

(2006 Conference) 9. Seven Wonderful Promises (Video)

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and highlights the struggle to let go of earthly desires and embrace the promises of the New Covenant. It encourages believers to focus on becoming overcomers in Christ, overcoming sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil. The sermon also stresses the need to trust in God's grace, to keep a clear conscience, and to humbly submit to God's will, allowing Him to build His church and lead us in triumph.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:20, Luke 5:37, Romans 6:14, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 16:18

Description

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Transcript

There is a verse I want to read in 2nd Corinthians chapter 1, 2nd Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 20. It says, as many as are the promises of God in Christ Jesus, they are yes. And therefore also through him is our amen to the glory of God through us.

There are some fantastic promises in scripture and it says, these promises God has made for man, especially the promises that are given us in Christ. There were a lot of Old Testament promises which were given through Moses like, I will prosper you, I will heal you, I will make you the chief among the nations. I have observed through the years, and you have heard me say that, that most Christians prefer to live under the Old Covenant.

It looks as though God says, hey fellas, I want you to give up this Old Covenant and come to something more glorious, the New Covenant. But like Jesus said, when the new wine is presented, they say the old is better. Jesus actually said that in Luke chapter 5. They taste the new wine and say the old is better.

We don't want all these heavenly blessings, we want something right now on earth. And that's why they say the old is better. I wonder if you say that.

Do you know that verse in Luke's Gospel chapter 5? If you don't let me show it to you. It's good to see everything from scripture. It's quite an interesting verse.

And he says in the last two verses, new wine must be put into new fresh wineskins, but no one after drinking the old wine wants the new. He says the old is good enough. Let me paraphrase that.

People hear about the New Covenant, and they say no, the old is good enough. In the Old Covenant they promised us healing for our bodies, they promised us prosperity, they promised us a lot of things on this earth, that's good enough for me. And that is the Gospel being preached today.

And the Lord says, okay, if that's good enough, that's good enough, go ahead. But how many will there be who will say the old is not good enough? God has abolished the Old Covenant, it says in Hebrews 8, I want the new. In the New Covenant you read about overcomers in Revelation.

In Revelation chapter 21 it says, he who overcomes will inherit all things. Revelation 21 verse 7, and I will be his God and he will be my son. He who overcomes, to all the churches in Revelation Jesus wrote, he who overcomes.

God's desire is that we must be overcomers. There was no such thing in the Old Covenant. In the Old Covenant you only overcame the Canaanites and the Philistines and the Edomites and the Moabites.

I have no interest in overcoming Moabites and Edomites and Canaanites and all those people today. I've got an interest in overcoming sin. I've got an interest in overcoming the devil.

I've got an interest in overcoming the world. Today the enemies of the Christian are the world, the spirit of the world, the fashions of the world, and all that is in the world. And then there is the flesh with its lusts and desires and corruption and then there is the devil.

That's what we've got to overcome. We don't have any Moabites or Philistines or your relatives or your boss or your difficult neighbor. We're not interested in overcoming them, but many people say, no, that's what we want.

Lord, I want you to deal with my neighbor. I want you to deal with my boss. The old is good enough.

In the Old Testament, Lord, you dealt with all the Israelites' enemies. But in the New Covenant, God did not deal with Jesus' enemies. Jesus' enemies, they continued to live for long lives, I suppose, because the New Covenant is different.

Very rarely you find nowadays God judging someone. I mean, there are cases like that where I remember hearing in Charles Spinney's ministry in the 19th century in England, somebody would get up and oppose his ministry and he would drop dead. But that is very rare.

I mean, like Ananias and Sapphira. Rare. It's not very common.

Very, very rare. In the Old Covenant, it was there all the time. Anybody who opposed Israel would be smitten.

But now that's rare. In the New Covenant, our enemies are primarily spiritual. We don't fight with them.

We don't fight with earthly enemies. But if our mind is set on earthly things, you'll find unconsciously we tend towards Old Covenant blessings and we never come into the New Covenant. Now, I'll tell you some of my personal convictions on this.

I don't want to impose it on anybody. But I am totally sold out on the New Covenant in every single aspect, because I believe this is what Jesus shed his blood for. It's called the blood of the everlasting covenant he made with God and man.

And I say, Lord, if there's anything Old Covenant in me, I want you to remove it. I'm not interested in earthly blessing. Zero.

I'm only interested in heavenly blessing. I want you to make me an overcomer over sin, over the world. The spirit of the world gets no foothold in me.

Over the flesh, all the lusts of the flesh, over Satan and all his hosts. I'm not interested in winning earthly court cases or God smiting my neighbors or dealing with difficult people or people who criticize me. I'm not interested in all that.

God can do whatever he wants. But I definitely want to overcome sin and the world and the flesh and the devil. I want to be an overcomer there.

And so, I say, Lord, I'm never going to call you Jehovah. I know there are lots of things about Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah. I say, Lord, I read the entire episodes and I never find the word Jehovah there even once.

Why are all these songwriters in this age singing about Jehovah? Okay, let them do it. I'm not going to do it. I never call God Jehovah, because Jesus taught me to call him father.

He told Moses that his name was Jehovah. I'll give you numerous instances to show you how Christians would prefer to go and say the old is better, Jehovah is better. Why call him father? I don't.

I take God's word extremely seriously in a day and age where it doesn't mean anything to most people. Jesus said, when you pray, say our father, not Jehovah. But you know the number of people who sing songs to Jehovah? And they say, then they argue about, is it Jehovah or is the correct pronunciation Yahweh? I say, I couldn't care less.

I don't call him either. Whether Jehovah, Yahweh, I call him father. I know how to pronounce that.

And I go one step further and I call him dad, Abba. I know how to pronounce that. All these, it's amazing how almost no Christian stands up against all this and says, this is all old covenant, man.

And that is the reason for their shallow lives. Because in the old covenant, they could not overcome the world. They could not overcome the flesh.

They could not overcome the devil. And in the old covenant, they used to get depressed and discouraged. In the new covenant, it says, rejoice always.

Do you know Christians who have argued with me? Brother Zach, you cannot say that everybody must rejoice always. Can you imagine born again believers telling me that you must not preach that people must rejoice always because they say there is something called clinical depression? I suppose the Holy

Spirit didn't know about that when he said rejoice in the Lord always. Well, I say, I don't know about all that, brother.

You can say what you like. You better scratch out that verse from your Bible and say, those who don't have clinical depression, rejoice in the Lord always. It's not what it says.

I don't care what people say. I believe God's word. Sin shall not have dominion over you means it will not have dominion over you.

You can rejoice. I don't mean smile always. There's no such verse in scripture.

That's for idiots. Go around smiling all the time. Rejoice in the Lord always.

That is what it says. It's an inner thing. There may be sorrow.

Jesus was a man of sorrows, but he had a joy, inward joy that kept him triumphant. The joy of the Lord was his strength. We don't follow Elijah who got depressed.

We don't follow Moses who lost his temper and broke those tablets of stone. We don't follow David who committed adultery and married so many women. The author and finisher of our faith is Jesus who never got depressed, who never lost his temper when it concerned anything personal.

He was angry for the house of God. The zeal of God's house ate him up, but never concerning anything personal. Never, never, never.

And he was never depressed. He was never angry concerning himself and he was never impure. You must keep Jesus as the author and finisher of your faith if you want to be an overcomer.

Will you pray this prayer with me? Lord, deliver me from the old covenant completely. Show me that the old covenant is over. It's like, you know, I remember living in India in the British days.

I used to live in New Delhi in 1947, early part of it. And our king was King George VI. You ask me who was my king as a little six year old boy, I'd say King George VI.

But you ask me today, I don't say King George or Queen Elizabeth. I've finished with all that. Who is the head of your state, Queen Elizabeth? Queen Elizabeth? No.

President of India. That's what I mean. The difference, one regime has finished.

Do you know that the old covenant is over? We are in a new covenant. Why do we say the old is good enough? Like say, oh, the British Raj was the best. I wish we were still under Queen Elizabeth.

This is how some people are living under the old covenant. And I want to encourage all of you to break free from that and come into the new covenant. We're living in another day.

Jesus has come. The Holy Spirit has come. And there are blessings.

There are fantastic promises. All the promises of God which are in Christ. Second Corinthians 120, God has said, yes.

And we say, amen. That's ours. We must be bold to claim those promises.

If somebody sends you a check, some multi-millionaire sends you a check. Let's say somebody like Bill Gates, richest man in the world, sends you a check. Number of checks.

Here, I like you so much. Here are some checks. What's the use admiring them? I got to go to the bank and cash them and say, thank you.

And whenever I have a need, I go and cash that check. This is even greater. God has given me promises signed by Jesus Christ, who's got all authority in heaven and earth.

And I can go to the bank of heaven and claim every single one of them. But it says in that verse in Second Corinthians 120, it's not enough that God has said yes in Jesus. We have to say, amen.

Second Corinthians 120. God has said yes in Christ. We have to say amen.

Any of you who have taken a check to a bank, if you want to cash a cash check, you go to any bank, signed by whoever it is, richest man in the world, whatever amount it is, whether it's 10 rupees or 1 million rupees, pay cash, they will always ask you to sign on the back side. They won't give it to you otherwise. But you say it's signed on the front.

I know it's signed on the front, but you got to sign on the back. It's signed on the front. In the name of Jesus Christ, this promise is mine.

I know, but you got to say amen to that. Otherwise you won't get it. That is the reason a lot of people don't get it.

They don't sign on the back and say, this is for me. So I want to encourage you. I just want to share a few promises with you this morning.

And I want you to put your signature on the back and say, this is for me. Don't, the signature of Jesus is already on the front. You say, Lord, this is for me.

The first one is the first promise in the New Testament, Matthew 121, where it says, thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. I want to say to you, the first promise in the New Testament, that is for you. Put your arm into that.

I'm going to give you seven promises. And I want you to put your arm into all seven. There are many more.

They're all from the New Testament. I'm not going to go back to the Old Testament of Jehovah and killing our earthly enemies. And no, we're finished with all that.

We're in a new regime, new covenant. And the first promise on the page of the New Testament is, he will save you from your sins. Meditate on that for a moment.

When you say, in the name of Jesus, what does it mean? For many people, when you say, in Jesus' name, all it means is now we can open our eyes. The prayer is over. That's not the meaning of it.

In Jesus' name means I come in the merit of Jesus Christ. I come in the merit of him who has come to save me from all my sins. I ask for this.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. Let me tell you the good news. You do not have to save yourself from your sins.

Then it's not a promise. Do you know the difference between a promise and a command? A command is, brother, save yourself from your sins. That's a command.

A promise is, he will save you from your sins. There's a world of difference between his doing it and my doing it. Supposing there is a big problem which you can't solve, and you contact some high official who is a good friend of yours, and he says, don't worry, I'll do it.

Finished. Your responsibility is over. He's a trustworthy fellow.

He said he'll do it. Whatever needs to be done, he'll do it. Can you trust Jesus like that? He will save you from your sins.

You say, why haven't I got it then? You didn't put your amen on the backside of the check. Yes, that's for me. Sin will not have dominion over you.

That's the same thing, Romans 6.14. Because you're not under Moses, you're under Christ. You're not under law, but you're under grace. That is the first thing that you must claim.

Lord, this particular sin is ruling over me. You said you'll save me from it. Think of some sin right now that has been ruling you ever since you heard this message 20 years ago.

For 20 years it has ruled you. Will you say today, Lord Jesus, you'll save me from that? It may be anger in some of your cases. You still haven't got victory over anger.

It may be sexual lust. Those are the two first sins that Jesus mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount. That's why I mentioned them.

The first sins that Jesus mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, verse 20 onwards, anger, sexual lust, telling lies, bitterness against other people who hurt you. These are the three-fourth common sins that people just can't overcome. Anger, sexually dirty thoughts, telling lies, and bitterness against others, enemies, and people who hurt you.

You read Matthew 5, the last half of it, you'll find these are the four sins that Jesus said. And that's why I mentioned them. That's why I mentioned them so often.

Are you a slave to one of these? Or all of these perhaps? Will you put your arm into the promise of God that sin will not have dominion over you anymore because you're under grace? Perhaps you need to go to God and say, Lord, I still haven't understood what it means to be under grace. Help me to understand what it means to be under grace. I'm not under law.

Law means my effort. Grace means God's effort. Law means my trying to save myself from sin.

Grace means He saves me from sin. It's a question of whom you trust. You trust yourself, you don't get it.

You trust in Jesus, He does it for you. So that's the first thing, and I believe we must be wholehearted and radical and never be satisfied until you get victory over this. Murmuring, complaining, grumbling, all these things, we've got to finish with it.

Think what your home will become if you get rid of murmuring and complaining in your home. Think what your home will become if you get rid of anger from your home. Think what your home will become if you get rid of depression, bad moods.

They are, what does it say in 2 Corinthians 1.20? What Jesus has, God has, all the promises of God are yes in Christ, that means He's put His signature, we put our amen, and it's ours. He will write His laws in our heart and mind. That's what He's promised to do.

We must not give up until we experience this. Not talk about it, but actually experience it. It will revolutionize your home and your church and everything if the leaders actually enter into the new covenant.

I fear that many of our elder brothers have not entered into the new covenant themselves. So how can a person who has only passed first standard teach a college class? That is the problem with many of our elders. They have passed first standard and they are trying to teach a college class.

No, we've got to get past this. We've got to really be overcomers. Otherwise, you can't get up and preach God's word just because you've studied something or you've meditated and produced a message.

No. It must come out of your overcoming life. Otherwise you'll be like the elder in Sardis and the elder in Laodicea.

So here's where we must begin. Lord, you will save me from my sins. I want to believe that today.

That's the name of Jesus means you will save me from my sins. You will give me the power to overcome just like Jesus gave Peter the power to overcome the law of gravity and walk on the water. To me that Jesus walking on the water and Peter walking on the water is a beautiful picture of the new covenant.

Under the old covenant, the law of gravity took over. Everybody sank in the water. But then Jesus came and he walked on the water overcoming the law of sin and death.

The law of sin and death is like gravity pulling us down. Jesus overcame and walked. And Peter said, Lord, if it's you, I can also walk.

Can you say that? Lord, if you lived on earth overcoming sin, I can live on earth overcoming sin. And Jesus said, come. If you've got the faith, come.

And he came and he looked unto Jesus and lo and behold, he could overcome gravity too according to your faith. Be it unto you. And he walks and he's triumphant and all of a sudden he gets a little proud.

That's the end. Or he looks around and this massive temptation or perhaps looks around to see what's happening to all the others. The moment you start looking around, whatever the reason, because you're proud or because the temptation is too big or to see whether others are obeying God as much as you, I guarantee you'll go down.

And when you start going down, you must pray what Peter prayed. Lord, save me. He'll save you.

But if you don't look around and just keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, you need not sink. That's the message of that miracle. Every miracle was a parable.

Every miracle was a parable to teach us something. That you can be an overcomer like Jesus overcame. To me, the greatest miracle there is not Jesus walking on the water.

That's not a great thing. It's Peter walking on the water. That's the miracle.

Jesus overcoming sin is not such a great thing. But if I can overcome sin, I who was such a slave, when I overcome, that's a miracle. Isn't it a miracle if you overcome anger? Or you who are slaves to dirty thoughts and internet pornography and all that, you suddenly finish with it? Boy, what a miracle that is.

Think how effective your life will become if you start going along that direction. And you get rid of bitterness. You get rid of telling lies.

Boy, you become an overcomer. Those are the ones we need in our church. Overcomers.

Where our homes become like little heaven. Our home becomes like a little heaven. No anger, nobody in a bad mood, anytime.

I decided long ago, I will never be in a bad mood for one second in my whole life. Why? Because of 2 Corinthians 1.20. All the promises of God are yes in Christ Jesus and I put my arm into it. That's it.

It's not got to do with my determination. I'm not a Buddhist controlling my feelings. No.

I'm a Christian. Jesus saves me. Not my gritting my teeth and yoga and all that.

No, no, no. It's Jesus. It's another power that keeps me from falling.

You must believe that. He'll keep you from falling. Believe it.

Put your arm into it. Okay, here's a second promise. And that's the second promise in the New Testament, Matthew 3.11. A lot of people have a problem with this.

Also, Matthew 3.11 is the second promise in the New Testament which is, He will, again it is He. Remember this. Old covenant is thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt.

But the new covenant promises are completely different. He will, He will, He will. If you can understand this fundamental difference between law, law is thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt.

And if you hear a preacher in your church saying thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt, he's under the law. The one who's under grace says he will. He will save you from your sins.

He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. John the Baptist said don't come to me. I can't help you.

I can baptize you in water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Don't think you have to go to somebody, you know, some. I know the early apostles had an ability to lay hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit, but I've never met anybody in my life.

Listen to this. I've never met anybody in my life who had that ability. I think the early apostles had it.

You just got to face facts. If they prayed for 12 people, all 12 received the Holy Spirit. I pray for 12 and I wonder if anybody received the Holy Spirit, maybe one.

I don't have that ability. So don't come to me. If I place my empty hands on your empty head, nothing's going to happen.

But go to Jesus and ask him to fill you with your Holy Spirit. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire, immerse you in the Holy Spirit. I went to him and I asked him to immerse me in the Holy Spirit and I asked him many, many times, Lord, set me on fire.

I'm getting a little cold, Lord. Set me on fire. I want to be a blazing flame for Jesus till the day I die.

Do you have that desire? You can't do it. You can't work yourself up. You can work up emotions, but you can't get the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Only he can do it. Only he. He will save you from your sins.

He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. Do you think he'll deny that to you after he said he'll do it? Think of earthly people who have made you some promises saying, don't worry, I'll do it. And you call him up a second time and you say, listen, didn't I tell you I'd do it? Trust me, I'll do it.

Can you trust Jesus? Can you go to him and say, Lord, here's a check signed by you that you will baptize me in the Holy Spirit and fire. Here today I'm writing my amen on the backside of it. That's for me.

Claim it. Say, Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit and I believe this is something continuous. I need to be saved from my sins continuously.

The first promise in the New Testament is not something that happened to me ten years ago. It has to happen to me today. Next week I have to be saved from my sin.

He will save you from your sins is a continuous promise. Just because you went and cashed a check in the bank last month, does that take care of your needs today? No. You got to go to the bank again and cash another check for today's needs.

It's like that. Okay. He baptized me in the Holy Spirit.

I need to be baptized continuously, immersed continuously in fire. I met a lot of people who were on fire for God sometime ago, but they're cold as anything today. What happened? They quoted date in the past.

I spoke in tongues on so and so date. So what brother, you're not on fire today. God wants us to be on fire all the time and I can't do it.

He has to do it. I have to write my amen. You'll do it Lord.

You'll do it for me. Why not go to God and claim some of these magnificent promises where Jesus has already put his signature on it and said, it's for you. You put your arm in behind and say, yes, it's for me.

That is boldness to go before God and claim that promise. I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve you Lord, whatever gifts you want to give me.

And it says in second Corinthians one 20 for the glory of God. That's also written in that verse, Lord, it is not for my glory. I give you my word.

I give you my word. I told the Lord that Lord, whatever gift you give me, I will never try to make profit out of it for myself. I won't write books for profit.

I will not write, make CDs for profit. I will not preach for profit. I will not do anything for myself for the glory of God.

Go to God and say that I Lord, I won't even seek honor with my gift. Only the glory of God. Don't seek to exercise a gift so that people will recognize it and make you an elder in the church.

Lord, I don't want to be an elder in the church. I want to glorify God. That's all.

I don't want anybody to recognize my gift and say, oh, that's a good brother to make an elder in the church. Is that what you're interested in? Get rid of all these carnal desires and say, Lord, I want to glorify you. That's all.

That's why I want to be saved from sin. That's why I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit all the time. He will do it.

This is not a command. It's a promise. Please distinguish.

I'm not preaching commands this morning. I'm telling you promises to which you must put your signature at the back. I'm in.

Okay, let's go to another wonderful promise in one Corinthians chapter 10. In one Corinthians chapter 10, we have a wonderful promise of God, which has been a tremendous encouragement to me through many, many years. One Corinthians 10:13 promise number three.

God is faithful in the middle of that verse who will never allow you to be tempted beyond what you're able to bear, but will with every temptation make a way to escape so that you can endure it. I tell you, I would be scared to face the future if I didn't have that verse. God will never allow you to be tested by a test, which is so massive that you cannot bear it.

Now, if you don't put your arm into that, well, then you may face a test, which is going to be too much for you because it's everything is according to faith. I'll tell you one thing in the New Testament faith means you put your arm into that check. It's faith is that simple.

You put your arm into the backside of that check, and if you don't do that, you will not get it. You will not be saved from your sin. You will not be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

You may face a massive trial, which you can't handle. But I don't believe in my entire life, however long I live, I will never face a trial, which is too much for me to handle. I'll never face a trial, which I cannot overcome.

I will never face a trial in my life where I have to grumble. I will never face a trial in my life where I have to complain against God or against any human being. Never.

Not because of what I am. I'm not talking about my ability. I'm not under law.

Law is my ability. I'm talking about God's ability. He is faithful.

Never to allow me to face a trial, which is too much for me. You see that in the book of Job. Job was the first book written in the Bible.

And what the very first thing you see there in the first chapter of the first book that God wrote is you have to get God's permission. Satan has to get God's permission before he sends a trial into the life of a man of God or a woman of God. He has to get God.

The trial may be massive, but he has to get God's permission first. Without God's permission, it cannot come to you. And when I look back over my life, you know, I can see that there were certain things which God did not allow to come into my life until I was able to bear it.

I remember it was about 16 years after I was born again, 16 years after I was born again, that God allowed every single Christian group almost in India to call me false teacher, heretic, false prophet, all types of names. I couldn't handle it when I was just a Christian of two or three years. And God didn't allow it to come.

He trained me and prepared me and strengthened me for 16 years. And then the devil goes to God and say, OK, can I get everybody to call Zach a false prophet and heretic? God says, now you can. He wasn't ready for it till now.

Isn't that good of God? I think I would have collapsed in discouragement if that had happened to me when I was a Christian of four or five years. I'd have just given up. But I didn't give up because God prepared me in 16 years for it.

I was a Christian for about 39 years before God allowed the devil to take me to court. I couldn't have handled it before. I think the devil would have gone to God and said, can I take him to court now? God said, no, he's not ready for it.

20 years, 30 years, no, not yet ready, not yet ready. 35 years, no, no. And then one day God says, devil, OK, now you can have it.

I tell you, when you understand this, you don't deal with men. I don't deal with men. No man can touch me.

It is impossible. I am a servant of God. It's God who opens the hedges and allows the devil to do something.

And he will never allow that to happen before he has prepared me for it. And then I can be an overcomer. It's wonderful.

He will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability. You will not face the test that I face because you may not be strong enough for it yet. That's just like saying a sixth standard student will not get a question paper, which a 10th standard student gets.

That's not a great revelation. Is that? No. It's a very simple truth.

That's exactly this verse. A BSC student is going to get a tougher math paper than a fourth standard student. That's all this verse is saying.

God will not give you a question paper that's too tough for you. He'll see which class you're in and he'll give you that. So whenever a question paper comes, don't say this is too tough for me.

Oh, we didn't study this portion. All the excuses people make nowadays. No Lord, I can overcome this.

This is not something beyond my ability. Have you heard some believers say, Oh, this is getting too much for me. God is a liar.

This is getting too much for me. God is not a liar. The Bible says God is faithful.

You probably did not put your arm into that verse. Put your arm in today and say, Lord, I believe with all my heart. Not what I am.

No, no, no, no, no. But you are faithful. You will never allow me.

Never, never, never. Not in a hundred years. Will you allow me even one day to be tested beyond my ability.

But when a test comes, you'll give me a way to overcome it. Wonderful promise. That's why you can face even 10 years from now.

I don't know what's going to happen in India 10 years from now. I don't know what persecution is going to come on Christians years from now, but I tell you, humanly speaking, I'm scared. I've read of people who are persecuted where they pull out their nails and poke things through their tongue.

And I can't stand that. And I say, Lord, if you don't give me grace, I may even deny Jesus Christ. I won't be like Peter say, Oh, if all men deny you, I will not deny you.

I won't say that. I'll say, Lord, I'm a weak person. But because I'm a weak person, I cling to you.

It's good to be weak. You know, the little two year old who never tries to cross the road himself, but holds on to daddy's hand is much safer. So as I was saying, the two year old clings on to his father's hand says, I'm scared, Dad, I can't cross this road alone.

There's too much traffic, and he crosses safely. But the seven year old who's pretty bold says, Oh, dad, I know I can go let that be a lot of cars going and he gets run over. Don't be like the seven year old.

Be like the little child who clings on to daddy's hand and says, I can't cross this. This world is too dangerous, Lord. It's I can't walk across alone.

I hold your hand and you hold mine and we'll cross over without any problem. So I'll never be like Peter saying, Oh, if all deny you, I will not deny you. What I say to the Lord is, Lord, humanly speaking, I'm a coward.

If people start pulling out my nails, I don't know what I will deny. But I know that you will not forsake me. I cling to you, and therefore I know that you will never allow me to be tested beyond my ability.

But in whatever situation, even if it means somebody pulling out my nails or torturing me for my Christian faith, you will not allow me to be tested beyond my ability. And like those saints and martyrs of old who suffered and overcame, I will also be overcomer. But let your confidence be in God.

A lot of our problems are because we have confidence in ourselves. One of the main things that God wants you to learn is to have no confidence in yourself. Okay, we go to promise number four.

Second Corinthians chapter 12 verse nine. Second Corinthians chapter 12 verse nine. We read this wonderful promise.

My grace is sufficient for you because my power is perfected in weakness. This goes on from the previous promise. That means in every situation, God's grace is enough to take me over.

The problem may remain there, the difficult person may remain there, but God's grace will help me to overcome. One of the beautiful illustrations I read about this was where a man saw a dream where he was trying to cross a river in a boat. And always unjust about a foot below the level of the water was a long rock which was hidden.

And his boat was hitting against that rock and hitting against that rock and hitting against the rock. He couldn't go through to the other side. And he was saying, Lord, remove this rock, remove this rock, remove this rock.

Just like you sometimes pray, get rid of this neighbor, get rid of this problem, get rid of this difficulty, or get rid of his sickness, or get rid of this. And the Lord says, I won't remove the rock, but I'll raise the level of the water so you can still go across. That is the meaning of my grace is sufficient for you.

Your difficult wife may never change, though you pray that rock will remain. But God will raise the level of his grace so that with that difficult wife, you'll be an overcomer. Or with that difficult boss, you'll be an overcomer.

And that neighbor who you prayed for so many years that he would shift his house, you just heard the other day that he's bought the house and he's going to live there forever. Great. Now you got to pray that God will raise the level of the water so that you overcome with that person there permanently now.

My grace is sufficient for you. Every situation that you can ever face in your life, God's grace is sufficient. Again, it's not a question of what you can do.

God says my grace, not your ability. Your ability is not sufficient. But God says my grace is sufficient for you in every single situation you can ever face in your whole life.

I want to believe that in this particular case, it was a sickness. Now, generally speaking, I believe it's God's will that we should be healthy. I believe that's God's general will.

But I will not preach that God will deliver us from all sickness because there's no such promise in the Bible. There is a promise that he'll save us from all sin, but there's no promise in the Bible that he'll heal you from all sicknesses. I know some Pentecostals preach it, but it's not in the Bible and it is not even true in their life.

There are as many Pentecostals and Charismatics who die of cancer as in other churches. There are as many lame people and with polio in Pentecostal churches as in other churches. There are as many blind people and deaf people in Pentecostal Charismatic churches as in other churches.

And if you take statistics, you'll find the average is pretty much the same. So if the average is pretty much the same, why do they talk so much about healing? Nothing seems to be happening. Don't be deceived.

It is to prevent you from concentrating on being saved from sin that the devil makes you concentrate on healing or prosperity or something like that. You get all your mind focused on healing and prosperity, and

which in many cases God may not allow you to have, and you never get saved from sin. There's a lot of deception going on in the world today.

There are as many poor people in Pentecostal Charismatic churches that preach prosperity as there are anywhere else. It's the pastors who get rich, the other ones who collect money and become millionaires, not the others. It's a fantastic deception, and I'm sorry to say so many believers are just swallowing that and being deceived by it.

But grace is sufficient. In Paul's case, he had a sickness. He prayed three times it would go away, and it did not go away.

And the Lord said, I'm not going to remove the rock. I'll raise the level of the water. I won't remove your sickness.

But listen to this. Your sickness will not hinder you from serving me. You will serve me more than all the other apostles in spite of your sickness.

Isn't that great? God is not going to make Paul blind and deaf and paralyzed. No, but sometimes he may allow something to be there which does not hinder our effectiveness for Christ, which does not hinder our becoming like Christ, which does not hinder our living a spirit-filled life, which does not hinder us from overcoming sin, but which will keep us humble. I've told you many times the most difficult thing for God to do is to keep a person humble.

And one way he did it for Paul was by giving him a sickness. That's the way he did it for Timothy. Constant stomach problems.

Whatever he ate, he would have diarrhea or vomiting or something like that. Poor man. He really had to cling to God.

But he was a godly man. God's grace was sufficient for him. It didn't hinder him from serving God.

And I'll tell you this, I've learned through the years that God doesn't take away all our aches and pains and everything else, but he'll never, he'll give us grace so that we can still continue to serve him despite our aches and pains and blood pressure and everything else. My grace is sufficient whatever situation you may face. Please remember that.

Don't ever complain that your wife is too difficult or your husband is too difficult or your servant is too difficult or your children are a nuisance. You're then saying God's grace is not sufficient. God's grace is sufficient.

Put your arm into that today. Whatever circumstance you face, whatever it is, say God's grace is sufficient for me to overcome that. Maybe it's a financial hardship.

In that financial hardship you say, okay Lord, I can't get the things I want to. Life is a little tough right now, but your grace is sufficient. And I'll tell you this, some of you who got plenty of money and who got everything you want in this world, you will never have a ministry like those who have gone through financial hardship.

I'm sorry to say that, but you'll never have it because you got everything you want in this world. You don't need God's grace. Why do you need God's grace? You got health, you got wealth, you got everything else

you need.

Of course you need some Bible knowledge to get up and preach in your meetings, but you won't be an overcomer because you got nothing to overcome. And when some little difficulty comes up in your home, you grumble and complain. Rich people are the ones who grumble and complain the most because they are used to a certain standard of comfort and luxury that a little thing goes wrong and they get all upset.

Poor people don't complain so much. And if you, if God allows you to go through a little poverty and struggle, perhaps you'll stop complaining so much. So trust in God's grace and say, Lord, I want to prove in my life, whatever my circumstances, I believe your grace is sufficient.

If I have a sickness that never gets healed, okay, your grace is sufficient to make me overcome that. There are many, many people in the history of the church who've overcome tremendous problems. People who were blind, who never got healed from their blindness, like the blind poet, George Matheson, Oh, love that will not let me go.

I rest my weary soul in thee, like Fanny Crosby, who wrote thousands of hymns, wonderful blind woman, totally blind. Some of the amazing songs we sing, most of the very well-known songs that we sing were written by that blind woman, Fanny Crosby. God's grace was abundant.

Can you imagine if you were blind, would you get discouraged and give up? She didn't. She didn't have the benefits that you and I have, but she wrote so many hymns and blessed thousands of people more than we do with our eyesight. God's grace is sufficient.

And one day you will see in eternity, numerous people who proved that God's grace was sufficient. And you must be one of them, that you never complain. You overcome your circumstances by the grace of God and say, God's grace is sufficient for me.

And then we go to promise number five, very well-known promise in Romans 8, 28. Promise number five is all things work together for good. God causes all things to work together for good.

I like that translation in the NASB. It's God who causes all things. It's even better than the King James version.

God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to His purpose. Let me ask you, do you love God? Do you want to fulfill God's purpose in your life? Is that your only ambition? Here's a promise. God will cause everything, listen, read carefully, not to work individually, but to work together for good.

Sometimes we look at that individual event and say, how in the world is this going to work for my good? No, it won't. But this along with a hundred other things that God sends into your life is going to be working for good. And this is also necessary.

It's like a part of a jigsaw puzzle. You've seen a jigsaw puzzle with 200 pieces. And if one part is missing, the picture is incomplete.

But that part by itself means nothing. You can't get anything out of that one piece in the jigsaw puzzle. But it's a very important piece.

So I think of a jigsaw puzzle when I read Romans 8 28. All pieces together present me a beautiful picture, the face of Jesus. Think if you had a jigsaw puzzle with the face of Jesus and 200 pieces in it, one piece missing, I miss something of his face.

So that little thing is also necessary. God will cause it all to work together for good. And the good mention is in the next verse, Romans 8 29, that he'll make us like Jesus Christ through all these circumstances.

Please listen. The good is not that you'll get a better job or get a prettier wife or a richer husband. No, that's not the good.

God doesn't give us shallow things that have no eternal worth. When he talks about good, he's not saying, you know, for example, a person goes and goes for an interview and doesn't get that job. What do I tell him? God has something better for you.

But he may misunderstand what I say as though I'm going to get a job with a bigger salary. That's if he's an old covenant person who says the old is good enough. But if he's a new covenant person, he'll say the promise is that I'll become a little more like Jesus.

Maybe the job I get is going to be half the salary of this one, but it'll work for my good. So, and the girl you wanted to marry, you couldn't get. And I say you'll get something better.

It doesn't mean the girl you will marry will be prettier or richer or any such thing. But someone who will help you help will be a better help me for you to live for God. That's the point.

Romans 8, 28 claim, put your arm into it. I believe it, Lord, that every single thing that ever happens in my life is going to work together with everything else for my good, for my very best to make me like Jesus. There's nothing that's ever going to happen to me in my life because Lord, I love you.

I only want your purpose to be fulfilled in my life. I believe that as I go out to face this world, every single thing that happens is going to be part of the jigsaw puzzle that finally makes me like Jesus Christ. And therefore I have no complaints about anything.

That's why we can give thanks always for all things, because God is making all these things work together for good. Okay, we go to promise number six. Another wonderful promise in Hebrews chapter 13, verse five and six, where it says, the Lord says, let your character be free from the love of money.

Be content with what you have for. He has said, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you.

And I understand that in the original Greek, it is three times. I will never, never, never, which means father, son, and Holy Spirit. I will never, never, never leave you, nor forsake you.

And so that verse six, we can confidently say, the Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What will man do to me? Why can we say that? Why is it we can say the Lord is my helper? I will not be afraid.

You know, fear is one of the greatest things that's ruling people in the world today. Fear of the future, fear of sickness, fear of financial difficulty, fear of losing a job, fear of your husband dying, fear of your losing your house, fear of so many things. But you say, the Lord is my helper.

One who runs this universe is my helper. I will not be afraid. What can any man do to me? People threaten us in this world.

I'll do this to you. I'll do that to you. And you can say, what can man do to me? Because the Lord is my helper.

Why can we say that? Because he has said, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. And that is why I say to you, please keep your conscience clear.

Please keep your conscience clear. And please humble yourself. There are only two things you have to do.

As soon as you commit a sin, confess it. And as soon as you get an opportunity to humble yourself, humble yourself. And then the promise is true.

He will never leave you. He'll never forsake you. I decided long ago in my life that I will keep my conscience clear immediately.

As soon as I slipped up somewhere, my thoughts, words, I will never justify myself. I would say, I'm wrong. Forgive me.

I tell you, I'm sorry to say that even some of our elder brothers have not learned that lesson to immediately acknowledge error. Why can't we do that? So why can't we do that? Immediately you fall. I'm not saying you'll never fall.

But as soon as you fall, don't, don't, don't justify yourself. I am sick and tired of the justification I've heard from so many people, all the way from elder brothers down to the last. There's always a justification.

Well, I look at these people and I don't see an anointing in their lives. They're missing God's best. Keep your conscience clear.

You could be wrong, brother. You could be wrong. Just acknowledge there is a possibility I may be wrong.

I confess it. Forgive me. Cleanse me.

You missed a lot in life by not keeping your conscience clear with God and man and not humbling yourself. That's the second thing. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God in all situations.

And he will never leave you nor forsake you. Then we can boldly say the Lord is my helper. You must be able to say that.

The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What will man do to me? A good verse to memorize.

Hebrews 13, 6, because it says we must say that boldly. The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid.

What will man do to me? Got it? Shall we say it together? The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What will man do to me? You didn't say it boldly.

It says here you must say it boldly. The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid.

What will man do to me? Say that all your life. Say it all your life. Every day.

The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What will man do to me? He has said he'll never leave me nor forsake me.

And the last one, number seven. This relates to our ministry and the church. Matthew 16 and verse 18.

This is especially for those of you who are interested in building the church in your locality. I am. I hope you are.

The Lord's promise is, in the middle of that verse, I will build my church. Again it is I will, not you will. The trouble with a lot of people is they are going out to build the church and nothing happens.

The Lord says I will build my church and here's the promise. The gates of Hades will not overpower it. Why has it overpowered your church? Because you tried to build it according to your ideas, according to your psychology, how to deal with people, etc.

etc. No wonder the gates of hell overpowered it. There's confusion, there's jealousy, there's strife, there's all types of things, there's worldliness.

Why not let Jesus build it? Why not just become an instrument in his hand and say, Lord this is your church, build it. For 30 years I've faced all types of problems in our different churches. You know that.

And every time I face a problem, I fall on my face before God and say, Lord this is your work, this is not mine. It's your church, it's not mine. I'm building nothing.

You build your church and I know the gates of hell will never overpower it and that's why I don't have any complaint against anyone. It's he who builds the church. The government will be upon his shoulder, it says in Isaiah 9. The trouble with some of our elder brothers is the government is on their shoulder.

They are upset when somebody does not submit to their authority. Who made you an authority? Why not just get rid of that government from your shoulder and put it on his shoulder and you'll discover that the gates of hell will not prevail against your church, against the church which he's building. It's a wonderful promise.

The gates of hell will not prevail. We will overcome the devil in our home, in our church. Your home is a little church where you father and mother are the elders.

Noah's church was just his family, eight people. The gates of hell will not overpower it. This is the spirit of triumph that you got from these promises.

You put your arm in behind it and you'll find all the checks will be cashed by the bank of heaven. I can guarantee that and that's the spirit in which we've got to face the world in the days to come. Let's bow our heads before God and pray.

God has given us exceeding great and wonderful and magnificent promises. Let's claim them in Jesus' name and then we'll be able to testify like the Apostle Paul. Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, always.

That we can walk as Jesus walked on this earth, always in triumph, afraid of no man, afraid of no demon or devil or anything, afraid of no circumstance because his father would never forsake him. And Jesus has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Keep your conscience clean, brother, sister.

Humble yourself at every opportunity. God gives grace to the humble.

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