

Trust God Even When Life Hurts

1. To Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul. 2. O my God, in Thee I trust, let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. (Psalm 25:1-2 [RSV])

Although it was written by David and about David, this passage could have been written about Job. He was man whom God had blessed greatly, and then Satan came along and put him through the greatest agony imaginable in order to get Job to reject God. Listen to what Job had to face:

1. There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil. 2. There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3. He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and very many servants; so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east.

18. While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; 19. and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness, and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you." 20. Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell upon the ground, and worshiped. 21. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." 22. In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong. (Job 1:1-3; 18-22 [RSV])

Job's trust in God was not based upon emotion. It was based upon a complete belief in God as the One Who knew what was best for him in all situations. Job uttered these classic words after he had gone through the worst testing that anyone has possibly gone through. Job 13:15 says, **"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him."** Job said this while everyone else told him to curse God and die, including his wife!

Trusting God boils down to whether we believe what He says is true or not. How do we know that we can trust God? Because what He has said in the past has come to pass. We have seen prophecy fulfilled exactly as God has said it would be. We know that His word is trustworthy. We can count on Him. Psalm 9:10 says, **"And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee."** The Psalmist adds in Psalm 33:4, **"For the word of the LORD is right; and all His works are done in truth."** We see that others have trusted God before us. Men have gladly laid down their lives, they have faced torture and pain; they have lost their homes and families, and they were able to do this because they trusted in God.

In 2 Corinthians 9:8, we are told, **“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”** Reading this carefully, we learn that God is able to make all things right. No matter how hopeless or futile a situation may be, if we understand this Scripture we understand that God is able to take even the worst details of the worst situation and turn it into abounding grace. This is what we see in the case of Job.

10. And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

12. And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. 13. He had also seven sons and three daughters. (Job 42:10; 12-13 [RSV])

In Philippians 4:6, we read **“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”** While we lie awake, unable to sleep because of our worry and distress, God is waiting for our prayerful requests. He is waiting for our prayer and petition so that He can be God and we can get some sleep!

Logically, we are trying to solve issues that we simply do not have the skills or the wisdom to solve. Enter, God. He knows what we want, what we need and the difference between the two. In Isaiah 41:13, He says, **“For I am the Lord, your God, Who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, ‘Do not fear; I will help you.’”** Note that He offers His help. This is also what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30: **28. “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30. For My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”**

The help that God offers can come in many forms. How often have you gone through trials only to look back some time later and realize that you would never have believed things would work out that way? Maybe one of the reasons we have a hard time giving it up to God is because we will have to live in His answer instead of just having an answer given to us. That does take great trust. But God is worthy of great trust.

When we go to God initially, we are prepared to act when He makes a way for us. We are prepared to make changes when He leads us in the right direction. In Psalm 32:7, we read **“You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”** When we give our worries to God, we are protected, we are soothed with deliverance, and we have given Him back the power that we rob Him of when we stubbornly hang on to

problems we will never be able to control on our own. Is not it wonderful to know that God is waiting for us to let Him bring us peace? As God said in Jeremiah 32:27, ***"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me?"***

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 31:14-15 [RSV], ***14. But I trust in Thee, O Lord, I say, "Thou art my God." 15. My times are in Thy hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors!*** In this chapter the Psalmist is saying that he trusted God to deliver him, and he trusted Him to do it at the right time. Trust requires us to say, "My times are in Your hands" (paraphrase).

As we continuously mature in the Christian life, we learn to believe for things not NOW but in God's perfect timing. As we can see from Hebrews 11:1, ***"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*** We can always have faith now, but we cannot always have the manifestation now.

The Bible says this about trusting God: ***"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding"*** (Proverbs 3:5). Furthermore, it tells us, ***"He who trusts in himself is a fool . . ."*** (Proverbs 28:26). Still, most of us have difficulty trusting God, at least at one point or another, in our walk with Him.

There are probably many reasons why trusting God is difficult. God's ways do not always make sense to us. God told Noah to build an ark. It may have never rained up to this point, and the nearest body of water was probably many miles away. It could not have made much sense to Noah at all (story found in Genesis 6-8). We want life to make sense. We always want to set our own terms and timetables.

God works on a different timetable than our minds comprehend. God promised Abraham a son from his own body through his wife Sarah. It was at least 24 years before this promise was fulfilled in the manner in which God had promised. In the meantime, Abraham and Sarah had difficulty trusting God and tried their own methods to fulfill the promise (read about this in Genesis 15-17). We want what we want and we want it now! It is difficult to trust in a plan that requires us to surrender all control of the time for completion.

Trusting God does not always mean that we will understand what He is doing, or why He is doing it. This is the really hard part! This is where faith and trust have to operate at their highest level! When all of a sudden everything in our life starts going bad, we begin to wonder where God is! We wonder if He has forgotten about us, or if He still cares about us. When all of our best-laid plans go bad, we wonder why God would allow this to happen to us! We may even get mad at God. Sometimes Christians, it seems, suffer more than unbelievers.

But God does not always operate the way that we think. Our parents did not always do things our way when we were children. But we cannot let that keep us from trusting God! He knows best! He knows the future, we do not! Isaiah 46:8-

11 [RSV] says, **8. "Remember this and consider, recall it to mind, you transgressors, 9. remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10. declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose,' 11. calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.**

Trusting God is not based on whether He gives us everything for which we ask. Selfishness does not produce trust. How many people have you known that have said something like this: "I asked God for something, and He didn't give it to one, therefore I can't trust Him." This is a very selfish motive. And this will never develop trust in God, only fear.

Let us take a few moments to consider the case and example of the Apostle Paul. Paul had a very legitimate request of God. He asked the Lord to heal Him. And God said no. Did Paul stop trusting in God because He would not heal him? No. He accepted the fact that God had another plan for him. He accepted the fact that God knew what was best for Paul.

How do we develop a deep trust in God? How do we get to the place where Job was where he could say, **"Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him"**? He had a relationship with God. A real relationship. Not just a relationship of one day a week, but 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Job drew close to God.

This was Job's secret: in trusting God He knew God! Do we know Him? Do we trust Him? For our salvation? For our daily needs? For everything?

In order to trust in God, you must totally surrender your will, your ideas, your desires, and your future in to God's hands. Many of us are "control freaks." We do not want to give the control of any part of our lives over to another. If you do not believe that God loves you fully and really does have your best interests at heart and desires the very best for you, trusting Him is going to be extremely difficult. It takes a very special relationship to allow that measure of surrender. Most of us have a tendency to claim trust in God. However, at the first sign of any difficulty or trial, we think that God must not love us because He is allowing this difficulty to happen. The trial is exactly what God is using to test the level of trust that we have in Him.

In spite of the trials, we always have God's promise that the trials and tests that we go through are for our good. Listen to what God's word has to say about our trials. **"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. . . . Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."**

(Romans 8:28, Hebrews 12:2, 2 Corinthians 4:17, James 1:2-3). We learn that it is through trust that our relationship with God strengthens and our love for Him grows.

In Job 38 verse 1 it says, “***Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. . . .***” And then in chapter 42 Job realized how foolish he was to act as if he knew better than God.

In Mark 4:35-41 the disciples (with Jesus) are in the midst of a storm. When called upon, Jesus answered out of the storm, and the storm was quieted. But the disciples were amazed and still had no clue Who this Jesus was (and is). When you are in the midst of a storm in your life, do you expect Jesus to answer you out of the storm; in the midst of a world crashing in all around you? And when Jesus does answer, what do you expect? I think people expect God to calm the storm that is raging all around us, but what God wants to do is **calm the storm within us.**

It is the calm that is within us; the peace that surpasses all understanding, that powers us through the storms raging all around us. When Jesus died on the cross **FOR YOU** and when Jesus rose from the grave **FOR YOU** Jesus paved the way through the storm. This is not a scheme to make our lives better now, but rather, it is Good News NOW (which does make our lives better). But it has already been done. Jesus has won; the storms have lost their power; and Jesus is already in the boat with you. What do you need to do? Trust in the Lord.

Why does God choose to heal some and not others? Trusting God is the best path. Do my actions affect the outcome? I am reminded by the powerful passage in the *Book of Job*, when God addressed all of the questions Job raised in his terrible predicament, where nothing made sense. Who am I to think I have control over anything? As a human being, I am weak and fickle; I do not even have control over my own emotions! On one day, I can feel so blessed by God; on the next day, the smallest thing could cause my heart to be weighed down. Who is like God? He created and rules the whole universe. Life and death are in His Hands. We need to simply trust in God, for He is the Creator.

If sin is involved, there may be scars and consequences, but, if we come to Him in humility and repentance, He is quick to forgive. Trusting God can redeem our past, and turn our lives into something beautiful. I have witnessed this in so many people. Even when our intentions are pure, we can place blame on ourselves unnecessarily. Whether justified or not, this still results in a burden on our hearts. When I surrender my regrets and fears to trusting Him, He replaces my burdens with peace, and trusting God sets me free. I can then rest, trusting in God's complete sovereign control over all things. It is then I can have confidence in my salvation in Christ because He did not fail.

Before we close this morning, I would like to read to you some excerpts from Job chapters 38-40:

“Where were you when I laid the Earth's foundation? Who marked off its dimensions? Have you ever given order to the morning, or shown the dawn its place? Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail? Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, to water a land where no man lives, a desert with no one in it, to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?”

“Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring fourth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Who endowed the heart with wisdom or gave understanding to the mind? Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens when the dust becomes hard and the clods of earth stick together?”

“Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in the thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food? Do you know when the mountains goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth?”

“Do you give the horse his strength or clothe his neck with a flowing mane? Do you make him leap like a locust, striking terror with his proud snorting? He paws fiercely, rejoicing in his strength, and charges into the fray. He laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; he does not shy away from the sword. Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread his wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build his nest on high?”

We can trust in many things. None, however, offer the protection plan, the long-term security, or the benefits that trusting in God offers. All of the other things in which we place our trust can fail. God never fails! In the words of King David, ***“Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with You. He will not fail you or forsake you”*** (1 Chronicles 28:20).

Job had the kind of faith that you and I should aspire to have. We should desire to have the kind of faith that can stare tragedy and pain in the face and say, "I will not blame the Almighty for allowing bad things to happen to me to prove to Satan that I will not doubt."