

Sermon Summary – Sunday 2 July 2023

KNOWING & TRUSTING GO HAND IN HAND (Calven Celliers)

One of the greatest struggles and challenges you may find yourself facing in this life, is the struggle to trust God. Trusting God is easy when you can see how everything is going to work out. When you have a secure job, money in the bank, all the bills are paid, your marriage is going well, your children are all serving the Lord, and you are in good health. Trusting God is easy when you are living on the mountain top. If we are completely honest with ourselves, it is comfortable to trust God during these times, it doesn't take a lot to trust God when everything is A-ok.

The challenge to trust, however, comes when life happens and you go from the mountain top of joy into the valley of despair. How do you trust the Lord when you are not sure how you will pay your next bill, or put food on the table, when your job is unsteady or non-existent, when your marriage is falling apart, when your kids have turned their back on the faith you instilled in them? How do you trust God when your get up and go has got up and gone, when your health is failing and every day becomes a struggle? How do you keep trusting in the Lord when all 'hell' seems to be break loose in your life.? These are not easy things to deal with and yet in the middle of life, there is this verse that leaps off the page in Proverbs.

In what are probably some of wise King Solomon's most well-known words, we are instructed as Christ-followers to trust in the Lord – **Read Proverbs 3: 5 & 6.**

There it is, laid out in front of you, the command to trust God and lean not on your own understanding. And yet, as difficult as it may seem, I want you to know without a shadow of doubt that it is possible to do, or God wouldn't ask you to do it. The question remains how do you get to this place of trust?

What does it mean to trust in the Lord? Let's define what the word trust means. And to do this, I am going to our good friend Merriam-Webster, who defines the word trust, first and foremost, as a verb. In other words, it's something that you do. To trust is to place a firm belief or an assured reliance in the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something. I have come to see that often God answers our desire to know and understand not by giving answers, but by giving us Himself. Trust is all about not knowing what a day might hold, but having confidence in the One who holds each and every day. Despite most of us having a desperate desire within to understand, life has taught me that we must submit to God's ways, even when we can't comprehend them. So, walk down the hallway of your life today with the knowledge that there will be many things you will not understand, but know and believe in your heart that your Father in heaven is in control. So, the best working definition of trust that I can come up with, is that trust is a confident reliance in someone when you are in a position of vulnerability. And in the context of this morning's teaching, that Someone is obviously the Lord.

Take this definition and now apply it to this morning's key verse. Here is what King Solomon is saying – *You should have a firm belief and an assured reliance in the character, ability, strength, or truth of the Lord. You should place your confidence and hope in the Lord and depend on Him to produce a future outcome that is good for you, even when you don't understand the path that He has you on.*

It takes trust to believe the words of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans – **Read Romans 8: 28**. When the going gets rough, it takes active trust to believe and be confident in the knowledge that there is a Grand Designer behind everything that we are experiencing, and that God loves us and that He is in complete control. It takes active trust to hold onto the knowledge that God's plan for your life involves all that happens to you, and even when it's far from good, God specializes in bringing good out of it. Trusting God is easy when you can see how everything is going to work out.

Read Isaiah 55: 8 & 9.

God sees the whole picture, while we only see a tiny corner, a.k.a, our current reality. To trust in the Lord with all our heart means we can't place our own right to understand above His right to direct our lives the way He sees fit. We often will not understand how God is causing all things to work together for good, but when we trust Him with all our hearts, we are called to have confidence that God works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil His good purpose – **Read Philippians 2:13**.

Speaking about not leaning on your own understanding, King Solomon made another observation on the topic – **Read Proverbs 14:12**. If you are going through a difficult season right now and nothing makes sense, keep your eyes on Jesus. What King Solomon is highlighting in this verse is that human strategies and philosophies about life have a whole lot of people convinced because they appeal to our own self-centred notions of what's best. But those who won't seek God's opinion regarding the way forward will pay a high price in the end. Rely solely on human logic, lean on your own understanding to chart the course of your life, and it will lead you on a path away from God. But seek His will in all you do and He promises us in Scripture that He will show us which path to take. Without God's Word guiding us and equipping us, life is very hard to navigate. Oh, it may seem so much easier to just go it on your own, to try and figure things out, rather than to put in the time, effort and dedication to seeking God's will in His Word, but it's a facade.

We cannot see what lies ahead – **Read James 4:14** (*Read Eugene Peterson's paraphrase in The Message is possible.*) Just when we think we have life all figured out, it pulls the rug out from under us, that is the nature of life on this side of eternity. There is a way that seems right, but in the end... That's why God asks us to trust Him, to have a firm belief and an assured reliance in His character, ability, and strength; to place our confidence and hope in Him and depend on Him to produce a future outcome that is in accordance with His plan and purpose for our lives – **Read 2 Corinthians 5:7**.

The challenge to trust God is real, especially when life happens and you go from the mountain top of joy into the valley of despair, and it's during those times, during the trying seasons of life when we're least inclined, that we need to seek first the Kingdom of God, or as King Solomon put it, '*seek God's will in all you do, so that He can show you which path to take.*'

God rarely chooses to make His will for your life obvious. Instead, He wants you to be persistent in seeking His guidance. And I believe that that's because God knows that the process of seeking Him is as important as the answer or direction or solution He will give you. As you take steps of faith and learn to recognize His leading, you grow spiritually and strengthen your relationship with Him. It is not always a simple process, but in the end, it's worth it – **Read Matthew 6:33**.

In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose. Let God guide you. If God is truly guiding you, then there is no need to panic nor fear – **Read Isaiah 43:2**.

And so, to answer the question, *how do you get to a place of trusting God in your life?* **Read Psalm 9:10.**

The more you know the Lord, the more you trust Him. The original word that David used for “*know*” doesn’t merely mean head-knowledge. It implies an intimate understanding gained through personal experience. Focus less on the mysteries of His counsel and more on the certainties of His character. God reveals Himself in His Word. The Bible gives you a clear understanding of who God is and what He is like. The Bible shows you the character of God and how He works in the lives of people. However, knowing God is more than just knowing facts about God. God’s Word promises you can know God personally. Knowing God by name is knowing Him the way you know your best friend. God calls you to a relationship with Him, a living relationship with Jesus, where you truly become friends. Linger in God’s Word, take note of His faithfulness, listened for His voice in prayer and pay attention to His love in action. Through faith in Christ, you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. He leads and guides you through every day, every season, through the good times and the bad times. The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and applies it in your life. And, the more you know the Lord, the closer you get to Him, the more time you spend with Him, building relationship, the more you’ll trust Him. Trust grows in the presence of relationship. In time, you will discover what King David says is true — knowing and trusting go hand in hand. And it’s easier to trust God with all our heart when we’re intimately acquainted with His.

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