



A Promise of Protection

Acts 23:11-35

1. The Promise (Acts 23:11)

2. The Protection (Acts 23:12-35)

There are many promises in the Bible. There are many promises that we embrace and cherish. Here are but a few that you may be familiar with.

Psalms 23:4, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;"

Psalms 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Psalms 37:23-24, "The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand."

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Romans 8:38-39, "Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ephesians 6:2-3, "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

James 4:7-8, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

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."

All of these promises, we love and we trust. We trust because, "he who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23). We know that God is faithful to fulfill all of these promises.

One thing that is interesting about all of these promises, is that we receive them second hand. The Psalms were written to the ancient Jews. The promises found in them were given to the Jews. We receive the promises because we are God's people by faith. Jesus spoke to his disciples. His promises were for them. We receive his promises because we are his disciples as well. Paul wrote his words to churches in first century. The promises were for them. We receive the promises because we are a church as well.

Can you imagine receiving a promise from God to you directly. Perhaps a promise about your health. Perhaps a promise about your children. Perhaps a promise about business venture, or a move, or a job change. Wouldn't that be incredible?

Well, in our text this morning we will see a personalized promise given, from Jesus himself, to the apostle Paul. We see this in Acts, chapter 23. Last week, we looked at the first 10 verses of this chapter. This morning, we will finish the chapter. That makes our text, Acts 23:11-35. The title of my message this morning is, "A Promise of Protection" because, that's what we will see in our text. We will see Paul promised protection. Now, before I read, I want to set the context.

Paul has returned from his third missionary journey, and found himself in quite some trouble with the Jews. He was wrongfully accused by the Jews of bringing a Gentile into the temple. As a result, he was dragged out of the temple area and almost killed by the crowd, were it not for the Romans rescuing him.

Then, while speaking to the crowd, his comments about taking the gospel to the Gentiles brought the Jewish crowd into an uproar. They shouted out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live" (Acts 22:22). So Paul, again, was taken into Roman custody, and thereby protected from the Jews

On the next day, when brought before the Jewish counsel, Paul created a division in the council by crying out, "Brothers, It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial" (Acts 23:6). Again, this began an uproar, and the Romans needed to rescue Paul, as they were afraid that "Paul would be torn to pieces by them" (Acts 23:10). Three times the Romans had to save Paul from being killed.

So, now, in the beginning of our text, Paul finds himself in jail. He is awaiting a court appearance in the morning. So, consider the text:

Acts 23:11-35

The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."

When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him." So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent." So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of these things."

Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor." And he wrote a letter to this effect:

"Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him."

So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

My first point comes from verse 11.

Acts 23:11

The following night the Lord stood by him and said, Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.

1. The Promise (Acts 23:11)

These verses serve as the promise from Jesus to Paul. It is the promise that Paul will have opportunity to "testify" about Christ in Rome. I'm calling my message "A Promise of Protection," because the promise is that he will survive Jerusalem. Paul has already had three attacks on his life. Jesus here is promising that he won't be killed in Jerusalem. Rather, Paul will get to Rome, exactly as he had planned to do.

Do you remember what Paul's plans were after serving in Ephesus for three years? In Acts 19:21, we read, "Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome." We have seen this plan unfold before our eyes as we have walked through the book of Acts. Paul went to Macedonia and Achaia in Acts 20. Paul arrived in Jerusalem in Acts 21. And now, we have the promise from the mouth of Jesus that he will, indeed, make it to Rome, which we will see when we come to Acts 28.

Notice what Jesus says he will do in Rome.

Acts 23:11

... as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.

Again, we see the theme of Acts emerging. Jesus is calling all of us to "Be My Witnesses." Paul did this in Jerusalem. Jesus promises that he will do it again in Rome. He will "testify." That's the same form of the word that we have seen for "witness" throughout the book of Acts.

What's encouraging for me is to see Paul's witnessing activity in Jerusalem. It consisted of him giving his testimony before the Jewish crowd (as recorded in Acts 22:1-21). It consisted of him confirming the resurrection in to the Jewish council (as recorded in Acts 23:1-10). That's about all that is recorded of Paul's activities in Jerusalem. By the end of our chapter, Paul will be in Caesarea, on his way to Rome. All that Paul did by way of witness was to give his testimony on one occasion, and confirm the resurrection on another. Jesus said to him, as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.

From the best that we can tell, he had no converts in these witnessing activities. But the Lord considered them as genuine witness of the Lord. And this is all that God asks of us. This is all that Acts is calling us to do. We simply need to be a witness to him and to the resurrection.

I mentioned last week in my message of how I have failed often to bring up the resurrection in my witnessing opportunities. Well, I had an opportunity this week to speak with an unbeliever about the resurrection.

I had an opportunity this week to see and speak with a man who I haven't seen for several years. But I remember about five years ago, when I first met him, over the course of time in our conversations over several months, he asked me about being a pastor. He was curious. He said, "What led you into that line of work?"

Five years ago, I was able to give him my elevator pitch, of how I grew up in a weak church, but then, was exposed to a church that actually taught the Bible, verse by verse. The single truth that sunk deep into my heart in those early days came from the mouth of Jesus, who said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter my kingdom." I had never been taught that there are many people who profess to be Christians but are not. It was a paradigm shift in my thinking and transforming in my life. I thought that if I hadn't learned this from my years of church, "What else have I not heard?" And the Lord gave me a deep desire to study and know the Bible. Through this church, I learned more about the good news of Jesus, how he came and died on the cross for our sins, to transform us by his grace to live godly lives.

Now, as I remember five years ago, he was very complementary, always admiring people of faith. Well, that was five years ago. But this past week, I saw him again. In the course of our conversation, this man was telling me of his experience with people regarding Christianity. He said there are those who don't believe, and there are those who have a weak faith, and there are those who would die for their faith.

That was a softball comment to me, especially as I have been thinking this week of the prominence of the resurrection in the gospel messages. And so, I responded by saying something to this effect, "Well, the core of Christianity is that we believe in a risen savior, Jesus Christ, one who was crucified for our sins, then buried, then raised from the dead and ascended into heaven." I continued on, "And when you come to believe that Jesus conquered death, you too are willing to die for your faith, not like a jihadist, who is willing to kill people, but like a servant, who will put others first, and be willing to serve others unto death, knowing that there is something beyond this life." He responded like he did five years ago, saying, "I always respect and admire people of faith." And that's where our conversation ended this week.

Who knows when I will see this man again? But it struck me (only later when digging into this text) that my spiritual conversations with this man have been similar to what Paul did in Jerusalem. Paul gave his short testimony before the crowds. Paul bore witness to the resurrection. That's exactly what I have done with this man. I have given my testimony to him five years ago. And this week, I bore witness to the resurrection.

We are simply called to do the same with those in our social sphere. This is what Paul was promised that he would do again in Rome.

Acts 23:11

... as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.

This is the promise that Jesus made to Paul: the promise that he would testify in Rome. Now, that didn't happen right away. Paul had a rough road on his way to Rome. It would be several years until he arrived in Rome. All during that time, he was a prisoner of Rome.

I'm sure that the promise that Jesus gave to him was a great strength to him. Look again at how verse 11 begins.

Acts 23:11

The following night the Lord stood by him and said, Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.

Jesus said, "Take courage." For indeed, Paul would need courage along the way to Rome. He would need courage to stand before Felix, (the governor, who had the ability to put him to death). Paul would need courage to speak with this man about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgement (Acts 24:25). Paul would need courage to remain in prison for two years as he awaited a hearing. Paul would need courage to stand against the onslaught of Jewish accusers who brought "many and serious charges against [Paul]" (Acts 25:7). Paul would need courage to stand before King Agrippa and give his testimony, challenging him to believe in the gospel (Acts 26:29). Paul would need courage to be told, "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind" (Acts 26:24). Paul would need courage to endure the storm at sea before arriving in Rome (Acts 27).

Truth be told, we all need courage in our Christian walk, especially when it comes to witnessing. Have any of you become nervous when talking with others about Jesus? Join the club. Have any of you cowered from sharing with others about Jesus? Join the club. Have any of you missed opportunities to be a witness to Jesus because you feared the rejection of others? Join the club. It takes courage to witness to others about Jesus.

But what about this? What if you were told, You can give witness to anybody about Jesus, and you won't be killed? This was the very promise that Paul received from the Lord Jesus. You can give witness to anybody about Jesus, and until you reach Rome, and you won't be killed, because, you will bear witness about me in Rome. I am standing by your side. I will insure that you are safe in my arms.

Though I am not sovereign or omniscient like Jesus, I can practically give you the same promise: "You can give witness to anybody about Jesus, and you won't be killed!" I say this because I don't know anybody who has been killed because of giving to others about Jesus. Now, I have read about those who have given their lives for Jesus. From the days of the Bible until now, there have been many who have given their lives for Christ. I have read about their martyrdom. From Stephen to Polycarp to Hugh Latimer to John and Betty Stam. I have read about them. But I have never known anyone personally who has been put to death in our day and age for giving testimony to Jesus and the resurrection.

I'm thankful that we live in a free society, that holds free speech as a fundamental right. For the most part, our government will come to your aid, if you are being threatened for giving witness to Jesus and his resurrection.

The curious thing about our text is this: The same was true in the days of Paul. The Romans were the ones who protected Paul, all the way to Rome, to insure that he had a fair trial.

In fact, John Stott points this out as one of the grand themes of Acts in these last chapters.

He writes, "In Acts 21-23, Luke [the author of Acts] depicts the reaction to the gospel of two communities--of the Jews who were increasingly hostile to it, and of the Romans who were consistently friendly to it. The two themes of Jewish opposition and Roman justice are interwoven in Luke's narrative. Jewish opposition had been evident from the beginning [of Acts]. [and Luke] consistently presents the Roman authorities as friends of the gospel, not foes. Whenever they had the opportunity, the Roman authorities defended the Christian missionaries."^[1]

And what we will see in my second point is the Roman authorities defending and protecting Paul.

2. The Protection (Acts 23:12-35)

We have seen, "The Promise" in verse 11. Now we see the carrying out the promise with "the Protection" in verses 12-35.

And I promise you that I will go through these verses much faster than I did verse 11. The reason is simple: In verses 12-35, we have a story of how the Roman government protected Paul from the hostility of the Jews.

Now, in the telling of this story, we read nothing of Jesus. We read nothing of God. Nowhere in this text does Luke insert some theological principle or teaching. Instead, we simply see the Romans protecting Paul.

Yet, you would be amiss, if you didn't connect the story of the protection (verses 12-35) with the promise (verse 11). Further, you would be amiss if you didn't recognize the sovereignty of God in protecting Paul until he reached Jerusalem.

In this way, these verses are much like the story of Esther, the only book in the Bible that doesn't mention God. Yet, the story reveals the incredible sovereignty of God, in protecting the Jews from extermination at the hands of the Persians.

So likewise here, we see the sovereignty of God, protecting Paul as he is on his way to Rome, even if it isn't explicitly stated in the text. Truth be told, this is how God protects us today, not with demonstrable miracles of deliverance, not with theological affirmations along the way, but through the natural course of life and everyday events. And just as Jesus stood by Paul, so also does Jesus stand by us.

Do you remember the great commission? Jesus said to his disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus is with us always. every bit as much as Jesus was with his earthly disciples.

The promise of the New Testament is that Jesus lives in everyone who believes. Listen to Galatians 2:20 (a Fighter Verse from a few weeks past), "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." And if Christ lives in you, then he is with you. He will protect you.

So, let's dig into our story.

Acts 23:12-13

When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who made this conspiracy.

This shows you how much the Jews hated Paul. They wanted to kill him. They plotted to kill him. They vowed to kill him. They vowed to kill him soon, before anyone would eat or drink again. Forty of them came together to plan Paul's murder. But what is forty against the hand of the Lord?

Acts 23:14-15

They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

With these words, they brought some council members in on their plans. The chief priests were part of the Sadducees, and would have been willing to help kill Paul. Remember at the council, it was the Sadducees, who were against Paul, especially as Paul expressed his belief in the

resurrection.

When these chief priests and elders heard of the plan of an ambush, I'm sure that they were more than willing to give consent, as their hands would be clean of the murder. After all, their only role was to call Paul to the counsel. These 40 men would have been the hit men. "What a tragedy!" they may have said at the untimely death of Paul.

But the best laid plans are easily thwarted by the Lord. "No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the LORD" (Proverbs 21:30). In this case, the Lord used Paul's nephew to help in the protection.

Acts 23:16

Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.

The son of Paul's sister is Paul's nephew. We don't know anything about this fellow. We don't know his name. We don't know his age. We simply know that he was a "young man" (verse 17, 18). Further, we don't know how he heard the news. But somehow, the circle of the knowledge of the plot increased enough that it reached his ears. He went and told Paul of the plan to kill him. Verse 17 tells us of Paul's response. Acts 23:17

Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him."

At this point, I trust that you see how Paul dealt with the promise of protection. He didn't view it as so absolute that he would remain passive. No, Paul acted in a way that would save his life. He sent the boy with a centurion escort to go and talk with the tribune.

Now, the fact that this centurion carried through with Paul's request shows a bit of how cordial the Roman authorities were with Paul. Again, it was a demonstration of the Romans being supportive of Paul.

Acts 23:18-19

So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

It's at this point that a further hint of the age of Paul's nephew. The tribune takes him by the hand and leads him away to talk privately. I would suspect that such an action would only be done with a youngster. So young men, know that you can act courageously in working out the plan of God. In this case, this young man was used by the Lord to save Paul's life.

Verse 20 tells us what Paul's nephew said to the tribune:

Acts 23:20-21

And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent."

This young boy communicated the story exactly, even pleading the tribune not to listen to the Jews. The tribune believed him.

Acts 23:22

So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of these things."

This counsel was to protect the young man. For surely, these forty men would have looked for the leak to determine who foiled their plan. Then, the tribune went to action

Acts 23:23-24

Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor."

That is quite an order! Two hundred soldiers, each of them armed and ready to fight! Seventy horsemen mounted on seventy horses, with some extras for Paul and those who were with him! Two hundred spearmen, special soldiers armed with a large spear! That means at least 470 men to escort Paul to Caesarea, where he would be safe from the Jews. Why so many? I don't know, other than to affirm that God's protection is abundant. It's as if God says, "They have forty who are attacking? I'll give more than four hundred to provide safety."

Remember Jesus? He said that he could call down 12 legions of angels if necessary. A legion is 6,000. So, 12 legions of angels is 96,000 angels. You cannot defeat the Lord in an arms race.

This cavalry was to leave at the third hour of the night. The night began at 6pm. So, they would have departed at 9pm, under the cover of darkness to bring Paul to safety away from those awaiting to ambush him and take his life. The tribune also wrote a note to Felix, the governor of Caesarea, to help give context as to why this prisoner was sent to Caesarea. Luke didn't have the note, but he had the gist of the note,

Acts 23:25-26

And he wrote a letter to this effect: "Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings."

Here, we finally learn the name of the tribune, who had commanded the rescue of Paul on a number of occasions, who had tried to figure out why the Jews were so hostile against him. His name is Claudius Lysias. Anyway,

Acts 23:26-30

"Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him."

Now, if you know the whole story, you see how he stretched the truth to make himself sound better than he really was. He takes credit for some things that he didn't do directly. He says nothing of how he ordered his beating. But the sentiment is fair.

What took place is given in verses 31-32.

Acts 23:31-32

So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him.

Antipatris is a city about forty miles northwest of Jerusalem. It was about halfway to Caesarea. Then on the following day, Paul and is brought by the horsemen to Caesarea. Paul was received well.

Acts 23:33-35

When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

We see Paul, safe and sound in Caesarea (though still under arrest). in prison in Herod's praetorium (or palace). There are dungeons in the basement of every castle. That's the case here.

We see Jesus being faithful on the first part of the promise of protection. It was given to Paul directly. In the New Year as we continue our exposition of Acts, we will see Jesus fulfill the promise, as Paul eventually lands in Rome.

We don't have such specific promises to us. But we have plenty of promises in the Bible. We can hold onto these promises just as strongly as Paul held onto the promise in our text this morning. We will see God's faithfulness to Paul to bring him to Jerusalem. God will be faithful to you regarding his promises in the Bible.

Of course, you need to be careful with the promises in the Bible. God promises to Paul that he would arrive in Rome. That promise doesn't apply to you or to me. We can't rest in the promise that I will travel to Rome before we die. Yet, there are many promises of the Bible that are universal enough to apply to us all.

So as this point, I want to review again the same dozen promises that I listed for you at the beginning of my message. I want for you to think about a promise that you can hold on to.

Psalms 23:4, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;"

Psalms 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Psalms 37:23-24, "The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand."

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Romans 8:38-39, "Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ephesians 6:2-3, "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let

your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

James 4:7-8, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

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." What's a promise that you need to hold onto?

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 27, 2022 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] John Stott, *The Message of Acts* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL), 336-7.