

The Promise of God to a promise-breaking people

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[0 : 00] Father, we're going to look at your word. We've just sung that the Bible tells us you love us. Father, open our eyes, open the eyes of our heart to your great love for us in the person of your Son and his death upon the cross. This we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. David, I've told, some of you have heard this before, but I actually am very, very thankful for an atheist philosophy professor by the name of Marvin Glass, who was the one who encouraged me to read the Bible.

Actually, if he was here, he would probably not think that was what, he would actually be maybe unhappy that that was what he caused. But he was spectacular at virtually every class, bringing up absurd parts of the Bible to make fun of it or to show how it was wrong. He was very good at it. And I had to confess, I had been a Christian for a couple of years, and I have to confess that every time he would tell this story, I would, in my mind, say, I bet he's got this wrong. He's not telling it right. And then I'd go and look it up, and he had it right. And I realized that I didn't know the Bible, and it was always like a challenge to my faith. So I sort of resolved, as a result of Marvin Glass, who ran for the Communist Party of Canada in about eight by-elections and elections here in Ottawa, ten elections.

[1 : 28] He was a good, hardcore Stalinist atheist, and he helped me to want to read the Bible. And it was him who sort of pushed me to finally read all of the Old Testament, because I have to confess that when I read the Old Testament, I actually confess right now, if some of you, many of you, that if you're a person here who's just maybe here just as seeking, it might surprise you to know that when you read books like *The Year of Living Biblically* or something like that that makes fun of the Bible, the fact of the matter is that most Christians have never read the whole Old Testament.

So there's no chance in the world they're going to try to live that way, because they haven't made it all the way through from Genesis to the end of Malachi, because, frankly, the Old Testament is often unbelievably weird and regularly incomprehensible.

And so when I read the Old Testament, which I try to do every day, I try to read quite a few chapters of the Old Testament every day, I just read it out of obedience. I often don't get very much out of it. Where if I do, it's taken a long time to start to get out of it. Today, the text that we're looking at in Galatians, it actually assumes that you know a really classically weird story in the Old Testament. And so we're going to look at it. And actually, after you hear about this classically weird story in the Old Testament, maybe it'll encourage you to, once again, try to read the Old Testament to understand that it might look weird on the surface, but actually, it's quite spectacularly exciting once you pierce through it.

[3 : 05] So if you get your Bibles, it's Galatians chapter 3, which is in the New Testament, not the Old Testament, but we're going through the book of Galatians. Galatians chapter 3, verse 15. And Paul assumes that we know sort of a background story as he tells this.

And as you're turning to this, Galatians chapter 3, 15. Galatians, I mean, we don't know for sure, but many scholars think that Galatians was the first part of what we now call the New Testament, the first part of the New Testament that was written.

It was maybe written about 15 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. It was written to a congregation of pagans, mainly pagans, although some Jews, but mainly pagans who had become Christians.

They live in the part of the Roman Empire that we now call southern Turkey, mid-sort of central southern Turkey. And the problem which has caused the letter to be written is that they have accepted the gospel, which I'll talk about a bit more in a moment, but they have a group of people

telling them they have to be way more religious and spiritual and that the gospel isn't enough. They have to be more religious, more spiritual, or they're not going to really get the benefits of the gospel. And that's what Paul's trying to go against. And here's how it continues. Verse 15. To give a human example, brothers and sisters, even with a man-made covenant, and just pause here for a second, some of your Bibles will say the word will.

[4 : 32] And in the original language, it's the same word. There's two different English words for this singular sort of idea. And so some of your versions have chosen the word will, and some of the versions have chosen covenant.

They're both correct, because that's the original language word. Okay? And I'll explain it in a moment. To give a human example, brothers and sisters, verse 15, even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

I'll explain this in a moment. Now, the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, and to offsprings, referring to many, but referring to one, and to your offspring, who is Christ.

This is what I mean. The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise, but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. Now, one of the things we have to realize is that part of the whole point of Galatians, in fact, most of the New Testament, is that God has to deliver us from religion.

[5 : 53] The Bible isn't encouraging us to be religious. In fact, the Bible is the good news that God delivers us from religion, and this is very important here to understand the difference between the promise and religion.

And so the very first thing, then, is if we could put up the first point, Andrew. The trustworthy, promise-keeping God promised to bless.

The trustworthy, promise-keeping God promised to bless. Yes. Now, I've gotten out of place in my notes.

First of all, I could give you a complicated, ancient Near East example of what Paul means by saying you can't change contracts. Some of them you can, some of them you can't.

The best example for us, that'd be obvious in Canada, is that if, not if, Louise and I have made a will. We have to update it, but we've made a will, and if we die in a car accident this afternoon, which I hope and pray we don't, but if we die this afternoon, we can't change the will.

[7 : 02] It's unchangeable. So that's a good Canadian example to try to get into what Paul is trying to refer to. Sometimes a contract or a covenant or a will can be made that can't be changed.

In our case, when you're dead, it can't be changed. You know, when we were first making our will, somebody gave us some advice that, you know, many people just think the fairest way to do a will is you divide up your assets equally between all of the children, but sometimes you need to take into account if some of your children have unique needs.

You know, so for instance, let's say maybe one of our children was to become a missionary, and missionaries, generally speaking, don't become rich, and maybe the rest of our children went into professional jobs.

It was going to make them a good income, and so maybe we would make a will to give more money to the child who's going to be a missionary than to the other kids, and we make the will. That's not the way the will is, by the way.

That's all equal. But you make the will. In case my kids are worried. By the way, it's not much to spend. If Louise and I die today, it's not very much to spend, let me tell you.

[8 : 19] You might buy a new, I don't know, what's the cheapest car you can buy nowadays? Some type of Nissan. You might get a new one of those. That would be about the extent of it right now. But anyway, but let's say, you know, we changed our will and die with that intent, but a week after we die, or a month after we die, the kid who's the missionary writes a book that sells five million copies and they're rich.

And the other kids with the professional jobs all get laid off. The situation's completely changed, but you can't change it. Okay? And so part of what Paul is trying to get at here is that Paul, God makes a covenant, like a will, a contract, so to speak, with Abraham, and this is an unchangeable thing.

That's just the way the world works, folks. And so whatever happens 430 years later when the law is given to Moses, well, I mean, it just, it can't change it, right?

A later development can't change the original thing. That's sort of at the heart of what Paul is trying to talk about. But here, you know, look at the point. The trustworthy promise-keeping God promised to bless.

And I think in that little few verses that I read, I think the word promise is there, promise or promises are there five times. It's there quite a bit in the passage we're going to look at. And for many of us, as soon as we see the word promise connected to God, well, maybe because, you know, your back, I can't really see you very well, a combination of my glasses and the glare, and, you know, your back is to other people, but many of you, your eyes might have started to roll.

[9 : 52] Oh, yeah. I mean, if not, your eyes rolling on the outside and the inside, because many of us are deeply conflicted and deeply cynical about promises in general, but promises connected to God in specific.

Maybe I am vastly more sinful than every single person here, or maybe this is an unbelievably unique collection of exemplary holy people, but you don't have to go in the blog sphere very far or meet very many people to understand that, you know, the fact of the matter is, I mean, how cynical we are about promises?

How many people are upset that the liberals haven't kept their promises? How many conservatives were upset? I mean, how many people were really upset or surprised, shocked that the conservatives before that didn't keep their promises?

Like, what would you say to somebody who's going around to you and goes, I am shocked, I am shocked that the liberals didn't keep their promises? Like, you'd go, come on, get a life. Like, did you really believe they were going to keep those promises?

Like, that's how Canadians are. And do we expect big corporations? Do we expect the government? Do we expect people to keep their promises? No. And many of us, I mean, many of us, you know, in important institutions like marriage, like with parents and kids, we're just used to the fact that in many cases promises haven't been kept.

[11 : 11] In many cases, we withhold promises from people. Why? We withhold promises from people because we don't want to disappoint them when we don't do it. I mean, I'm not saying that we all, I mean, some of us are very good at keeping promises.

I just want to get at the point that many of us have a deep type of, we're very conflicted about believing promises, making promises, keeping promises. We all have a history of wounds, of having been hurt by promises not kept.

And we, if we're honest, have actually done wounding in our lives by making promises and not keeping them. And so many people, there's a deep cynicism and conflictedness when they see anything to do with God making a promise.

And many of us in particular have believed the promises of God and have been disappointed, or at least we thought we believed the promises of God and have been disappointed. And so we often say, well, that's nice, George.

Good sentence, the trustworthy God, promise keeping God, promise to bless. That, George, is such a classic religious statement. It is so ambiguous that you can explain away everything.

[12 : 20] Way to go, George. That's what some people might be thinking. Maybe you're thinking, I never thought about that before, but that's actually really good. No, I'm just joking. I don't want to come here and just plant seeds of doubt.

But, I mean, that's the context within which this text of the Bible has been written. That's why the sermon title is The Promise of God to a Promise-Breaking People, or a promise conflicted, or a promise skeptical, or a promise cynical people.

That's who we are. But you look at the text. Look at verse 18. For if the inheritance comes by law, it no longer comes by promise, but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

And all the way through this text, it keeps talking about how God has made a promise to bless. If you could put up the next point, Andrew, that would be very helpful.

In fact, underneath this text, or behind this text, because Paul's hearers must have known about it, and we don't pick it up, but there's in fact a story behind this text that Paul is referring to.

[13 : 29] And in it, the trustworthy God doubles down to show that he will keep his promise. And we're not going to read the text. It would have to be a whole sermon on it. But later on, and it might be very hard, one of the problems with reading Genesis 15 is how you translate the word offspring, and it's the problem in the original language of singular and plural.

But I'll just give you a summary of the story. Here's the story that Paul is sort of referring to. It's really, it's one of those classic, weird Old Testament stories.

God says to Abraham, Abraham, I want you to take, I think it's four animals, I want you to take four animals, I want you to kill the four animals, and then I want you to cut the animals in half, and I want you to lay them out on the ground so there's one half on one side, the other half on the other side. I want you to do that. Abraham goes, he kills the dog, kills the cat, kills the parrot, kills the budgie, as a modern example. Lays them out on the ground, because he cuts them in half, and he lays them in a row.

And then the next thing you know is, as God puts Abraham into a deep sleep, and while Abraham is in a deep sleep, all of a sudden there's a torch that goes through between the animals, and a pot that's full of, that's smoking, goes between the animals, and then God speaks to Abraham in a dream and promises that he's going to bless him.

[14:46] That's pretty weird, right? But here's what's actually quite spectacular about this story, and you know, this just comes from study. In the ancient world at that time, that's how contracts or covenants were made between the Lord and the vassal.

Okay, so this is me making a contract with Apple, or Google, you know, or the government, and them with me. Now what happens when you make a contract, I'm the little guy, I'm the minnow, I'm the minion, I'm the little guy, what happens when you make a contract with a powerful person? It's all stacked towards the powerful person, right? In the 60s, in the 70s, in the 80s, there's a very, at the time, famous African-American comedian, a comedian by the name of Dick Gregory, who just died a few years ago, and he was a very important comedian for furthering civil rights in the States, and he was also quite a part of the Vietnam War.

And one of his regular routines was that he was all in favor of the American government drafting his son to go fight in Vietnam, pause, as long as he got to serve beside the Rockefeller's son, the Rockefeller's kids, right?

Because he knew, no, no, that's not how it worked. Poor African-American, rich white guy, their kids go to different places to fight. You know, some in clubs in Washington, some in the jungles of Vietnam.

[16:21] Because that's how it works in life. So in this ancient world, the way the contracts were made, it's almost as if it's making a contract with the mob. And so you cut the animals, you kill the animals, you cut the animals in half, you put them down in a line, and then the Lord makes the vassal walk between the dead animals.

Why? You break the words of this contract, this is what's going to happen to you. Dead meat. So what's so shocking about this story?

In this story, it looks, if you were a person in the ancient world, you're reading this story in Genesis 15, okay, this is the way the Almighty God is going to work with a normal, ordinary, finite human being.

Abraham, find four animals, cut, kill them, cut them in half, lay them down, and then everybody in the story is waiting for Abraham to walk between the animals. But what happens? No.

God puts Abraham to sleep. And the torch and the smoking pot go between the animals. The torch is an image of God. The pot, the smoking pot, the incense, is an image of God.

[17:31] God walks between the animals. And God makes a unilateral promise that he will do everything that's required to bless, and Abraham is asked to do nada, nil, zip.

It's a shocking promise. In fact, could you put up the next point? The birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is God keeping his promise to bless.

In fact, even this ancient ritual points to the fact that there is going to be someone will die for this promise to bless, and it's not going to be Abraham, it's going to be God in the person of his son. And when I put up there the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is God keeping his promise to bless, we need to understand that if you're going back, you just read Genesis as a book, begin at Genesis 1, you come to Genesis 15, you'll know that whatever blessing means, it's going to have to be, if it's really a blessing from God, it's going to have to be something that deals with sin because human beings have put themselves in the place of God and sin and evil has entered into the world.

Whatever it's going to mean for God to bless, it's going to have to deal with death because because of Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, they have brought death into the world.

[19 : 15] They themselves will die and all of their seed, all of their offspring, and in fact, not only that, whatever God is going to have to do to bless, he's going to have to deal with the fact that human beings now are estranged from God, they're alienated from God, they live their lives with their back to God, with their ears blocked to God, wanting to be like God themselves.

They are far from God, not they are far from God, we are far from God, I am far from God, and whatever it's going to mean for God to bless, he's going to have to deal with that. You see that if you just read from Genesis 1 to Genesis 15, whatever it's going to mean, God's going to have to deal with that.

So that when Paul comes now to understand that in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is God keeping his promise to bless, that in a sense, when you see Jesus dying upon the cross, you see the promise.

When you think of Jesus dying upon the cross, you see promise kept for you and for me. because the birth of Jesus is not just a pleasant story that we can have really cool looking greeting card pictures.

The birth of Jesus is an invasion. It is God invading our created world to sin. It is not human beings sort of genetically engineering or just, you know, in modern and all of a sense to try to have the perfect child that will now develop us.

[20 : 43] No, it is God breaking into our human world. When we see the life of Jesus, we see not just somebody who lived a full life, in fact, that lived a very short life.

We see somebody who now has an entire life of a complete and utter submission and humility and obedience before the Father. And it is going to be so important because I am not humble.

I am not obedient. I have not lived a perfect life. Whatever is going to have to happen, there is going to have to be someone who has done this for me that can somehow be mine in exchange when I receive it by faith.

And Jesus, of course, in his life, his miracles begin to vindicate who he is. His teaching explains who he is and how he is God keeping his promise. And the ultimate miracle, his death, and then his resurrection is God vindicating that what Jesus has been saying is true.

It is vindicating that the promise that was begun to be made in Genesis chapter 12 and Genesis 15 and Genesis 18 and Genesis 22 and all of those four stories as it unpacks this promise of blessing that God is making to Abraham, that God is keeping his promise that Jesus does not just die upon the cross.

[21 : 52] He does not die for his own sins at all. He dies for you. He dies for me. He dies for the estranged. He dies. God knew that I cannot make promises so he made a promise.

He knows that I often don't keep my promises so he keeps his promise. He knows that I often withhold making promises so he did not hold back in making a promise. He keeps his promise. And Jesus' death is a death for me and his resurrection is a resurrection for me and a vindication that God has kept his promise and that when we read the gospels we are reading the story of the promise that has come and the promise that is kept.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Just as a bit of an aside a bit of a plug one of the things at the conference the apologetics conference that's coming up in just a couple of weeks Mike Lacona has just written a book about a year ago published by Oxford University Press on the reasonableness and some of the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and if you're wondering I mean there is in fact surprisingly good reasons to believe that Jesus really did in history die and rise from the dead and I encourage you to go to that conference to come Mike Lacona is going to begin a talk specifically around that issue I encourage you to come encourage you to bring your friends but here so some of you might say okay George this is sort of I mean it is a little bit interesting to think of Jesus as the promise and the promise kept but I'm still not entirely sure what difference it makes well here's the huge difference it makes and Paul's going to start to try to explain it to us if you could put up the next point

Andrew needing to perform is a very different way to live than living by believing God's promise there are two mutually exclusive and contradictory ways of living by contradictory I mean you either do one or the other you can't do both needing to perform is a very different way to live than living by believing God's promise if somebody told me that I don't know this would never happen that if you just merely come to a ballroom in a hotel and we're going to give you five luxury days all for free in a luxury hotel or condo and then you go there and in fact well there's this cost this cost this cost this cost you have to sit through this talk and this sales pitch and then if you don't do that you don't

really get that you get something different dang it all it's not a promise there's a whole pile of things I got to do just in case you ever get a phone call or an invitation for something like that you know it's a completely different way to live all religion all spirituality is all based on needing to perform and it might be that in you know some very harsh religions it's very harsh laws and very harsh rituals that you need to perform it might be that if you're far more spiritual you just have to make sure you vote for the green party stop eating gluten become a vegan and that's all you have to do to go to heaven [25 : 17] I mean it might be that's the difference between spirituality and religion often and sorry that's a terrible thing for me to say I apologize I didn't mean to offend I really didn't but the fact of the matter is that spirituality and religion is not different both of them involve needing to perform it just might be that the standards are different and the standards are higher or lower but Bible here Paul is trying to communicate that the promise living by believing a promise is very very different there's a man in the church who has for the last several years very graciously allowed Louise and me and the kids to go to his cottage for free so one day he said George how do you like to go to my cottage and be there for a week for free he sent me an email what do I have to do to get that promise I have to respond I have to believe him and all I had to do was respond when I got my equivalent to an MDiv what did I have to do well George you've got to study for three years you've got to fulfill these diocesan requirements you've got to fulfill these academic requirements you've got to get that you have to pass you've got to do this you've got to do that completely different way of living believing a promise and needing to perform and that's what Paul is trying to communicate they're completely and utterly different ways to live and the gospel is good news of God making a promise to bless and the blessing is going to deal with sin and it's going to deal with death and it's going to deal with our estrangement for God and it's a promise of something that God will do and it's the news which I'm now passing on to you not only that God has made a promise but that he's kept it and it's not news of new rituals new therapies new things to do new rules to keep it's news of a promise kept which can be for you some of you might say okay George that's very interesting but one second here

I thought you're sort of in favor of things like the Old Testament and things like the Ten Commandments like George like aren't you sort of in favor of like you shall not commit adultery I know your wife's in favor of you being in favor of that particular commandment and I know you're in favor of her believing in that commandment so George like what are you just saying that you just have to believe this like how okay that's what Paul's going to keep talking about let's look at 19 to 23 in fact Paul asked the question but by this aside this is just a little really you know this is one of the shocking things about look at verse 19 why then the law and then you're going to look down at verse 21 is the law then contrary to the promises about here's just a little bit of an aside this is one of the things which is so shocking about the Bible how the Bible forms you you know there's all sorts of religions and spiritualities and maybe many Christians who mistakenly say don't ask that question just believe the Bible always encourages us to ask honest questions that's part of the reason

I was only within the biblical world that science was able to develop because science develops on the idea amongst other things that it is a good thing to ask a question and the Bible models for us that we should ask good questions if you read the Gospels when people ask Jesus a false question because it's not really a question it's just trying to get him in trouble he's very subtle but whenever anybody asks him an honest question he gives him an answer anyway verse 19 why then the law why then the Ten Commandments George why then things about sacrifices why then things about how you care for the poor how you care for the environment why then the law verse 19 next part it was added because of transgressions in other words we'll get to in other words George if you haven't noticed people do bad things and screw up you know you know it's so funny there's so many times you see about people wanting to be centered but what happens you want to be centered but what happens if your center is getting revenge what if your center is racism what if your center is self-love and narcissism like the primary advice of our culture is completely and utterly ignorant of the fact that we do evil

I mean you read the national post the globe and mail I mean the national post a little while ago there was a whole big glossy insert all around different types of spiritual practices like being centered and being focused but the problem is too many of us are focused around racism and self-love and narcissism and pride and anger and envy and greed and gluttony Lord don't help me be centered help me to be de-centered I want to be centered on your promise because if I'm centered on myself boy am I in trouble and boy are my kids in trouble and boy is my wife in trouble anyway sorry not

sorry that's what the Bible is saying why then the law well why because in case you haven't noticed people do bad things and they do bad things without being apologetic they do bad things because they like doing bad things they do bad things and then they get mad at people who point out that they've done bad things that's all encompassed in this simple line it was added because of transgressions because of transgressions continue not until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary now an intermediary implies more than one but God is one

I only have nine minutes left I can't go into that the main thing is that the same one God there's one will and one mind and one God behind all of this thing so the same God who ultimately creates the promises ultimately the one even though it's done through an intermediary who wanted the law so God doesn't contradict himself you've got to remember that verse 21 is the law then contrary to the promises of God what does Paul say certainly not for if a law had been given that could give life then righteousness would indeed be by the law just as an aside if you bring a corpse to a yoga class it'll still be dead at the end if you say morning and evening prayer over a corpse it'll still be dead if you read the if you tattoo the ten commandments on a corpse it's still dead for if a law had been given verse 21 that could give life then righteousness would indeed be by the law but the scripture imprisoned did I skip something no I didn't okay but the scripture imprisoned that sounds mean everything under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus

[32 : 50] Christ might be given to those who believe now before faith came we were held captive under the law imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed so just pause that all sounds really really mean and extreme if you could put up the next point Andrew it's not actually it's very helpful God gave the law to sell the problem this church we're very blessed we have a very very good counsel and one of the ways we know we have a very good counsel is they don't always agree with me thanks be to God and usually when they don't agree with me it's because they're way wiser than me and they've saved us from a stupid path sometimes I'll ask them to reconsider an issue because what I've realized is I didn't sell the problem because I deal with the church every day it's one of the main things I think about and the staff think about and we talk to each other we can start to see a really big problem and so we come up with a proposal to solve the problem and then the council or the congregation might say nah don't want to do it and that's because

I realized afterwards they didn't see the problem and sometimes in life sometimes it's a classic management technique that first you sell the problem and so that's what Paul is doing here he's saying that God did the law to help sell the problem the fact of the matter is imagine for an instance that you I was just reading I just finished reading a novel just yesterday where a person who was in jail wrongly a detective comes to believe that he's innocent and that in fact if some requests for some DNA were made it would probably prove that he was innocent of the crime and part of the whole problem was to get the person to actually want to make the request so if we just sort of tame that just imagine for a second imagine that you you're that person or maybe you're just a person and you really believe that this new

DNA evidence will prove that the person that's in jail your brother or your sister your mom or your dad or your kid will get them out of jail that they've been innocent all along but when you go to visit your child every time you visit your child they don't actually believe they're in prison they believe grim faced and metal and concrete everywhere if you've ever been inside a jail for the record I've only gone to visit parishioners not because I had to do time not that you know Jesus saves prisoners and all but if you go in it's just very concrete and medley and for them to somehow think no no no no dad or brother or sister I'm not in a jail I'm in a five star hotel and resort I'm eating the best food what you want to do is you want to have something to get you almost want the jail to be more jail like so it will break through their fantasy for them to realize they're in jail so they can actually then have the desire to ask for the promise for the thing that will get them out and that's what

Paul is saying is that you rules his own laws in terms of how a holy society should look how a holy society should work how it should care for the poor and care for the environment and care for marriages and the ritual thing need to be done to make you right with God and God actually provides that to try to break through our our our complete and utter often refusal to recognize that we still sin that we're going to die like it's actually quite amazing for most of us nobody here has lived forever all of us had a beginning I don't want to depress you but you're all going to die unless Jesus comes back first and you're all very limited so you're all finite but why is it that we so easily

think that we're like

God why do we so easily fill ourselves with arrogant thoughts of power when a microscopic germ can kill us and God needs to sell the problem to us so that we need to call out to God and receive his promise to bless and the law does something else just very quickly because I'm running out of time if you could wrap the next point remember that whole thing about George are you saying that you can just disregard that you should not commit adultery hopefully you believe that your wife hopes you believe it and I know you hope your wife believes it and we both do and here the law was your version some of your versions will say guardian some will say teacher there's an original language word there that doesn't have an easy English equivalent guardian sort of is right but not entirely teacher task master has to be added to get a bit of a sense the law was a guardian teacher task master until the promise came it was not the promise itself in other words it's all part of [38 : 36] God telling us the problem do and what we had to accomplish if we treated it as a way to make ourselves right with God it completely and utterly failed but here's the illustration maybe this is an illustration to help you understand what Paul is trying to make it remember I said that living believing in a promise is vastly different than needing to perform if somebody from the church said you know George if you start cleaning my cottage on a regular basis maybe someday I'll let you stay there well I probably wouldn't start in a sense I would be like an irreligious person I just say I have better things to do on a Sunday afternoon NFL is on this afternoon and my bed beckons for a nap going to a cottage to clean it in the hope that next year you might let me use the cottage nah

I don't think so maybe I get a little bit filled with optimism I try it for a while but even if I did it I would probably eventually be doing it with a lot of grudging sense and that's what religion and spirituality does to us it creates anxiety it creates false hopes it creates resentment but let me tell you when Louise and I are leaving the cottage we clean that cottage really well out not out of a desire to perform but out of gratitude and that's the difference the gospel makes as it starts to grip us if you could put up the final point believe his promise to become his child believe the promises of the promise to live as his child believe his promise to become his child believe the promises of the promise to live as his child

Jesus is the promise he's God's promise to bless and as he dies upon the cross we see the promise kept and he is always to us promise one of the things for us is we will read the promises in the Bible after we put our hope and trust in the promise and there will be times we are going to feel that we are very disappointed one of the problems we have is we imagine what God's promises say rather than actually listen to what they say but we are to be a promise driven people and when it seems that sometimes some of the promises that God makes to us the individual ones aren't being kept then that's a good time to call out to God and ask him questions and ask your pastor but we need to be prepared to be humbled because often what happens when we hear the individual promises of God our desire to be like

God and to be exalted into glory and boast quickly come in and we don't hear what God actually says and what will actually bless us but we imagine something that will make us glorious and powerful over others a source of envy but we are to learn to trust that the same God who died upon the cross to redeem us who paid the price who lived the perfect life for us that he did this all for us that he suffered abandonment of the father that he did this for us that he in fact is God's promise kept to bless and when we believe the promise we become his child and we live his life mindful and gripped by the promise and we hear the promises the promise makes to us as the way to live please stand just bow our heads in prayer father we if there's any here father some of us here may be really burdened with wounds of promises that have been broken to them father

I ask that your holy spirit would turn their eyes to you to your promise to your promise kept father there are some of us who are maybe burnt out and cynical by the promises that we have broken maybe wounds in terms of how we have hurt others by making promises and then breaking them father turn the eyes of our hearts to Jesus and to you your promise made your promise how deeply we easily slide into thinking we need to perform perform perform and we forget the promise and we ask father that you would turn our hearts and our eyes to you to your promise kept and father if there are any here who have never given their lives have come to you to say father you have made this promise I believe it may it be real in me may that promise I accept I take the promise and all it involves father if there are any here who have not yet done that may may your

[44 : 22] Holy Spirit move and work in their lives that they might do that business and work with you today to receive that promise father give me that promise so that I might live by that promise in

light of that promise father may you help people make that all these things we ask in the name of
Jesus your son and our savior amen