



SEASON OF
PROMISE

EASTER at GATEWAY

5 Week Devotional
Preparing for Easter

 **GATEWAY**
CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The Promise!

It is Easter Season! That sounds funny to say, doesn't it? But why? Immediately after Thanksgiving, don't we routinely say, "It's Christmas Season?" We celebrate Advent the entire month of December. I like the thought of Easter as a season. Easter is weightier than one morning service on one particular spring day. Historically, the Church began preparing for Easter 40 days before Easter Sunday with what is known as Lent. Lent was a time of fasting and centering on repentance. Forethought is good, but I would like to add a Gateway twist on this history making time of year. **Let's celebrate God's promises!**

The birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus fulfilled God's ultimate promise--a reunited, restored relationship with Him that would never end. Earth in our physical bodies may be our current residence, but it is a temporary residence—Heaven, with a new, heavenly body, is our eternal destiny! Opening up that promise is like opening

up a Russian nesting doll, a Matryoshka Doll. I remember bringing one for Annie from one of my mission trips. She thought it was beautiful and then I showed her how to open it up. To her amazement, inside there was another doll, just a bit smaller and painted differently. But the fun wasn't over, she kept opening them and to her surprise there were 7 dolls inside the big one! That nesting doll is a fitting simile to 7,000 plus promises of God in the Bible fulfilled in Easter! The Apostle Paul gives us this keen insight in **1 Corinthians 1:20-22:**

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

This devotional contains five promises, one per week, which will guide you and your family to get these fulfilled promises down deep in your soul so you can stand firm (Rock-Solid) on Christ. So much was accomplished on the Cross of Calvary & Jesus' resurrection is the fulcrum of history! Let's soak in and celebrate these 5 fulfilled promises of God!

One last thing. The night before Jesus' early

morning arrest, He prays a two-part prayer. The first part of the prayer is for His disciples and the second part is for everyone who will come to faith in Him through the disciples' testimonies about Jesus. **John 17:20a 20** *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message..."*

As a focus of missional power, I am asking those of you who are using this booklet to prepare your heart for this Season of Easter and to pray for opportunities to tell others the Jesus message of this Season. If you ask God for open hearts in which to share the Easter Promise, He will open hearts to receive The Easter Promise.

The Easter Promise: God wants a personal relationship with you. He loves you so much that He sent His Son Jesus to heal the current breach between you and Him. Jesus died so you could live. Jesus resurrected so you could live again. There is more to this life than meets the natural eye. And there is more life than this life. Would you like to know more? Join me at church on Easter Sunday.

Pastor Charlie

Additional Resources:

Understanding God's Promises:

God Loves You, But What Does That Mean?
(According to the Bible)

Worship Music Playlist:

Curated worship songs to prepare us for Easter.

All Resources can be found by
scanning the QR Code below or
by visiting Gatewayfranklin.com/easter



WEEK ONE

The Promise: Eternal Life

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Yes, eternal life is a promise from God. If we believe in Jesus, we will have eternal life. This doesn't mean that our current quality of life will be extended forever. This means that we will have a new life; the original life God had intended for us will be restored and it will last forever.

When does that life start? Well, we get a taste of this life as soon as we believe. Once we begin to live in the confidence of the promises of God, our whole life changes. Fear gets replaced with faith. Discouragement gets supplanted by courage. Rejection gets replaced by loving acceptance. Brokenness gets replaced with wholeness. But all of that progress will seem like small potatoes when we are made perfect through Christ in Heaven.

Reflection Questions

1. How would you describe your confidence (or lack of it) in the promise of Eternal Life?
2. What things have changed in your life as a result of that promise?
3. Does fear, discouragement, rejection or brokenness still need to be replaced by faith, courage, love or wholeness as you believe the promise of Eternal Life?

Weekly Prayer Focus

Thank God for His promise of Eternal Life and how it has changed you and ask Him to replace old mindsets that need to be replaced by believing the promise.

Family Activity for Those With Children

Supplies: Play Doh

Activity: Each person in the family uses Play Doh to create a building structure. It doesn't have to be perfect. The goal is to make a structure that will last as long as it's possible for a Play Doh structure to last. Once the structure is complete, set structure

outside and keep watch to see how long it lasts. Eventually, the structure will fall apart, be knocked down or damaged.

Lesson: Even though we try our best to create something that will last forever, eventually, it will fall apart. Our life on earth is finite, but we rest in the truth that God's kingdom is eternal. What God creates is forever. In Him, we live with eternal life in His kingdom.

WEEK TWO

The Promise: Forgiveness

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins and purify us
from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 1:9

Seemingly, no one wants to own their mistakes anymore. The blame game isn't a new tactic for hiding from responsibility; it is as old as Adam and Eve. To confess our sins is to own our sins. We can't give Jesus that which we don't own and Jesus can't forgive that which we don't give Him. But... when we own our sin, He not only forgives us, He washes us clean!

God gives this parallel promise through the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."* It took the death of Jesus to make us "white as snow." It took His blood to restore our sin saturated life back to its original softness before God. Because

of Jesus' death and our confession, God views us through the lens of the cross. Jesus' righteousness (rightness) has now been imputed (transferred) to us. Thanks be unto God!

Reflection Questions

1. How would you describe your confidence (or lack of it) in the promise of forgiveness?
2. What might you need to confess to the Lord today in order to receive His forgiveness?
3. What does it mean to you to be washed clean through confession and forgiveness?

Weekly Prayer Focus

Thank Jesus for the promise of forgiveness when you confess your sin and ask Him to reveal any hidden or unconfessed sin in your life so that you can be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

Family Activity for Those With Children

Watch the following video together:

Week 2 The Promise of Forgiveness



*Find the video by scanning or
visit Gatewayfranklin.com/easter*

WEEK THREE

The Promise: Good Plans

¹¹ “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:11-13

Jeremiah writes in one of Israel’s very dark seasons. The Israelites are in the midst of captivity. They have wandered from the Lord. And yet, even in that dark time God gives them these promises through the words of the prophet Jeremiah.

- “I have good plans for you!”
- “When you call, I will listen to you!”
- “When you seek me with your whole heart you will find me!”

Reflection Questions

1. How would you describe your confidence (or lack of it) in the promise of Good Plans?
2. How do you seek God with your whole heart?
3. How can you grow in faith this week to trust that God has “Good Plans” for you?

Weekly Prayer Focus

Thank God for the promise of Good Plans for your future and use this week to seek Him with your whole heart with the expectation that you will find Him.

Family Activity for Those With Children

Send your child on a mission!

Materials List:

Paper

Pen

Small treat (optional)

Use your home to create a fun treasure hunt for your child. Hide clues around the house and yard—aim for at least ten to twenty clues, depending on the

age and attention span of your child. Tell your child that they have a special mission and hand them the first clue. Keep it a bit mysterious, so they don't know if it leads to a surprise or a simple chore.

Ask your child to follow each clue until they reach the end of the mission. Try to keep your instructions chill, so they don't catch on if it's a surprise or a chore. Encourage them to read the clues. Only give help if they need it. Pay attention to any questions they ask about where they're going or how much longer it will take.

Wrap up the adventure with a cool ending—attach a note with a small treat or just say, “to be continued.” After they finish, share a snack or treat together. Chat about how it felt to get one direction at a time. Did it get frustrating? Did they feel like quitting?

Lesson: This is a bit like life is sometimes. Explain that God may reveal His plans bit by bit, and it might take our whole lives to finish some of the missions He gives us. The important thing is to keep following His plans and timing until the end.

WEEK FOUR

The Promise: Forever Presence

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

This promise comes from God to Moses, from Moses to Joshua, and then to all of Israel when the Israelites who have been wandering through the desert to the land that has been promised to them, the Promised Land, are to stop the wandering process (walking in circles) and to receive the promise God gave Abraham hundreds of years before – a “Promised Land!” The opposition for this faith-forward move will appear daunting thus prompting God’s call for strength and courage. The source of this strength and courage is the 100% constancy of His Presence. His promise was His Presence.

This is not an isolated promise. Right before Jesus’ crucifixion, He prepares His disciples and followers

for His departure (John 14-17). He assures them that it is necessary for Him to depart but encourages them to “take heart.” Why? Because He was preparing a place for them, He was going to send someone just like Himself to be with them forever, and because He had “overcome the world.” (John 16:33). I love that verb tense – an already accomplished action!

All of these promises apply to us as well. He has prepared a place for us, He has sent the Holy Spirit to us, and He still occupies the “overcomer of the world” seat!

Reflection Questions

1. How would you describe your confidence (or lack of it) in the promise of God’s Forever Presence?
2. Are you feeling fearful, worried or alone? Identify those feelings and confess them.
3. Where do you find it hard to “take heart” this week and how can you apply the words of Jesus to your situation?

Weekly Prayer Focus

Thank Jesus for sending us the Holy Spirit as His Forever Presence in our lives and ask Him for strength and courage to overcome every fear and walk with confidence that He has overcome the world and so can we in Him!

Family Activity for Those With Children

Materials List:

Objects around your house like couch cushions, cones, boxes, etc.

Bandanas to blindfold the kids

Set up a fun little obstacle course for your kids. Make it as easy or as challenging as you want, depending on your kids' ages, but be sure to add some "impossible" obstacles in the course. Tell your kids that you have a fun game to play with them, but do not explain what it is. For them to play this game, you will blindfold them and walk them into the room where your obstacle course is. You can describe the obstacle course and how challenging it will be; you can also tell the kids that you will be there to support them at any moment. Ask if they would like to give it a try on their own or if they would like you to guide them. Make sure the course is hard enough that they will fail if they choose to

do it on their own. After they have completed the course, talk about the difference between trying to do this on their own, versus with the help that was offered.

Lesson: Life is like this obstacle course, and we don't know what the future holds – that's why you were blindfolded. But one thing that we know is constant is the Presence of our Heavenly Father, our God, our Savior. Just like (whoever is leading the kid into the course, mom/dad/grandparents/siblings) was right beside you when you tried to go through this big obstacle course on your own, God is ALWAYS with us, even when we go through a big obstacle. We can try to do life on our own, but it is so much easier and better to go through life knowing that God, our Creator, is leading us all the way through

WEEK FIVE

The Promise: The Promise is Now and Later

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Hebrews 11:39-40

Hebrews chapter 11 is known as The Hall of Fame of Faith. Each person mentioned in this chapter is commended for their faithful following of God's instructions. Each one, in their own right, accomplished nothing short of miraculous exploits and yet the chapter ends with these words, "yet none of them received what had been promised." Huh? That's because the Promise was always Jesus – the ultimate Deliverer. Every other delivery pointed to our ultimate deliverance through Jesus.

Every person who follows Jesus can rest in the promises of God necessary for life now, but God's

ultimate promise, His ultimate deliverance, will be when we live with Him forever. As we approach Easter, take stock of these truths – all of God’s promises are for you and your children so you can live a life of faith right now. God’s promise of Jesus’ return is for you and your children so you can live in confidence of a future with Him. Life doesn’t always look like we want it to – but one day it will be more than we could have ever imagined!

And when it was time, God did for Israel just what He said He would do, He delivered them from their darkness. God’s plans for them had never stopped or slowed down, and His plans for you have never stopped or slowed down. Don’t forget! Every promise God has made was fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. How would you describe your confidence (or the lack of it) in The Promise is Now and Later?
2. What promises of God do you find yourself longing for that you know are for now?
3. What promises of God do you find yourself longing for that you know are ultimately for later?

Weekly Prayer Focus

Thank God that every promise He has made was fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Ask Him to open your eyes and heart more than ever this Easter season so that you may experience all the promises we have in Jesus.

Family Activity for Those With Children

Watch the following video together:

Week 5 The Promise is Now and Later



*Find the video by scanning or
visit Gatewayfranklin.com/easter*



EASTER SEASON WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Promise Given

Wednesday, February 21st 6:30PM

Palm Sunday: The Promise Entering

Sunday, March 24th 9AM & 11AM

Good Friday: The Promise Sealed

Friday, March 29th 6:30PM

Easter: The Promise Fulfilled

Sunday, March 31st

7AM Sunrise in the Courtyard

9AM & 11AM in the Sanctuary

Full Gateway Kids services for 9AM & 11AM

