

Sunday, January 23, 2021 am

DRAWING CLOSER TO GOD (3)

Learning to Trust God

In our last lesson about our need to know God we noted a number of things we can do to help us know God better and thus further our relationship with Him. One of those qualities I mentioned was how we need to trust God. I believe this to be an important topic, so in this lesson I would like to develop that quality. In fact, this is a topic I believe many are struggling with, especially in difficult times like these. Rather than trusting God, many want to blame God. But if you desire to draw closer to God, you cannot do that. During our last gospel meeting, Joshua Thornhill presented a lesson entitled, "In God we trust." In that lesson he dealt with the struggle of trusting God. I encourage you to listen to that lesson again. Here I present some of my thoughts about trusting God.

I. What does it mean to trust God?

- a. What is trust? It is having complete confidence in someone or something. Bible dictionaries tie it to the word *hope*.
- b. **Concerning God, trust is a complete confidence in Him that He can take care of us, regardless of what might happen.**
- c. Hebrews 11 -We know Hebrews 11 as the chapter of faith – and it is! But as we have noted, true faith involves trusting God. It is that trust that causes us to endure. Consider some of the examples in Hebrews 11 about trusting God.
 - i. **Enoch** – Hebrews 11:5 – he did not die because he was pleasing to God. Genesis 5:24 says that He walked with God. We know from the surrounding context that the world was very wicked at that time. Some how Enoch stood out and trusted God and His ways.
 - ii. **Noah** – Hebrews 11:7 – he built an ark as God instructed Him (Genesis 6-8). Considering the times and the people around him. It was an incredible act of trust.
 - iii. **Abraham** – Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19 perhaps the greatest example of trust – 1) At the word of God, he left his homeland not knowing where he was going; As he continued to increase in faith to the point that he was ready to sacrifice his son Isaac as God instructed him. He trusted God so much he knew God would raise him from the dead (showing his intent to follow through).
 - iv. **Moses** – Hebrews 11:24-29 – He trusted God as he defended his own people in spite of his royal upbringing; 11:28 speaks of keeping the Passover in the land – an act of trust within itself – they sacrificed a lamb and the lives of their firstborn was spared; 11:29 – He and Israel passed through the Red Sea with waters heaped up on both sides (Exodus 14:22 described the waters as a wall) – imagine the trust in that act.
 - v. **Jericho** – Hebrews 11:30-31 – they walked around Jericho following illogical instructions from a human standpoint, and thus they received the land.
 - vi. **Rahab** – Hebrews 11:31 – trusted God and the Israelites as the city of Jericho fell.
 - vii. Then there are the countless others described in the succeeding verses – **Samson, Gideon and Barak, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets** – great examples of trusting God because of their faith.
 - viii. We see in these examples what genuine trust is.

II. Trust God, and not:

- a. Uncertain riches – 1 Timothy 6:17, Mark 10:24
- b. Armor – Luke 11:22 – this would represent the protections of this world. This is not to say that act recklessly, or that we do not take protective actions, but we do not depend on them to save us, especially before God. Psalm 20:6-7 says, *Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed; He will*

answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

- c. Our accomplishments – Philippians 3:3-4ff – Paul had accomplished many things and was “going places”, but NOT where God wanted him to go. That is why he walked away from it all (7-11)
- d. Our own wisdom – the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God – 1 Corinthians 1:20-21, 3:19 – the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.
- e. In ourselves – Luke 18:9 – see 1 Corinthians 10:12 – let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.
- f. Will we let go of whatever is standing in our way of trusting Him? Trusting God will not take place if He is not first in your life. And that is a major message of scripture – Matthew 6:33.

III. **How can I learn to trust God?**

- a. **First, consider who God is.** This goes back to knowing God. This is what the first part of our theme is about. Learning about Him – His qualities and how He works according to His word. But beyond this there are things we need to know about Him.
 - i. Know that He is there – He is where He has always been. Whether we feel His presence or not, does not change this fact. In our human and flawed minds we want to experience things with our 5 senses. That is not how God works. We want Him to help us with our problems the way we expect it to happen. That is not how God works. But just because things are not going your way does not mean He is not there, or that He is not working. Understand His ways are not our ways – His ways are higher – Isaiah 55:8-9. Hebrews 13:5-6 notes that He will never leave nor forsake us.
 - ii. Know that God cares – 1 Peter 5:7, that is why we can come to Him. He DOES care! Psalm 103:13-14, *As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.*
 - iii. Know that God is faithful – 1 Corinthians 10:123, Psalm 36:5, 34:8 - *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!* He is dependable. David said in Psalm 37:25, *I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.*
 - iv. He keeps His promises. He has done so in times past, and with that we can take confidence He will continue to do so. He cannot lie.
 - v. Know that His way is best – Psalm 18:30, *As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.* As an example, consider 2 Peter 2:9 which says that He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.
 - vi. We must continually keep these qualities before our minds, especially during the trying times of life.
- b. **Learn to trust His word**
 - i. God’s word is inspired – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – and it is profitable to make us complete. If we are to trust God, we MUST believe what He tells us in His word. We cannot get around that.
 - ii. God’s word is BETTER than our wisdom - Proverbs 3:5-8 – do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him
Jeremiah 10:23 - *O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.* I MUST realize that I can be wrong. This is especially true when what I want conflicts with God tells me to do. I think of Naaman who wanted some grand performance to heal his leprosy – but when he followed the instructions of the LORD through Elisha, he was finally cleansed (2 Kings 5:13-14)
 - iii. God’s word is sufficient – 2 Peter 1:3, 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 5:7 tells us, “We walk by faith, not by sight” – this is the point of that text.
- c. **It is a matter of the mind**

- i. Trusting God is not an easy thing to do, especially when you are facing troubles and uncertainties. But it is something you can do.
- ii. You have to make up your mind that you are going to trust Him no matter what.
- iii. This goes back to those examples in Hebrews 11.
- iv. I also think of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were threatened with death by fire and still refused to bow to the king's idol – Daniel 3:16-18.
- v. It also describes Paul as he is determined to remain faithful to God – Acts 20:21, as he is headed to Jerusalem to be persecuted, he is willing – because he knows the final outcome.
- vi. Consider that worry (persistent worries, not rational concern) is a lack of total trust in God. It too is a matter of the mind that is opposed to trusting God. That was the point Jesus made in Matthew 6:25-34 as He challenges us to seek first the kingdom of God and know that God can take care of our needs.
- vii. AND with this realize that you CAN trust. It is not something impossible to do.

d. Pray about it

- i. A practical step that we continually find in virtually every lesson about Christian growth.
- ii. If you are struggling with trusting God – turn to Him and ask for that strength. But as always, you must be reverent about it.
- iii. 1 Peter 3:12 tells us, *“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*
- iv. Mark 9:24, when a father is pleading with Jesus to heal his demon possessed son, Jesus says, “If you can believe...” The father cried out, “Lord I believe. Help my unbelief.” Can we not do the same as we strive to learn to trust Him as we ought to?

These are a few things to consider when it comes to trusting God. One final observation I want to make is to realize that God is WORTHY of our trust. He has proven Himself trustworthy – He does not lie. His word is truth. His ways are best. He has accomplished His purpose thus far and will continue to do so (Romans 8:28). Psalm 119:90 says, *Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.*

So, as we strive to draw closer to God this year, let us learn to trust Him with our very being. What about you? Do you REALLY trust Him? Think about it!