

# What is Jesus Doing?

## GOD'S PROMISES TO HIS SERVANTS

We've all heard about God's promises to those who believe in Him. The Bible is full of testimonies and examples of God's faithfulness to the just and the unjust.

*The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all He has made.*

- Psalm 145:9

It is the ultimate demonstration of God's faithfulness that He sacrificed His only begotten Son to any and all who would believe in Him as a propitiation for sin and a means of salvation.

*The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.*

- Nahum 1:7

Surely God is faithful in all that He does, and His ways are higher than ours. Even when we are falling short, He is always working, providing order in this chaotic world and we have scriptures that display His mercy and Grace.

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

- Romans 8:28

Those of us who have surrendered our lives completely to Jesus know His voice because we have given Him our attention daily and intentionally and actively sought His Glory above our own.

This is how we have confidence in knowing His call upon our lives. As I have mentioned before, Donna and her mom Ruth and I have seen the goodness of God in abundance and have had our fervent and effectual prayers answered repeatedly because we have aligned our will with the Master's.

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This is why we can say with assurance that God is very, very good to His servants.

That said, I know that there are many who believe that Jesus is Lord and may have asked Him to be Lord of their life but have not surrendered to His lordship in reality.

I know that's a hard thing for some of you to hear but as your Pastor, I must be truthful and give you what the Lord has given me.

Now, I have no doubt that God works all things together for good for those who love Him but who still may not be in daily obedience to Him as well.

However, the road may be hard for those who still want to do it their way even though they have agreed that Jesus is Lord.

Some of those things He allows in their lives may be uncomfortable, because the good these things are meant to do will drive His beloved children to a place of surrender where He can truly bless them in the ways of peace truth and joy because they have become truly the called according to HIS purpose.

When we surrender our lives to Jesus and give Him lordship over those lives that He created we are agreeing with His purpose and not our own desires for our lives.

I believe that this is what being "the called according to His purpose" truly means. God calls His servants and God blesses His servants as they serve others.

The God of Israel promised blessing to his people only if they obeyed his commands.

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These are the blessings that God promised the nation of Israel if only they would obey Him.

**[9]** *“The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. [10] Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. (note this is the Hebrew word for fear Yare which means in awe of, just like the fear of the Lord. It’s a good thing.)*

**[11]** *And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. [12] The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. [13] And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.*

- Deuteronomy 28:9-13

These are the promises that God made to His chosen people Israel corporately.

As we see in the Bible repeatedly, corporately they could not and would not obey and so they were cursed and not blessed by repeated captivities and ultimately dispersion.

But we all know the Good News!

Because God so loved the world He sent His only begotten Son, the one perfect remnant of Israel, whose sinless obedience unto death won salvation for ANY who would receive Him as Lord be they Jew or Gentile.

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This transfers all of God's contingent blessings upon Israel to any person who would follow Jesus in truth and in deed.

It is no different for us as followers of Christ than it was for the people of Israel.

God desires to be Lord in all we do, but because we have free will it becomes our choice to follow Him or continue to be Lord of our own lives.

Being Lord of our own lives has consequences. That is why Jesus tells us that we are to take up our crosses daily if we are going to follow Him.

God blesses His servants in all they do when they are individually obedient to His commands.

Whose commands?

Christ's commands.

And what are Christ's commands?

Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

- Matthew 22:37

The verb 'love' here is the same word 'agape' and it means an active love.

A love that blesses and causes us to actually do something for our neighbor with the love God has given each one of us.

And if we are obedient to love others as Jesus commanded us, then this is the blessing we will receive...

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In the gospel of Luke Jesus says this...

*Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.*

- Luke 12:37-38

And how do we become His servants truly?

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

- Philippians 2:3-4

So being honest with ourselves... Does this describe you?

Do you esteem others more highly than yourself?

And if it does not describe you today, is it your desire to become a person who esteems others better than himself tomorrow?

The scriptures compel us to look at this concept with a clear mind and in fact with the mind of Christ...

It's the natural man or person who seeks to place himself or herself above others and to get something from them rather than give something to them. It is the truly spiritual person, the servant of Christ, who desires to bring his Master glory by doing what Jesus Himself did.

And what did Jesus Himself do?

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The scripture in Philippians continues... I like the Living Bible Translation for this one...

*Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ, who, though he was God, did not demand and cling to his rights as God, but laid aside his mighty power and glory, taking the disguise of a slave and becoming like men.*

- Philippians 2:5-7

The lesson here for us is that just because we are able to use the gifts God gave us to achieve great things for ourselves, that should and MUST not be our sole purpose if we are going to be servants of Christ.

If we are going to be servants of Christ, it must be our purpose to become servants, or slaves if you will, to those who have needs around us that we are able to fill.

I'm sorry if that bums you out, but the good news remains... if you are willing to truly follow Jesus and take up your cross daily, meaning fulfill your purpose to those around you, then God will take very, very good care of you.

Think about it, why would God not continue to bless you with every good thing that you need if you are going to be willing to pass those good things on to those around you.

I once heard a Pastor give a sermon about making your vessel larger to hold more blessings. My spirit was troubled by that sermon and in seeking the Lord and His wisdom I was given a picture. We are not supposed to hold blessings in large or small vessels but we are supposed to be conduits of those blessings as Christ's servants.

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Think of this... no matter how large a vessel is filled with water, eventually that water becomes stagnant if it is not poured out and replenished. When that vessel is filled to the brim it cannot hold any more.

The servant of God is more like a garden hose, plugged into the source of all blessings on the one end in Heaven and spraying the world around them to create around them a fertile Kingdom garden on earth.

That way, instead of being a vessel filled with stagnating water the useful servant is constantly filled with living, running water that has no possibility of growing stagnant but is endlessly a source of joy.

Here are some more of the promises that you as a servant of Christ can depend upon if you are doing your part to bring glory to your master...

*And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

- 2 Corinthians 9:8

Here is a special promise from Psalms...

*Blessed is he who considers the poor;  
The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*

*The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive,  
And he will be blessed on the earth;  
You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.*

*The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness;  
You will sustain him on his sickbed.*

- Psalm 41:1-3

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Now I can tell you that in this fallen world, our bodies may experience illness. In fact, part of being a servant of Christ is providing a witness to unbelievers of peace and even joy as you go through the trials of life.

This is, in fact, why James the Just, the brother of Jesus tells us...

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

- James 1:2-4

However, let's go back to the end of the former scripture we just read,... when the psalmist says

*The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness;  
You will sustain him on his sickbed.*

- Psalm 41:3

It is for this very reason that God strengthens his servants when they are physically ill or harmed. So that the world can see them counting it all joy and providing a witness to the greatness of God while also becoming more perfect and complete as a servant.

Does that make sense?

The servant of the Lord can say in complete confidence what Christ's servant the apostle Paul said...

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

- Philippians 4:13



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And Jesus says this in Matthew's Gospel...

*So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

- Matthew 6:31-33

Seeking His Kingdom is looking for the opportunities that He has prepared for you to do. Which is illuminated in Ephesians...

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

- Ephesians 2:10

And this scripture tells us what it takes to be called righteous in the Kingdom by the King of Glory Himself...

*Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

- Matthew 25:37-40

We've all experienced the weariness that comes from pursuing the things of the world whether it's wealth, fame, being right in every argument or being the possessor of some secret knowledge that only you know because you're so smart... Trying desperately to be validated and recognized as SOMEBODY...

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But God says this...

*But those who wait on the Lord  
Shall renew their strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint.*

- Isaiah 40:31

We all realize that each of us has more than some and less than some others, be it money, brains or beauty.

So... we have all been given something to use as servants to our Gracious Master... In the parable of the Talents there are three servants, two profitable and one unprofitable.

Here is the goal for all of us as servants, whether we have been given much or little...

**[20]** *“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’* **[21]** *His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

- Matthew 25:20-21

And finally... Paul prays for the Church at Corinth to strengthen them in their righteous servanthood. This is my prayer for us as well...

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*Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.*

*For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*

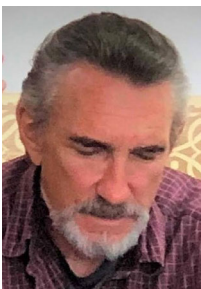
*Amen!*

- 2 Corinthians 9:10-15

That said, I have often mentioned that it is our desire at Abundant Life church to give you opportunities as well as equipping you for the good works that the Lord has prepared you for.

Please feel free to come and speak to me after service or anytime about how you might be able to serve abundant life or any of those in need within our body.

The Lord is very generous to His servants. We are His Hands and Feet in this beautiful Valley. Let's not take Him for granted but let us serve Him by serving each other with a heart of compassionate love.



*Let's Pray,*

*- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi*