



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 1: 12-24 – 2: 1-4

Winter 2025

"Paul's Apology"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are, this morning, in 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, and we're going to look at verses 12 through chapter 2, verse 4. It's a lengthy passage, and just in reading over it, it occurred to me that it's a bit complicated. It might be puzzling as we read through it, so let me just explain it briefly, and then we'll, of course, spend the hour on it.

This is Paul's defense—and it's one of the reasons, probably the main reason, he wrote this letter. Paul had told the Corinthians he was coming to see them...and then he didn't come; and there were reasons for that. But they didn't know that and they took that as a weakness in Paul. In fact, he was accused by some of those who were not favorable toward Paul in Corinth, some of his enemies, that he's 'inconsistent', that he 'Doesn't keep his word.'

And so Paul now defends himself and explains all of that. That's the gist of this defense that he makes beginning with verse 12; and it continues down through chapter 2, verse 4. So, I'm taking a long passage because that's the whole of his argument; and we'll look at that this morning.

So we move from a passage in which Paul praises the Corinthians and thanks them for their prayers for him that delivered him and his friends from a very dire situation; to now his defense. Verse 12;

¹²For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you. *(And as I think about that, it's probably a summation of his argument: '...in the grace of God with sincerity, we've conducted ourselves before you...,' "For..." Verse 13,)* ¹³For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; ¹⁴just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

¹⁵In this confidence I intended at first to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing; ¹⁶that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea. ¹⁷Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? *(Well, that requires a 'No' answer. In other words, 'No, I wasn't vacillating when I intended to do this...)* Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no *at the same time*? ¹⁸But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. ¹⁹For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. ²⁰For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. ²¹Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²²who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

²³But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.

2 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. ²For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? ³This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be *the joy* of you all. ⁴For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote

to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

2 Corinthians 1: 12-24—2:1-4

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in together. Let's bow for a word of prayer;

LORD, it's a great privilege to be with Your people and to continue a study like this, verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph, chapter by chapter; studying Your Word and following the thought of the apostle. And it takes us into passages that are not always easy to understand and get a bit complicated, (as this one is), but there is so much here; and so much about Your goodness, and Your faithfulness, and the blessings we have in Christ.

We pray that You would help us to see that and to reflect deeply upon the blessings that are here in this text, as in every text, and that You might enlighten us, encourage us, and apply these to our heart that we might live as we ought to: Live in the power and the grace that is from You. That is how Paul spoke of his life and how he lived. He lived by Your grace, and because he did, he lived a life of integrity—one that he could defend very easily. May we do the same; may we have that kind of life before others. That's a work of Your grace and so we pray for that; we pray that You would do that for us this morning; sanctify us and build us up in the faith.

But we have needs, LORD, that are physical in nature as well, and we have a number of individuals that are really dealing with hard issues, physical ailments, and we pray for them. We pray that You would give healing very quickly; raise them up. There are others LORD, who are going through physical difficulty and we remember them; we pray for them; we pray You would strengthen them and encourage them. Bless their families; and may they soon be able to praise You for Your goodness and faithfulness to them. You are faithful to us always, LORD, we give You thanks for that.

We thank You for Christ; we thank You for His death for us—what a blessing! You sent Your own Son into a dark and fallen world to save a multitude—and make them Yours; make them children of God. And We thank You that we, who have believed in Him, have done that—and done that by Your grace...and Your grace alone.

So now LORD, bless us as we continue our worship and as we continue our study together. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) In December of 1941, Japan attacked the Philippines, the day after Pearl Harbor. Two months later, General Douglas MacArthur was forced to flee across the South Pacific to Australia. Before leaving the Philippines he made a famous promise, "I shall return." Two years later, in 1944, he returned, defeated the Imperial Japanese army, and liberated the islands. He kept his word; he was a hero. But if for some reason he had failed to return, he likely would have become a non-hero, in fact even an object of ridicule. We admire people who, against the odds, keep their promises.

But it doesn't always work that way. Paul had promised to return to Corinth. He didn't; and the Corinthians were very disappointed. He had detractors in the church to begin with, enemies who said he was 'double-minded and unreliable'; and they seized upon this to attack him. Basically they said, 'He didn't keep his word'. It was a serious charge, because if true, if only partly true, then Paul was not a man to be trusted. In fact, if it were true, Paul was not an apostle—and all of his instruction was suspect.

So Paul had to answer the accusations—give an apology, not a confession, not a plea for forgiveness, but an apology in the sense of a defense. That's largely why he wrote 2 Corinthians, to defend his character and his ministry—and especially to defend the Gospel.

A simple outline is:

First, verses 12-14: 'He defends his character'.

Secondly, in verses 15-17, 'He explained his absence.'

Third, in verses 18-22, 'He affirmed his faithfulness, his trustworthiness.'

And then,

Fourth, in verse 23 through chapter 2, verse 4, 'He explained that he didn't come for their sake, to spare them another difficult visit.'

So really his absence was not a sign of his disloyalty or his failure, it was a proof of his love for them.

First, Paul defended his character:

He said in verse 12, that, 'His conscience was clear'. The testimony of his conscience was that he acted, "in holiness and godly sincerity". (vs12b). Now, the Corinthians had prayed for him; he spoke of that in the previous verse and he thanked them for their prayers. They had helped him, through their prayers, to deliver him from a deadly danger. What he was assuring them of here, is that those prayers were not misplaced.

He was a man of good character. He had "proud confidence", (vs12a), in his testimony...'the testimony of his conscience'. (ibid.). Now, that was a bold statement—but he was not boasting of himself and not boasting in anything that he had done—he was, 'boasting in the LORD.' (2Cor 10:17). He stated that his confidence was "in the grace of God." (vs12b). He lived purely before them.—He lived purely before the church; he lived purely before the Corinthians; he lived purely before the world, because he lived by grace. In other words he lived, 'By divine power; not in his own strength, but in the strength and the ability that God gives.'

So his boast was not in himself; it was not in his own deeds; his boast was "in the LORD." (ibid.). He attributed everything that he was, and did, to Him alone. He lived purely, with a good conscience, because he lived by grace—by the sovereign grace of God. And he lived that way before the world, (as well as before them). He was transparent. He was not hypocritical, (that's really the accusation that's being made against him, 'He is a hypocrite.')

No; he lived a transparent life, and they had seen how he lived.

He lived with them for 18 months—a year and a half; they had seen his life. He lived selflessly; he supported himself, when he first came to Corinth, by making tents. Only when he received a gift from the Macedonian churches was he able to devote himself completely to the work of the ministry. But he never asked the Corinthians for a penny, for a drachma, for a denarius...Nothing.

And this was a wealthy church. He received help from those Macedonians who were poor. The Corinthians, (which was a wealthy church), he asked for nothing from them. He had a right to it, but he never took money from the Corinthians as a testimony to them, (and, I think, a testimony to the world), that, *the Gospel is free*. We proclaim the Good News, “without charge”, (Paul reminded them of that in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 18). There is nothing secret or suspicious about Paul's life: He lived an open life; he lived a morally pure life.

The same was true about his letters. They were not always easy to understand; you know that—you've read through the New Testament and have read all of Paul's writings, his letters. Peter himself acknowledged that that was the case: In 2 Peter, chapter 3, verse 16 he said that some of the things that Paul writes are, “hard to understand.”

We know that; we would all confess that—but the problem is ours, it's not his. Paul did not write deceptively in order to hide his real meaning. He said, in verse 13, "For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand..." In other words, ‘You don't have to, ‘read between the lines’ in order to understand my meaning. —Just study and think!’ They had received three letters from him, (two have been lost to us), but they had had plenty of correspondence from Paul to know that he was genuine in his letters, (just as he was in his life). So he expressed his hope that they would understand this and have complete confidence in him as their apostle.

Now in verse 15 to the end of the passage, Paul explained his travel plans, his good intentions and why he was not able to follow through and come to them. But in

making his defense he also gave a magnificent statement on God's faithfulness, and how He never disappoints.

But first, in verses 15 through 17, he stated his genuine desire to come to them. He actually had changed his plans twice: When he was in Ephesus he wrote to them, in 1 Corinthians, that he would travel to Macedonia—and from Macedonia in the north, he would travel south and come to Corinth. And then from Corinth he would go to Jerusalem. That's the 'itinerary' given in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 5, (so he makes this promise to them in that letter that he was coming to visit them). That was 'Plan 'A' —his original plan.

But something happened and what happened was a problem, or rather, a series of problems—a number of problems in the Corinthian church...serious problems that demanded that he make an unscheduled visit to the city. In 2 Corinthians chapter 2, he called it a '*painful*', (v1), a '*sorrowful*', (vs2), visit, (we'll come to that in a moment). Well, it was a 'painful' and difficult visit because it involved discipline. So, that 'painful visit' nullified his original plan to visit them. But while he was there, he promised to return to them again before leaving the region and going back to Judea and Jerusalem.

And his plans, at that time, are given here in verses 15 and 16: He wanted to travel from Ephesus, across the Aegean Sea to Corinth, and then go north to Macedonia, and then return back through Corinth and from there go on to Judea. That was, 'Plan B'. So rather than visit the city once, he planned to make two visits to Corinth, going and then coming back through Corinth, as he said in verse 15, "...so that you might twice receive a blessing;" (That is, 'a blessing through his ministry to them, a blessing through the instruction of the Word of God.')

Well, it didn't happen. So, twice he made plans to visit them, and twice he had to alter those plans due to unexpected circumstances. But those changes became 'grounds' for accusations against Paul by enemies in Corinth. They said that he was completely untrustworthy, both as a man and as a teacher.

Now if he's untrustworthy as a man, he's going to be untrustworthy as a teacher. Unfortunately, many of Paul's friends in Corinth entertained this slander and allowed themselves to believe it; rather than think the best of Paul and assume that he had good reasons for changing his plans, for they had every reason to assume that about him. They knew his character; they knew the kind of man that he was...but oftentimes, even friends are not as loyal as they should be.

So rather than wait to hear the facts, (as we should), people, even Christians, often listen to reports, and rumors, and slurs, and make judgments improperly. People gossip...and people like to hear gossip, (that's just human nature), but even, unfortunately, among us as Christians, people like that; people do that.

Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Alice Roosevelt Longworth was a celebrity all through her life. She was a bright and outspoken favorite of the media for years. And she was a socialite—a woman who entertained in her home. She had a pillow on her couch embroidered with the words, "If you can't say anything good about someone, sit right here by me." Well, the Corinthians contained some of that among themselves. And Paul learned of it, unfortunately.

He learned what his accusers had been saying; and so he answered them in verse 17. The accusations are reflected in the questions that he asked. "I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I?", (meaning when he intended to return to them). (vs17a). The question, as I mentioned in the reading of the text, expects a negative answer; that's the grammar of it.

And so does the next one: "Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no *at the same time*?" (vs17b). In other words, 'Is his word undependable? Does he speak out of both sides of his mouth? And are his decisions determined by worldly, fleshly motives? Is he undependable?'

Both of those questions raise that issue, and both of them require the answer, 'No!' Circumstances occurred that changed his plans, and they were largely due to the Corinthians' failure, (and he'll explain that later, beginning in verse 23).

But before doing that he pauses, in verse 18, to make an important statement about God's faithfulness, (and in it he gives a theological defense of himself). Basically it is this: 'God is faithful. And since Paul is God's servant, he likewise is faithful. His preaching, his message is true, and his life is consistent with his message. Christ's servants are faithful, not fickle.' That is essentially Paul's defense in verse 18 through 20.

And it's mainly a defense of his message, not a defense of himself. Really, they can think whatever they want to think about Paul—but the Gospel is *true*, regardless of their opinion of him. So he defends it; and in defending it, he defends himself. He begins in verse 18, "But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no." No one would question God's faithfulness; when He says 'yes', He means 'yes'. There's no ambiguity in His promises, no hidden meaning in His revelation. But if they question Paul's trustworthiness then they were questioning God's trustworthiness as well, because it is God who called Paul to be an apostle and entrusted him with the Gospel.

But of course, God is faithful—and Paul is faithful also. And one of the greatest proofs of Paul's faithfulness is the message he brought to them, the Gospel of Christ. Verse 19, "For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Sylvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him." In other words, the message that Paul and his companions preached in Corinth is *true*—there is nothing unreliable in Christ, so the message is reliable. 'It is yes in Him; it is true', is what he's saying. And the fact that the message is *true*, would at least seem to support the integrity of the messenger who gave it.

Now that's not always true. Not everyone who confesses Christ, is a believer. There are 'goats among the sheep'; there are 'tares among the wheat'—and only time reveals the difference. Even genuine believers are at times dishonest; they sin and that's a terrible thing. But Christ is not like that. He is all truth. In Him everything is 'Yes', meaning, 'everything is true—He is truth.'

Again, from their personal experience with Paul, the Corinthians should have known that he himself was true. But regardless of what they thought of Paul, Christ is true, and Paul was defending the Gospel he preached. Jesus is not both 'yes' and 'no'. He is not inconsistent. "Jesus Christ...", as Hebrews 13, verse 8, tells us, "...is the same yesterday today and forever."

And that's what Paul is saying here. In verse 20, Paul says that, 'All of the promises of God are fulfilled in Christ.' He's the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises, from Genesis to Malachi. He's the fulfillment of the first promise of the Gospel given: In Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, the promise of a redeemer to come who would defeat Satan, defeat the serpent and his seed.

He is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham—that he would have spiritual descendants, 'numbering like the stars of heaven', and that, 'all the nations of the world would be blessed through him'. (Gen 22:17-18). Through Abraham because through Abraham comes Christ, who is the Savior.

It happens through Christ; He is, 'the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.' (Luk 24:44). Every blessing of God has been, and is being fulfilled, in Christ; "...therefore..." Paul said, "...also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." (vs20). "Amen" is Hebrew for, 'It is true.' It's the equivalent of, 'Yes'. It affirms the truth. We use it; 'Amen', (we say to that), meaning; 'It's true', 'I agree', 'Yes it is.'

And the Corinthians had given an 'Amen' to these great truths about Christ. They had laid hold of all the great promises in Christ by the 'Amen of faith'. And by their 'Amen', they had given glory to God because they had affirmed that, 'Yes, everything God said and did was and is true...and they believe it.' They put their faith in it.

But a person cannot say 'Yes and Amen' to all of that, he or she cannot agree with all that Paul preached about Christ as the Corinthians did...and then say, 'But Paul is not truthful or reliable.' It's the person who does that, (who believes Paul and then doesn't believe Paul), that is unreliable—whose word is both 'Yes' and 'No'. That's the

inconsistent person; and that's what they were demonstrating here. They 'Amened' Paul's message, but they didn't 'Amen' Paul. —It was illogical.

Now that is Paul's defense, but he makes it on some important truth about Christ: Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, in whom the promises are fulfilled. So let's look at these truths that he has stated that are 'fulfilled in Christ'

He fulfills all the promises—and that is necessary for us to understand. First of all it means that all of God's promises depend on Christ alone. They are all realized in Christ alone. God's promise of forgiveness of sin, of reconciliation, of peace with God, and the promise of eternal life are obtained through Christ alone. We don't have any promise or any hope apart from Him.

So Jesus Christ is the message of the apostles.

He is the message of the church—it's what we must preach.

If we depart from that, then we have no reason for being; we cease to be a church.

It is important that we teach these things: That Christ is the center of our ministry, that He is the center of our lives. All who have 'Amened' Him have the assurance that God is for them. You put your faith in Him, God is for you—you have all of God's promises.

And God cannot lie. Men do. Men fail, sometimes due to personal weakness, sometimes it's through no fault of their own—providence overrules their best laid plans and most sincere intentions.

But God never fails. His promises are always 'Yes, and Amen'! He is the author of providence; we can take God at His word; He's absolutely reliable. (Mark, *(Newman)*, made this point in his lesson, *(this morning)*, how that the absolute sovereignty of God and what a comfort that is—the omnipotence of God.) No circumstance can circumvent His purpose or His intention...Nothing can frustrate God; He is absolutely reliable. He promises to watch over us, and He is protecting you, as a believer, *right now*; guiding

you, *right now*; working everything for your good, *right now*—regardless of the circumstances.

We can't always explain that. It's difficult to explain how all of the trials of life come into a person's life...and how it's for their *good*. I can't explain that; but I do know that's what the Word of God teaches—and we rest in that.

All of this applied to the Corinthians: The Lord God is for the Corinthians. So for all their distrust of Paul, they had been greatly blessed by the apostle: He brought them the Gospel; and he brought them these great truths; and through his ministry they were brought into it—they experienced God's fullness and blessing. Now that's what makes their distrust of Paul so astonishing, for there was a sense in which they owed him everything. He was their spiritual father.

But Paul took no credit for their blessings. In verses 21 and 22, he gives all the glory to God and His grace. It is God who established them in the Lord Jesus Christ, established them in their faith. And he says in verse 22, that He, (*God*), 'gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit.' ['gave them', the '*them*' may be Paul and his companions, (*Silvanus and Timothy*) or the Corinthians—but it applies to the Corinthians, (and applies to us as well).] ...'gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit', "who", as Paul says, "also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge." (vs22). That's true of every believer; the Spirit has "sealed us" and been given to us "as a pledge." (vs22).

Both of those two verses give the believer the assurance of eternal security. That's indicated in verse 21—the statement "establishes us", is in the *present* tense. And it's significant because it signifies that this is *constant, ongoing*. That's the experience of the believer: '*Without ceasing, without stopping*'; we are always, always in this condition of being *saved* and *sealed*. Once we have been placed in Christ, "established" in Him, we are forever in Him—and can never be removed. This is one of the great truths that Paul had brought to them—and that they were to understand.

This is the promise given to every believer throughout Scripture. Perhaps the most common text that you've heard on that, (and that certainly states it definitively),

is John chapter 10, verse 28. "I give eternal life to them." "Eternal life" is the gift of God. We don't earn it. We can't earn it. "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." (ibid.) Once put in Christ, we can never be plucked out of Christ. And that's reinforced through the gift of the Holy Spirit, here described as, 'a seal placed upon us'. We have been 'sealed' by God with the Holy Spirit.

Paul had in mind the practice of fixing a royal seal to an object to give it complete security. Letters and legal documents were fixed with a seal as proof that they had not been tampered with, and that they were not forgeries. So too, God has 'sealed' His people; He has sealed every believer in Jesus Christ. 'The seal of the Holy Spirit' carries with it the *certain* protection of safekeeping and fulfillment.

That fulfillment is seen very clearly in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30, where Paul says that, 'the believer has been sealed by the Holy Spirit', "for the day of redemption." In other words, he or she is protected, the believer is protected unto the very end, for salvation. That is the idea in the other description Paul gives of the Spirit where he calls Him "a pledge" that God has put "in our hearts", (vs22b)—an earnest. [Businessmen are familiar with 'earnest money', part of a payment given as a *pledge* that the contract will be honored. It's a down payment; it's a show of good faith.] And the Holy Spirit is given as God's pledge to us of the greater payment, (or blessing), to come. What we do have with the Spirit is just a small fraction of the future endowment and the future inheritance that's ours. Just a small portion of it—'A taste of it' as it were.

But they're both really the same—the spiritual life of the future is ours now: It's the life of Christ; it's resurrection life that we have now in Christ and through the Holy Spirit. In fact, that is suggested in the idea of the seal. A royal seal was identifiable as, 'The King's Seal', because it had an image on it. It may have been the image of the emperor, the king, or the person that had a distinctive image, and it was a mark of authenticity.

And the Holy Spirit also stamps the image of Christ on us. By His recreative work in us, the divine character is formed in our personality so that we take on God's

character—that's *sanctification*. That's the work of the Spirit in us. That is, 'New life in Christ.' All of that is indicated here by Paul, not only to encourage us, (and encourage those Corinthians), but also to add to his defense. The fact that Paul had 'the pledge of the Spirit', and 'His seal', and 'Christ's image' on him, should have convinced the Corinthians that he was not faithless, (as he was accused of being).

There were reasons Paul had not come to Corinth. Circumstances had twice prevented him from returning and he explains that now, in verse 23, where he resumes the account of his absence. It was not only due to circumstances, but also due to his concern, his genuine loving concern for the Corinthians. —"To spare you", he says. He wanted to avoid disciplining the church as he had to do previously, (when had he made his, 'unscheduled visit', what he refers to in verse 1, of chapter 2 as, 'the painful visit'). It had not been altogether successful. The problem which had involved correction had not been completely resolved, so Paul didn't feel the time was right for him to go back to Corinth with another confrontation.

Resuming his explanation for not returning as he had planned and promised, he says in verse 23, "But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm." (vs23-24).

Here we get a look at the heart of the apostle to see his inner life. He was not an autocrat; he was not a firm, unyielding disciplinarian. In verse 4, of chapter 2, he refers to a letter he had written to them, "with many tears". He felt deeply for these Corinthians; discipline is necessary, but he knew when to soften it—and evidently he concluded that the Corinthians could not survive more discipline. He had applied it; they hadn't received it well. (Now, he later learns that they did, and that's why he writes this letter encouraging them.) But he felt at this moment, (at that time), that another visit would only produce more pain. So, in the first verses of chapter 2, he tells them that, 'In order to avoid another sorrowful visit, he had decided to postpone his visit until a better occasion.'

Now that wasn't faithlessness, it was faithfulness—to them. He was not so concerned to win an argument as he was to win them, to reconcile them, and heal the church. He wanted them to experience the joy of life in Christ, in whom all the promises are “Yes”... are, “true”. They weren't living in them; they weren't experiencing them; so as a result of that, there were these conflicts in the church: Conflicts with one another, a disobedience to the Lord, no spirit of joy in Corinth.

Well, when I read about the promises, the promises of God, the promises we have in Christ, and all of them are “Yes” and “Amen”, I think of that scene in *Pilgrim's Progress*, when Christian and Hopeful are captured by Giant Despair and thrown into his castle. They ‘got off the path’, you may remember if you've read the story. They take a shortcut and think that they’re doing the right thing. But ‘the shortcut’ is never the right thing; they get off the “Ancient Path”, as it were, and they ended up where they were... in the giant's dungeon in Doubting Castle. But as the two pilgrims languished in darkness and gloom...doubting, Christian suddenly remembered that they had the key called *Promise*, that unlocked all of the doors in Doubting Castle; and with that...the doors flew open and they went free.

The relationship we have with God in Christ is certain. It's not ‘yes and no’, but always “Yes”. The promises are real. They relieve us of all doubts—and they drive away despair...but we must know them; we must believe them. We must know that God is always for us, always keeping our present secure and our future hopeful—that's true for every believer in Jesus Christ.

And we're to rest in that—and we're to know that. And we're to cultivate that relationship with Him—knowing and understanding more and more the promises of God and the character of the Lord God. That's the cure for despair, (at least there is no cure without that).

But the question is: Are you in Christ? Have you believed in Him? It's all you have to do: Recognize that you're a sinner, that you're in need of the Savior, and say "Amen" to Christ—that is, 'Trust in Him.' May God help you to do that, (if you have not), to trust in the One in whom are all the promises and blessings of God. The whole treasure of God is in the Lord Jesus Christ.—Come to Him, trust in Him.

And may God help all of us to reflect deeply on who He is, the consistency of our Savior, and abundant blessings we have in Him—and rejoice in that.

(Closing prayer) Father, we do thank You that Your faithfulness is true, and it is great. And all the promises in Your Son are "Yes" and "Amen"! We can rely upon them. We can live by faith and know that that our faith is absolutely in the truth—and that You will never fail us. May we be encouraged by that to be faithful and live lives that bring honor to You—and are a blessing to those around us.

And now, the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ name, Amen.

(End of Audio)