength and assistance of the Spirit for such things as God has promised (John Bunyan). Prayer for him, then, was based on God's promise.
- E. God holds us to the benchmark request in our prayer for Him to use us for His glory. God holds us to what we ask him to do.
- F. The promises of God and the glory of God must be the end of our prayers. (John 4:14)

III. Areas that we have prayed in harmony with God.

- A. Our salvation. (Revelation 3:20)
- B. Victory. (I Corinthians 10:13)
- C. Forgiveness. (I John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13)
- D. Health. (James 5:16; III John 2; Isaiah 53)

1. Is this conditional or unconditional?
2. If God gave us continual good health we would live forever in this body.
3. It is not God's will that we live in this body forever. Although God heals, all in this body die sometime.
4. Is there an assurance of a spiritual healing? Forgiveness and cleansing seems to be this guarantee.

E. Prosperity. (Joshua 1:8)

1. Is this conditional? Some teach it is unconditional.
2. It is not for God's greatest glory to give everyone prosperity. This is a checkpoint.

F. Deliverance from and in problems. (I Peter 5:10) Christ is not insurance from storms but insurance in them.

G. Guidance or direction. (Psalm 32:8; Proverbs 3:5-6)

H. Counsel. (James 1:5)

I. Family. (Proverbs 22:5; Acts 16:31)

1. Some say that if you pray for your family members they are certain to come to Christ.
2. God has delegated part of His sovereignty to the human will. To invade that delegated sovereignty would make God a transgressor.

J. Career.

K. Christian service.

L. Nonbelievers. (Romans 9-11)

IV. Addendum concerning the promises.

A. The miraculous.

1. God can heal miraculously, but does not always do so.
2. Billy Graham when asked to raise the dead said he was called to preach instead.

3. A miracle is said to be that which is contrary to natural laws. God is not bound by his own laws. (I Corinthians 12)

4. God has not promised to extend our natural lives indefinitely.

5. Most things are in accordance with natural laws.

B. It is possible to make some demands upon God. (Psalm 16:15)

1. He sometimes yields to demands.

2. However the results can be disastrous. (e.g. the Israelites' demand for a king)

C. God will often fulfill his promise in our behalf when we have forgotten it. (Psalm 105:42)

D. Dawson Trotman used to respond to theologians who criticized him for taking the promises out of context by saying, "Well, the Jews are not claiming them - someone should."

V. Group observations about the promises.

A. Motives and attitudes are important when claiming promises. (James 4:3)

B. Promises claimed cannot conflict with God's plan or earlier promises made.

C. If you do not know God's promises you cannot claim them.

D. There are tendencies to look at promises without thinking about the conditions.

E. God does not have the same answer for everyone.

F. God is not a fairy godmother.

G. Prayer is not the office to change God's purpose but to lay hold of God and His purposes.

H. It is important to open up the treasure chest of promises.

Application questions.

1. What are the most important observations that the speaker made about the promises we have to claim? What relationship do these promises have to the conditions mentioned?

2. What does the speaker say is the governing principle in God's refusal to answer some prayers? Can you think of anything else? Why does this not show God to be unfair or unjust?

3. What new observations did you make about God's promises? Have you opened the treasure chest of promises to claim them for yourself? Take some time and pray to God in faith thanking Him for what He has promised to do and will most certainly fulfill.
