Five Promises of God in the Gospel: Will You Believe Them?

By Marco Scouvert

God does not want his children to live in constant dread concerning the state of their souls. He wants us to have a rock-solid confidence that we are loved and accepted by him in Jesus. However, early on in my Christian life, I struggled on and off for several years with doubts about my own salvation. I lacked a settled assurance concerning the nature of my relationship with God and where I would spend eternity. "Am I a genuine believer and child of God?" "Are my sins actually forgiven and does God really love me?" "Will I truly go to heaven when I die?" When these kinds of questions presented themselves, often I was not able to confidently say, "Yes."

Do you claim to believe the gospel but are anxiously unsure if your sins are forgiven or if God really loves you? Do you have recurring doubts about whether you will enter God's kingdom on the day of judgment? If so, I want to share the following personal story and encouragement to help you have a more settled assurance concerning your salvation in Christ.

"Don't You Believe the Promises of God?"

In the midst of this time of uncertainty, a friend and I were invited for dinner at the home of an older couple in our church. During the meal we had lighter, though meaningful, conversation. But after we finished eating, our discussion got more serious. The man asked us, "What do you fear most?" We both thought for a bit. Then my friend said, "Displeasing God." I wished that was true of me at that moment, but it wasn't my greatest fear at that time. So I answered honestly, "How Jesus said that there will be many people who address him as Lord on the day of judgment, but he will cast them away from his presence" (see Matthew 7:21-23).

Our host said something like, "Oh, that is scary," and lamented what a terrible experience that was going to be for such people. I believe he thought I was saying that was a frightening prospect for many other people. I actually meant that I was afraid that I might be one of those people! Thankfully, no one picked up on my personal worry and I was happy to let the misunderstanding remain so we could move on in the conversation.

The next day, after church, I walked a bit with my friend and we had some discussion. At one point she insightfully asked, "When you answered that question last night about what you feared most, were you talking about other people or were you talking about yourself?" I told her truthfully that I had wondered at times if I was destined to hear those dreadful words from Jesus and be cast out of God's kingdom. After listening, she gently asked, "But don't you believe the promises of God?"

I said, "Yes," though in that moment my tone demonstrated I didn't appreciate the significance of what she was asking. I don't recall exactly what happened next, but she may have said something like, "Well, if that's true, then why are you afraid of being rejected by Jesus and missing out on eternal life? God has promised that those who believe in his Son are forgiven and will live forever in his kingdom." In a moment, suddenly, the gloomy clouds of my doubts seemed to disperse. In their place appeared a mountain of more settled assurance that I was a believer and I was forgiven.

Five Gospel Promises to Believe

What was the secret sauce in my friend's question? It helped me shift my focus off of myself, my performance, and onto Jesus — what he had done and what God promises to those who believe in him. I had developed an unhealthy habit of self-examination, introspection, and comparison with others. In those moments, my works became the object of my faith rather than Christ and the word of God.

It is true that the evidence of a changed life is helpful for confirming our claim to believe in Jesus, but it should not be the driver of our assurance. The surest foundation for confidence before God and about our salvation is to listen to and believe the promises that God and Jesus make to us in the gospel.

Below, I have listed out five glorious gospel promises given to us in the Bible. I urge you to read them, believe them, and even commit them to memory. Ask the Lord to help your unbelief and strengthen your confidence in Christ through them. Instead of listening to your anxious thoughts arise, speak these promises to yourself regularly. Whether God is pleased to give you a more settled assurance at some point or your path is a lifelong fight against your doubts, keep returning to these promises as ballast for your soul.

1. Jesus promises to receive and keep you. "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37).

2. God promises to forgive your sins. "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43).

3. God promises to accept you as his child. "To all who did receive [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

4. God promises not to let you perish in your sins. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

5. Jesus promises to raise you from the dead. "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:40).

"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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