

## PROBLEMS AND PROMISES (Remember Kadesh Barnea)

Normally we are engaged in **'expository' preaching** here at GCC [i.e., a 'systematic' approach to a particular passage of Scripture – outlining it and gleaning the salient, spiritual truths contained in that particular passage].

However, occasionally, we preach **"Topical Sermons"** [i.e. not dealing with just one passage of Scripture, but addressing a particular subject, or "topic" from a biblical perspective].

**Today's sermon is a "Topical Sermon,"** .../ addressing **the Christian's need for the on-going 'spiritual disciplines'** of the Christian life, such as collecting and memorizing the promises of God in Scripture. ... /This is part of the task Christ has committed to the church in the work of "discipleship" in **the Great Commission** [Matt. 28:18-20].

**This sermon is also designed to challenge the congregation here at GCC who participated in this year's Scripture memory program at GCC, called "Knights of the King's Table."** ... /An opportunity to respond to the sermon will be provided in the form of a "Sign-up" sheet in the back to "sign up" for this year's Knights of the King's Table Scripture Memory Program [which begins Sunday evening, September 10th at 6:30 PM in room 204]. ... Also, a complete set of the memory verses being used in this year's program is provided in the back.

### REVISITING KADISH BARNEA:

The sermon is titled: **"Problems & Promises."** /... Many people ask: "Why is life in this world so hard/ ... so difficult; ... so full of "problems?" ... The Bible gives this answer: ... **"Sin"**, ... rebellion against the Maker and Creator of all things, especially by Adam, the first man God created. His **"original" sin brought corruption into the creation** [i.e. all sorts of "problems," including death]. /... Ever since, this world has been full of corruption and evil and wickedness [... in other words, **life in this world is full of "problems"** –> represented by the many "locked locks" in the ppt slide]. ...

God could have destroyed the world at that point, ... but instead, He **entered into a 'covenant' relationship with mankind** when He PROMISED a way out for mankind, a "Deliverer," a "Savior" [Gen. 3:15 ...

Mankind [the entire human race that came out of Adam] was under the penalty of death because of their sin [God has always said that sin must be punished, ... *"The wages of sin is death."* Rom. 6:23] /...

From the beginning of history in the Bible, God has given "exceedingly great and precious promises" [II Pet. 1:5-6] to those in the human race who repent of their sin and believe [trust] in God, their Maker and Creator. These "promises" are the "Keys" that unlock the "problems" in this fallen, corrupt and sinful world. They provide "a way of escape" [Heb. 2:1] - (1) from the penalty of eternal destruction & death, and - (2) into a way of life in the present world with peace, assurance and hope /... [as opposed to the emptiness and futility of those who refuse to believe [trust] God and wind up separated forever from God and the glory of His eternal kingdom. /... Instead, we are told the destiny of such people [in Rev. 14:11], that they wind up in a place where "the smoke of their torment rises up forever and there is no rest day or night." [cf. II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:10 "for ever"]

### Kadesh Barnea:

**There is a very significant event recorded in the O.T. at a place called Kadesh Barnea.** ... God had "called out" **Abraham** many years before, to be the father of the nation of Israel. /... God made some wonderful promises to Abraham. He promised to make **a great nation** of his offspring. He promised to give them a promised land "flowing with milk and honey." ... God had delivered this people [Israel, the descendants of Abraham] from

bondage in Egypt [“The Exodus”] in a miraculous fashion [bringing various plagues and pestilence, swarms of insects, upon Egypt to convince the Pharaoh to let His people go. Next, God miraculously parted the waters of the Red Sea to allow the people of Israel to pass through on dry land. .../ Once they were miraculously delivered, they had arrived at a place near the border of the land God had promised to Abraham’s descendants, ... a place called **Kadesh Barnea**.

The **passage in Deuteronomy** [chapter one] describes what happened in this place [**READ ...**].

*At last we came to Kadesh Barnea...But you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God and refused to go. You complained in your tents and said, “The Lord hates us! That’s why he brought us out of Egypt. He wanted to hand us over to the Amorites so that they could destroy us! Where are we going anyway? Our own men have discouraged us by saying, ‘The people there are taller and stronger than we are. The cities are big with sky-high walls! We even saw the people of Anak there.’” (**Deuteronomy 1:1(b) & 26-28**) (GWT)*

**The “spiritual significance” of this event** has to do with the fact that the people of Israel **chose not to believe [trust] God’s promise** that He would give them this land [which means He would deliver its inhabitants into their hands]. As a **result**, God would not allow that generation of Israel to enter the promised land. ... This was because they looked at the circumstances / and the people of the land looked too imposing to them [they were like giants], and the Israelites said they were like grasshoppers compared to the people of the land. And they lived in cities protected by high walls. ... From Israel’s perspective, / looking at the situation from a human, fleshly, point of view, ...it seemed impossible for them to go in and take possession of the land. ... But God was asking them to “believe” [trust] in his promises. ... Had they done this, they would have experienced a great victory, but their unbelief resulted in them being turned away to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, until that whole generation [except for Joshua and Caleb] had passed away.

The story of the *Spies Mission Briefing* at Kadesh Barnea occurred over 3,400 years ago...

- Yet it is referred to multiple times in the Bible.
- You may ask: **“Why does God repeatedly refer to this event?”**
- **I Corinthians 10:6,11** *“Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did...These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us...” ... [NOTE: “Examples” & “Warnings”!]*

It is significant that the Bible refers to this failure to enter the Promised land as a failure to enter into God’s **“rest”**:

**The spiritual application** of what happened at Kadesh Barnea is found in the New Testament book of Hebrews, 3:7-4:11. ... This passage refers to **Psalm 95**, which also has reference to what happened at Kadesh Barnea. God speaks through the psalmist, saying: *“Today, if you hear his voice, **do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion [Example/Warning]**, ... I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’ “For 40 years I was angry with that generation; I said, “They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways,” ... so I declared on oath in my anger, they shall never enter my rest.”*

The writer to the Hebrews emphasizes the fact that Psalm 95 refers to the entering of the promised land as entering into God’s “REST” [cf. Psalm 95: 11]. .../ In Hebrews 3: 19 we are told, ... *“So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.”* Then in Hebrews chapter 4, the writer goes on to make the spiritual application of what happened at Kadesh Barnea to Christians today ...>>>

Heb. 4:1-3a ... *Therefore, since the promise of ‘entering his rest’ still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did, but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. **Now we who have ‘believed’ enter that REST ...***

There is **another key passage** in **Jeremiah 17:5-11** which closely parallels this spiritual application. Just as Israel was condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years, because of their stubborn rebellion and unbelief, and their refusal to believe the promise of God, ... this passage in Jeremiah suggests the same thing happens to everyone who ignores their dependency on God and refuses to pay attention to and trust in His promises:

*"This is what the Lord says: 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord. **That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.** But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.'" [cf. Psalm 1]*

Mixing **"Faith"** with the **Promises**

- They didn't mix **Faith** with the **Promises** of God
  - "...The people there are taller and stronger than we are. The cities are big with sky-high walls! We even saw the people of Anak there.'" (Deuteronomy 1:28(b))
- **God intends for His People to take His Promises Seriously!**
  - **Caleb and Joshua!** "Let's go at once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!" ... Numbers 13:30(b) (GWT)

**"He said it. Let's get it!"**

- **"I raised my hand and swore** [PROMISE] **an oath to give you this land to live in. But none of you will enter it except Caleb** (son of Jephunneh) **and Joshua** (son of Nun)." (Numbers 14:30 (GWT))

**Persistent Problems .../ [The APPLICATION of this principal to today]**

- Relationships
- Finances
- Employment
- Addictions
- Crime
- Fear
- Depression
- Loneliness
- Cultural Decay
- Political Instability
- Health

God has **"PROMISES"** that relate to all of these **PROBLEMS/ TRIALS ...**

**"Words of Wisdom"**

*"Life is tough. It's even tougher if you're stupid." By John Wayne*  
[cf. Psalm 14:1 **"The fool** has said in his heart, **'There is no God'**"]

The **"fool"** ... 'rolls the dice and **gambles'** that ... [risks everything on his false presuppositions]

1. that there is no God ... [cf. Rom. 1:18-20]
2. that he will not stand before a judgment seat at the end of his life [II Cor. 5:10]

## Mixing “Faith” with the Promises of God:

- “No temptation [regardless of its source] (**PROBLEMS**) has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience [nor is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance]; but God is faithful [to His word—He is compassionate and trustworthy], and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability [to resist], but along with the temptation He [has in the past and is now and] will [always] provide the way out as well (**PROMISES**), so that you will be able to endure it [without yielding, and will overcome temptation with joy].” 1 Corinthians 10:13 (AMP)

## The Precious Promise Procurement Process:

### 1. “Find” God’s Promises!

*“Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] (**PROBLEMS!**) who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth. (**PROMISES!**)” (2 Timothy 2:15 (AMP)*

### 2. Dedicate yourself to Knowing God and the Precious Promises He has for you!

#### “Words of Wisdom”

*“If you wish to know God, you must know his Word. If you wish to perceive His power, you must see how He works by his word...”*

#### Charles Spurgeon

*[i.e., You must learn from experience to ‘see’ God’s ‘fingerprints’ in your life – [i.e., learning to **watch** Him fulfill His promises in your life.]*

## The Precious Promise Procurement Process:

- “**Collect” God’s Promises!**
  - “My son, if you take my words to heart and treasure my commands within you, if you pay close attention to wisdom, and let your mind reach for understanding, if indeed you call out for insight, if you ask aloud for understanding, if you **search for wisdom as if it were money and hunt for it as if it were hidden treasure**, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and you will find the knowledge of God. The Lord gives wisdom. From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.” (Proverbs 2:1-6 (GWT)

#### Words of Wisdom”

*“The Bible is no lazy man’s book! Much of its treasure, like the valuable minerals stored in the bowels of the earth, only yield themselves to the diligent seeker.” A.W. Pink*

## The Precious Promise Procurement Process

### “Save” God’s Promises!

*“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11)*

#### “Words of Wisdom”

*“Don’t wait until the moment of crisis. Plan ahead; hide God’s word in your heart, and pray in advance for victory, holiness, and a life pleasing to God.”*

#### Dr. David Jeremiah

*When we don’t... [We are like the old prospector who celebrated a great find, and then ...]*

*When we don’t [... threw his valuable find back into the creek! [“In one ear/ out the other”]*

## “Practical Promises for Present Problems”

- Problem
  - **Does God even Know what I am going through right now?**
- Promise
  - **God Knows:**
    - “From heaven the Lord looks down and **sees all mankind**; from his dwelling place **he watches all** who live on earth he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.” Psalm 33:13-15
    - “**Be self-controlled and alert...stand firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering.**” I Peter 5:8-9 ... / [We all have a tendency to think we are ‘the Lone Ranger’ / i.e., nobody, not even God, doesn’t know what we’re going through.]

## “Words of Wisdom”

“God is at work in the worst of times. He is at work doing a thousand things no one can see but him.” **Dr. John Piper**

Cf. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones Devotional, re. **Rom. 8:28 “all things” - Quote!** ...

*Trials and ‘problems’ come into our lives **for a reason!***

- 1) They awaken us to the fact of our overdependence on ourselves and upon earthly and human things.
- 2) They remind us of the fleeting nature of our life here on earth.
- 3) They show us our weakness, our helplessness, and our lack of power apart from God.
- 4) **They turn us and drive us to God and make us realize more than ever our dependence on Him.**

## “Practical Promises for Present Problems”

- Problem
  - **Does God hear my prayers?**
    - If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened (Psalm 66:18)
    - If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable. (Proverbs 28:9)
    - Hands covered with blood, (Isaiah 1:15) fasting, fighting, dishonoring, (Isaiah 58:4), Husbands prayers hindered inconsiderate disrespectful towards wives (I Peter 3:7)
- Promise
  - **God hears:**
    - “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and **his ears are attentive to their cry;**” (Psalm 34:15)
    - “In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. **From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.**” (Psalm 18:6)

## “Words of Wisdom”

“Prayer is beyond any question the highest activity of the human soul. Man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees, he comes face to face with God.” **Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones**

**We cannot pray effectively if we are not familiar with the promises of God!**

**II Sam. 7:25** “And now, **LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised,**”

**Luke 11:9-10** - “So I say to you: **Ask** and it will be given to you; **seek** and you will find; **knock** and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

**Luke 18:1-8** – The persistent widow ...

**“Practical Promises for Present Problems”**

- **Problem**
  - *I feel all alone in this.*
- **Promise**
  - **God IS present:**
    - *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)*
    - *“Listen to me, ...you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.” (Isaiah 46:3-4)*

**“Words of Wisdom”**

*“The great thing to remember is that though our feelings come and go, God’s love for us does not.” C.S. Lewis*

**“Practical Promises for Present Problems”**

- **Problem**
  - *Has God forgotten me?*
- **Promise**
  - **God NEVER forgets us:**
    - *“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;” (Isaiah 49:15-16)*
  - **God wants to Help:**
    - *“The Lord is waiting to be kind to you. He rises to have compassion on you...” Isaiah 30:18(a) (GWT)*

**“Words of Wisdom”**

*“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the same time, we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”*

**Dr. Timothy Keller**

**“Practical Promises for Present Problems”**

- **Problem**
  - *Am I a lost cause?*
- **Promise**
  - **God is FAITHFUL:**
    - *“Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.” (Isaiah 54:10)*
    - *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5(b))*
    - *“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1)*

**“Words of Wisdom”**

*“God’s faithfulness means that God will always do what He said and fulfill what he has promised.”*

**Dr. Wayne Grudem**

**“Practical Promises for Present Problems”**

- **Problem**
  - *I’m afraid!*

## Promise

- **We are SAFE in God:**
- **“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”** (Deuteronomy 33:27)
- **“When I am afraid, I will trust in you.”** (Psalm 56:3)
- **“The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?”** (Psalm 27:1)

### “Words of Wisdom”

**“Basically, there are two paths you can walk: faith or fear. It’s impossible to simultaneously trust God and not trust God.”** Dr. Charles Stanley

### Place Marks & Praises!

- **INTENTIONALLY Remember and Rejoice** for the times God has already been faithful in your life!
  - **“I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.”** (Psalm 77:11)
  - **“I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.”** (Psalm 143:5)
  - **“Why am I so sad? Why am I so troubled? I will put my hope in God, and once again I will praise him, my savior and my God.”** Psalm 42:5 (GNT)
  - **“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”** (Philippians 4:4)

### Perspective! Perspective! Perspective!

- Focus on your Problems from God’s perspective, not ours!
  - **Focus on “roots” not “leaves”:** **“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”** (Ephesians 6:12)

**God’s Promises are for our Problems!** **“...Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.”** (2 Chronicles 20:15)

### Perpetual Preparation

- **Be Disciplined, Daily:**
  - **Find, Collect, and Save** God’s Promises!

### “Words of Wisdom”

**“If you don’t do your part, don’t blame God.”** Billy Sunday

### Mixing “Faith” with the Promises

- 2 Peter 1:3 **“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”**

2 Corinthians 12:9 **“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”**

### “Words of Wisdom”

**“If we trust in the promises from God’s Word, which assure us these things are true, it will give us a greater sense of security, assurance and peace in our soul. If we fail to trust in these promises, we will not enter into God’s rest!”** Pastor Ted Groves

### The Missing Half ...

### Take God’s Promises Seriously

- **God STILL intends for His People to mix “Faith” with His Promises!**
  - **“Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was**

***of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.  
Now we who have believed enter that rest..." (Hebrews 4:1-3)***



