

“CLAIM THIS PROMISE... WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE QUITTING!”

TEXT: Rev. 2:10

INTRO: A. This series of messages on “CLAIMING THE PROMISES” will not just focus on the promises themselves, but on how they can help us in times of special need. Every believer needs to learn how to identify and apply the promises in God’s Word.

B. This is the age of drop outs, flop outs and quitters. Sadly, even among Christians the drop out rate is high. Surely there will be very few who will hear our Savior’s words: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

C. Ivor Powell said: “If the Christian life is compared with a race, then the athlete must remember the finish line in not halfway down the course. A runner who desires a trophy must continue – to the end!” The student who gets the diploma must finish the course. The Christian life, like marriage is a life-long commitment.

D. Today we will deal with the concept of quitting. Synonyms for “quitting” are abandon, forsake, cease, or leave. The suggestion relates to those who stop before completion.

TRANS: Paul probably thought about those who were formerly co-laborers with him, while he sat in prison. No doubt he remembered with tears, his former companion, Demas...

I. DEMAS, THE QUITTER:

2 Tim. 4:10

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

A. A Negative Example:

1. There is no doubt that we have more Demas’ in the church than we have Daniels.
 - a. Demas’ problem was carnality.
 - b. Demas’ problem was love for his former lifestyle.

ILLUS: How many make professions of faith and for a while leave the world, only to later be pulled back into it because they found the life of faith too stringent, too narrow, too hard. They gave up the fight and went back to their former lifestyle. They got in thinking that it would be easy, but didn’t have the backbone to continue, because they found that it was warfare.

In Demas’ case he no doubt saw Paul end up in prison and decided he didn’t want to go there!

2. It is sad that there are so many Phygellus’ and so few Pauls.

2 Tim. 1:15

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

- a. It always hurts when those with whom you once labored drift away.
- b. It is such a blessing to see those who not only “stay by the stuff” but who also hold up your hands and minister to your needs.

2 Tim. 1:16

The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

c. Thank God for the Onesiphorus' in the ministry; what a refreshment they are!

ILLUS: Powell sums up Demas' life and ministry in four words: delight, distraction, departure, and disappointment. What a commentary on so many Demas' today. They come in rejoicing, get pulled away by the magnetic attraction of the world and end up going back - back to what?? If it was so good, why did they leave in the first place? The Demas' are always those who break the preacher's (and the Lord's) heart. He not only lost his friendship with Paul and his ministry, he also lost his contentment and crown! Think of what he could have been. Think of the ministry he could have had.

Bible researchers date the books of Philemon and Colossians about the same time. When those two books, which both mention Demas, were written, Demas was a profitable servant.

Philemon 1:24

Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Col. 4:14

Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

TRANS: If you don't want to become a quitter, claim our text verse! Make it you life verse!

Rev. 2:10b

...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

II. JOHN MARK, THE TURN COAT:

A. A Disappointing Example:

Acts 15:37-40

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

1. Mark started out so well. Acts 12:12 (a prayer warrior); Acts 12:25 (a fellow missionary)
2. We are not told what caused his defection and subsequent disaffection, but whatever it was left a bitter taste in Paul's mouth.
3. He was no longer considered trustworthy by Paul.

ILLUS: Principle: Decisions you make will haunt you later on. Principle: Actions you take will establish your reputation for life, in the minds of some. A reputation lost is nearly impossible to regain.

- a. Paul refused to take John Mark with him for fear he would quit on him again.
- b. We read again and again of Paul and Barnabas, and Paul and Timothy, and even Paul and Silas, but never Paul and John Mark!

ILLUS: Opportunities lost may never be regained. Ministries lost may never be regained. Surely unless some claim our text verse tonight, we will have some Demas' and a few John Mark's among us!

Someone has likened the opportunities of service to that of diamonds. If a diamond could speak it might complain of the harsh treatment it received the hands of the diamond cutter and polisher. There is a great difference between the stone found in the mines and the jewel of exquisite beauty placed in a royal crown! John wrote: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is." I John 3:2 The believer who quits or turns back is like the diamond who rejects the cutter and polisher. Therefore "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." 1 Cor.15:58

Contrast Demas and John Mark with the great Apostle Paul who wrote at the end of his life and ministry, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

Paul made mistakes, but from the day of his Damascus road experience when he met the Savior, till the day he met that same Savior again in heaven at the end of his earthly life and ministry, he never faltered! Paul would have no doubt appreciated the moral of the little poem:

"Two frogs fell into a deep cream bowl; one was an optimistic soul,
But the other took the gloomy view, "We shall drown!" he cried without adieu.
So with a last despairing cry, He flung up his legs and said "Goodbye!"
Quote the other frog with a merry grin. "I can't get out, but I won't give in;
I'll swim around 'til my strength is spent, Then will I die the more content."
Bravely he swam 'til it would seem – his struggles began to churn the cream.
On the top of the butter at last he stopped, and out of the bowl he gaily hopped.
What is the moral? It's easily found, If you can't hop out, keep swimming around!"

CONCL: So, "CLAIM THIS PROMISE...WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE QUITTING!" We have more than enough sitters, quitters and other critters in the church. We need more men, women and teens who refuse to quit or turn back.

Christians need the tenacity and stubbornness of a Winston Churchill, who, when the island of England was threatened by Nazi Germany, said:

"We shall fight to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields, and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender... we shall never, never, never, never quit..." June 4, 1940

May God give us Christians who will vow to keep on fighting till their last breath. We need believers whose motto is "We shall never, never, never, never surrender!"