

A Personal Promise

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the significance of God's personal promises and the humility required to embrace them in our lives.

Duration: 22:10

Scripture: 1 Samuel 23:14, 2 Samuel 7:18-19, Psalm 103:12, Psalm 145:3, Lamentations 3:22-23, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:19

Topics: "Promise"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of David from the book of 1 Samuel. David goes from being an unknown shepherd boy to a famous warrior and leader of the army. However, due to King Saul's jealousy, David becomes an outlaw and is forced to hide in the wilderness and caves. Many of the Psalms written by David were composed during this time. The speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's promises and only fighting the battles that God wants us to fight. The sermon also highlights the mercy and love of God, and how we should be grateful for His blessings in our lives.

Transcript

So what I want to share with you is something I feel the Lord laid on my heart. The first two points are very meaningful to all of us. We should develop that more and more, what we're going to read.

The third point, I trust, is prophetic for somebody here in this place. The setting of the text is this. David, in the book of 1 Samuel, goes from unknown shepherd boy to famous warrior to leader of the army, the toast of the town of all of Israel, David, and then outlaw, because King Saul is jealous of him, wants to kill him.

So David is running into the woods, the wilderness, caves, the desert areas down in the Negev, and many of the Psalms which we have by David were written while he was on the run. He got up to having about 600 men with him, who were kind of his large militia force, a posse, but it was no match for all the soldiers in the army of Israel. But God kept him alive, as he has kept another David alive to serve him.

But the Lord had spoken a prophetic word over David that David would one day sit on the throne of Israel. It looked unlikely, but when God says it, it's going to happen. How many say amen? First Samuel ends with Saul and his sons being killed in a battle against the Philistines.

Saul has gone off the tracks consulting with a witch and no longer depends on the Lord. His son Jonathan, who is David's best friend really, dies that day. I've always felt that's one of the saddest parts of the Bible,

and I've taken it to mean this.

In my mind, Jonathan should have never been fighting in that battle with his father, because he knew who David was. His heart was knit to David. But sometimes you end up fighting battles you have no business being in, and you can really get hurt.

Many times they involve loyalty to family or to culture. That's a good lesson for all of us. I only want to fight the battles God wants me to fight.

How many are with me? Say amen. And that's tragic to me, because when David became king, he could have had Jonathan as his assistant with all that experience. But Jonathan was no more, because he died fighting with a loser, in this case his father, who God had departed from.

Fighting a battle he never should have been in, in my judgment. And it turns out to be a sad story. So now David, Saul's dead.

David is not right away made king, but the people know that this is the champion of Israel. And men stay with him, and then the southern kingdom, Judah, links up with them. But the northern kingdom was still loyal to King Saul, even though he had died.

And one of his sons, Ish-bosheth, has been made king. And a lot of them were loyal to that king. But eventually God put all of Israel under David's rule, even as he had spoken that.

And now David is king. And one day, David having that sensitive heart that was so unusual, because remember the Bible said David had a heart after God's own heart. There was something about David's heart that made him so special to God.

Was he perfect? No. We blush, and we have to turn away from some of the pages of scripture, of some of the things David got involved with. But I thank God he doesn't judge us for our worst moments.

He judges us the fact that we trust him, and that we rely on him. And if a righteous man falls six times, he gets up seven. All in favor say amen.

So there's a good lesson there for us. Because when I was growing up in church, I thought God only used you if you were perfect. And some of us have grown up around that concept.

God never uses you because of who you are. God uses you despite who you are, because of his mercy, and his grace, and his love, and his purposes which we don't understand. And now we're going to come face to face with that.

One day David says to the prophet, wait a minute, something's wrong. I'm living in a beautiful house, palace, and God's tent, the tabernacle, is out in the open. Remember the temple hadn't been built.

The temple was eventually built by David's son. What was his name? Solomon. But David has this thought first, and he goes, that's not right.

I'm living in the lap of luxury, and the ark of the covenant, and the tabernacle is still just slipshod kind of operation. It doesn't sound right. So he says to the prophet, prophet, why is this happening? This is not right.

And the prophet wrongly says, probably, the prophet Nathan says to him, do whatever is in your heart, for God is with you. But even if God is with you, you can't do anything that's in your heart. You got to make sure it comes from God.

So Nathan, after he gives him that word of encouragement, God gives him a little correction and says, no, tell David, he's not the one to build my temple. His son is going to build it. But I want you to go back and tell David this, because he thought of me, because he wanted to honor me.

Tell him that he's going to have a son, and there's a double meaning to that portion of scripture. He's not only going to have a son that will build the temple, Solomon, but then he had another son, because Jesus was called the son of David. And Jesus is now building the real temple, because God doesn't dwell in any building, buildings he's not interested in.

He's interested in hearts and people's lives. So Jesus is building that temple today, and we're co-laborers with him. But tell David this also, that I will always have one of his descendants sitting on the throne.

His kingdom will never have an end. Speaking of Jesus being the ultimate descendant, whose kingdom will have no end. This guy was a shepherd boy.

This guy almost died 50 times out in the wilderness. Now God is telling the prophet, you tell him this, and I'm going to do this for him, and I'm going to bless him. And now the prophet goes back and tells David, David, here's the bad news, you can't build the temple.

God has other plans, but here's the good news, and gives him all of this stuff about what God is going to do, and how he's going to bless him. He's going to bless him after he dies, by blessing his descendants. It's overwhelming to David.

So David gets alone with God, and he sits down someplace. And now we're privy to this prayer, and the way he talks to God. By the way, I want you to notice the naturalness of how David speaks to God.

I've been trying to learn more of that in my own life, because when you grow up in church and you hear people pray, you sometimes think that's the way we should always pray, or it can become churchy. I'm going to understand what I'm talking about. It becomes very religious, right? And it's not the way we talk to anyone else that we respect.

So now here's what David says. Let's look at it in 2 Samuel chapter 7. Then King David went into the tent of the Lord's presence, and he sat down. Didn't stand, didn't kneel.

He sat down, and he prayed, Sovereign Lord, I am not worthy of what you have already done for me, nor is my family. Yet now you are doing even more, Sovereign Lord. You have made promises about my descendants in the years to come, and you let a man see this, Sovereign Lord.

What more can I say to you? You know me, your servant. It was your will and purpose to do this. You have done all these great things in order to instruct me.

How great you are, Sovereign Lord. There is none like you. We have always known that you alone are God.

We'll look at another passage later, but get this picture, because isn't that something we all should be saying today? Who are we that you should be so good to us? Isn't that in your heart today? You have to

be filled with pride if you can't say that, honestly, because if anyone has any humility in them, who are we? Come on. Not what people think. What God knows about us.

Who are any of us that God should send his Son, should chase after us, show us mercy after mercy, faithfully fulfill his promise, surprise us with blessings, and when sometimes we were at our worst, he protected us even more. Am I not right? Can we put our hands together and thank God? Who are we? This is one of the reasons why God must have treasured David, because notice the humility that's in his heart. You know, God is drawn to humility.

He resists the proud. Some people, Christians, ministers, can strut around and act like they're somebody, but David, the greatest, he said, who am I? Who am I? How in the world are you blessing me like this? Who am I? Not I deserve it. I'm glad you noticed me.

I always thought I was better than my brothers. No, no. Who am I? How many have that testimony today before God? Lift your hand.

Who am I? Say it with me. Who am I? Who are we? Who are we? Who am I? You know, St. Teresa of Avila, a medieval saint, said to her servants in the convent where she was, who were studying her every move and so taken up with her and thought she was so great, she one time turned to them and said, stop fawning over me. If you knew what I was really like, you'd never talk to me.

Now there's a woman who knew herself. Because how we are with other people and the good face we put on, that's not the real us. Do I get a witness here somewhere? So who are we? Who are we? That almighty, holy God, perfect God should be so good to us.

I don't know your life story, but I'll tell you my life story right now. Goodness and mercy has followed me all the days of my life. And the reason I'm standing here today is because God is full of mercy and love.

The only reason we're here in this building, it's purely the mercy of God. Who are we that God should be so good? Has God been as good to you as he has been to me? How many remember times when you were embarrassed by your own behavior and God still didn't throw you away? Can somebody say amen? I mean secret things that only us and God know about. Come on, for real now.

Who are we that God should cover us with mercy and love and shower us with blessings? When I look at my children or my grandchild, I got a new little one, Charlotte. She's so sweet. She's crawling now, but I told you Sunday, she only goes in reverse.

It's the saddest thing. She can't move forward no matter what. We're trying to get her in another gear, but I just look at her.

Who am I that I should have such a beautiful granddaughter to enjoy? I could be dead. I could be in jail. I could be a drunkard like my father was for 22 years.

Who am I? Who am I? Who are you? It's purely the mercy of God. Don't you feel that tonight? How many just feel total gratitude toward God? Come on, let's lift up our hands and just praise him out loud. Lift your hands up.

Just thank him. Say, God, who am I that you should bless me like this? Who am I, God, that you should be so merciful, so kind, so patient, God? Who are we, God? Who are we, God? We praise you. It's because

of who you are.

For the Lord then heard this from David's lips. You may put your hands down. For you know me, O Lord.

You know me. See, you think you know me, but you don't know me. He knows me.

Your friends think they know you. They don't know you. How many know where I'm going right here, where I'm talking? God knows you.

And David is saying, God, it's not just who am I. You know me. How do you come off blessing me like this when you know me? Because you can hide a lot of things from a lot of people, including your spouse, but you can't hide a thing from God. And like Bill Gaither wrote years ago, that song, the one who knows me best loves me most.

How is that possible? Because there's a lot of people, the better you get to know them, the more you kind of withdraw. They look great on the outside. Haven't you ever had that happen? Like this is the greatest person, then you get to know them and you go, oh, like, Lord, have mercy.

God knows us and still loves us. I don't know about you. I can't get over that today.

I can't get over that today. Who am I that I should have such a sweet mom? I was with her, with my wife last night, 101 years old, trying to feed her some food, getting her appetite back. And she's doing better.

But I looked at her there and she pointed up once to heaven to say, oh, thank God. Who am I to have a mom like that? Who am I? Why should I have a mother like that? I have other friends that their mother never cared for them, never told them once they loved them. We're on drugs, on alcohol.

Who am I? Why this blessing to me? I got to give God all the glory. I got to give God all the praise. Can we one more time clap our hands with David? God, who am I? God, who am I? Who am I? And God, you know me.

You know me, God. But here's the part that struck me. So David starts out that prayer in a kind of worshipful tone, humbles himself.

That's a good way. He just worships God. Who am I? You are so great.

You are so grand. You are so merciful for you know me, God. How in the world? You know, that's a bad thing for us.

I want to just stay on this for one more second. When you get used to being saved, that's a very sad day. We should be excited that we're just been having all our sins cleansed.

I just read yesterday in the Puritan book of sayings, the only sins God forgives are the ones that he never remembers anymore. There's no such thing of God ever forgiving a sin and then remembering it. How could we not be praising him every day? How many are happy he forgives and forgets, right? And washes it away as far as the east is from the west.

He separates us and we get used to that. We're like, yeah, I'm saved. I'm a Christian.

We should never get used to that. We should be like your mercies are new every day. Oh God, one more time.

Come on. Great is your faithfulness. We praise you, God.

We praise you, God. We praise you, God. So as I was following David's prayer, I'm watching while I want to learn how to pray better myself.

So he's saying, who am I? And then you know me. You know me. And then notice what he says here in two verses that are separated in the text, but I put them together.

And now Lord God, fulfill for all time, the promise you made about me and my descendants and do what you said you would. Then verse 28, and now sovereign Lord, you are God. You always keep your promises and you have made this wonderful promise to me.

Two things about that. Notice the power there is in praying when you say to God, now God, do what you said. Do what you said.

I'm not making this thing up, God. You said it. Now I'm praying it.

You made the promise. And that's why when you read your Bible and the Holy Spirit makes a promise alive to you. I know one day when I was in a very bad place and the church was under the gun financially and I was struggling, you know, I read that verse and my God shall supply all of your needs.

The thing just came alive. How many ever have a verse that just comes alive in you? And then I was able to pray, now God, do what you said. You said you would supply our needs.

This is not icing on the cake. This is the cake. We need this, God.

Notice how it's a good way to pray, Lord, do what you said. God loves that. He loves to be reminded.

But here's the part that got me. This was no promise in the Bible that David was talking about. This was a personal promise.

He didn't say, my God, you promised to supply all of our needs, now supply them. God, you promised to give us victory in every battle when we fight under your name. He didn't say that either.

He said, now God, the personal thing you told me, do what you said. This word I just got through the prophet. It's about me.

Nobody else can take that promise in the whole world. No one in the universe, not the apostle Paul, no one can take that promise. That's only for David.

Your descendants will always be on the throne. See, God loves to make personal prophetic promises and intimations in our lives to prepare us and to draw us to believe him. So he'll speak about the future of your life, not the person next to you, your life.

Sometimes it can come in a vision. Sometimes it can come in like a sense of a burden. I'm supposed to do that for the Lord.

He's going to help me one day do that. I have some right now that I could tell God about that are between me and him, but I believe he showed me them that I'm going to use you in this way. When you have that, you have every right to go to God and say, God, that personal word that you gave to me, do what you said.

Hasn't happened yet. This goes along with Psalm 119, verse 49. Remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope.

God, you spoke to me. I know he spoke to me long before Chrissy ever came back to God. He told me she was going to come back and made it so real to me.

And then I could go to him and say, God, remember your word. Now do what you promised me that. Now fulfill it, Lord.

Fulfill it. It hasn't happened, but it took me through some difficult times. He made personal promises to my wife about music when she was just a little girl.

These are to encourage us. He gave one to David. And I just wonder, maybe somebody is here today and God has spoken a word into your life, into your heart.

It's a private, personal thing. It's between you and God, but you know it. It's a godly thing.

It'll bring glory to Jesus. It's not selfish. And we learned from David that God makes personal promises to his children.

He did it in the New Testament to Peter, to Paul, and maybe he's made one to you tonight. And you're struggling because you haven't seen it. And I want to stir you up to a holy remembrance, whether it's about one of your children.

I don't care how they're doing. Did God promise you something? Did God show that to you he was going to do it? Are you going to quit trusting him now? Are you going to hold on to him and say, God, do what you said? You said you would do that. Now, God, do what you said.

If he's made that kind of promise to you, you got to hold on to it and treasure it. I would love to see David open up his heart and tell us the intimations and the leadings that the Holy Spirit has given him over the years. I know God has given me some.

And I want you tonight not to let the devil rob that word to your life from the Lord. It's not your dream. It's not your destiny.

Don't use those words. It's the promise of God for your life that God is going to do something that hasn't happened yet. And I don't care how unlikely it seems.

And you look and you say, I don't see how that could ever happen. And you know what? She's even worse now than she used to be. Put all that aside and just go to God today and say, Lord, I believe you promised me something.

Now do it. Bring her home. Accomplish it in my life.

Let's bow our heads. I just wonder if there's some folks here. Maybe it's a call to the ministry.

It could be a call to be a missionary. Maybe I feel called to be a witness to a certain kind of people. And you know what? I know that's real in my heart.

God made it real to me. You get out of your seat and come up here and just stand and say, God, I'm not going to let go of that promise you made me. You didn't make it to everyone.

You made it to me about my life. Just get out of your seat and come forward. Thank you, Jesus.

Fulfill your word. Do what you promised. You're a faithful God.

Do as you said to me, Lord. Do as you said to me. We pray with David.

Do what you said, God. Do what you promised for us, Lord. That specific personal thing you made real to your children, Lord.

Everybody turn around and hug a bunch of people. God bless you. See you Sunday.

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