

Sermon Series: Promise Kept

Title: Promised Participation

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An invitation says, **"You matter. You have a role to play."**

God's promise of salvation isn't just about saving us FROM something; it's about saving us FOR something.

Galatians 5:13 *"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh ; rather, serve one another humbly in love."*

I. Participation with the Father: Relationship

Romans 8:14-15 says: *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'*

Exodus 20:18–21 *Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin." The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.*

Romans 8:14 - but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'

This is a deeply relational invitation. He's inviting us to be His children. What deeper relational imagery could God give us? Through Christ, we are adopted into His family. But participation requires something from us. A relationship takes intentionality.

James 4:8 says, *"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."*

II. Participation with the Son: Death and Resurrection

Romans 6:4-5 explains this beautifully: *We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

Our participation with Jesus is in His death and resurrection...

Romans 6: 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; **and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.**

Baptism symbolizes this participation. It's an outward declaration of an inward transformation. Communion is another symbol and act of our participation with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 10:16 *"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?"*

Through these acts, we participate with Jesus, in His death and resurrection. We still need to do battle every day against our flesh. We're no longer slaves to sin, but we still need to daily choose to die to ourselves so that Christ may shine in us.

Luke 9:23 says, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

Paul said it this way: **Galatians 2:20-21** *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

Our participation with Jesus is also in His suffering. **Philippians 3:10** *"I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,"*

Who would ask to know someone in their suffering? Someone that loved someone else deeply.

III. Participation with the Holy Spirit: Guidance and Gifts

Third, we participate with the Holy Spirit, who empowers and guides us. Galatians 5:25 challenges us to *"keep in step with the Spirit."* This implies movement. The Spirit is leading us, but we must choose to follow.

Jesus described the Holy Spirit as our counselor or helper in John 14:26:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

We have direct access to the Spirit of God!* The Spirit not only guides us but also equips us with spiritual gifts for the work of the Kingdom.

1 Corinthians 12:7 says, *"To each is given the manifestation, (or clear display), of the Spirit for the common good."*

IV. Participation with the Body of Christ: Service and Community

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 reminds us:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

You alone are not the body of Christ. We together are the body of Christ. Each of us has a role. **Ephesians 4:16 says**, *“From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

From Him - this unity of all the parts can only be done by God. From Him.

To what end do we work? That we would **grow and build itself up in love**.

Serving isn't optional; it's essential. The body grows because each part of the body does its part. If you are a believer in Christ, you are part of the body. So the question is: what part are you playing?

Jesus said in John 13:35, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Every act of service, no matter how small, is a tangible expression of love that strengthens the body of Christ, and it teaches you Christ-like love.

Conclusion: Promised Participation

1. Have you participated in beginning a relationship with God the Father? Do not live in fear of God, but draw near to Him and He will draw near to you.
2. For the believer, Have you participated with Jesus in his death and resurrection through baptism and in communion? Are you daily taking up your cross, enduring suffering, because you want a deeper relationship with Jesus, by knowing Him in His suffering?
3. For the believer, are you participating with the Holy Spirit and inviting Him into every moment of your day? Are you listening to His leading and following Him as He calls you to serve those around you?
4. For the believer, you are a part of the body of Christ. Are you participating with the body of Christ, serving one another in love and strengthening this local church and the church worldwide?

