

## God's Promises in Evangelism

By: Mike Porter  
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### INTRODUCTION

D.L. Moody wrote about God's Promises, "Take the promises of God. Let a man feed for a month on the promises of God, and he will not talk about how poor he is. You hear people say, 'Oh, my leanness! How lean I am!' It is not their leanness, it is their laziness. If you would only read from Genesis to Revelation and see all the promises made by God to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and to all His people everywhere- if you would spend a month feeding on the precious promises of God- you wouldn't be going about complaining how poor you are. You would lift up your head and proclaim the riches of His Grace, because you couldn't help doing it!"

Isn't a promise only as good as the One who making it? Have you ever been disappointed by someone who sincerely made a promise to you only to later break it through either forgetfulness, or a lack of commitment when other pressures came up? As we grow in our faith in Christ, experiencing His forgiveness and love, reading and testing His word and standing in awe of who God is, our faith in Him increases in leaps and bounds. He has proven Himself faithful in one area after another in our lives. We've rejoiced in those first moments of knowing His forgiveness, eternal life and power over crippling sins. Step by step His promises have proven themselves true. In addition to promises for our own lives, God has given us many promises for ministry; including the Great Commission- as we embrace them and live by them He will grow us in ways unimaginable.

#### **A. Evangelism Fears**

Many doubts and fears come up as we think of evangelism:

1. "I don't know how to share my faith"
2. "I'm not comfortable sharing- I'm shy"
3. "I don't want to be made the laughing stock!"
4. "People don't seem open to the gospel these days."

We know these fears, doubts and excuses aren't from the Lord, but when they come upon us, they can be difficult to overcome. We need to grab hold of God's promises, cling to them and step out in them trusting that "He who promised is faithful." (*Hebrews 10:23*)

#### **B. The Power of Promises**

Peter claims this about God's promises: God has given us "exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (*2 Pet 1:4*) God's promises, as they are embraced, accomplish two things:

1. They help us to become more like Christ.

2. They help us to forsake our sinful desires.

### **C. Abraham and Five Promises:**

Abraham started with five promises. He grew up in a pagan household in the land of Ur of the Chaldees and didn't have a Bible to look back on and no godly heritage. The five promises were regarding blessing Abraham, making a great nation through him and Sarah, giving him and his descendants the land of Canaan, blessing those who blessed him and cursing those who cursed him, and blessing all people through him.

In the years after receiving those promises, Abraham was tested in them. In two times of famine Abraham doubted God's promises which resulted in lying about his wife Sarah, that she was his sister to preserve his life. He figured his gal was worth killing a husband for. Abraham and Sarah also doubted God about having offspring, resulting in having a son Ishmael through Hagar, Sarah's maid. How could God bless that?

Through times of both believing and doubting God's promises, Abraham grew to learn of God's faithfulness and the certainty of His promises. He reached a point of unwavering faith after the birth of the miracle child Isaac in their old age. The Lord tested Abraham and, "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had *promised* He was also able to perform." (*Romans 4:20-21*)

The Lord has blessed us with a multitude of promises regarding the Great Commission. Are you stepping out in faith and acting upon them? Have you come to a point in your faith where you no longer waver in believing them? Come, let us together grow in these promises and challenge each other to believe and be a rock of faith instead of a "wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind." (*James 1:6*).

### **The Promises of God in Evangelism**

The following sections are structured as follows:

1. The promise
2. Scriptures that state the promise
3. Scriptures where believers prayed the promise
4. Scriptures where believers acted on the promise.
5. Scriptures where the Father tested believers to see if they would hold to the promise.

## **PREPARATION FOR EVANGELISM**

### **A. God Prepares the Hearts of Those We Evangelize**

#### **1. The Promise Stated:**

Jesus said, "It is not the will of Your Father...that one of these little ones [the lost sheep] should perish." (*Matt 18:14*). God "desires all men to be saved" (*1 Tim 2:14*). He declares the fields are "ripe for harvest." The lost we share the gospel

with were on the heart of God to save before the foundations of the world. We don't minister in a vacuum- God has prepared their hearts to hear what the Spirit has to say through our words!

## **2. The Promise Acted Upon:**

Paul shared the gospel with the Gentiles after the Jews rejected him in Antioch, "the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' ...Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And *as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*" (Acts 13:46-48) As you step out in faith, there are many you witness to that are appointed to eternal life- and God has prepared the way, using you as one of His tools to plant or water or harvest the seed of the gospel.

## **3. The Promise Tested:**

In Corinth Paul ran into opposition. The Lord encouraged him that He would keep Paul safe, "*for I have many people in this city.*" (Acts 18:10) Wherever and to whomever you share the gospel, there will be trials and temptations to abandon the work, but God has prepared the hearts of everyone you share the gospel with. It's critical to believe this to counteract the devil's lies, "You wasted your time on that one."

### **B. The Promise of the Spirit's Filling**

#### **1. The Promise Stated:**

"You shall receive power when the *Holy Spirit has come upon you*; and you shall be witnesses..." (Acts 1:8) We desperately need the Holy Spirit to come upon us, fill us and baptize us with power to be witnesses.

#### **2. The Promise Prayed**

Jesus told us to ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit's power by prayer, "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13) So let us in our weakness cry out for God to fill us and anoint us with power to accomplish the work of evangelism.

#### **3. The Promise Acted Upon**

In Acts 4, the Sanhedrin were "greatly disturbed" (v. 2) at the preaching of Jesus by Peter. Peter was "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" (v. 8) and the Holy Spirit through Peter boldly convicted them of their unbelief in killing Jesus their Messiah, the only One who could save them from their sin (v. 10-12). They persecuted Peter and the Apostles, commanding them not to speak any more in the name of Jesus and threatening them (v. 15-21), then letting them go.

Peter went back to his brothers in Christ and they prayed that they would be filled with boldness in preaching (v. 29). The Lord answered their prayers, "the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all *filled with the*

*Holy Spirit*, and they spoke the word with boldness.” (Acts 4:29-31) God commands believers to “*be filled with the Spirit*” (Eph 5:18). If we’re not filled with the Spirit, we’re ministering out of our own power.

Daily we desperately need the Holy Spirit’s filling in our lives and are to open ourselves up to His filling and blessing for the work of evangelism through a humble, broken spirit that recognizes great need for His ongoing work in and through us and asks, believing we will receive. “Not by [our] might, not by [our] power, but by My Spirit says the Lord.” (Zech 4:6)

Do you struggle with feelings of inadequacy in evangelism? Good. Trust in the Lord’s Promise of the Spirit coming upon you, filling you and overflowing you with His power to accomplish His work- pray through this and watch the Lord deliver on His Promise!

### C. God Will Give Us Open Doors

One of the reasons some believers give for not sharing the gospel frequently is a “spiritual reason”: “I don’t share with anyone unless the Lord leads me to.” Further questioning often reveals that it has been a very long time since they last shared the gospel with anyone. That seems to me to be self-deception and an excuse. Christ commanded us to “Go…” but they have “stopped”. Unless He specifically tells us to “stop”, then we should “Go”!

#### **1. The Promise Stated:**

Jesus promised us that the Holy Spirit would guide us in all truth (John 16:13) - this includes evangelism.

#### **2. The Promise Prayed:**

Paul asked that the church at Colossi would “continue earnestly in prayer” for him, “that *God would open to us a door for the word*, to speak the mystery of Christ.” (Col 4:3) Sometimes, whatever the motives, we’re really wishing that God would close the door for our evangelism! If we’re earnestly seeking and praying for open doors, God will open them- He wants to open them and wants us to pray in that way! And when it isn’t the proper place, time, person or circumstances, the Lord will reveal that to us- usually in very simple, easily discernable ways (body language, timing, appropriateness, etc).

#### **3. The Promise Acted Upon (Acts 8:4, 11:19-21, 14:27, 16:6-10, 17:16,22-23, 18:9)**

When the disciples were all bottled up in Jerusalem, the Lord told them that after the Holy Spirit came upon them they would be witnesses throughout Judea, Samaria and the world, in addition to Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). They were stuck in Jerusalem. God gave them the world as an open door, but they were failing to walk through that open door- maybe they were stuck in their comfort zone- there’s no place like home. God used Paul to stir up persecution of the church

which caused the believers to scatter- and the results were tremendous as they went everywhere preaching the word, first to Jews, then to Gentiles. Sometimes God does more than just open doors for evangelism- He has to get us off our butts and shove us through them!

Why did Europe become saturated with the gospel and eastern Asia didn't the first sixteen or so centuries of the church? We don't know our sovereign Lord had in mind, but when Paul had gone through the region of Phrygia on his 2nd missionary journey, in modern day Turkey, he desired to go Northeast into Galatia and then Bithynia, which, if he continued, would have kept him in Asia and moving away from Europe. The Holy Spirit closed that door and ended up calling Paul over to Greece instead, and the gospel went to Europe (*Acts 16:6-10*). Paul was so aggressive in sharing the gospel that only a closed door stopped him! Let us follow his example and trust the Lord to provide open doors and pray earnestly for them! Then we'll be able to report with joy the Lord's successes to our brothers.

When Paul and the disciples came back from one missionary journey, they "gathered the church together, [and] reported all that God had done with them... that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." (*Acts 14:27*) Pray for open doors and you will be amazed at what the Lord does to answer your prayers!

#### D. God Makes Us Witnesses

##### **1. The Promise Stated: (*John 15:16a, Acts 1:8, 26:16, Luke 24:48*)**

Jesus Christ is the Faithful Witness (*Revelation 1:5*) who promised His disciples, "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and *you shall be witnesses to Me...*" (*Acts 1:8*), faithfully proclaiming Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus told Paul at his conversion, "Rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, *to make you a ... witness* both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you." (*Acts 26:16*) God promises that He will make us witnesses- through us God will report the good news of salvation and souls will receive the witness. A witness faithfully proclaims what he/she has observed and experienced, regardless of the cost.

##### **2. The Promise Acted Upon (*Acts 2:32, 3:15, 5:32, 13:31, 26:22-23*)**

Peter declared at Pentecost, "This Jesus God has raised up of which we are all *witnesses.*" (*Acts 2:32*)

##### **3. The Promise Tested (*Acts 4:33, 22:20, 22, Rev 2:13, 17:6*)**

After receiving threats, "with great power the apostles gave *witness* to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all." (*4:33*) So powerful was their witness, that some witnessed to the point of death, "[You] did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful *martyr* [witness], who was killed among you, where Satan dwells." (*Rev 2:13*) We have seen, heard and experienced such a great salvation. We're merely called to report

what we have seen, heard and experienced- the Word of God and the Word made flesh, transforming our lives. God will make us witnesses- He will take our words about Christ and convince unbelievers of its' truth!

## E. God Distributes Gifts and Ministries in Evangelism

### **1. The Promise Stated (*John 4:37, Eph 4:11, 1 Cor 12:4-5*)**

It's a comfort to know that the Lord Jesus will guide us in what ministry to be involved in and how it relates to evangelism. Jesus said about evangelism and the harvest, "One sows and another reaps." (*John 4:37*) Paul stated, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord." (*1 Cor 12:4-5*) Indeed, there are many different ministries that win people to Christ. Each of us is to be involved in some way in winning people to Christ, using the gifts we have to complement that in some way.

Paul wrote, "God gave some to be ...evangelists...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry." (*Eph 4:11-12*) Some are equipped by the Lord to equip others in how to share their faith that the whole body may be built up.

### **2. The Promise Acted Upon**

Paul had a team that ministered with him. On his third missionary journey while in Greece, he "decided to return through Macedonia. And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia." (*Acts 20:4-5*) Paul also had Luke, Barnabus, Mark and others on different missionary journeys accompany him. The Spirit used each person in unique ways to accomplish the overall Great Commission to win souls to Christ and to get them disciplined. Sometimes people worked together to plant and sow seeds at different times on the same people. Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." (*1 Cor 3:6*)

## 1. THE EVANGELISM ENCOUNTER

When quoting the Great Commission, often people quote only the commandment, "Go therefore..." However, there's more than just a commandment in Jesus' word. The commandment is sandwiched by two incredible promises:

### A. Christ's Authority in our Commission:

#### **1. The Promise Stated: (*Matt 16:19, 28:18, Luke 10:19, John 16:13, 33, Acts 26:18, Eph 1:22*)**

Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth...Go...!" (*Matthew 28:18*) One day, standing before the throne of God, we will gaze in amazement as we see "a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne... crying... 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (*Revelation 7:9-10*) Where did all these saints come from? God is faithful- He

will do accomplish the Great Commission- and He will do it through His church!

The *authority* of Jesus Christ has been given to us- consider what a powerful promise that truly is! When Jesus spoke, “they were *astonished* at His teaching, for His word was with *authority*.” (*Luke 4:32*) He has given us authority over Satan and his demons, the world and our fleshly weaknesses to accomplish the deliverance of sinners from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God!

Upon Peter realizing Jesus was the Christ, Jesus spoke of the power and authority we have in Him: *the keys of the kingdom of heaven* are given us (*Matthew 16:19*) and “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against” us. The gates of Hades guarded sinners to keep them bound in sin and the kingdom of darkness, but we have authority in Christ to deliver them to the Savior and the Kingdom of Heaven (*Matthew 16:18*). The Lord Jesus promised Paul, “I now send you to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins...” (*Acts 26:18*) These promises give us boldness to approach the most hardened of sinners in the darkest of areas, pray and share the gospel with them, believing in the authority of Christ to set them free from Satan’s grip to hear and respond to the gospel and be saved.

## **2. The Promise Prayed (*Matt 18:18-19, John 17:15*)**

In Christ, the prayers of the church have the power to bind Satan’s work in an unbeliever’s life and loose the grip of Satan, that they can freely respond to the gospel, “Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.” (*Matt 18:18-19*) When we’re out evangelizing, one prayer I often pray before starting is that the Lord would bind the work of Satan so that people can clearly hear the gospel, for Satan has “blinded the minds of unbelievers” (*2 Cor 4:4*). I also pray that the Lord would prevent Satan from distracting people as they hear the gospel, prevent cell phone calls from coming in as we talk to them and prevent interference from other people. It never ceases to amaze me how many cell phones go off the minute the gospel is shared.

## **3. The Promise Acted Upon (*Acts 6:7, 18:8*)**

Wherever the disciples preached, the Lord confirmed His word through signs (*Mark 16:20, Acts 8:6, 13:12*) In the book of Acts and in the gospels, amazing accounts are recorded of demon possessed people having demons cast out of them and returning to God. Jesus cast out a legion of demons from a man and the man then went and shared what the Lord had done for him. Paul cast out demons from people. Even more amazing than all of this are the following accounts of conversions: priests were en masse converting to Christ (*Acts 6:7*) and even a synagogue ruler came to Christ, and was beaten terribly in public as a result (*Acts 18:8*). With amazement we read the account of the believer’s chief enemy, Saul, converting to Christ as well. Who do you know who is ensnared in a cult or

world religion, who persecutes the cross? You have been put in their life to share the gospel in the authority of Jesus Christ- believe in the authority of Jesus Christ to overcome the darkness, pray and watch the Lord work to tear down the strongholds of the enemy!

#### **4. The Promise Tested**

God doesn't send his sons and daughters on a commission without giving them the authority of the King to accomplish His mission. Jeremiah was a lone voice crying out against a corrupt government, priesthood, prophets and people. How could he possibly get the job done? Only with the authority of the Lord; "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." (*Jer. 1:5*)

Jeremiah was scared. He struggled with God's promises, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth!" (Maybe you've felt similarly when it comes to sharing the gospel with certain people?) The Lord encouraged him, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to *all* to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces...For *I am with you to deliver you*," says the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, *I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms...do not be dismayed before their faces...I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land...they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you,*' Says the Lord, 'to deliver you.'" (*Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19*)

#### **5. Personal Testimonies**

Randy and I were at preaching in Broad Ripple one Friday night on an amplifier out by the bars. While I was preaching this teenage boy dressed in gothic black with chains and darkness cursed us with satanic symbols. He came back later and talked with Randy and Randy gave him the gospel of John. The teenager took his lighter and tried to light it on fire. It wouldn't burn, so he turned up his lighter all the way- flames a foot high came out of the lighter, but the gospel of John wouldn't burn- it was a miracle! His fingers began to burn while holding the gospel and he cursed, threw the gospel on the ground and stomped on it as Randy said, "You see, the word of God endures forever!"

My friend Mario was ministering with his friends to some drunks, giving them sandwiches and then sharing the gospel. Two of them repented on the spot and evidently received Christ- and they suddenly were sober, in their right mind!

You have authority in Christ over the power of darkness- you are protected, and the Lord Jesus will tear down walls of unbelief. Trust Him and go forth in boldness with those in darkness.

#### **B. Jesus' Presence with Us During Ministry**



### **1. The Promise Stated (*Matt 28:20, Acts 18:10*)**

God promises His presence while we're winning souls for Christ and praying for the lost: the last words of the Great Commission are a promise: "...Lo, *I am with you always*, even to the end of the age." (*Matt 28:20*)

God promised Paul in the heat of trouble in Corinth, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for *I am with you...*" (*Acts 18:10*) Jesus promised, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, *I am there in the midst of them.*" (*Matt 18:20*)

### **2. The Promise Acted Upon (*Acts 18:11*)**

Paul's response in Corinth to the Lord's promise to be with him and protect him was, "He continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." (*Acts 18:11*) After he was taken to court, "Paul still remained a good while" (*18:18*)

### **3. The Promise Tested (*2 Tim 4:10, 16-18, 1 Kings 19:14,18*)**

There are two times when we most need the assurance of the Lord's presence in evangelism:

- a. When other ministry partners abandon the faith or betray us in some way. Sorrow filled Paul as he wrote to Timothy, "Come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." (*2 Tim 4:10*)
- b. When we're ministering all alone and persecution strikes. Paul wrote of such a circumstance, "Alexander...did me much harm... at my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me... but the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me..." (*2 Tim 4:14-17*)

### **4. Personal Testimony**

It was 11 p.m. out by the bars in Broad Ripple and I was alone that night preaching on an amplifier as nearly a hundred bikers gathered in the parking lot of the Subway Restaurant. Some were not happy with the message of repentance and the gospel. One man shouted, "There's a hundred of us and one of you...!" I stopped for a moment and prayed for wisdom, and the Lord told me to continue preaching while looking in the eye at the very man who threatened me. No troubles occurred that night. I had the authority of Christ!

## C. The Spirit Gives Us Boldness

### **1. The Promise Stated (*Acts 1:8, Luke 24:49*)**

God's explosive power was always linked to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..." (*Acts 1:8*)

## **2. The Promise Prayed (*Acts 4:29, Eph 1:19, 6:19-20, Phil 1:19-20*)**

The disciples prayed for boldness in preaching in the midst of threats of persecution (*Acts 4:29*). Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him while he was in prison, “that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth *boldly* to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it *I may speak boldly*, as I ought to speak.” (*Eph 6:19-20*) Paul prayed for the believer’s understanding of the “*exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe...*” (*Eph 1:19-22*)

## **3. The Promise Acted Upon (*Acts 4:13, 31, 33, 5:29, 9:27, 29, Phil 1:14,20*)**

The boldness of Peter and John caused their enemies to marvel (*Acts 4:13*) as they persecuted them. With the other believers they prayed for boldness and the Lord answered their prayers, “When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with *boldness...*with great *power* the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus...” (*Acts 4:31,33*) Their boldness confronted the religious leaders who told them to stop speaking of Jesus (*Acts 5:29*). Paul’s boldness in preaching resulted in almost getting killed several times (*Acts 9:27,29*) and other believers were emboldened by his example to preach while he was in prison (*Phil 1:14*).

## **4. Personal Testimony**

Billy Brandle was the first of my friends to preach on an amplifier back in 1986- he was a trail blazer for the rest of us in Indianapolis. How I thank God for him and his boldness! One evening he setup his amplifier outside an Ozzy Osborne concert, which includes demonic, anti-Christian messages. As the kids streamed out of the concert, there was Billy preaching on repentance and the gospel. The police warned Billy that they could not protect him. Billy kept on preaching as a swarm of teenagers filled with hatred toward Christ surrounded him, but he continued. Not a hand was laid on him. That evening, the police had a newfound respect for Billy, and for Billy’s Lord Jesus!

### D. The Spirit Gives Us Wisdom

#### **1. The Promise Stated (*John 16:13*)**

Jesus promised us that the Holy Spirit will guide us in all truth (*John 16:13*)- that’s something we desperately need as we share the gospel!

#### **2. The Promise Prayed (*Col 4:4, Eph 1:17*)**

Paul asked the Colossians to pray for him, that “I may proclaim [the gospel] clearly...”

#### **3. The Promise Acted Upon (*Acts 4:13, 6:10, 9:22, 18:9,28, 26:27-28, 28:23-24, 1 Cor 2:1-5*)**

Repeatedly the disciples, many of whom weren’t educated in formal religious training, confounded the religious and government leaders as they proved that

Jesus was the Christ (*Acts 4:13*). “They were not able to resist the *wisdom* and the Spirit by which [Stephen] spoke.” (*Acts 6:10*) Paul “vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.” (*Acts 18:28*) Paul wasn’t impressed with government leaders in high places. He challenged King Agrippa to faith (*Acts 26:27-28*) and his witness caused Felix to tremble (*Acts 24:25*).

Paul spoke of his secret- it wasn’t due to his own “persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (*1 Cor 2:1-5*)

In evangelism, as we study to show ourselves approved, workmen who correctly handle the word of truth, and as we rely on the Holy Spirit, we can trust that He will give us the necessary word at the proper time to confound the wisdom of the world and convert people to the “foolishness” of the gospel of Christ.

#### E. The Lord Delivers Us

##### **1. The Promise Stated (*Acts 18:10, 26:17*)**

The Lord Jesus promised Paul, “I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles.”

##### **2. The Promise Prayed (*2 Cor 1:12, Phil 1:19, 2 Thess 3:2*)**

Paul asked the Thessalonian church to pray “that we may be *delivered* from unreasonable and wicked men.” (*2 Thess. 3:2*)

##### **3. The Promise Tested (*Phil 1:19, 2 Cor 1:8-12, 11:23-33, 2 Tim 4:16-18*)**

Paul’s life was one of continual persecution, yet he trusted in the Lord’s deliverance, “I know this will turn out for my *deliverance...*” (*Phil 1:19*) At times things looked so dark that all human reason defied deliverance, “We despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who *delivered us from so great a death*, and *does deliver us*; in whom we trust that He *will still deliver us*, you also helping together in prayer for us...” (*2 Cor 1:8-12*)

#### **Some Other Evangelism Promises While We’re Sharing Christ:**

F. The Spirit Will Give Us What We Need to Not Be Ashamed (*Phil 1:19-20, Rom 1:16-17, 2 Tim 1:8*) of our Lord, of His gospel or of His messengers.

G. The Lord will Give us the Faith to Sustain Us and Overcome Doubts (*Acts 11:12, Heb 12:2, Mark 9:24*)

H. The Lord Will Make Evangelism an easy work for us (*John 4:38, Matt 11:30*)

I. The Lord Will Help Us Conquer our Fears (*2 Tim 1:7, Acts 18:9*)

## **1. THE RESULTS OF EVANGELISM**

### A. A Plentiful Harvest/ Bearing Fruit

#### **1. The Promise Stated (*John 15:5, 17:20, Matt 4:19, 9:37, Mark 4:20, Luke 5:10*)**

As we follow Christ, abiding in Him, He will make us fishers of men (*Luke 5:10*) and through us He will bear much fruit (*John 15:5*). He promised us that the harvest is plentiful (*Matt 9:37*) and ready for harvest (*John 4:35-38*).

#### **2. The Promise Prayed (*Luke 10:2, Matt 9:37, John 4:38*)**

Jesus commanded us to pray to the Lord of the harvest for harvesters to reap the plentiful harvest (*Matt 9:37*) - this was a harvest in which He has sent us to “reap that for which you have not labored.” (*John 4:38*)

#### **3. The Promise Acted Upon (*Acts 2:41,47, 4:4, 5:14, 11:21,24, 14:1, 17:10-12, 34, 18:4,8*)**

They harvested 3000 souls at Pentecost and daily afterwards the church added to that number. This explosion also occurred in Samaria then Antioch and elsewhere: “A great number believed and turned to the Lord.” (*Acts 11:21*) Even in places that resisted the gospel, such as Athens, it was common for a few people to believe (*Acts 17:34*). Today in America there is also a harvest in a land that is resistant to the gospel. Today also the workers are few!

#### **4. The Promise Tested (*Acts 17:5,13*)**

Frequently Satan used persecution in the midst of the plentiful harvest to attempt to shut down the harvesting- and it seemed to always backfire. Saul’s persecution is an example of this: “great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria...those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” (*Acts 8:1,4*)

### B. The Spirit Confirms our Words (Signs/Wonders)

#### **1. The Promise Stated (*Luke 5:10, Mark 4:26-29, 16:18-19*)**

Jesus promised that signs and wonders would accompany the disciples as they witnessed- demons cast out and miracles performed. That’s awesome- but I think a far greater sign/wonder is the salvation of a person- where God delivers lost sinners like myself from the power of darkness to the kingdom of the Son of His love (*Col 1:13, Luke 10:17-20*). Jesus promised to use us to fish for men (*Luke 5:10*). This was an invisible work (*Mark 4:26-29*) but the result would be seen by all- changed lives.

## **2. The Promise Prayed (*Acts 4:30*)**

The disciples prayed for the Lord's "hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." (*Acts 4:30*) The result was that the place was shaken and they had boldness to preach. We shouldn't be timid to pray that God confirms His word in people's lives by signs and wonders- let us not put God in a box that we've created for Him- how He can work today in America. Let us pray and watch and see His signs and wonders.

## **3. The Promise Acted Upon (*Mark 16:20, Acts 5:12, 8:6-7, 10:44, 13:12, 16:14, 1 Cor 3:6*)**

"Through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people." (*Acts 5:12*) The signs and wonders worked in conjunction with the gospel message, and "Believers were increasingly added to the Lord..." (*Acts 5:14*)

## **4. The Promise Tested**

While Paul was witnessing to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul on the island of Paphos, a false prophet opposed Paul. The Lord used signs and wonders to confirm the gospel message, "Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord." (*Acts 13:12*)

## **5. Personal Testimony**

There have been too many "coincidences" that occur during our evangelism to discount them as anything other than God's Sovereignty in bringing the right people at the right time. At least twice we witnessed to people who had heard the gunshot from a murder just a day or so earlier. The Lord is working many signs and wonders in the lives of the people we witness to- either before or after we talk with them, confirming the gospel through amazing life situations- let us trust Him and pray for this.

### **D. Saturation of God's Word in an Area.**

#### **1. The Promise Stated (*Acts 1:8*)**

The Lord promised we'd be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

#### **2. The Promise Prayed (*2 Thess 3:1*)**

Paul asked for prayer that the word of God would run swiftly (*2 Thess 3:1*).

#### **3. The Promise Acted Upon (*Acts 5:28, 6:7, 13:44, 49, 17:6, 19:10*)**

The enemies of the cross accused Peter of filling Jerusalem with his doctrine (*Acts 5:28*) - what a blessed accusation! Oh, that we would be accused of such things in our cities! At Pisidian Antioch, Luke recorded that the word of the Lord was spread throughout the region (*Acts 13:49*). Some Jews accused Paul and the other brothers with him of turning "the world upside down" with their doctrine. Later, "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus" (*Acts 19:10*) Do you have that yearning in prayer and in action for this our city? Allow me to modify a

scripture to get a point across about God's heart for Indianapolis- you who live here, do you have this heart in you for our city? God said, "Should I not pity Indianapolis, that great city, in which are more than one million persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left...?" (*Jonah 4:11*) Are you burdened to hear of 500,000 race fans coming to the Indy 500 to party it up and that there are so few Christians out there sharing the gospel with them? We have an estimated 30-40 people that will be passing out 120,000 tracts race day (May 27th, 2007), God willing. Will you join us? Many will be ministering to the 100,000+ partiers the night before at Georgetown and 30th near the track- do you care? Do you care enough to step out of your comfort zone and share the gospel with them? I can only imagine what it would be like to have 1000 Christians out there, stepping out and sharing the gospel with the lost! I can imagine a day when dozens or hundreds of Christians are outside of every concert, every race event, every tennis tournament, every marathon, every Marti Gras- sharing the gospel boldly! This last Marti Gras, Jose Muniz led several hundred believers to share their faith at Marti Gras- let us turn the world upside down with *our* gospel message! The world is busy pumping out its "gospel" that is "no gospel at all" 24x7. The light shines in the darkness- let your light shine!

#### E. Rewards in the Kingdom

##### **1. The Promise Stated (*John 4:36, 1 Cor 3:8, Lu 12:8-9, Mark 10:29-31*)**

Our light and momentary troubles in evangelism will result in an eternal weight of glory (*2 Cor 4:17*), a reward according to our labor (*1 Cor 3:8*) as we're gathering fruit for eternal life (*John 4:36*) One of the most amazing promises is given by Jesus in the midst of life's most discouraging results in evangelism: rejection of the gospel and persecution by our own family members: "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time- houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions- and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first." (*Mark 10:29-31*)

##### **2. The Promise Prayed (*Philemon 6*)**

Paul prayed that they would be active in sharing their faith that they would know every good thing they have in Christ (*Philemon 6*). That's a promise about the rewards of the Kingdom while we're still here in this life! As we are active sharing our faith, it results in a cycle of growth. We end up praying more for lost souls and thus our prayer life breathes new life and vitality. With all the conversations we've had with people from many different backgrounds, as we study the Word, we get idea after idea on how to use the very Word we're having devotions in to share new things with people- the result is a new freshness and vitality to our Bible study (indeed, there is no way I could conceive of writing a writing like this without having been out on the streets sharing the gospel- evangelism has driven an insatiable hunger in me for the Word of God!) In

addition, our fellowship with other believers becomes more vibrant as they are mutually encouraged by our evangelism and see the fruit of it.

### **3. The Promise Tested (*Acts 13:52*)**

Paul and Barnabus boldly proclaimed the word of the Lord in Antioch (*Acts 13:46*) in the midst of the Jews blaspheming and envying them. They were kicked out of the city, but “were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” (*Acts 13:52*) Paul didn’t fret- he knew his rewards were coming, and he knew there would be fruit from his ministry in Antioch and that the fruit would remain, regardless of persecution and the wiles of the devil.

Paul spoke confidently of God’s promises as he faced a most dreadful trial in his life- in prison in Rome awaiting execution. He penned these words to his beloved Timothy, “Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling...I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” (*2 Tim 1:8-12*)

Dear brothers and sisters, the Day is rapidly approaching- there’s one thing we can’t do in heaven: share the gospel! I plead with you to embrace the promises of God and boldly share your faith till your last breath. He who has started a good work in you will complete it until that final Day of Christ Jesus. Come soon, Lord Jesus!

In Christ’s Love,

Mike Porter