

SERMON PRACTICES

Christmas: Promises Fulfilled Week One: Praying the Promises

Welcome, we're delighted you've chosen to dig more deeply into the Scriptures and consider what God has for you through this sermon. These sermon practices are ideally intended to be discussed with others, so find a friend, family member, or roommate to join you. If you haven't yet joined a life group yet, check out our website at vchurch.org/groups or stop at the Welcome Center for more info.

Getting Started

Before you start today's study, be sure you take a moment to sit quietly before the Lord, then have one person pray, asking the Holy Spirit to give you all deep insight into the Scriptures and the ability to receive his teaching and direction in your time together.

Reflection: Promises for Yourself

(1) Write your name in the blank at the beginning of the prayer written below, and then have someone read it aloud. As it's read, follow along and pray these promises over yourself.

_____, in Christ, you are God's beloved child in whom He takes great delight. You did not choose the Lord, but He chose you, and you are indeed God's friend. He knitted you together in your mother's womb. You are beautifully and wonderfully made. You are crowned with glory and honor. His kindness and favor are poured out upon you. You have been created to do great things, which God prepared for you before even time began.

When you pass through the dark valley, Jesus will be with you. When you cross through great rivers, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Jesus will be with you in the raging fire. He will never love and never forsake you.

With your faith placed in Jesus, you are completely forgiven and perfectly pure before God. He has no condemnation for you. Your Perfect Father loves you with all his heart. He knows your every longing. Your pain is not hidden from Him. Nothing will ever be able to separate you from God's love that is found in Christ Jesus. He calls you to live every day in His love; and he gives you power to do so. No temptation has authority over you.

I pray you will receive these promises deep in your heart. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may you know His promises are forever true. For no matter how many promises God has made, they are all guaranteed in Christ. And so we join with all the saints and the angels, saying "Yes & Amen" to these promises fulfilled in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Amen

(2) Take a minute or two to read through the prayer again, this time quietly to yourself. As you read, underline the promise you need most to believe right now.

- Keep in mind, the prayer of the man who said, “Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief.” Remember that receiving the promises of God requires a deep dependence that he will help you believe. It’s not something that you simply do by personal will power.
- **Share the promise you underlined with your group and discuss why it is important for you right now.**
 - Is it easy or challenging to believe this promise? Have you ever heard that promise before? Or is it new for you? What would it look like to see that promise fulfilled?

Reflection: Promises for Others

(3) Take another quiet minute to ask God who in your life needs to be encouraged by the prayer. Then set up a time to connect with that person to share it with them and pray over it together.

Explore Scripture: Promises in Scripture

(4) Search the list of scriptures below and find the ones that speak most directly to you today. Circle the words that stand out to you the most.

- **Then write out your own prayer to God based on this verse and your need.** Be sure you pray your written prayer. Let it be a starting point that leads you on two more moments of silence and prayer with God throughout this week.

Psalm 139:13-16

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Ephesians 2:4-8

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

Matthew 6:25-29

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Romans 5:6-8

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

Titus 3:4-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Luke 12:6-7

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

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.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Isaiah 41:10

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Psalms 8:3-5

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

John 1:12

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Isaiah 49:15-16

Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

Romans 8:35

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Song of Solomon 2:4

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

Psalms 62:5

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

John 15:15

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Ephesians 3:17-19

...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Note: The bible is full of God's promises. If you can't find what you're looking for here, we encourage you to keep digging. Try these additional scriptures or ask the Lord to guide you to somewhere within His Word.

Psalm 23

Isaiah 43:2

Daniel 3:24-26

Luke 1:37

John 15:16

1 Corinthians 2:20-22

1 Corinthians 10:13

Philippians 1:6

1 John 1:8-9

Wrapping Up

Finish your time by taking turns reading the scripture that stood out to you the most. Then spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you remember and believe these promises throughout your week.

