

Lecture 12
Trust in God
Psalms 4, 13, 56, 57, 91, 108, 125, 143, 146

We take a look at the money in our pockets and it says, “In God We Trust.” Trust Him to do what? Keep us free from invasion?...keep us prosperous?...keep us from killing each other in racial or social revolution?...keep us in a position of world power and leadership? Revolutionary soldiers used to say, “Trust in God and keep your powder dry.” Certainly as a nation we are a lot more self-reliant (keeping our powder dry) than we are God-reliant.

Of the nine psalms in this week’s lesson, six are specifically attributed to David. David was the anointed king even though Saul was still on the throne. He was pursued, attacked, and generally hounded by his enemies even though God had promised him a future of leadership. David inspires us because we read of his trust in God during these times of adversity. In Psalm 4:3 he says, “Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call to him.” He was sure of that. Verse 8 “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

In Psalm 13:2 he writes, “How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?” Hear that frustration? Yet verse 5 says, “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.”

When the Philistines had seized David in Gath he said in Psalm 56:3-4, “When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?” Down in verse 8, “Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll—are they not in your record?” The New American Standard Version renders this verse, “Thou hast taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Thy bottle; are they not in Thy book?” In other words, “God, You see my tears and I know that You care that I am suffering.” Then David reiterates in 56:11 “in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

When he fled from Saul into the cave Psalm 57:1 says, “Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in You my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of Your wings until the disaster has passed.”

Some of us are in cave-like experiences. So we can identify with Psalm 143:2 as David prays, “Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.” Some of what we’re going through may be our own fault. We deserve judgment instead of relief. Sometimes we’re in that dark place because of what others have done or as a fallout of circumstances out of our control. But David prayed in 143:8, “Let the morning bring me word of Your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in You. Show me the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul.” Verse 10, “Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.” David’s desire was God’s will in his life. He trusted God to show him the way through the difficulties -- up and over the speedbumps to a smooth highway.

When David became king he had a different set of problems—all the burdens of government and leadership were on his shoulders so he wrote in Psalm 108:12-13 “Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. With God we will gain the victory, and He will trample down our enemies.” So David not only trusted God in the pit of his own dire circumstances but also on the pinnacle of success.

Let me ask you a question, “Can you trust God?” Perhaps there are two ways to look at that question. Can you trust God; that is -- Is He dependable in times of need? Will He do what He says? Or secondly, it might be asked with the emphasis on -- Can you trust God?

Do you have such a relationship with God and such confidence in Him that you believe He is with you always even though you do not see any evidence of His presence and His power?

It is not easy to trust God in times of adversity. There is distress, despair, darkness that fills our souls as we wonder if God truly cares about our plight. But **not to trust** Him is to doubt His sovereignty and to question His goodness. In order to trust God we must view our adverse circumstances through eyes of faith, not our senses. And just as the faith of salvation comes through hearing the message of the gospel (Romans 10:17), so the faith to trust God in adversity comes through the Word of God alone. It is only in the Scriptures that we find an adequate view of God's relationship to and involvement in our painful circumstances. It is only through Scripture, applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that we receive the grace to trust God in everything. We should commit this promise to our hearts: Hebrews 13:5 "**Never** will I leave you; **never** will I forsake you."

There are five brief areas in my outline that I want to mention and expand on:

- 1) We trust God for salvation. 2) We trust God for safety/security. 3) We trust God for strength. 4) We trust God for sharing. And 5) We trust God for serenity. Let's take a look at each of them.

First, We trust God for salvation

To Christians that means placing faith in the blood of Jesus Christ to atone for our sins so that we might be pure and holy in God's sight and live with Him in heaven for eternity. Eternal security begins here in this life when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and continues on forever after death of the body.

Isaiah 12:2 "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

Often in the Old Testament the mention of God's salvation has to do with deliverance (being saved from) circumstances at hand. I'd like to address that as my second point.

We trust God for safety/security

Psalms 125:1-2 in the lesson today says, "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. Like the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore."

A hedge of protection as high as a mountain around us. Mentally we may believe that. But here is where, when disaster strikes, doubt begins to question "why?" "If, You, God are my safety, why am I in this situation in the first place?" Get me out! becomes our prayer.

Helen Roseveare was a British medical missionary in the Congo years ago during an uprising. Her faith and commitment was very strong, yet she was raped and assaulted and treated brutally. Commenting later, she said, "I must ask myself a question as if it came directly from the Lord, 'Can you thank Me for trusting you with this experience even if I never tell you why?'"

That's a good thought. God has trusted each of us with our own set of experiences to deal with. Can we still trust in Him even if He never tells us why?

The secret to responsible trust is acceptance. "Acceptance is taking from God's hand absolutely anything He gives, looking into His face in trust and thanksgiving, knowing that the confinement of the hedge we're in good, even though maybe painful, it's good simply because God Himself has allowed it."

Many, many years ago, Felix of Nola was escaping his enemies. He took temporary refuge in a cave. He had scarcely entered the opening of the cave before a spider began to weave its web across the small opening. With remarkable speed, the insect completely sealed off the mouth of the cave with its rather obvious web, giving the appearance that the cave had not been

entered for many weeks. As Felix's pursuers passed by, they saw the web and didn't even bother to look in. Later, as the godly fugitive stepped out into the sunlight, he uttered these insightful words: "Where God is, a spider's web is a wall; where He is not, a wall is but a spider's web."

Isaiah 25:9 "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

My third point is We trust God for strength

Okay, God says He's our safety and security in all circumstances, but often I'm crying, "God I need the strength to stand on that promise." You ever feel like that?

Christianity is trusting Christ, not self. Most people are trying to reach God, find God, please God through their own efforts. Total trust is resting all one's weight on something else. When one is crippled, he must trust his crutches as his strength.

There's a great lesson for strength in Psalm 13. In verses 1-2 David is down, flat on his face—focused on his misery and complaints. Focused on the depth of the trial and the length of the trial. ("How long?," he asks.) In vs. 3-4 David is on his knees—taking his burden to the Lord . . . admitting his own need and dependence upon God. By verses 5-6 David is on his feet, rejoicing and singing. David's circumstances hadn't changed, but **he** had changed. Strength comes from choosing to fully trust, pray and praise.

Dr. V. Raymond Edman, professor at Wheaton College, wrote this in his book titled *In Quietness and Confidence*:

First, He brought me here, it is by His will I am in this strait place: in that fact I will rest.

Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me the grace to behave as His child.

Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me lessons He intends for me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.

Last, in His good time He can bring me out again—how and when He knows.

So let me say—I am here,

- (1) By God's appointment
- (2) In His keeping
- (3) Under His training
- (4) For His time.

To me that's an encouraging thought.

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Or as Elton Trueblood says, "**faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation.**" Strength comes from proper perspective. And a good dose of the song "Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey" doesn't hurt either.

A fourth thing to think about is that we trust God for sharing.

I've already mentioned how our money has the motto "In God We Trust" on it. How can you give away ten to thirty percent of your income and still have enough to live on?

Most of us are familiar with the challenge from God in Malachi that says we're to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse and see if He won't open the floodgates of heaven to bless us. God is trusting **us** to do some things. Do you find that an interesting thought—we're to trust God and in turn He trusts us?

God has chosen to have a relationship with us, which includes entrusting certain things to us as His stewards. For example, He entrusted the Old Testament law and the oracles to the

Jewish people, expecting them to value, guard and teach His truth to all nations (Romans 3:2). And God especially entrusted the Ten Commandments to Moses (Acts 7:38).

God has now entrusted the ministry of the gospel to all believers who have been reconciled by Christ's payment for our sins and given new life through the resurrection. Scripture calls us "ambassadors for Christ," which suggests that God is entreating the world through us (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

Perhaps the most astounding aspect of our stewardship is found in Jesus' prayer shortly before His death: God has entrusted His glory to us (John 17:22-23). We are the caretakers of His reputation and His character among humankind. Jesus specifically says in this passage that our relationship with other believers can bring glory to God. In other words, what we say and do toward one another reflects on what others think of Him. What an incredible privilege, and an awesome responsibility.

Paul, too, links the concept of stewardship with our relationship with God. As His children, we inherit His riches and responsibilities. We share with Him in the good and the bad, just as a family shares those times together. Paul refers to the difficulties we experience and the promise of God's nearness and strength in Romans 8:17: "And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."

God has entrusted to us a great deal. He knows that we can do all things by His grace, so He's trusting in us to trust in Him. Yet God knows our fears as well. Otherwise, He wouldn't assure us so often of His purposes and His presence.

- We feel hurt and alone, God says He cares.
- We feel angry and resentful, God promises wisdom and strength.
- We feel ashamed; God grants forgiveness and comfort.
- But most of all God promises to supply all our needs in Christ Jesus. We are to trust in God as we share the gospel, as we share one another's burdens and as we share even our money both through the church and directly to those in need. Trust God in financial matters. It is true . . . You can't outgive God.

Lastly, think about the fact that We trust God for serenity.

Serenity is another word for peace. Psalm 91:1-2 of today's lesson, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Isaiah 26:3 "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."

In his letter to the Roman Christians, Paul recounts a litany of the effects of God's goodness toward us: we are forgiven; strengthened by his Spirit; granted wisdom, sonship, and hope. We are promised the prayers of Christ for our needs and the certainty of an eternal destiny and purpose. Paul then asks: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for all of us, how will He not also with him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32)

We continually experience hardships. People disappoint us. We disappoint ourselves. But God is constant and compassionate. We are not alone. He cares. Against all reason, the transcendent God loves us so much that He has committed himself to us. That is why Paul could proclaim, "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, not things present, nor

things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

That is a promise that should bring us ultimate peace. Our God is uniquely and ultimately trustworthy.

Well, we can trust in God for salvation, safety, security, strength, sharing and serenity.

I’ve shared this before but it is still a good reminder of how exciting trust in God can really be. It’s a piece called

THE ROAD OF LIFE

At first, I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there sort of like a president. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I really didn’t KNOW Him.

But later on when I met Christ, it seemed as though life were rather like a bike ride, but it was a tandem bike, and I noticed that Christ was in the back helping me pedal.

I don’t know just when it was that He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since. When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring, but predictable . . . It was the shortest distance between two points.

But when He took the lead, He knew delightful long cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places at breakneck speeds, it was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, He said, “Pedal!”

I worried and was anxious and asked, “Where are you taking me?” He laughed and didn’t answer, and I started to learn to trust.

I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure. And when I’d say, “I’m scared,” He’d lean back and touch my hand.

He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me gifts to take on my journey, my Lord’s and mine.

And we were off again. He said, “Give the gifts away; they’re extra baggage, too much weight.” So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light.

I did not trust Him, at first, in control of my life. I thought He’d wreck it; but He knows bike secrets, knows how to make it bend to take sharp corners, knows how to jump to clear high rocks, knows how to fly to shorten scary passages.

And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I’m beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, Jesus Christ.

And when I’m sure I just can’t do anymore, He just smiles and says— “Pedal.”

Psalm 146:5-6 “Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, the maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—the Lord, who remains faithful forever.” My prayer this week is that we truly find our peace, rest, hope and joy by trusting in God. If God if for us, what can man do to us.