

POWER IN THE PROMISES

1 John 4:18; Hebrews 13:5-8; Romans
8:28-32; Psalms 37:4-6; Proverbs 3:5-6;
James 4:7-10; 1 John 1:9; 2 Timothy 3:16

Living by Faith in the Father's Heart

By

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Opening.

Quite possibly the most potent enemy of your faith is your fear. Fear is a sinful cancer in the soul, an emotional whirlwind that shuts down our ability to think clearly, to trust our faithful God, and makes the willingness to embrace His Word and walk in His Word impossible. No matter how much Scripture rests in your soul, no matter how much Truth has been hidden in your heart, it won't benefit you in the least if your heart is immobilized by worry, pinned down in panic. The difference between the brave and the cowardly is that the brave think just enough under pressure to *act*. The brave man or woman stops blaming everyone else, and starts taking action!

The enemy of our hearts {Satan} knows that fear ravages the heart, and so one of his greatest strategies is to induce fear in believers, oftentimes through the circumstances surrounding us. He knows your triggers, he knows the things that can shake your soul, he knows just what will have you falling apart and 'freaking out.' And he will play that tune like a cheap guitar, over and over again, until you learn to defeat it, to put your heart, soul, mind and strength in the hands of your heavenly Father. Romans 8:15 tells us, that we **“did not receive a spirit that makes”** us **“a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Sonship** [‘the Spirit of adoption’]. **And by Him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”** Fear is *antithetical* to our confidence in Christ, our courage which comes through the Holy Spirit's filling.

In 1 John 4:18 the Apostle tells us, that **“There is no fear in love** [what John's saying is that we live, breathe, and reside in the furiously overwhelming love of God, and *in* that love — embodied and embraced in His Son— there can be *no* fear whatsoever!]. **But perfect love** [‘love’ that's been matured by our passion for Jesus and intimacy with the Father: *teleios* is an adjective of excellence, the classical tragedian Aeschylus applied this word to the Greek gods as a divine attribute meaning ‘*mighty, efficacious*’] **drives out fear** [*phobos* is used here and in Rom. 8:15 of the craven ‘fear’ of a slave toward a cruel and malicious master or a guilty criminal before a righteous judge], **because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears** [the child of God who is constantly afraid, who lives a lifestyle of fear] **is not made perfect in love.”** She has not been perfected by the love of the Father— matured, raise up to all the fullness of God. **“We love,”** why? **“Because He first loved us.”** That's what John tells us in v. 19. We can love and love well, meaning faithfully and fiercely, only when we have accepted and embraced that *Abba's* love for His sons and daughters never changes. Ever. It does not depend on anything we do or don't do, say or don't say; it is limitless love, unconditional in nature and sacrificial in its service. God's love is eternally self-generating, and does not depend on any source outside Himself. Anybody say, “Amen”?

My point is that *Abba* is not an anxious Judge waiting to condemn us {Rom. 8:1}, but a merciful and gracious Father who never fails to make provision for His children. And we have no need to fear the circumstances of life nor any aspect of Satan's System whatsoever. **Our confidence in God produces courage before man.**

Nothing can ever separate you from the love of God made visible and experiential in Christ Jesus our Lord. ...You must be convinced of this, trust it, and never forget..." that "everything else will pass away, but the love of Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Faith will become vision, hope will become possession, but the love of Jesus Christ that is stronger than death endures forever. In the end, it is the *one* thing you can hang onto!¹

Fear.

It's "sad but" all too "true— some Christians" seem to "want to be slaves. ...Most believers today are not experiencing what Paul calls in Romans 8:21 the '**glorious freedom of the children of God.**' The basic problem" is that "we accept grace in theory but deny it in practice. Living by grace rather than law leads us out of the house of fear into the house of love." What was it we saw in 1 John 4:18? TLB puts it like this: "**We need have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly; His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us and shows that we are not fully convinced that He really loves us.**" In *The Message* Peterson says, "**There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life— fear of death, fear of judgment— is one not yet fully formed in love,**" 1 John 4:18. "...The author of Hebrews describes Jesus as the One who has delivered '**those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death,**' Hebrews 2:15. The Gospel of Freedom" and Life "proclaims that death is an illusion, a phantom, the" nightmare "of little children. Death is simply a transition into the one experience worthy of the name *life.*"²

Essay-- Power In The Promises.

Where do we begin? In a world as mad as a hatter, in a culture gone crazy around us, the institutions we have known as bulwarks and buttresses against demonic deception crumbling into dust by the minute, where do we turn? Back to the one rock-solid reality in a world grown dark by the shadow of the enemy: the Living Word of the Living God, Jesus Christ the Lord, Savior and Sovereign. What He has promised, He will do. And without fail. For as the author of Hebrews said, "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever,**" 13:8.

What does that kind of unerring faithfulness mean to us, what can we do in light of that? We can "**keep our lives free from the love of money;**" we can "**be content with what we have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you!;**" we can "**say with confidence, 'The Lord is my Helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'"** I just gave you three things that we can do, three actions of faith that we can take by believing and embracing the simple yet profoundly powerful truth that Jesus has sworn to never leave us, to never forsake us, to be with us through thick and thin, good and bad, holiness and unholiness, to come to us *as we are* in order to shape us into who we should be. Jesus finds us where we live and loves us as we are. He will cleanse, purify, and empower His own ...and that's a promise!

So, we start with faith— which is birthed in the heart— a Biblical, Scriptural, genuine faith, which always rest *in* something and *on* something. That ‘something’ is the Word which came forth from God Himself, the Wisdom which was beside Him as He created all that is, the revelation of God’s immense and unshakable heart towards humanity. That is what we choose to trust in. Understand that the power and grace of God flow *through His promises, not through His commands*. His commands are there as guardrails and guidelines for our hearts and lives; they’re there for our protection. But His power exercised on our behalf, His grace poured out like rain upon our lives, His mercy and tenderness, compassion and courage, come forth through His promises and the faith we exercise in them. We must turn our hearts to these if we would be initiated into the Life of Faith. And if we’re to become the men and women Christ created us to be... we *must* grow up and learn to trust that God’s heart toward us is good. Not evil nor indifferent but good, indescribably good, good beyond all reckoning or reason. Good, loving, generous, strong, beyond all human understanding.

We can offer this as the definition of a promise. *A promise is a divine guarantee, an encapsulated statement of Truth, a solid rock of reality on which to anchor your soul.* You got that? His promises accomplish three basic things in the Kingdom of God: [1] they express the essence of the Almighty {the essence of *Abba*}; [2] they provide instantaneous perspective; and [3] they reduce complicated situations to utmost simplicity. Promises fuel the soul’s willingness to rest in the heart of God. We stand on a promise to stabilize the soul seized by fear, worry, anxiety, dominated by pain, panic, and intense internal pressure. The heart that has gone astray into jealousy, envy, vindictiveness, the desire for retaliation or revenge, brutal bitterness, an unforgiving attitude, self-absorption or self-hatred. Both of which are equally as corrosive to our lives in the Spirit of Christ.

The Promises.

➤ All Scripture is quoted from the NIV, unless otherwise indicated.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him [present tense pictures a *lifestyle* of loving Him {with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, which means Jesus is our sole priority, Jesus is our ultimate reality; Jesus said, ‘If you obey My commands, you will *remain* in My love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in His love.’}], **who have been called according to His purpose** [‘calling’ is our *entrance* into the relationship, ‘loving’ Him is our *intimacy* in the relationship]. **For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son** [‘to the image’ of Jesus, the *eikon* of our Lord], **that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all— how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”**— Romans 8:28-32.

The beginning of resting in faith is to believe God when He makes us promises, such as Deuteronomy 31:8 which says, **“The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you.**

Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Psalms 16:7-11: **“I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me [because ‘I have hidden Your Word away in my heart that I might not sin against You’... and where Your Word dwells Your Spirit works!]. I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will You let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the Path of Life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.”**

Psalms 16:8, **“I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken;”** and 16:11, **“You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.”**

“I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart [‘be courageous at heart’] and wait for the Lord,” Psalms 27:13-14.

Psalms 34:15-19: **“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their cry [‘pleas’]; the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the Earth. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.”**

Psalms 34:19 says, **“Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all.”**

Psalms 37:4-5, **“Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart [Anag means- ‘be deliriously happy about, take exquisite delight in.’ This is consecration at its finest, and when you do this, when you make Him the treasure of your heart, when you ‘delight yourself in the LORD,’ when you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, He can now ‘give you the desires of your heart’ because His desires have become your desires, His ways your ways, His will your will, His Words your words.]. Commit your way [‘your Journey’] to the LORD [word translated ‘commit,’ galal, lit. means- ‘roll oneself down’ and is a word-picture taken from the gimel, the camel, for the way he lays himself down until his master can roll whatever he’s carrying up onto his back]; trust in Him [And the key is: to keep on trusting, regardless of what you think, or think you see with the physical eyes {it’s the eyes of faith that count!}. Batach = ‘be bold in God, have confidence in Christ, be secure in the Spirit’] and He will accomplish this: He will make your righteousness shine like the Dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday Sun,”** v. 6 {NIV Exp}.

And v. 23, **“If the Lord delights in a man’s way, He makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand,”** Psalms

37:23-24. And if the Lord is the One **“holding”** you up, lifting you by His outstretched arm, do you really have anything to worry about... anything to obsess over... anything to get buried under? If He holds you by His mighty hand, you may stumble and stagger but you will never fall!

In Psalms 55:22 the command is to, **“Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall;”** the NAU has, **“Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.”**

“For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, He is a Shield to those whose walk is blameless, for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones,” Proverbs 2:6-8.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding [i.e., what you *think* you know]; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.”** To **“trust,”** from the Hebrew *batach* means- ‘to have a bold and secure confidence in.’ Notice it is with **“all your heart”** that you are to trust Him and in **“all your ways”** that you are to acknowledge Him. That means every path of life in which you walk. Only when we live by faith in the Father’s heart and honesty about the hidden realms of our lives can we rest in the knowledge that it is God who directs our every step.

Isaiah 26:3-4: **“You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You** [the prophet, inspired by the Holy Spirit, defines the ‘*steadfast mind*’ as one that ‘trusts in’ the Lord continually and does not doubt]. **Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock Eternal.”**

After witnessing the destruction of his nation by the Chaldean army, and the flower of Judah’s young people being led away to Babylon in chains, after all of the sorrow and pain and heartache of forty years of faithful ministry to a nation consumed by idolatry, because of an unflinching faith in the grace and mercy of *Yahweh Elohiym*, the prophet Jeremiah could write these words: **“I well remember”** my affliction and wandering, **“and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him.’ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him** [whatever you do, do not miss that!]; **it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord,”** Lamentations 3:20-26. The word **“wait”** here was originally used for someone taking frail strands of cord, easily breakable by themselves, and twisting them together into a strong and resilient rope. *Qavah* speaks to the child of God who takes the truths, promises, and relational realities of the Trinity, as revealed in the Word, and weaves them into an unbreakable rope of faith.

James say's three things in 4:7: [1] **“Submit yourselves, then, to God. [2] Resist the devil, and [3] he will flee from you** [from submission and surrender comes the strength to resist!; three things are taking place here: [1] a complete surrender to Christ; [2] a resistance of the enemy and all of his deception; and [3] the result: he will flee like the coward he is; *he cannot stand against the Truth* ...never has and never will]. **Come near to God and He will come near to you** [How beautiful is that? We are not the passive people of God, we are active and engaged in ‘drawing near,’ in the intimacy of our own discipleship!]. **Wash your hands, you sinners** [that's confession], **and purify your hearts, you double-minded** [you ‘two-souled:’ that's repentance, taking a deeper look at our lives, asking God to examine us all the way down to the level of *motive*, to look at *why* we do what we do]. **Grieve, mourn and wail** [because *this* is a painful process]. **Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up** [‘He will exalt you at just the right moment, in His own time’],” vv. 8-10 {Exp}.

“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise [in v. 4 of 2 Peter 3: the promise of His return in judgment upon an unbelieving humanity, an idolatrous Earth, at the 2nd Advent], **as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance** [for every member of the human race to come to a change of mind about Jesus Christ],” 2 Peter 3:9 {NIV}.

Salvation.

Acts 16:31, **“They [Paul and Silas] replied** [to the question, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?,’ v. 30b], **‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved— you and your household.’”**

Jesus said, **“that everyone who believes in Him may have Eternal Life. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life,”** John 3:15-16.

Again in John 10:28, **“I give them Eternal Life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand,”** v. 29.

Titus 3:4-6 says, **“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done** [our self-righteous seeking for approbation and approval], **but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth** [our spiritual birth, the birth from above] **and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.”** **“Rebirth”** is the ‘birth’ that comes from above {the theological term is ‘regeneration’}. God the Holy Spirit creates for us a human spirit {or gives life to our human spirit} and God the Father imputes His Eternal Life, His very own Life, to that human spirit; now we share the very Life which God is.

TLB translates this, **“But when the Time came for the kindness and love of God**

our Savior to appear, then He saved us— not because we were good enough to be saved but because of His kindness and pity— by washing away our sins and giving us the new joy of the indwelling Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us with wonderful fullness— and all because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did,” Titus 3:4-6.

Fellowship and Spirituality.

1 John 1:9 says, **“If we confess our sins** [maybe we will, maybe we won’t: in this context {vv. 6-10, five times in five vv.} and in this construction {subjunctive mood} the choice is always up to us; ‘confess’ simply means- *name, cite, or acknowledge*], **He is faithful** [to do the same thing every single time we confess] **and righteous** [it doesn’t compromise His impeccable righteousness because Christ has already paid the price for *every sin ever* committed], **and will forgive us our sins** [and forget them; Isaiah 43:25 says, that ‘I, even I, am the One who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more;’ and Psalm 103:12 states, that ‘as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.’] **and purify us from all unrighteousness** [all sin, every aspect of the ‘flesh,’ every avenue our ‘flesh’ might take to make itself known: arrogance, greed, lust, envy, selfishness, hatred {of self, of others, of *God*}, all the good we do in order to receive recognition, praise and applause, every self-centered and self-aggrandizing motive, *everything!*].”

Peterson translates this in *The Message*, **“...If we admit our sins— make a clean breast of them— He won’t let us down; He’ll be true to Himself. He’ll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing.”**

Jesus said in John 15:7-9, **“If you remain in Me** [‘if you *live* in Me, *dwell* in a place of intimacy and openness with Me’], **and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to My Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit** [divine production, the service of a life consecrated to Christ], **showing yourselves to be My disciples** [the world’s knowledge of our discipleship comes from the love, sacrificial and selfless, that we have for each other; the *proof* of that apprenticeship to Jesus is seen in the faithful, loving service we offer to the world]. **As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love** [‘make yourself at *Home* in My heart, and never leave there’].”

Listen to TLB, **“But if you stay in Me and obey My commands, you may ask any request you like, and it will be granted! My true disciples produce bountiful harvests. This brings great glory to my Father. I have loved you even as the Father has loved Me. Live within My love,”** John 15:7-9. Man, I love that— **“live within My love.”** Yes, Lord, yes... there’s no other place I long to live. And nowhere else can Life be found!

The apostle Paul said, **“being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the Day of Christ Jesus,”** Philippians 1:6 {NIV}; here’s Peterson’s paraphrase in *The Message*,

“There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very Day Christ Jesus appears.”

Colossians 2:10 says, **“and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the Head over every power and authority.”** In Christ you are spiritually and eternally complete!

2 Timothy 2:21-22, **“If a man cleanses himself from the latter [the ‘ignoble’ actions and dishonorable ‘purposes’ Paul mentions in v. 20; she ‘cleanses’ herself by walking in the Light as Jesus is in the Light], he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”** Which tells us that it’s possible, even probable, that *Abba’s* children **“call on”** Him in prayer from a **“pure heart.”** If this were not the purpose and potential for all Jesus’ Followers, why even mention it?

In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul said, **“All Scripture is God-breathed [theopneustos] and is useful for teaching, rebuking [‘the refuting of error’], correcting [is a word that speaks of Jesus’ Life and love, His character and conviction, developed within us. So, along with realizing that we’re going the wrong way, Scripture always sheds illumination on the right Way. If we approach the Word in humility, from that ‘rebuke’ will come a change in attitude, which will result in *action* that sets us on course again.] and training in righteousness [Paideia referred in the ancient world to the ‘instruction and discipline given with the goal of raising a child to maturity.’ The Bible is our guide to Life, *real* Life, genuine Life in Jesus, it is a living Entity still warm from the Spirit’s breath... offered to us in grace to lead us by faith in its wisdom, purity, and power to an ever deepening intimacy with the Trinity.]”**

Here’s how this sounds in *The Message*, **“Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another— showing us Truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us,”** 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Trial and Testing.

In Exodus 14:13-14 Moses **“answered the people”** of Israel with three statements of irrefutable faith, **“[1] Do not be afraid! [2] Stand firm [hold fast to your faith in God] and [what?] you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; [3] you need only to be still.”** Do not fear; stand firm in faith; and watch what the Lord will do to bring supernatural deliverance.

Deuteronomy 20:3-4 says, **“Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the LORD your God is the One who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory.”**

Now, let's take the latter half of v. 3 and the totality of v. 4. **“Do not be fainthearted or afraid. ...For the LORD your God is the One who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies....”**

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you,”
Deuteronomy 31:6.

In 1 Samuel 17:47b a young David said, **“it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's....”**

1 Samuel 17:45 tells us, that **“David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I against you in the name of the LORD of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the Earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that LORD delivers; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give all of you into our hands,’”** vv. 46-47.

In Psalm 4:7 David wrote, **“You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone O LORD, make me dwell in safety,”** v. 8.

V. 8 alone: **“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone O LORD, make me dwell in safety.”**

Psalm 56:2, **“My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride. When I am afraid I will trust in You. In God, whose Word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?,”** vv. 3-4.
Absolutely nothing ...except send us on to be with the One we love.

In Isaiah 41:10 God commanded the people of His chosen nation, and so He commands us as His sons and daughters {Gal. 3:26}, **“So do not fear for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”** Whooaahhh! Is that beautiful or what? The rest of the passage reads like this: **“All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, ‘Do not fear; I will help you,’”** vv. 11-13 {NIV}.

Paul said, **“No temptation has seized you [‘overtaken you’] except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you**

can stand up under it,” 1 Corinthians 10:13 {NIV}; TLB says, **“But remember this—the wrong desires that come into your life aren’t anything new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. And no temptation is irresistible. You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can’t stand up against it, for He has promised this and will do what He says. He will show you how to escape temptation’s power so that you can bear up patiently against it.”**

Ephesians 3:20 tells us, that God **“is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.”** His power **“that is at work within us”** is the indwelling power of the Spirit of God, the power of the Resurrected Christ.

Peter tells us, that **“all kinds of trials”** {multilayered, multicolored, rarely ever of the same mind or manner} **“have come so that your faith [the Truth you hold within your heart]— of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed [when He comes at the Rapture to receive His Body and make her His Bride],”** 1 Peter 1:7.

“For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God,” 1 Peter 2:19; *The Message* says, **“What counts is that you put up with it for God’s sake when you’re treated badly for no good reason.”**

1 Peter 2:20: **“But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating [means- ‘be physically beaten and battered’] for doing wrong and endure it [there is none, you’re getting exactly what you deserve in this instance]? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God;”** Peterson say’s, **“There’s no particular virtue in accepting punishment that you well deserve. But if you’re treated badly for good behavior and continue in spite of it to be a good servant, that is what counts with God”—** *The Message*.

1 Peter 5:7 is the NT counterpart to Psalm 55:22. It says, **“Cast all your anxiety [your fears, your cares, your worries] on Him because He cares for you;”** TLB puts it this way, **“Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.”**

In Romans 8:28 Paul say’s that **“we know”** without a shadow of a doubt, **“we know with an absolute and experiential knowledge [oida] that in all things [pain, sorrow, rejection, loss, abandonment, abuse, betrayal] God works for the divinely good of those who love Him by their lifestyles, who have been called according to His predetermined purpose. ...What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”—** v. 31 {RR Exp}.

James encourages us in 1:2-3, to **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers**

[*hegeomai* {‘consider’} was originally a mathematical term, meaning- *add up the facts, weigh and compare the information at hand*], **whenever you face trials of many kinds** [multi-colored, multi-faceted: ‘trials of every shape, size, form and fashion’], **because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.**”

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; because when he has stood the test, he will receive the Crown of Life [one category of eternal reward] **that God has promised to those who love Him,**” James 1:12; here’s Peterson in *The Message*, **“Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is Life and more Life.”**

Promises for Needs.

Philippians 4:6-7: **“Do not be anxious about anything** [‘don’t be worried, don’t be fearful,’ literally, ‘over anything;’ from *merimnao*- ‘be anxious, troubled with cares’], **but in everything** [prosperity *or* adversity], **by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**” *Phroureo* is a military term meaning- *station a garrison, protect by military guard*. Here Paul uses it for the confidence and security of the one who puts everything in the hands of the Lord.

I want you to hear this in two more translations, two modern paraphrases. TLB says, **“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don’t forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this, you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.”** Then in *The Message* it has, **“Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.”** Amen to that!

Paul said in Philippians 4:19, **“And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus;”** Peterson translates this, **“You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need, His generosity exceeding even yours in the glory that pours from Jesus.”**

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed,” 2 Corinthians 9:8.

Matthew 6:31-34 is a part of Jesus’ first public sermon, the ‘Discourse on the Hill.’ While addressed to His followers in the nation of Israel, we as His disciples in His Church can take

hold of these truths by faith, for these truths speak to all believers. **“So do not worry saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans [‘the Gentiles’] run after all these things [they ‘seek’ them ‘eagerly’]; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own [without you adding to it by mental and emotional anxiety: fear, worry, panic, frustration, etc.]”**

1 Timothy 6:6-8 says, **“But godliness [true spirituality] with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”**

Promises When in Discouragement and Despair.

“But I will call upon the Lord [Yahweh: the covenant-keeping God] to save me” David said in Psalm 55:16— **“and He will. I will pray [qara- ‘call out, cry out loudly’] morning, noon, and night, pleading aloud with God; and He will hear and answer. Though the tide of battle runs strongly against me, for so many are fighting me, yet He will rescue me,”** He will ransom me unharmed from the Battle waged against me, vv. 17-18 {TLB}.

Isaiah 40:31, **“but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”**

Here’s the immediate context of v. 31— **“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength [they will exchange the *human* for the *divine*]. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint,”** vv. 29-30. To **“hope in the LORD”** is a beautiful picture of faith in the Hebrew. It means to ‘look for with eager expectation, to hope and to trust in.’ It was originally used for someone taking frail strands of cord, breakable by themselves, and twisting them together into a strong and resilient rope. *Qavah* speaks of a child of the King who takes the promises, provisions and rock-solid realities of the Sacred Word and weaves them into an unbreakable rope of faith.

Notice the progression in the Life God offers us: we soar on eagle’s wings, run like the wind, then walk unwearied, step after step and mile after mile. In the same way, there is a progression to ministry as well, in service to the People of God. You start out slow {maybe even at a crawl}, then you pick up the pace— faster and more determined— ultimately you run, you take off on a full blown sprint to the Finish. This assumes that we are not now all that we will be one day. And that *Abba* will lead us into the Life He’s promised us, the Life of fullness in His Spirit and freedom for our hearts!

Philippians 3:13-14: **“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it [‘taken hold’ of what?— the objective of Life in the Spirit of Christ: complete *wholeness* and *holiness*]. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”** Listen to TLB here. **“No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the Race and receive the prize for which God is calling us up to Heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for us.”**

“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength,” *all things* {without exception} through Jesus Christ my King— Philippians 4:13 {NIV}.

Living by faith includes the call to something far greater than self-protection. **“For God did not give us,”** as Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:7, **“a spirit of timidity [of ‘fear’ or ‘cowardice’], but of awesome power, of infinite love, and the wisdom of a disciplined soul,”** {RR Exp}. TEV says, **“For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, His Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control.”**

“For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are— yet was without sin. Let us then approach [for the purpose of worship: 7:25; 10:1 and 22; 11:6] the Throne of Grace with confidence [‘with boldness and courage, freedom and fearlessness’], so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need,” meaning ‘just in the nick of Time,’ before it’s too late— Heb 4:15-16.

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have [‘be satisfied in soul’], because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my Helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”— Hebrews 13:5-6 {NIV}. Peterson says on this same passage, **“Don’t be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have. Since God assured us, ‘I’ll never let you down, never walk off and leave you,’ we can boldly quote, ‘God is there, ready to help; I’m fearless no matter what. Who or what can get to me?’”**

Prayer Promises.

In Matthew 21:22 Jesus said, **“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer;”** and in *The Message*, **“Absolutely everything, ranging from small to large, as you make it a part of your believing prayer, gets included as you lay hold of God.”**

In John 15:7 He told the disciples, that **“If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”**

TLB says, **“But if you stay in Me and obey my commands, you may ask any request you like, and it will be granted!”**

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus,” 1 Thessalonians 5:18; and in *The Message*, **“Thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.”**

James in 1:5-6 of his letter to the Jewish believers in the 1st century who had been scattered because of persecution said, **“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask of God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him [a divine guarantee of the Father’s faithfulness]. But when he asks [the promise is *conditional* ... and this is the condition:], he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”**

Here’s how this sounds in *The Message*: **“If you don’t know what you’re doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You’ll get His help, and won’t be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believably, without a second thought. People who ‘worry their prayers’ are like wind-whipped waves,”** James 1:5-6.

1 John 3:21-22 says, **“Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from Him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him.”**

1 John 5:14-15 gives us the key to every category of prayer. **“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will [that’s it, ‘according to His will’], He hears us. And if we know that He hears us— whatever we ask— we know that we have what we have asked of Him.”** Listen to Peterson’s paraphrase of this in *The Message*: **“And how bold and free we then become in His presence, freely asking according to His will, sure that He’s listening. And if we’re confident that He’s listening, we know that what we’ve asked for is as good as ours.”**

Promises Regarding Unbelievers.

Paul said in Romans 1:16, **“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation [‘the rescue, redemption, and deliverance’] of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”**

In 1 Timothy 2 the Apostle declared, **“this is good and pleases God our Savior”** that **“intercession be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority,”** because our **“God ...desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the Truth,”** vv. 1b, 2a, 3-4.

Here’s one for women in 1 Peter 3:1-2. **“Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands [yeah, that one] so that, if any of them do not believe the Word [of Christ: the glorious Gospel of Grace], they may be won over without words by the**

behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.” Peterson puts it this way in *The Message*: **“The same goes for you wives: Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs. There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be captivated by your life of holy beauty.”**

2 Peter 3:9 says, **“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some seem to understand slowness. He is infinitely and unbelievably patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but each and every one to come to repentance [to a ‘change of mind’ about Jesus Christ],”** {RR Exp}.

“He [Jesus Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins [hilasmos means ‘sin-offering, expiation’], and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world,” 1 John 2:2. *Hilasmos* means that He satisfied once-and-for-all the righteous demands of the Father concerning the issue of sin by His sacrifice for us on Calvary’s Cross. Listen to *The Message*, **“When He served as a sacrifice for our sins, He solved the sin problem for good— not only yours, but the whole world’s.”**

Promises for the Future.

The Security of Our Salvation.

Jesus said to His disciples in John 10:28-29, **“I give them Eternal Life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”** Again, Peterson say’s, **“I give them real and eternal Life. They are protected from the Destroyer for good. No one can steal them from out of My hand. The Father who put them under My care is so much greater than the Destroyer and Thief. No one could ever get them away from Him.”** Amen!

1 Peter 1:3-5: **“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade— kept [‘reserved, set aside’] in Heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

Resurrection and Return.

Philippians 3:20-21 says, **“But our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.”**

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation [and deliverance] through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we

are awake or asleep [alive or dead ‘in Christ’], **we may live together with Him,**” 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.

1 John 3:1-2: **“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”**

Eternity.

When you compare Revelation 7:16-17 with Revelation 21:3-4, you see this incredible picture of Eternity with Christ, one where “never again will” His friends and lovers “**hunger; never again will they thirst. The Sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb ...will be their Shepherd; He will lead them to springs of Living Water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. ... Now the dwelling of God is with men [that is, the *personal* Presence of Jesus Christ], and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. [Once more] He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”** For “**the first things**”— the *former* things— “**have passed away,**” the “**old order**” is gone for good. TLB translates this last phrase, “**All of that has gone forever.**” This passage concerns the promise of Eternity, what we ought to call the *Hope* of Heaven.

Revelation 20:6 says, “**Blessed and holy are those who have part in the First Resurrection. The second death has no power over them [the ‘second death’ is the ‘Lake of Fire,’ 20:14], but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”**

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God [Jesus Christ, God in man] is with men, and He will live with them [‘dwell among them,’ NAU]. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away,” Revelation 21:3-4.

: Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, p. 86

: Ibid., pp. 146-7