

# Principles of Prayer and Promises

Advanced Seminar

**“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1.**

## PPP: Lesson 14b:

The Holy Spirit and the Promises:

**“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Psalm 16:11.**

Did you know that heaven can begin right here on this earth? That is what the text tells us; the joy, the thrill of standing in the presence of Jesus and looking into His face is going to start right now when your life is filled with the Holy Spirit. I am not telling you it is the full thrill, it is not the full payment, it is only a down payment, a little foretaste, a little preview of what will be ours in all its glorious fullness when Christ comes and we are actually given the gift of immortality.

That is wonderful enough, right? We ought to be enjoying the blessings of heaven now, our faces should be lighted up anticipating the joys stored up in the morning when our Lord returns.

Some may say that this is impossible. We are saying that we can start knowing now what heaven is like but the Bible says:

**“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.**

But we are saying that if we are filled with the Holy Spirit we can begin to know what heaven is like? That contradicts the Bible doesn't it? Let's take a closer look and see if this is a contradiction that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit we get a little down payment on heaven, a foretaste of our inheritance.

I memorized that verse and I believe it, but I wish the teacher had included the next verse. It is true that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, . . .

**“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:10.**

In other words, when you are filled with the Holy Spirit you do know the things that your eyes never seen and ears heard, and your mind as never conceived of. What it is telling us here is if we are totally surrendered to Jesus and we're allowing the Holy Spirit to have His way in our lives, and we are constantly immersed and filled with this great power of the Spirit of God, that we will understand things that our eyes have never seen or ears heard or our minds been able to comprehend. We will see it and know it because of the Spirit within us. I long for that experience; I want that to be your daily experience also.

**The Blessing of Abraham**

**“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:14.**

Notice that there is something we must have first before we can claim the promise of the Spirit and it is called the ‘Blessing of Abraham’. We know what the Promise of the Spirit is; that’s the power of God filling our lives. We cannot claim it or expect to receive it unless we first experience the ‘Blessing of Abraham’. We must have it, so what is it? Let’s go to Romans 4;

**“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.” Romans 4:19-22.**

So what was the blessing of Abraham? It was righteousness by faith, wasn’t it? God imputed righteousness to him because of his faith. He had the gift we call ‘righteousness by faith’. That is the ‘Blessing of Abraham’.

God promised Abraham that his wife Sarah would have a baby. A son would be born to Abraham, and here he was an hundred years old and his wife was ninety years old and the promise had still not been fulfilled to them. The reason it had not been fulfilled was that they could not believe that it would happen. The Bible plainly says that Sarah’s womb was dead. Sarah knew that her womb was dead, Abraham knew it, and they just could not believe that any child could be conceived by this old woman who was ninety years of age.

They did not believe for quite a time. In fact, they even thought that they should help God out on this. Abraham took Hagar and had a child by her, but then God came back again and said, “You’re going to have a son, Sarah and yourself.” Finally Abraham and Sarah began to believe God and His Word. Finally they accepted that God would do what He said. They stepped out on raw, simple faith and said, “Well, if God said it, it’s got to happen,” and they began to believe it.

The baby was born when they began to believe it, and because Abraham had the kind of faith that could believe the impossible, something that was physically, humanly, biologically impossible, something that could never happen by any kind of human devising or planning, because Abraham believed it would happen purely and solely because God said it, God imputed righteousness to him. God gave him credit for righteousness because of his faith.

Now, has God made some promises to you and me? Of course He has made promises, just like to Abraham. What does He expect us to do about those promises? We need to believe them just like Abraham did. I don’t care how impossible they seem to be. If God says it, it is going to happen. There is power in the promise, in the very words of the promise. If He says something, all we have to do is just believe it. We don’t have to worry about how God is going to do it. You can leave that part up to God. All you have to do is accept it and know that it is going to happen because it is based on the authority of the infallible Word of God.

Let’s look at one of those promises that has been made to us; **1 John 1:9. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

When you kneel down and ask God to forgive your sin, how do you know it’s been forgiven? Why

because God said it, right? You don't get any feeling; God does not give you any ecstatic emotion from your head to your feet to prove to you that He kept His Word. God says, "Look, You just ask Me and I'll do it. When you ask Me, thank Me for it, and then get up and act like it is done because it will be done." That is the way it is. He requires that when you claim a promise, you need to believe that it is done.

Remember that man at the pool of Bethesda who was lying there powerless? He had not been able to walk on his feet, the Bible says, for thirty eight years. Jesus came and looked at him and said, "Rise, take up your bed and walk". This man had been helpless for all those years. He knew it couldn't be done. Suppose he simply lay there and looked up at the Lord and said, "I can't do that. If you heal me I can, I haven't been able to stand up for all those years. If you heal me then I will get up and walk away with this bed."

Now if the man had responded like that, do you suppose he ever would have been healed? Oh, no. But when Jesus said, "Rise and take up your bed," that man believed the word of Jesus and he made the effort to get up and as he made the effort to get up and do something that was absolutely impossible for him to do, the power and promise of Jesus came flowing into his body and he was healed.

It is the same thing when you come and ask forgiveness for your sins. When you kneel down and ask God to forgive your past sins and then you believe that it is done, and that all that past guilt and condemnation is now lifted from your life, this is what we call justification by faith. That takes care of our past sins. We do not now have to feel any condemnation. I don't care how wicked and evil and corrupt and perverse and degenerate we've been, the moment we confess our sins and believe the promise of Jesus, our sins are forgiven. And Jesus places His robe of perfect righteousness and obedience around us. So when God looks at us He sees nothing but the perfect life of Jesus and He credits us with that life and looks upon us as though we had not sinned. This is a part of the Blessing of Abraham.

That is beautiful, but is that the same as righteousness by faith? No, that is part of it, but not all of it. More is involved in Righteousness by Faith than just forgiveness for the past. Every one of us needs something else besides forgiveness. We need power for the future also.

When Adam sinned, two things happened to his life that also affect us, because we are his descendants. What happened to Adam back there? Number one, the death sentence came upon him. God said if you sin you'll die. Number Two, what else happened? His will became so weakened and traumatized by that sin that he would never again in his own strength be able to resist temptation and to keep from sinning again. Those are the two problems of sin that have to be taken care of in your life and mine.

The death sentence has passed on to us and the sinful, weakened fallen nature has been passed onto us. We need forgiveness for the past in order to lift the death sentence from us. Then we need power for the future to enable us in more power than we possess, to be able to resist temptation. That power only comes by Christ living in us; by Him imparting His own life of victory to us.

**"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and**

**majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 1:24, 25.**

So we come to Him and we claim that promise. We say, “Lord, I have this weakness, this sin, and I need the victory over that, and You promised that you will keep me from falling. Give me the victory over this sin.”

Will God do it if I ask Him for that? Is there power in this promise to fulfill it to me? Absolutely! And how do you know that you have the victory? Because He said so! Because He promised. This is the same kind of faith as you exercise in Justification. You claim His promise and you believe it will happen because He said so. Now, you come and claim another promise but this time you’re not asking for forgiveness for past sins you are asking for power over a present temptation. When you pray, you believe that it happens and it is done. You get up and thank the Lord and praise the Lord because you know it has happened. This is sanctification by faith.

When you have both of these experiences, you have forgiveness for the past by faith and then you have victory over your sins through faith in the promise. When you put those two things together in your life you have righteousness by faith.

Neither one of them can stand alone and truly be called righteousness by faith. But when you get those two experiences together in your life then you have the Blessing of Abraham.

**Faith and Works:** So here is a question many ask; ‘If I have faith, and God gives me grace, does that mean I do not have to be concerned about my works?’ Here are a few Bible Texts that seem at first glance to contradict each other.

**“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” Genesis 15:6. “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Romans 4:2, 3.**

We know that Faith is simply believing what God says. So here it seems Abraham just believed and that was good enough, no works involved. But look at this text:

**“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” James 2:20-21.**

Do the two passages disagree? A simple example may solve this mystery. Suppose I come to your house and knock loudly on your door, and tell you, “Quick! Your house is on fire! You must get out right away!” And you say to me, “I believe you!!!” But you go back in and continue watching TV, or eating your meal or whatever you were doing. Do you think you actually really did believe what I told you? No, of course you didn’t or you would have grabbed your family and fled out of the house!

When God tells us something if we really do have Faith, we really believe Him, we will act on that belief, we will respond by obeying what God says! Unless we do have works with our faith, we do not really have faith either. Abraham showed he did really have faith because he acted on what God told him and so, while it was his faith that saved him, his works showed his faith was real.