

Title: A Key Called Promise
Text: 2 Samuel 23: 5
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In Pilgrim’s Progress when Christian and Hopeful were cast into the dungeon of despair in Doubting Castle under the captivity of the giant, after a long time broken and beaten in that dungeon, Christian broke out in “a passionate speech.” He said, “[Why] am I thus to lie in a stinking dungeon when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.’ Then said Hopeful that’s good news: good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom, and try.” Of course, the key opened the locks and they walked free.

Proposition: Brethren, when we are in that dungeon of despair remember, we have: A Key Called Promise—it is Christ our Covenant and God’s everlasting covenant promise in him—that is the key that will open any lock in Doubting Castle! David speaks of this everlasting covenant promise in the last words before his death.

2 Samuel 23: 5: Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

NOT OF BLOOD OR FLESH

2 Samuel 23: 5: Although my house be not so with God...

The promise of God does not run in bloodlines nor does it have anything to do with sinful flesh.

In David's house or family there was only disarray and sin. David had a son who raped one of David's daughters. David's son Absalom killed David’s son Amnon. Absalom rebelled much against David until at last he was slain. That alone would have set many to erroneously to accuse David of not being able to manage his own family and therefore not being able to manage the kingship or to be a prophet of God.

But that was not the end of it. The promise is not to our sinful flesh of Adam. David, himself, was a fallen sinner in Adam. On one occasion, in pride, David numbered Israel and offended God and over 70,000 men died because of David. Do not simply skip over that. Seventy thousand people in Israel died because of David. Then we are familiar with David’s most infamous sin which is that he committed adultery with Bathsheba. In order to cover that David committed cold-blooded murder by sending Uriah into battle where he was killed.

The point here is not simply to point out the sin of David’s house and of his own flesh. It is to point out that this everlasting covenant promise of God has nothing to do with either. This “Key Called Promise” does not run in bloodlines nor is it to, or because of, our sinful flesh. God teaches us to "cease from man" and flee to the Rock of Israel. The Rock, himself, said, *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33).* So it was David said, *“Although my house be not so with God...”*

SOVEREIGN FREE GRACE

2 Samuel 23: 5: Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure:...

How thankful we are for that word "Yet!" Though David’s house was full of fallen, spiritually dead rebels, God chose David by free, everlasting covenant grace. The Promise is made from God to his chosen people. David said, *“HE”*—God—*“hath made with ME.”* That is a vital distinction—David did not make this covenant of promise with God; God made it with David. This covenant is a covenant of free and sovereign grace. God the Father chose his Son, Christ Jesus. God the Father chose David in Christ. God the Father chose a host of elect in Christ. Since this covenant is of God’s sovereign grace in Christ, not based on anything in his elect, therefore his elect cannot change this covenant.

This key called promise is the everlasting covenant promise between God the Father and his Son, Christ Jesus. The promises to David typify God’s promises to Christ and his promises to every believer in Christ.

Psalm 89: 1: « Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. » I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. 2: For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. 3: I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 4: Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah....19: Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people. 20: I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: 21: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. 22: The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. 23: And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. 24: But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. 25: I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. 26: He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. 27: Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. 28: My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. 29: His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. 30: If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; 31: If they break my statutes, and keep

not my commandments; 32: Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. 33: Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. 34: My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. 35: Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. 36: His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. 37: It shall be established for ever [established by Christ Jesus on the cross on whose shoulder the government rested] as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

If you read the rest of the Psalm, God cast David's crown to the ground. David became a reproach to his neighbors and his enemies. How does that harmonize with all that we just read concerning God's covenant with David? It is part of God's covenant with David as it pictures the cross. The Lord Jesus agreed in covenant to bear the sin of his people and God used all his enemies to nail Christ to the cross through which Christ put away the sins of his people. Doing so Christ put a death blow to the devil's head. Also, as we see that those things actually happened to David, it tells us that we shall not be without trouble in this world as the children of God's everlasting covenant promise. But the covenant of God never changes.

Luke 1: 31: And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32: He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Acts 13: 34: And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

Furthermore, we see this key called promise is *everlasting*. It is fulfilled and established in and by the eternal Son of God. The blessings given to us in the covenant are spiritual, eternal blessings.

Jeremiah 33: 20: Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; 21: Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

In addition, the covenant promise is *ordered and sure*. That means that everything God requires, God provides. The righteous God requires perfect righteousness of his people—Christ is the Lord our Righteousness who has brought in everlasting righteousness for his elect people by fulfilling every jot and tittle of the law. The perfectly holy God requires perfection of holiness—Christ the Lord is the holiness of his people. The faithful God requires perfect fidelity to God—Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

2 Corinthians 1: 20: For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Isaiah 42:4: He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

ALL OUR SALVATION AND ALL OUR DESIRE

2 Samuel 23: 5: Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

Even though a believer does not behold God's promises coming to pass, this key called promise opens every lock of despair when God makes Christ all our salvation and all our desire.

David was dying. He looked at the state of his house and found no hope in those things. He could look at himself and find no hope there. But David did not lie on the stinking floor of the dungeon of despair because he had a key to unlock the locks of Doubting Castle and be at liberty. He remembered that he had in his bosom a key called promise. David thought on that sure word of covenant promise—yea on Christ the Covenant himself—and he said, "*This is ALL my salvation.*" God had taken every bit of strength from David's sinful flesh. But God had increased David's faith in Christ and the promises of God in him. Christ our Covenant—along with the promises of God fulfilled in and by Christ—was ALL David's salvation.

Psalm 62: 1: «To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.» Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. 2: He only is my rock and my salvation; my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.

David said, "My soul waits *only* for HIM." What do you need to be saved from? Be it the law, the devil, our sinful nature, the troubles of providence, death, hell, or anything else, it is only from Christ that salvation comes. Christ *only* is My Rock: my sure foundation. Christ *only* is my salvation: not only does my salvation come from Christ, Christ is my only Salvation, meaning, Christ is everything God requires of me and everything that saves me. Christ *only* is my defense: a wall of fire who leads us and is our rearward. Brethren, the promise is Christ himself! ALL salvation is Christ himself. God said of Christ Jesus the Son of God,

Isaiah 42: 6: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE, for a light of the Gentiles; 7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. 8: I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Therefore, when Satan buffets, when our house is falling down, when we are cast into the dungeon of despair in Doubting Castle, since Christ is the Covenant in whom all God’s promises are ordered in all things and sure, not one of God’s elect shall be greatly moved. And we shall never be moved away from Christ our Salvation.

Therefore, when God makes Christ all our salvation, God makes Christ the only longing of our souls. David said, “*This is all my desire.*” The word means "delight and longing.” When Christ our Covenant was ALL David’s salvation then Christ our Covenant was also ALL David’s longing.

Psalm 73:25: Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. 26: My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Psalm 63: 1: « A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. » O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2: To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

When Christ is ALL my salvation and ALL my desire then the locks are opened. It will cease to matter how impossible things may appear to my natural sight. David said, “*Although he make it not to grow.*” Though God may not at present give you any outward, visible indication of progress or though God makes all appear dismal the locks are opened. No matter how many locks may have to be opened to free you from the dungeon of despair, no matter how strong they appear, no matter how impossible the task may appear, believer, when God makes Christ All our salvation and ALL our longing by his everlasting covenant promise then we have in our bosom a key called promise; the sure mercies of David; the everlasting covenant ordered and sure in all things in Christ.

God settles you on Christ to know that ALL God’s promises are in Christ and Christ is ALL your salvation then we wait upon him to see HIS POWER and HIS GLORY the same as we have seen in his word in the sanctuary. God settles us so that Christ is all my desire for Christ to do the work. Then, although God makes it not to grow, it does not matter how bad it may appear around me because this I know...”Behold, the days come, saith the LORD...”

Jeremiah 23: 5: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6: In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Zechariah 6: 12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: 13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

This applies not only to our eternal salvation by Christ, but it also applies to every trial we face in this life. We run when we ought to have sit still; we speak when we ought to have remained silent; lean to our understanding when we should have trusted in Christ. So we end up locked in the dungeon of despair broken, bruised and in shackles.

But God settles his child upon Christ our Covenant. His promise to execute justice and judgment in the earth makes us wait on him; makes us move when he says move, speak when he says speak. All of this is “*Though he make it not to grow*”—though things may not appear promising—yet we know THE PROMISE shall come and HE shall work.

Remember how God let Israel run until they became like a tree with all its branches broken off? Why? God said, “That I might be glorified!” In trial, as it is in our conversion, God only blesses his child with his promise when the Spirit has brought him to bow to Christ as the only one who can save him and the only one he desires to save him. Then the Promise of God opens the locks of despair and sets him at liberty from the dungeon in Doubting Castle so that God gets all the glory. God made Habakkuk behold the majesty of God and the judgment of God to come that his child might be settled at Christ’s feet in the day of trouble. Then notice what the believer was assured of by God.

Habakkuk 3: 16: When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, THAT I MIGHT REST IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops. 17: ALTHOUGH the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18: YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD, I WILL JOY IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION. 19: THE LORD GOD IS MY STRENGTH, AND HE WILL MAKE MY FEET LIKE HINDS’ FEET, AND HE WILL MAKE ME TO WALK UPON MINE HIGH PLACES.

Amen!