

The children were lined up for lunch in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. After watching them for a while, the supervising nun wrote a sign and posted it on the apple tray:

“Take only ONE. God is watching!”

The children kept moving further along through the line, where at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. One of the children looked at the cookies and then wrote a sign that read: “Take all you want. God is watching the apples.”

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Hebrews 10:23 (NIV) - <sup>23</sup> Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Have you ever heard the phrase: “Don’t write checks with your mouth that you can’t cash?” What that is talking about is making promises you can’t or never intend to keep.

And I don’t know about you, but I have had that happen to me. And when that happens it is certainly more difficult to trust that person, but what also can happen is that we find it hard to trust God as well, because we are not sure that He will make good on His promises. There are times that we compare our relationships in the natural and it can effect our relationship with our Heavenly Father. (Talk about what happens)

All throughout Scripture God spoke and what he spoke happened.

It started in Genesis. God simply spoke and there was light. He spoke to Abraham and he became the father of many nations. And the list goes on and on of God's promises to His people.

God will never let you down. Oh, don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying you will never go through some things, just ask Job. I'm not saying you will always understand what you're going through. I'm not saying you will never have questions. All I'm saying is he will never let you down. If He spoke it, it will come to pass.

But sometimes in the waiting. . .

Numbers 23:19 (NIV) - <sup>19</sup> God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Let me share something that I hope will help you out today.

In the original Hebrew language of the Old Testament there is no real accurate word for promise. It was translators that used that word. The Hebrew word that was used for the times that promise is used in the Old Testament is *dabar* or some form of that word. And what that word actually means is "to say."

The people of God understood a very important detail about God and that was when he spoke, it happened.

He had showed Himself faithful time and time again. So, they just understood that when he spoke, He did.

God was faithful and had a reputation that showed that over and over. He was a keeper of His Word. And so, with such a reputation, there was never a need to distinguish between something God said and something He promised. They went hand in hand. His people knew that whatever God spoke happened.

I love that. What God says happens. You and I can't mess that up. He doesn't even ask our permission. He just does. No if's, ands, or buts about it. And that is really good news.

That means that whatever Scripture we read that contains a promise of God you can consider it done.

Now some of those promises are conditional, but if we do what is expected of us, we can be assured that it will happen.

What do you mean conditional pastor, doesn't God love us unconditionally? And the answer to that question is absolutely.

But how about this:

Psalm 37:4 (NIV) - <sup>4</sup>Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

What's the condition? Delight yourself in the Lord.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV) - <sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup>in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

What's the condition?

Then there are those promises that are simply unconditional, and those praise God you can't mess up no matter what.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) - <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

He will always make a way. . .always.

And that Scripture brings me to what I really want to share with you today.

The enemy doesn't want you to believe that God is that faithful. That when you are tempted you are all alone. And nothing is further from the truth.

Here's the truth church Satan will always oppose what ever God speaks over your life. There are a few things that if we will recognize, will help us in the battle. And church you need to know that there is a battle raging. Scripture even tells us. . .

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV) - <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

I believe one of the main issues in the Body of Christ today is that we don't understand that when Jesus cried out on the cross it is finished. That is what He meant. It is finished.

What's finished pastor.

Obviously, there are some things God is still doing in my life so thank God He is not finished with me yet.

However, let me just share a few thoughts today is that alright?

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) - <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

How does this happen look at it. . .?

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV) - <sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Your victory over the enemy happens when you stand in the confidence of who you are because of the finished work of Christ.

As a Christian you are made new, and you are made right. What good news.

However, we have a problem. The devil wants you to believe something different. He opposes whatever God declares. So, if he can get you to have an identity crisis, he can begin to erode your confidence in God, and get you to believe that God is not faithful.

How does Satan get you to believe just the opposite of what God has said? Accusations.

He tries to convince you that you're not new, he will bring up the things from your past that brought you shame, and regret. The sins you did, the mistakes you made, the struggles you deal with. He accuses you of still being the same person you were, before you were made new.

Satan will always twist what God said, so the deception sounds true. He did it with Adam and Eve.

John Bevere once said, "the problem with deception, is that its deceiving."

Here's a secret for you, the enemy will try to liken your identity with your actions. In other words, he wants you to just admit your still a sinner saved by grace, which you are not, instead of just repenting the thing and moving on in the journey. You're in a battle of your destiny

Here's the problem with going along with what the accuser of the brothers and sisters wants you to speak over your life. If he can convince you that you are still a sinner instead of a new creation what happens is your beliefs will begin to influence your actions.

Believing that you're a sinner, after the Lord has declared you new will enslave you to a lifestyle from which Jesus died to set you free from.

You can only rise to the level you believe yourself to be. And when you believe what God spoke over you, spoke to you, you will begin to rise to the level He has called you to.

Satan knows that the greatest hindrance to being used by God is to believe that God can't use you.

Satan's accusations are intended to silence your voice. "Look what you've done! And you think you're a Christian!" he accuses. He'll tell you that you've messed up too much and are therefore too far beyond God's love or His use, saddled with the regret, guilt, and shame that he throws on you will cripple you from saying a word. Because you fear that your word is of no value, or no help.

But nothing is further from the truth. I have found that the more that I have gone through the more I am able to share. I become vulnerable yes, but people aren't necessarily attracted to a fancy sermon, but if I can share with them my struggles and how God saw me through it gives them hope that He will do the same for them.

Because we are not fighting flesh and blood, but rather the accuser of the brothers and sisters in Christ so we must make sure that we are wearing the full armor of God. Let's quickly look at that as I try to close out this message.

We find the armor of God in Ephesians chapter 6

Ephesians 6:10–17 (NIV) - <sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you

may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**Belt of truth:** A belt holds the other pieces of clothing and armor together. It secures the outfit and allows a soldier to move freely. Truth both secures us and gives us freedom.

John 8:32 (NIV) - <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

**Breastplate of righteousness:** The breastplate of righteousness covers our hearts and other vital organs. In a sense, the breastplate covers the most vulnerable areas of a warrior.

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) - <sup>23</sup> Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

**Footwear of the gospel:** Our feet are to be "fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace" Our feet are willing to move. We are willing to be obedient to Christ, we will run from temptations and walk in the path that He has called us to.

**Shield of faith:** The shield of faith is used to "extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one" When Satan attacks us, our faith in Christ lessens the blow. We can withstand the attack because we know whom we have believed. And know that He is faithful.

**Helmet of salvation:** A helmet protects the brain, basically our minds. We have the mind of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV) - <sup>5</sup>We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Sword of the Spirit: The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. This includes God's written Word and God's spoken Word (the Holy Spirit within us).

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV) - <sup>12</sup>For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

There is power in the Word of God.