

Message Series: **'The Power of a Promise'**
Message Title: **'Three Promises that Meet our Deepest Longings'**
Scripture Source: **Romans 8**
Date: Sunday, June 12, 2016
Teacher: John Garner

Can you identify...even if you wish you didn't have to?

An 'ache of anguish' is felt when his confessional words are reflected upon. He wants to be different, yet left to fend for himself, a haunting experience of failure, a feeling of alienation and a bleak future confront and harass his soul.

Questions loom large on the horizon of the soul: 'can I forgiven by God? Can I belong where it matters? Can my future be secure?' As Romans chapter 7 concludes a beautiful glimmer of hope emerges...in the face of my own brokenness and sinfulness before a righteous God, salvation from the power and penalty of sin...my sin...is made possible through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is hope...there are beautiful and powerful promises that intersect at the point of my deepest soul longings and needs.

As we explore in an overview manner Romans 8, which of these three promises most connects with you and even moves you spiritually and emotionally?

The Promise of No Condemnation

The Promise of No Alienation

The Promise of No Separation

No Condemnation: Romans 8:1-4

Note the strength of conviction and appreciation expressed in his words: Vss. 1-2
When a person trusts in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins and a restored relationship with God, their standing before God is clean and clear. The death of Christ secures a full pardon from the just penalty of sin before a righteous God. Christ Jesus absorbed the full judgement of God so that our sins could be fully and permanently paid for. The genuine Christian is under no threat of judgement. That issue has been resolved. Even when we struggle as Romans 7:15-24 points out, we don't lose our secure standing before God in a judicial sense. We will feel awkward and out of sorts spiritually and emotionally...as we ought to, yet we don't face ultimate judgement. That position of being declared forgiven and reconciled to God is our ever present reality..." Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Yet, to reject or dismiss God's offer of forgiveness is to face the fact of experiencing the full weight of God's judgement at death. Romans 3:23, 6:23.

This is amazing that God took the initiative to resolve this age old dilemma of sin and broken relationships. Vs. 4

What does...or could this powerful promise mean to you? Do you need to take a step toward God for the first time, or a renewed time to experience the beauty and power of this promise? Can you experience forgiveness and reconciliation with God? The answer is a resounding 'yes.' Others may condemn you, we at times condemn our selves, but God is ready and able to forgive us. Will you believe that?

No Alienation: Romans 8:15-17

The 'feel' of this promise is more relational in nature than our first promise. This promise speaks to our deep longing to belong to and participate in healthy and secure relationships, beginning with our relationship with God as our Father. "we are God's children" vss.15-16
So many people, younger and older feel detached from healthy relationships. In fact, many people live relationally alienated lives...marked by profound loneliness, isolation, and hopelessness. Illustrate.

God yearns that we grow to know and experience him as a good, wise, loving and powerful Father. One who has revealed himself in the person, character and conduct of Jesus. John 1:14,18. We can experience being children of God, treasured children in his family. With this need for belonging to God offered, we also experience the presence of his empowering and enlightening Holy Spirit within us. We can grow and mature in every area of life...character, motive, attitude and conduct. We can overcome the call to self indulgence and self destructiveness through our relationship with God as our Father. 2 Peter 1:3-4

You may have had a rough relationship with your earthly father. Your heavenly father isn't like him. Don't allow the flaws of an earthly dad taint your perception of God. Work these perceptions through with a wise friend or counsellor.

Can you belong to God as his treasured child? Can you belong to God's family? Yes...through faith in Jesus and a growing understanding...a correct understanding of who God is.

No Separation: Romans 8:35-39

I treasure these words of promise. For thousands of years and in all sorts of settings these words of God have breathed hope into fearful, grieving, oppressed, suffering and wondering hearts and minds. These words intersected with my life Sunday afternoon at the Hotel Dieu Shaver Hospital as I stroked my mom's arm and read Scripture and prayed with her. The certainty of death could not separate my mom from the love of God. These potent words assure us that our future is secure...eternal life with God is our final and lasting home. My mom is now experiencing this promise. She rests securely in the arms of her strong and loving God...and that offers me great comfort and strength...as it has for many of you as you have 'walked through the valley of the shadow of death' with a loved one.

God pledges that there is not an experience, an event, a person, a force of evil, a fact of the past, a struggle in the present or a fear of the future that can rupture our relationship with the Saviour who loves us with an indestructible, unwavering or unfading love. Nothing and no one. As followers of Jesus we are tenderly and firmly embraced with an everlasting love.

Can we experience a secure future and eternity? Yes, through a thoughtful and chosen faith in Jesus.

Which Promise for you?

No condemnation?

No alienation?

No separation?

Please don't leave church empty hearted of a beautiful and powerful promise of God. Move in God's direction...if you have questions, let's talk.

In a moment we will concentrate on the essential heartbeat of God's promises...the sacrificial death of Jesus on our behalf. And then we will have an opportunity to 'mark the moment' of taking to heart, by faith, a promise that meets us where we are living today.