

04/10/11

SAVED BY HIS LIFE

Sermon by Pastor Scott Lowther

Let me give you an intro about this pulpit. Me and this pulpit go back a long way. We had an issue with the other one so somebody requested that we remove it so we got rid of it. And so I happened to have this one in my garage. There's a long story behind it. I was in Maranatha and there was a Church out in the middle of nowhere that I never heard of that was having some issues. And Pastor Ray said you need to go out there and see what's going on out there. It's 75 miles each way from my home and I drove out there twice a week because I played in the worship team and I spoke out there. There was a group of people that met in a barn and in the summer it was 110 degrees. In the barn. And in the winter you're blowing smoke and you see it. I'm not kidding. There's flies landing on you. It's like a 3rd world country! And the Lord was so faithful there that one day in like my 2nd or 3rd week I'm going out there this guy from Horizon Church called me and said "you don't know me but do you need a pulpit". And I said "I don't think so". And he said "I think you do, the Lord told me to build you one". And so he came and said how tall are you and he built it at the perfect height. He put all the fancy gizmos in there and it does everything except heat your coffee for you. And so long story short he made this for me. And I went to Campo - I was there 5 years and we made 2 pastors out of the group, we sent people off to churches - it was really great. Then I ended up here. All of that said, we had this in my garage and so with the issue of this other one we got rid of it and I brought it here. Joe refinished it and the cross that is on the front is from a guy from teen challenge who was kicking a heroin addiction and made that as God was delivering him. So it's got a lot of sentimental value to me.

I get funny emails. One guy said I am the Ayatollah of Christianity. I don't know if that is a compliment or an insult. Another guy's email said "I guess I should bring my dentures because you are giving me things to chew on". And I said "that's interesting too". Is that complimentary? Then on last Sunday a guy came to me and said "I came here today hoping I would really feel good about me but I'm not. But I am really feeling good about the Lord". And I said "then we are doing what we are suppose to do"! The last email said "Ok, I get it that God is passionate about

Himself”. Good, I’m glad you got it. “But if it is not just for Him to pass over sins without satisfying his justice and righteousness, then is it just for Him to give grace to those who don’t deserve it - on what basis would we get grace”? And I thought that was a really a well thought out idea. So I emailed him back *John 1:16&17 which says “from the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”*. So again the gospel. It’s amazing how much and how rich it is for us to deal with the issues of life.

Go to Romans Chapter 5. We are going to talk about this issue that I talked about a few weeks ago - as I said the Lord has been very faithful. He’s giving me all these things to bring to you. Like 2,3,4 weeks in advance so next week we’ll be discussing the fact that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. And if you don’t have a savior that is a destroyer you don’t have a savior at all because He came to destroy the works of the devil. And you’ll see how that works and we’ll look at the wiles of the devil and how he works and how Jesus came to combat that and destroy that and set you free.

And so if you struggle with that and think you are Satan’s whipping boy, then come and see what God’s word has to say and let the word of God deliver you from the things that are so easily are crushing you.

In Romans Chapter 5 it tells you about the life of Christ and I gave this question to you a few weeks ago and I said “what’s the story with Jesus’ life. If He just came to die then why didn’t He just come as an adult? Why would the creator of the universe step down and take on our humanity? Why would he do that? And why would He live 33 years and then give His life if all He came to do was die? There’s got to be something about His life”.

There’s 2 things. I originally was going to talk about one but the Lord has pushed me in a different direction so I am going to talk about the 2nd aspect of it. Let’s read out text. I think you will find some things enlightening. *Romans 5:8-10: “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him. For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall*

we be saved through His life". This is a great, great text. I just love the book of Romans and I pray that you keep in it no matter what. It's the book you can live off for the rest of your life. But the question is here and I want to look at 2 different things. The reason I think the Lord drove me to this passage today - is the theme and point of this passage is strong assurance. Many people I have been talking to lately don't seem to have a strong assurance. And so this passage talks about strong assurance and secondly it tells us how to increase that.

So how many of you guys without raising your hands, say "I am really struggling with assurance and I am just feeling like I don't know if the Lord is with me, I'm not sure how He is working in my life; I'm feeling kind of abandoned and forsaken. I feel like I should be closer to the Lord than I am but I am tentative, I'm withdrawn, I'm holding back, I'm not sure He is trustworthy". There's a million different answers you could have. But I feel that a lot from the congregation and so I wanted to try and address that.

So where can we see where God wants to rescue us from these things. First of all I want you to see that God shows His love for us that "while yet we were sinners Christ died for us". We talk a lot about God being sovereign and being passionate about His own glory. That's great and it's true. But He does love us. And that's something that I want you guys to see because you don't want to have one extreme without the other. You want to balance all of what scripture says. God does have love for us and what this is talking about is "if while we were yet sinners Christ died for us since therefore we have been justified by His blood, much more than we shall be saved from the wrath of God". What we get from the gospel is that only God can save us from the wrath of God. The wrath of God is something that everybody needs to be delivered from. It's not talked about much anymore because people don't like it. They want a kinder, gentler, more mellow grandpa like God instead of the God of scripture. But the God of scripture is very passionate. He is very just, he is very holy. He comes against sin with a vehement anger and hostility. But He is loving and kind and merciful and gracious and He abounds in goodness and truth.

And so we look at this passage and we see that God needs to deliver us from the wrath of God. Where can we see that God is the one who does this? You see it in 5 passive verbs. You remember from your English class there's verbs that show action or state of being. And the passive verbs in *Verse 9&10: having now been justified* (#1 in the past tense); *shall we be*

saved (that's #2); if while we were enemies we were reconciled (there's #3); to God through the death of His son much more having been reconciled (that's #4 repetitive), shall we be saved by His life (that's #5).

In all of these actions what are we doing? We're doing nothing. We are the ones being acted upon. Right? We are the recipients of the action. God is the doer of the action. And so what we got here is "we" being the recipients, who is acting, that would be the Father, and we know that from *verse 10: "while we are reconciled to God through the death of His son".* The Father is reconciling a people to Himself. OK. That's what we are looking at today. God's love is demonstrated in the fact that while we were enemies, he reconciled us. He took us when we were enemies and made us friends. Made us children. Made us part of His family. And so the Father demonstrates that love. So if you deny God's wrath, and we're not going to talk about that very much but if you deny it - you deny His love. You lose it. So don't think that God is one or the other. God is all the above. In perfect harmony and each attribute is equally important.

And so when we talk about assurance there's one thing we are going to see. 2 times in this passage it uses the term "much more". So do you see in Verse 9 how much more it works. *"Much more than having been justified shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him"* So the point is to make you confident and assured that God is going to save you. Amen. You should be excited that God is going to save you. If you look at the world you got to figure it's not going to be long. The Lord comes soon, I pray it's today, come quickly Lord Jesus, let's get this over with. I want to go home with the pulpit too. But the Lord is coming soon and if you are discerning, you know it. You know it. So live in anticipation of that great day. Look up the redemption draws nigh.

So it's the same in *verse 10: "For if we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his son much more having been reconciled shall we be saved by his life".* This is a great argument. God has already done the hardest thing in sacrificing His son to reconcile us, so how much more if we were his enemies and he reconciled us, how much more will he save us as his friends? Right? Do you see the argument? If He has already done the most difficult part, the other thing's a slam dunk. If He's sacrificed His son to reconcile his enemies, if now we're his children, is He going to drop the ball? Absolutely not. And so it's a confidence swelling into something to encourage you. How much more will He save us since

He's done this. 100 per cent. Double, triple, infinitely more. Much more is the way the holy spirit decides to term this phrase, "How much more than" if God was just to reconcile us, how much more than is he gracious to save us?

That's the point.

As so he begins to give this great thing about assurance. And assurance grows as you hear the word of the Lord. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. Assurance grows in direct proportion to the amount of scripture you digest. If you want assurance chew on the book. If you don't want assurance, don't. If you want fear and doubt and panic - listen to Job's comforters. But if you want assurance from God, go to the source and digest healthy portions of it. And your assurance will grow. And you'll have great confidence in the Lord. But assurance diminishes in the presence of concealed sin. Sin will erode your assurance. Sin will gut your faith. And so God always wants to deal with that with us.

Now we saw that we were saved by his life. So is this really all I need? Do I just need to be forgiven. Because his life has something to do with what we are going to be talking about. This is the way I want you to think as you lay hold of these truths. If all I needed to do was to be forgiven, then all He would have done is come and die. But I needed more. We all need more. If we are rotten, no-good, lousy sinners, and not anymore, you are a saint, you are just struggling, you are still a saint. You're still my brother, white as snow, and I love you. Sins and deed God remembers no more and you are in him the righteousness of God so who and I to call you unclean? I love you.

So as you look at the truth to what God says. I just need to be forgiven. If that made be right for heaven, then Jesus would have just came at 33. But I needed more. If I 'm forgiven, that what am I. Am I righteous or am I just morally neutral? I'm just morally neutral. I don't have any righteousness do I? I don't have any obedience. Do I? Adam was put in the garden and he was put there for a season to show obedience. "Adam, you can do whatever you want. You just can't eat here. You can't touch this". And people go "why did God put the tree in the garden"? Because he's testing Adam's obedience. Because righteousness comes through adherence to the word and will of God. So if you don't have that, you better get it somewhere. And the only person that I know you can get

it from is Jesus. So that's the point of his life.

So this is what Jesus said in *Matthews 5:20*: *For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven*". So He's dropping a bomb on these people saying, "you need to have some righteousness here people, and if it isn't any better than the most righteous person you can think of in your head, you are not even going to enter".

And so Jesus' life has to do with that. Jesus' life gives us the righteousness that we need. It's the righteousness of God that God gives. Remember Jesus said "I always do that which pleases him". Right? He came to fulfill the law so that the law's righteous requirement would be satisfied and the righteousness that God saw in him, "and this is my Son in whom I am well pleased", and as he did everything to fulfill the law, everything to insure that God's will was accomplished, that righteousness that he had, he gives to his people. And you stand before God blameless. Not just not that you have never sinned, but you stand before God as if you've done everything God ever said. There's a big difference there. If you look at yourself and say "I am standing before God as if I never sinned". Good for you. But it's different to stay here and say that or stand right next to the Lord and say "I'm as righteous as Jesus is and in him I have completed all the law, I've never failed, I've never sinned, I've never done anything wrong. Because He is my righteousness and His life is mine. And I'm in Him. And He who knew no sin became sin so that I might have his righteousness. And He took my righteousness, which was a filthy rag, and my sin, and He paid the penalty of it and He gave me life. And I stand before God with wrinkle or spot based on the atoning work of the savior. And that person is right with God and God looks at him and says "I see no sin, I see righteous adherence to my law, I see obedience, I see faith, you're mine, you're perfect - and you're in. All based on the atoning work of Jesus Christ. And so that's why this life is important.

Let's work on our assurances of today. Promises. Our assurance grows in the promises of the Lord. And as I talk to people recently, they've been telling me "I believe God has promises but I don't believe that they are for me". It's funny how we like to exclude ourselves from God's blessing and covering to feel good about ourselves in our lousy state. Right? We like to segregate ourselves and pull ourselves out so that we can enjoy our misery. And then complain about our misery and not want to go to God to

fix our misery. And so we like being like that. And I don't know why we do because God has better.

And so we are talking about promises and promises people think are a lot like babies. They are easy to make, but hard to deliver. And so as you think of God's promises, why would God give us any? On what basis do I get them? And how do I find assurance that they are mine? And that's what we are going to talk about in Jesus life. Are you living in the power of God's promises or are you not. Are you experiencing all the God has for you, or are you not. In this passage we are looking at is going to give us answers to all those things.

So let's look at Jesus' life specifically. And see if we can find something to help us with our assurance. Because the answers are going to be found in a brief bible survey with a great wonderful truth at the end which I am going to give you in like 3 or 4 minutes.

So God begins with Adam. Adam falls. But along later comes a man named Abraham and he had been given promises that the nations would be blessed through him. Right? Now is that a conditional or an unconditional promise? Before you say anything I'm going to read you a verse or two. Because everybody likes to contextualize things. Abraham received promises from God. Right? Ok. What if he never left Ur or the Chaldees? Nothing. Right? Leave your father's house, your country and kindred and go to a place that I am going to show you. What if Abraham said "no". Is he still a promise? Of course, not. Listen, hear God closely in *Genesis 22:16-18*. "...*Because you have done this (that sounds like a condition) and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me*".

Right, because. So here's what we need to understand. God works in us willing to do what he has promised but he assures we meet the criteria of the promise so that he can give it to us. That's the covenant working God. And so God is giving us promises and so there comes this law. After Abraham comes Isaac and Jacob and the 12 tribes and a little while after that comes Moses. And Moses comes along and he gives the law. And in this Old Testament - which I love this stuff - it's got the chariots and all that

other stuff - there's really good stuff here. But the law, the blessings and the perks were conditional upon obedience. It was a conditional. If you do this - then I will do that. And it was full of promises but nobody could keep it. Nobody could plug in and tap in to the promises that were there because they failed. And let me give you some of these conditions.

Exodus 19:5: "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my treasure possession".

Deuteronomy 7:12: "If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers".

Deuteronomy 11:26-28: "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse - the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known".

This happens over and over and then in Deuteronomy chapter 28 - the whole chapter is about - if you do this, look at all perks you get. If you don't - look at all the things that come your way that you are not going to like. You have everything from: blessings when you go in to blessings when you go out, to: your trees are going to be full of crickets and locusts that are going to eat up everything you got.

You've got this quandary going back and forth of these conditions that you must achieve and submit to and abide by if you are going to receive God's blessing. And even if you did all that God said in the old covenant, you still had like in *Deuteronomy 28:47: "Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the Lord sends against you".* So you had not only the requirement but the attitude that you must do to fulfill it. So it wasn't enough that you could just say "I did it all", you had to do it with joy. Not fake. I mean real joy. Because you are not fooling the Lord. So you needed this bubble over joy "Lord it's such a blessing to serve you". And if you didn't have it, he'd say "Ok, your trees are full of locust". Because it is a reflection on who He is. It's a reflection of His worth.

And so this covenant was predicated upon obedience. But there are great promises in the laws. The law had great promise but most people saw them as broken promises. The reason they saw them broken was because they didn't meet the criteria. Right?

And so let me give you some more of the old promises in the old covenant. *Psalms 29:11: "The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace".* That's a good one, isn't it? Don't you want that? You should.

Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". Anyone know that? Amen.

Psalms 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I have no want". Got any takers? It's a good one - there's a ton of these. What about the ones from *Hebrews 10:16: .. I will put my laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds. Theirs sins and lawless acts I will remember no more".* Does anybody want that? Or do they want God to remember this sin and lawless deeds. Do you want to stand before him and he goes "Oh yes I remember". Or do you want to have Him look at you and say "well done good and faithful servant and enter into the joy of your master". Yes, that's what we are after. That is what you should want.

There are these great promises but the trouble is that Jesus came to the earth and said things like this: "Moses gave you the law yet none of you keeps it". That crushing, isn't it?

Galatians 3:10: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law".

In Romans Chapter 9-11 it talks of Israel and the law and says "that Israel had the law but they pursued it by works and so failed in it". And so this law had these wonderful promises that seemed to be left untapped, and untaken and unreachable and is there any good news for those. Because how do we tap into those promises, how can we take hold of those things. Is there a way? And the answer is - the gospel.

Do you guys ever get a gift you don't want? You see God never gives gifts that you shouldn't want. Anything that God gives you, you should be

jumping at, and snapping at. A lady walked in the office this afternoon and said “blessings upon you” and I said “I’ll take more”. And she says “blessings and blessings” and I say “Great, I’ll take 2”.

You see that’s the reality. You should want what God has for you and you should be passionately pursuing it. Because God only gives good things. When I was younger, a little before high school, and my grandmother was kind of crazy and so she sent me girl’s pants as a Christmas gift, size 9! She should have known I was a 7! I thought this was the most useless, hopeless, what the heck was she thinking! I’m not a girl. She doesn’t know her own daughter had a son? So I was just struggling with what to do with it. And unfortunately many people do the same with God. They’re like “what do I do with that”. Peace to God of all understanding. “What am I suppose to do with that”. Love it, take it, gravitate towards it. Let it remove your fear. Let it quench your doubt. Let it bring life. But we leave the promises of God so untapped.

So let’s see why Jesus came. This is Paul writing in *Galatians 4:4-5*:
“*When the fullness of time had come God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons*”. Now the understanding that most people don’t seem to get is that Jesus came under the law. He taught under the law. Jesus taught the law. He’d say “you heard it said” “and I say” and amplify it. And so if you are a very astute bible scholar kind of people, you would notice that Jesus and Paul would often talk about things that were different. Right? Did you ever have someone say something like this to you: “Why did Jesus teach conditional forgiveness and Paul didn’t?” I’ll give you an example:

Matthews 4:6 “*If you don’t forgive your brother, your father won’t forgive you*”. You’ve read that haven’t you. And you hear the Lord’s prayer: “Forgive us our trespasses and we forgive those who trespass against us.”. that’s not something very encouraging to pray. Lord I pray that you would forgive me to the extent that I forgive other people. Do you want God to treat you like you are able to treat other people? Of course not. I need more than I can do. Lord I’m falling. My heart is deceitfully wicked of all things - I don’t even know it. And when people hurt me or somebody killed my son I have a really hard time coping with that but I would forgive them for Christ’s sake but I would still have something there every time I thought of my son. And God I don’t want you to forgive me like that.

And so Jesus said “if you don’t forgive your brother, your father won’t forgive you”. But Paul said in *Colossians 3:13*: “*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you*”. Do you see that? One is conditional, one is not. One is do this and get that. The other is you have that, therefore do this. The importance of understanding these things is really critical when it comes to determining and interpreting the bible. The Book of Hebrews Chapter 9 tell us that the death of the testator is required for a covenant to go into affect. In other words, the new covenant, the new will (which doesn’t go into effect until the death of the person who wrote the will - right?) and so the new testament technically doesn’t start in Matthew, it starts in the end of the gospels or in the book of Acts. That’s when the New Testament starts. And that’s why Paul’s teachings are a little bit different. It’s not because Paul’s arguing with Jesus, it’s Jesus came under the law to redeem those under the law.

And so it’s very important that you see that His purpose in coming was to come under the law. Jesus said things like: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you until heaven and earth have pass away not one iota, not one dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished”.

He’s talking about there’s a reason they came that relates to the law. I want to fulfill it. I want to walk as a spirit empowered man and fulfill the righteous requirement of my Father’s law. I want to honor Him. And there’s more reasons that just the fulfilling it, for the righteousness sake of it, that we’ll get to in a moment. So He wants to fulfill the law and obey it in every aspect so that He would be “righteous in his life”. And that righteous life that He lived of always doing that which pleases him, of not doing his own will, of being God centered and God focused, and Father motivated. I say nothing except what my Father says. I don’t do anything unless I see my Father working. I always do that which pleases him. I say what He says. I do what He does. If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father. I haven’t come to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me.

You have this overriding principal where Jesus comes along and says “I came to fulfill everything my Father ever spoke”. I came to do it for 2 reasons (1) because there’s righteousness in it that I am giving to my people

and (2) there's promises for my people that will go unclaimed unless someone meets the criteria. Jesus came to give us righteousness in his obedience to the law and to his Father's will. But He also came to fulfill the law so that He could lay claim to the promises and give them to you.

He just doesn't want to save you so you don't go to hell. He wants to give you the promises and lavish them upon you. He wants to open up his storehouses and have you come and receive. He wants to make everything available to you. He's given you everything you need for life in godliness but the people of God struggle and stumble because they don't know what they have been given. Or they feel that they are not worthy to receive it. You are not receiving anything on the basis of what you've done, you receiving everything on the basis of what He has done. That's why you get anything from God. Otherwise, if you are not in Christ, the only answer you get from God is "no". The only answer you will get from God outside of Jesus Christ is "no". But in Jesus Christ you will get a much different answer and I think that will be encouraging to you.

He fulfilled the requirement of being obedient to law and because of that, Paul says this in *Galatians 3:16*: "*The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ.*"

The point of Paul writing this is to breakdown the barriers of people who want to make distinctions between everything. You're either in Christ or you're not. If you are saved in the Old Testament you are saved by looking forward to Christ. If you saved in the New Testament you are saved by looking back at Christ. Abraham had the gospel preached to him before hand scripture says "so he believed on Christ". And the promises that came were predicated upon this obedience to the requirement of the law. And nobody fulfilled it. Except one and that one lays claim to all of it. And that's the point of this passage. So Christ is God's "yes" to everyone of the promises that He has made. Jesus was the only one who met the criteria to lay hold of these.

Do you think Jesus served his Father with joy? Absolutely. Do you think He stumbled at any point? Do you think He didn't fulfill any part of the law? Of course, not. He fulfilled all of it. Every sacrifice, every trip to Jerusalem, everything that was required of the law He did. Everything so that he can get the righteousness before his Father of fulfilling his

Father's word and lay claim to every promise that God had. That beforehand would go untapped because nobody met the criteria for it.

Certainly God poured out those blessings on his people. But there needed to be a reason that somebody would fulfill it so that He could. Otherwise he would be unjust to do so. And this is what's really great about the Lord.

Here's another thought to close with. I want you to think about this now. We've seen the promises weren't given to the many, they were given to the one. And the reason they were given to one is because the one met the criteria for them. In *2 Corinthians 1:20* "*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "yes" in Christ. And so through him the "amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God*".

This brings us back to where I was a few minutes ago. Are you living in the benefit of the promises that God gave? Are you experiencing the fullness of them? Are you living in that or are you saying "no, I want to be distant, I'm uncertain, I'm fearful. I see that God said "yes" somehow but I rather say "no, not now or maybe".

God's people perished for lack of knowledge. God's people perished because they don't draw near to them. God's people perish because they think that their way is the right way when God says "my way is the only way".

And we perish because we don't realize what we have been given. We don't know how to appropriate it. We wrestle with our guilt because we still think that somehow our deeds, our actions are the trigger point of whether or not God's going to deal with me in an acceptable or kind fashion. Instead of saying, "the only reason God deals with me apart from judgment is because of Jesus Christ". And if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. The old is passed away, behold all things become new. And that person will only ever be treated as a vessel of mercy, never a vessel of wrath. Because Jesus bore the wrath that was due his people. And God will not pour it out on His own.

You should be happy. You should say "Thank You Lord". But you know what, God's discipline is to set you free from the things that are dominating you so that He can dominate you Himself.

You know, too many people use God as a sugar daddy for an idol. They go to God because they want an idol and so God says "I'm not your sugar daddy and I'm not going to give you an idol. I hate idolatry and I'm not going to give you one. And I'm not going to be the means for you to get one. So don't come to me and ask me for idols because I am not going to give you one. Come to me asking me for me and I will give you me and then you will be content that you won't want anything else"

That's what you should be looking for. That's where God's heart is. If the Lord is the treasure of the universe, and He is, and if He's the most beautiful being in the universe, and He is, and if He is the most valuable thing, and He is, and He says "I'll give myself to you", we should say "the Lord is my shepherd, I have no want". I may have needs, I need to eat, but I rather do your will which Jesus said was his food. And I know that you will provide for all my needs according to your riches and glory but I want more of you. And if you've got promises, I want them. And if somebody else here doesn't want them, I want to leave with them because I'm being greedy and taking more. I want all that you have and whatever everybody else leaves I'm taking. Because I know that the Lord is gracious and He abounds in mercy. And He's faithful.

And there's promises for you guys that you just don't take. And you struggle with your life. And you say "is this all that there is". And I'm telling you, the best life that Jesus offers isn't mediocrity. He has more, he has better. He has passion for you. He has joy for you. He has zeal for you.

And so this is what scripture says: "For no matter how many promises". How many? All of them. Promise in Christ and so through Him the amen is spoken by us by God. This is talking about is: we receive everything His obedience earned. OK. When God says "yes", "amen" simply means "yes". That's what it means. It translates right over from the Greek to us. Amen. Yes. So be it.

God's deposits promises in my account. Ok, you have an account. It's called the Bank of Glory. God comes along and He deposits "promises" in your account. And Jesus is the door because He says so in John 10:9 and so he opens the door and He says "come on in". And in your account there's these exceeding great and precious promises that are for you. From the word of God. God doesn't give you invoices. God gives you

checks. So God isn't going to bill you for the promise, He just going to give it to you. He's going to give it to you. And you say "like what?". I don't know just as many as you can find here. Lord will you give me strength to serve you. "Yes". Will you strengthen me. "Yes". Will you encourage me when I feel like everybody hates me. "Yes". Lord, will you give me more of your spirit to walk in a way that's more honoring to you. "Yes". Lord I read a blessing here for the people. This one too? "Yes". What about this one? "Yes". So, you are my shepherd? "Yes". You do have plans for me to prosper for me and not to harm me and to give me a future and a hope? "Yes". You're not going to remember my sins and lawless deeds anymore? "No". This is great.

So God gives us this opportunity to come in and everyone who comes to Christ to God through Christ with their need has God running to them in Christ with His promise. And it's in this place for you to just go and tap. When we pray, people say so often that God doesn't answer pray. He answers every single one. A lot of times it's "no". Because we ask amidst. So get over it. Seriously.

In *Romans 8:32*: *"He who did not spare His Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"* Right? God's "Yes". Lord, can you change me? "Yes". Can you give me hope when I don't have it. "Yes". Can you let the love of God shed abroad in my heart so that I may begin to understand how long and wide and high and deep is the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge? "Yes, Yes, Yes".

Do you see how we response to Him. We have these great promises and we don't take them to Him. As if it's not going to work. And God's like "if I didn't spare my son to reconcile you as my enemy, I'm not going to withhold from you based on His work, something that would bless you and draw you closer to me"? Will I not with Him give you all things that you need? To perform what I called you to do. And what I've called you to be? Will I forsake the work of my hands? Will I begin something and then forget it? Or is my promise to you, that "He who began a good work will be faithful to complete it". That's it.

And so we have these wonderful promises that are left untapped. And they are untapped because we either don't know them or we think that there's somehow some conference or message we need to go to, to hear something

that's going to make it click. Here's what makes it click. God you said. God I'm here.

When are we going to be like Jacob, "Lord, I'm not letting you go until you bless me". And God said "Ok, I'll let you go limping but you're going!". But he met God. Right?

And we come in and say "well, praise the Lord, sort of" and "hope he's not long" and "what's for dinner". And we get hung up on everything else instead of saying "is it possible that the King of the Universe would have something for me now? That I could leave with my head lifted and my heart full and leave with more than I came". And the answer is "Absolutely, Yes". You have not, because you ask not. And when you do ask "you ask it to spend on your pleasures" James said.

And so the secret here, if there is a secret, is you got to understand that God has passionately pursued us and reconciled us to Himself through the death of His son. His son lived a perfect life so that you could have the obedient righteousness that you could never earn, put upon you so that the promises that He secured He could pour out upon you so that everyone that you can find is "Yes" and "Amen" there. You go there where God says "yes". And you take your "yes" and see what happens. Don't let it go.

God has grace that abounds. He has mercies that are new. We struggle because our concept of Him is like a man. Where He says in his word "I am not a man". I am not a man that I should lie. I am not a man that I would change my mind. You error because you thought I was altogether like you. I am nothing like you. I am different than you. And I keep my word and I fulfill my promise because my reputation is on the line. I am the Lord I change not. And I have promise for you. Hope in your time of need. Test me in this and see if I will not come through for you".

I've dealt with some many people who are so crushed by the things of life that they are not experiencing the freedom and peace and joy that Jesus Christ purchased with His blood for them. God doesn't withhold things from you. "No good thing will He withhold from him who walks uprightly", his word says.

So my question is simply this. Are you experiencing that? Are you walking in that? Is the fullness of God's "yes" your joy? Or are you

somewhere else saying “no Lord, not now, not yet, maybe never”. You’ll never have joy like that. You’re either in - or you’re out. You’re for him - or against him. You jump in with both feet - or you stand on the bank and watch everyone swim.

But don’t discredit the promises of God because of your own fear. You’re like “what if I pray that prayer and ask God to give me one of His promises”? What if you do. What’s going to happen? I don’t know. The Lord’s word says that “you promise that you would remove my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh that loves you”. It will happen. And you know what - I am convinced in this season for our church that God is after is devotion and not commotion. He is after hearts on fire for Him. And if we get that right, all the other things are going to work out. All the other things are going to be fine. God is after the heart. And our heart is a desire factory and it has a divine capacity to be full of love for God so that we have this interaction and out of that flows a river of living water to a dying world. If we get that first part right, there’s no telling what God will do.

Do you love God? I mean really love him? I mean that’s what you think about when there’s nothing else to think about. And when there’s stuff to think about you find yourself not able to think what you are suppose to think about because you are always thinking of Him. That’s what I’m talking about. You know how you get preoccupied in high school when you have somebody that you like and it’s becomes all consuming all day long and you walk into a post! Is it like that with you and the Lord? If not, it should be. Does God deserve any less? He only deserves more. And He made provision in one of His promises to secure that your stony, petrified heart can be changed. And if that’s your heart’s desire, I pray that He would. What the Lord wants from us all is to recognize one simple fact: Without faith it’s impossible to please Him. For He who comes to God must believe two things. (1) That He is. If you don’t believe He’s there, why would you go. (2) That He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. The giver gets the glory. God gives. He gets the glory from we as the recipients of His gifts, of His promises.

If you are lacking assurance today, I’m just simply going to the tell you the reason why - unbelief. Unbelief. Not because God wants you to not have assurance but because you put things in your life that suck the faith right out of you. You surround yourself with people who lie to you. You surround

yourself with people who don't know the Lord and you believe what they say. You sit in front of a world's indoctrination system of 42 inches and it just fills your head with nonsense. And it steals what God is working in you, from you. And the reality is God has better. And if I could tell you, if I could just say "look, humor me". One day, just one day, cut yourself off from all those things and put yourself before this book. And ask God to give you a promise that's valid for you. And He will. And He will give it you almost on the spot. Almost on the spot. You say "you're making big promises for God". I'm just telling you what God's covenant to you is. "No good thing will He uphold from them who walk uprightly with Him".

In Jesus Christ is God's "Yes". If you take anything you need to fulfill the ministry that God has called you to do, He will give it to you. He will not withhold that from you. So, do you go and make withdraws on the account that God has set up for you. Or is it sitting there untapped. You don't want to get to glory and say "Man, I had no idea of the stuff that was available to me". Everything that you need in this life pertaining to life in godliness, He has given you. It's in your account - go and get it. And walk in it. And enjoy it. And be blessed in it.

Don't let today be just another day when you leave your account untapped. The church is the primary places where God dispenses grace to His people. And with all my heart I believe he has grace to pour out upon you now. But it's up to you to respond. I can't respond for you. I can just share with you what God said.