

# Promise

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Preacher: Tyler Lawrence

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, hey, thank you so much for tuning in today. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana.! And as always, if you'd like to learn a little more about us, you can go to FCCGreensburg.com or you can check out the FCC Greensburg Facebook page, other social media as well.

But hey, today we're excited to get into the Word of God. But most of all, let this Word get into us and change us from the inside out. We are in the fourth and final week of our series called Secret Place, Psalm 91, verses 14 through 16.

And the message is called Promise. So go ahead and grab your Bible or your Bible app and let's head toward Psalm 91. Today we're going to close out this four-week series called Secret Place. And church, I love the story Booker T. Washington told about a slave from the mid-1800s who made a deal with his owner. A legit contract where he was allowed to buy his own freedom, but it was a lot of money.

And part of that agreement allowed him to go wherever he wanted and work for whomever he chose, as long as he kept making his payments to buy himself from this Virginia slaveholder.

[ 1 : 22 ] Well, partway through this multi-year contract, the Emancipation Proclamation passed in the U.S. freeing slaves in the year 1863.

Yet, according to the contract, he still owed \$300. Doesn't sound like much to us, but that was the equivalent of nearly \$8,000 today.

Working in Ohio at the time because he could earn a better wage, instead of saying, well, sorry about your luck. This was wrong in the first place. The law passed.

We're hundreds of miles away from each other. Let's just forget it. Instead, this former slave walked the entire distance back to Virginia and paid that \$300 that he had promised.

And when Booker T. Washington was having that conversation with him, he said, and I paraphrase, I knew I didn't have to pay that amount anymore since the law had been passed.

[ 2 : 19 ] But I gave my word, and my word has never been broken. See, being a man of integrity, this guy knew he couldn't enjoy that freedom until he fulfilled his promise.

And you know what? I was raised the same way. You probably were too. When you give your word, when you make a promise, you follow through. Now, on a lighter note, How many of you have ever had a kid say, Mommy, Daddy, I promise I'll clean my room if I can have that piece of chocolate.

I promise I won't get sassy when you ask me to do something. I promise I won't sneak candy anymore. I promise I won't lick my sister's arm. Hey, welcome to a preacher's family, okay?

I promise, I promise. How many times does that promise go out the window the second it's inconvenient? Well, here's the good news. God keeps every single promise he makes.

And isn't that the theme woven throughout the entirety of God's word, including Psalm 91 here? In fact, I want to go ahead as we close out this series, and I just want to read all of Psalm 91 to you so you can hear it in its entirety.

[ 3 : 33 ] And then we'll kind of jump back in and break it down these last three verses here. But here's what Psalm 91 says from the NKJV. He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress. My God in Him I will trust. Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence.

He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge. His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked.

Because you have made the Lord who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling.

[ 4 : 46 ] For He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent, you shall trample underfoot.

Because He has set His love upon me, therefore I will deliver Him. Now this is God speaking here. He says, I will set Him on high, because He has known my name.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer Him. I will be with Him in trouble. I will deliver Him and honor Him. With long life I will satisfy Him, and show Him my salvation.

Now if you've not been with us throughout this series, we've basically walked through this powerful psalm I just read with this life-changing promise that may not sound like rocket science, or may not even be new to you, but when we put it into practice, it transforms a me-centered life of mediocrity into the greatest adventure of serving God and others that you could ever imagine.

So here it is. You and I are invited into the secret place, into the presence of Almighty God under His perfect protection.

[ 6 : 06 ] Now, that doesn't mean that life is always a bowl full of cherries as we live in a fallen world because of sin. Genesis chapter 3, right? But through it all, God's faithful.

And the same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you if Jesus is truly Lord. Today we'll close out this series with the last three verses of Psalm 91 where we shift from the psalmist to that most believe was either David or Moses.

We really don't know for sure because it doesn't say. But regardless of who it was, they're declaring God's faithfulness to His children. Now, we have what's been called in theological circles a dramatic shift or even a divine oracle.

We go from this poetic literature, these pathos heart songs written to God, praising Him for His 360-degree protection, to now God Himself declaring this as truth, sharing even more promises.

And while we believe the Holy Spirit has spoken through every person He chose to write the words of Scripture, how cool when God decides to step into the pages and speak directly to His children.

[ 7 : 23 ] And this is kind of a dramatic shift from the psalmist to God, and it only happens maybe 15, 20 times in the psalms, okay? This may be the most well-known example here in Psalm 91.

So enough nerdy theology stuff. Let's get practical as you grab your outlines with me here. And you can always get those by going to the Church Center app under First Christian Church of Greensburg.

Church Center app, you can download that under First Christian Church of Greensburg. And under sermons on that, under today's message, hit take notes. And here's the first thing.

Let's talk about the reminder, and that is to love God. You know, I feel like this psalm is repetitive in a lot of ways, and that's okay because we need these reminders.

How many of you actually take advantage of the reminder app that you have on your phone where you can set it, and then whenever that day and time comes, it lets you know?

[ 8 : 26 ] Yeah, maybe it goes off when it's time to, you know, take your medicine, or you got an appointment the next day, and it lets you know. For me, it's things like when I need to change my furnace filter every six months, and it lets me know.

That reminder pops onto the screen. Well, God's Word is the daily reminder that we need of, number one, His love and grace. Second, our ability to mess everything up without Him.

And third, the hope and purpose we have in Christ. So, you've heard the whole psalm read today. Now let's go a verse at a time on these last three verses and dig a little deeper.

So, here's what Psalm 91 verse 14 says. The God of all creation says this, Because He has set His love upon me, therefore I will deliver Him.

I will set Him on high, because He has known my name. So, two phrases here that we need to focus on, and they come at the beginning and at the end of this verse.

[ 9 : 32 ] And this is like we talked about last week, because, you know, the cause and effect statements, because you have set your love upon Christ, therefore these good promises are yours in Jesus' name.

So, throughout the Bible, the word if appears about 1600 times to show that many of God's promises are conditional upon our response to Him.

In other words, we believe in the free will that God gives for it to be a mutual relationship of love between us and our Creator, who has more than done His part on the cross by the empty tomb. We have to choose in return to love Him back by faith. He won't force you, because that's not love, but when you come all in with Jesus, the door is open to His amazing grace and His promises over your life.

In fact, Matthew 22, starting in verse 37, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy, taking it further as He sums up the law with only two commands.

[10:43] Jesus replied, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment, and the second is like it.

Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments. And here in Psalm 91, verse 14, God Himself is saying these promises have a prerequisite, and that's intimacy with Him.

Loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Not perfection, but sincerity, devotion. Listen, loving God is true and should be true whether you're the most girly girl person listening to this, or maybe you're the most masculine man's man.

You can still love God with all your heart. And here's what's cool about the Hebrew word used here for love. It means to cling to, to delight in, or to set one's affection on.

It's not a superficial or just affectionate type of love. This is a love that brings me all in. And here's why we're compelled to love Him this way. 1 John 4, starting in verse 9.

[11:56] This is how God showed His love among us. He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as atoning sacrifice for our sins.

And then in verse 19 of 1 John 4, it says, we love. Why? Because He first loved us. So, we find out that love between our God and us is a two-way street that involves more than just lip service.

But just like a healthy marriage, love requires two people being fully invested, spending time in the presence of one another. And then the second phrase at the end of this verse is where God says, because He has known my name.

Now, funny story, and some of you may remember this. It was probably just about, I don't know, three, four weeks ago. A longtime member of our church that I've known for 20 plus years was doing our communion meditation that day.

And I normally introduce whoever's going to do it and then I step away after I just got done preaching the message. And when I went to introduce him, my mind went blank.

[13:12] Sometimes I'm so focused on the message that remembering names right after that is hard for me. And my mind went blank and I could not for the life of me remember this guy's name.

And it kind of made an awkward moment and I felt awful because I know his name. Tony, I'm just kidding. I mean Troy. And after I sat down, his name immediately came to me and I texted him an apology.

And he was so gracious as he always is. But that could have hurt somebody's feelings. And let me ask you this. How many of you are not good at remembering names?

Yeah, that's a lot of us. And yet we all know how meaningful it can be when you remember someone's name. For example, I've had people that maybe they're pretty well known in the preaching circles and I met them once and then I met them, I saw them again and they remembered and called me by name.

And listen, that meant something. I've even had someone visit our church one Sunday and then choose to come back the next. And I can specifically remember a person who was around retirement age, who was struggling, had just moved to Greensburg.

[14:22] And on their second visit to our church, I called them by name and it instantly, you could just tell how it impacted them. And it connected them to our church family and made them feel loved as we should make them feel.

And when God uses this phrase, because we have known or acknowledged his name, in the Hebrew, that means we've recognized, we've known God's character and power and authority. And that only happens in an intimate relationship with the God, the universe, as we live in such a way that shows that we are his and we know how awesome the one we serve truly is in our lives.

So we're given this reminder to know and love God with all you are by dwelling in the secret place, finding your identity and your protection in the shadow of his wings.

And then comes the reassurance. God's promises are yes. See, in verses 14 and 15, we have five I will statements from the only one who's never broken a promise.

[ 15 : 33 ] The only one who's got the firepower to accomplish it. The only one who created you in your mother's womb and knows every hair on your head. So let's start back in verses 14 and 15.

And here's what it says. Because he has set his love upon me. So this is God speaking to us. Therefore, I will deliver him.

That's number one. I will set him on high. Number two, because he has known my name. He shall call upon me and I will answer him. Number three, I will be with him in trouble.

Number four, and I will deliver and honor him. Number five, you know, there's a story told about a man who had all kinds of unfortunate life circumstances he couldn't control.

And between the sicknesses, the tragedies, the unexpected, he could never get ahead financially. And one day, he was venting to a friend about how ridiculously hard it was to survive in this world.

[ 16 : 35 ] And that's when the guy said, well, I thought your aunt left you something a few years back. I assumed that there could have been some, you know, money attached and you'd be in a better place.

And the guy just started to laugh and said, oh, that, that dumb old thing. All she left me was a rickety old chest that sat on the edge of her bed for 60 years that I remember vividly as a kid.

And it was always full of homemade blankets that she had made and other sentimental items like family pictures. So he said, I didn't even bother opening it. Well, that's when his friend said, well, you know, it probably wouldn't hurt to pry that thing open just to make sure.

But the guy kind of shrugged it off and it was probably about a month later, he walked up into his basement and, or down into his basement and he was grabbing some stuff out of it, some other stuff, and he just happened to walk by this chest.

And out of curiosity, he opened it up discovering a chest full of valuable jewelry, expensive coins, bank notes, totaled about \$200,000.

[ 17 : 44 ] See, for several years, he was struggling when he had more than what he needed right under his nose. And you know what? We may see this guy as foolish, but you know what?

We sometimes do the same thing with God's word. Chalked full of amazing promises we can cling to, we can walk in, but instead we choose to lackadaisically trudge along on our own, missing out on what God has for us.

And here in these two verses, we see God himself give five statements where he says, I will do these things for my child that I love.

So, here they are. I will deliver him. I will set him on high. When he calls upon me in prayer, I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble.

I will deliver and honor him. Thomas Chisholm wrote the words to this hymn in 1914 that are still true to this day. He said, All my need he freely supplieth.

[ 18 : 44 ] Day after day his goodness I prove. Mercy's unfailing, new every morning. Tell me of God's unchangeable love. Or, as the word says even better in 2 Corinthians 1.20, for no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ.

And so, through him, the amen is spoken to us, by us, to the glory of God. So, let's take two to three minutes here and quickly talk through those five I will statements that are in these two verses.

And I say in these two verses because there are like a couple more in the next one for the total of seven, which is cool because that number means completion. But here's what I want each of us to do.

I want you to know, I want you to think about actually the one that specifically jumps off kind of the page to you. Okay? And as we go through these five, I want you to think about what the one that impacts you the most and what God will do when you choose to fully dwell in him.

First, I will deliver him, God says. And again, this promise is to deliver us from danger, free us from circumstances that often make us feel trapped.

[ 20 : 00 ] And let's just deal with anxiety for a second. Most of us listening now at least sometimes face anxiety when life starts to feel heavy. And yet, he is the answer as we surrender whatever it is and let him deliver us.

And then second, I will set him on high. Have you ever noticed when your heart is right with the Lord and you've been walking in intimacy with him, that's when your perspective is different? And this is what Yahweh, the never-changing covenant-keeping God, is saying. When you're in the secret place, you're going to be able to see the difficulties of life from a high place, from a place of victory and not defeat.

And then third, he says, I will answer him. See, El Elyon, the one and only God Most High, hears every single prayer that we throw up to him.

And in his perfect will, for our good and for his glory, he answers those prayers to his children. And then fourth, he says, I will be with him in trouble.

[ 21 : 11 ] Do you know what I've noticed? At times when I felt completely alone and defeated and I had the courage to sit down with a Holy Spirit-filled mentor and talk about it, I've walked away a different person.

And isn't it amazing how God designed us not to isolate, but to be in godly community? And how that hour-long talk with someone a little further on their Jesus journey helped me realize that I'm not alone.

And others deal with similar stuff. And it even gave me some encouragement that God has good plans for my life and I'm going to be okay. And even though the problem might have still been there, I was different.

And that changed everything about it. Good news. El Shaddai, the all-sufficient one, is by your side through it all. And here's the last one, the fifth one. God says, I will deliver and honor him.

See, when you walk with Jesus, you can come through every trial in victory and you don't have to worry about what everyone else thinks or even if someone decides to try to smear your name.

[ 22 : 16 ] Guys, I've had this done a few times in my 20 years of ministry because when you start calling the church to think and act biblically, not everybody wants to do that. And you know what?

Sometimes people got baggage that causes them to cause issues, okay? And some would rather do religious traditions than actually practice biblical Christianity. And you know what?

A few people have believed stuff that's been said about me and that's okay because listen, I'm not perfect either and I've made mistakes and I've had to apologize but God, by his grace, because I don't deserve it, has chosen to honor me like he says here.

And that's not arrogance, that's believing his promise. And in the end, God will honor those who walk in integrity before him. And over time, people will see the consistency of your godly fruit-filled life and truth, the truth will be known.

That doesn't mean that we did everything perfect along the way, me especially. And sometimes you have to know, we have to know how to apologize and we have to know how to man up when we're in the wrong, okay?

[ 23 : 25 ] God's promise is yes in Christ, his promises. And last, let's talk about the reward. The reward and that is satisfactory salvation.

And I had some fun with that little phrase but look with me here at the last verse in Psalm 91, verse 16. God says, with long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.

Guys, this blows me away because so many people think that God is sitting up in the sky looking to blast you every time a cuss word slips out of your mouth. But listen, I'm also saying that he does call us to holiness.

But you need to know that as a believer, God is for you, not against you. And we look at Romans 8:31 that actually says this after talking about the amazing justification we have only by the blood of Christ.

It says, what then shall we say in response to these things, in response to God's grace? And then it says, if God is for us, who can be against us?

[ 24 : 34 ] He's that loving father that wants the best for you whether you're in a good place or not. And he's always calling us back into the secret place to dwell in the shadow of the Almighty.

Because in the salvation he freely offers, there's satisfaction like nothing else this world can give. He is the greatest high ever. And this phrase, with long life I will satisfy him immediately makes us think of having a lot of years.

And that can be true. But it's actually deeper than that. In the Hebrew language it more so applies to this idea of living a full and complete life. Kind of like we say, you know, that person lives life to the full.

Some people are alive but others truly live. And guys, this is Elohim, the God of all creation who's saying that in him alone you will discover a life of joy, peace, power, and purpose like nothing else can give.

And this word salvation that is used here refers to God's deliverance and rescue and his protection over every area of your life including, are you ready?

[ 25 : 46 ] Including entering eternity in his presence where we experience the ultimate reward for those who choose to know Jesus and walk in his salvation.

And this is really cool. The Hebrew word that's used here for salvation is pronounced Yeshua. Huh. That sounds almost identical.

There's just a slight difference that we in English can't even really say correctly. Slight difference in how to pronounce this. It almost sounds identical to the Hebrew and Aramaic name for Jesus.

Yeshua meaning salvation. And let me leave you today with this promise from the one who made salvation possible by his death and his resurrection.

Because this is the ultimate reward. John 14 1-3 Do not let your hearts be troubled Jesus says. You believe in God talking about God the Father believe also in me.

[ 26 : 45 ] That's God the Son. My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not so would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you? In other words Jesus is saying listen I'm not a liar I keep my promises.

And then he says and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Amen. What an amazing reward for those who dwell in the secret place. Let's pray together. Father thank you so much for just breaking down this beautiful psalm Psalm 91 over these four weeks and we just pray that we will live like this psalm tells us we can live that we will realize that we have a God who's got 360 degree care over us that we are protected and that anything that we walk through only gets there because God allowed it to happen and God allowed it to happen so that we can grow in our walk.

So Father thank you that you love us that your will is perfect and you are always working for our good and for your glory and I just pray that we can believe your promises and we can walk in them every day.

We love you Jesus and we pray in your holy name and God's people said amen and amen. Hey, thank you so much for tuning in today.

[ 28 : 21 ] Once again, my name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana and hey, we would love to connect with you if you got questions about faith, got questions about following Jesus, maybe about First Christian Church of Greensburg, we would love to answer those for you.

Here's how we can get connected in a couple different ways. You can give us a call 812-663-8488. If the office is closed, just leave us a message and we'll get back with you or you can email me at ray at fccgreensburg.com.

Hey, thank you so much for tuning in today. God bless you and have a great day.