

Friday: Remember...trust does not negate hardships

Read: Daniel 3:16-18 ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

<p>Reflect: The scene was exile at the hand of the Babylonians (well, actually at the hand of God – cf. Dan1:2 – but that is a bigger subject matter than today), and in exile whatever your rulers say, goes. Therefore the defiance by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is very startling.</p> <p>These three had their trust placed firmly in God. Yet we need to note their trust in God did not make everything easy for them. In fact, they were punished for their trust in God; they were thrown into the furnace (cf. Dan3:19-23).</p> <p>Now, God did reward their trust by saving them – the furnace did not kill them. Yet note their words in verse 18; they were willing to trust in God even if it meant their death. The beautiful irony? Even if God had not saved them from the fiery furnace they would have been delivered out of King Nebuchadnezzar’s hand. Their deliverance would have been in the form of physical death, which would have ushered them into eternity. Hard for us to swallow – but true nonetheless; even in death God is worthy of our trust.</p>	<p>Respond: How would a deeper trust in God simplify your life?</p> <p>Is your trust in God stronger now than it was two years ago?</p> <p>How have you trusted God so far today?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for King Solomon Christian Service Camp; a mission New Life supports. Pray for Bob Griffin and Larry Hayes, New Life’s elders; pray their trust in God will continue to grow. Pray for protection from sin and strength during times of testing.</p>	

Saturday: Remember...Jesus trusted...

Read: Matthew 26:36-46 ³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane... “Sit here, while I go over there and pray...³⁹ ... “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will...⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done...⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again...

<p>Reflect: Wow. I suppose that could be sufficient for today’s Devotional Guide...but then there would be a lot of black space below. Actually, that is not an all bad thing...</p> <p>Jesus, God in the flesh, wrestled with trusting His Father. If this was not so, then how else do we explain His prayer(s) here in Matthew? Obviously Jesus did trust the Father (hence “not as I will but as you will...” as well as the cross and our salvation), but submitting to Him was neither easy...nor painless. Jesus did not want to go through with the cross...</p> <p>Yet in dying to Himself Jesus was made alive again. The progression was Gethsemane and wanting another way but yielding to the Father’s will, Golgotha and physical death, followed by glorification. The end result of trusting God was a resounding victory over sin and death. That victory assures our victory if we will trust in God as well. Yet doing so is not always easy nor is it always painless... (BUT it is so worth it.)</p>	<p>Respond: Are you currently struggling to trust God with something in your life? How much have you prayed about it?</p> <p>What can you do today to prepare yourself for worship tomorrow at New Life’s building?</p> <p>Stop and realize God loves you.</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for the National Missionary Convention; a mission New Life supports. Pray for Ed Asbury, Keith Krause, and Mike Haag, deacons at New Life; pray they will submit their desires to the desires of their Heavenly Father. Pray for our worship tomorrow at the Church Building. Thank God for the comfort we can receive in knowing our sins are forgiven.</p>	

We All Trust...

February 7 – 13

We all trust in something(s). It is a part of our nature...it is a part of being a human. If we do not trust, then we are not really living.

It seems children trust easily and freely. Richard Foster shared the following observation about his children...

- When our children were young I would sometimes rise early on Saturday morning and fix them pancakes for breakfast. It was all great fun – the broken eggs, the spilt milk, the batter and the chatter. They loved pancakes – even my pancakes – and they would wolf them down quickly. I would often watch in astonishment at their greedy eating. Not once did I see either of them slipping a few pancakes under the table, stuffing them in their pockets thinking, “I don’t know about Dad. Maybe there won’t be any pancakes tomorrow and so I’d better get myself a little stash just in case.” Not once did they ask me about the price of eggs or my ability to secure enough milk for tomorrow. No, as far as they were concerned there was an endless supply of pancakes. They lived, you see, in trust.
 - (pg. ix, *Ruthless Trust* by Brennan Manning)

That is such a simple story...but also one of profound truth is it not? Children trust. They have to trust or else they will not survive.

Adults have to trust too. If any adult thinks they do not trust others they are either delusional or simply not thinking clearly about things.

- When you sit in a chair you trust it will support your weight.
- When you work hours at a job you trust you will be paid.
- When you deposit your paycheck you trust the money will be in your bank account until you need it.
- When you flip on a light switch you trust the light will come on.
- Etc, etc, etc.

The same holds true...if adults did not trust we would not survive.

Yep, we all trust. So the question is not “Do we trust?” the question is “In Whom do we trust?” God has proven Himself trustworthy time and time again. Yet so often we struggle with trusting Him. Why is this? I doubt the answer will be in the Devotional Guide this week, nor in the sermon (sorry).

Yet my hope is both the Devotional Guide and sermon this week will keep us on the path of deciding to trust God more fully. The reality is, even if we knew why we did not trust God...our problem is not fixed. We still have to choose to trust Him. So perhaps the best step this week is to pray over and over again, “Father, I am yours, and I trust You.” See what that does. You may be amazed at how the Holy Spirit uses that prayer.

Other issues of trust we will continue to explore in the coming weeks...but it still boils down to our own decision to trust.

Monday: Remember...Noah trusted...

Read: Genesis 6:9-22⁹ These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God...¹³ And God said to Noah...¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood...¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you...²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

<p>Reflect: What an amazing story of trust. Noah lived in a very corrupt time. In fact, it appears Noah and his family were the only ones trusting in God. Perhaps a reason the wickedness was so great on the earth (e.g., Gen6:5) is because everyone sought to take justice into their own hands. Perhaps there was no trust in an all-knowing God Who would one day make everything right.</p> <p>Consider the trust Noah had to build the ark – on dry ground. When we factor in how to this point it is possible it had yet not rained upon the earth, this act of building a massive ark on dry ground sounds all the more foolish. Yet Noah trusted in God.</p> <p>In the end the one(s) who looked foolish in chapter six were the only humans alive. Although often thought of as a children’s story...the story of Noah and the Ark is really a dark (even dreadful) story. Mankind was so wicked God almost destroyed the whole human race. Yet because a family trusted in Him humanity was spared. We also now have God’s Word an event like a global flood will never happen again (cf. Gen9:12-17). And we can trust Him.</p>	<p>Respond: In what areas do you struggle to trust God?</p> <p>In what areas do you find yourself easily trusting God?</p> <p>What are other signs God has given us of His trustworthiness?</p>
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Pray: Pray for Ryan Nelson and “33 Church” in Olathe; he is the latest “church planter” hired by the CEA. Thank God for our time of worship together yesterday at the Church Building. Thank God for His trustworthiness. Continue to pray for workers in God’s Kingdom (Mt9:36-38).

Tuesday: Remember...those at Babel did not trust...

Read: Genesis 11:4⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

<p>Reflect: God’s commands were clear; both at the time of creation, “...fill the earth and subdue it...” (Gen1:28), and after the flood as well, “fill the earth...” (Gen9:1). God clearly stated He did not want mankind concentrating in a geographic area.</p> <p>Yet here in Genesis 11 we have mankind going against the will of God (not trusting Him) because they do not want to be spread out over the face of the earth. In other words, mankind trusted they knew better than God. Yet even in this act of disobedience, God was still merciful and gracious.</p> <p>God was very merciful in how He dealt with the people of Babel. Granted, God confused their language and in doing so they left and spread “from there over the face of all the earth” (Gen11:8). Yet this is truly an act of grace. If mankind had stayed in a tight geographic area while disobeying God’s will for them, they would have quickly turned to sinning against one another in (even more) terrible ways. Wow, what an amazing and loving God. Even in an act of judgment (confusing their language) His mercy and grace are so clear.</p>	<p>Respond: What is an example in your life of how a corrective action of God was really an act of grace?</p> <p>Who is the most trustworthy person you know? Why are they so trustworthy?</p> <p>Has God ever demonstrated a lack of being trustworthy to you?</p>
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Pray: Pray for God to be at work at LCS, MCC, and OCC; missions we support. Pray for God to raise up servants for New Life and the rest of His Kingdom. Thank God for how He has been merciful and gracious to you today. Continue to pray for God’s people to have boldness to speak for Him (Acts4:29).

Wednesday: Remember...Abram did trust...

Read: Gen12:1-10 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you...⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him...⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel...⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb...¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there...

<p>Reflect: Let’s be honest with ourselves. If God appeared to us and said, “go where I will show you” we would likely do it. Yet what would we do if upon arriving at the place where God is going to work through us in miraculous ways...we had to leave? I suppose it might depend on the circumstances for leaving. In Abram’s case he had to leave because there was a drought.</p> <p>Perhaps in our day it would be similar to God appearing to you and saying, “Move across the country and through you I will bring millions to come to know me...” Yet upon arriving at your destination there was no work, no food, no shelter...so you had to travel to the opposite side of the country... again not knowing where you are going for sure or what awaits you.</p> <p>My goodness, no wonder Abram was such a remarkable man. He trusted God (most of the time) in spite of what his circumstances seemed to warrant.</p>	<p>Respond: Has God ever called you to a deeper trust in Him (perhaps with your time or finances) but you have been hesitant?</p> <p>Have you ever acted on what you believed God was calling you to do...and then been disappointed?</p> <p>If you have not made a list of good and bad things in your life to ponder, what is holding you back?</p>
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Pray: Pray for Shiloh Home of Hope and Emporia Christian Schools. Pray for all the children who come to New Life to know God loves them, and in return serve Him out of gratitude. Continue to pray for God’s Word to spread rapidly (2Thess3:1).

Thursday: Remember...Gideon ???

Read: Judges 6:36-40³⁶ Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said,³⁷ behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor...³⁸ And it was so...³⁹ Then Gideon said to God...⁴⁰ And God did so that night...”

<p>Reflect: In Christianese (i.e., Christian vocabulary and shared stories/understandings) it sounds Godly... “Well, we really believe God wants us to _____, so let’s put out a couple of fleeces to be sure...” The story behind the action(s) is that of Gideon; you can read of him in Judges 6-8. Yet is Gideon’s example a good one to follow?</p> <p>Gideon had already been told what God was going to do (e.g., Judg6:16), PLUS he witnessed something truly miraculous and responded appropriately (cf. Judg6:20-22). After this Gideon began to grow in his obedience (Judg6:25ff). Yet then Gideon’s trust wavered and he put out a fleece...</p> <p>Fortunately God was gracious. In reality God used Gideon in miraculous ways. Yet we should not take his lack of trust (i.e., the fleeces) and use it in our lives in order to show we are trusting God. If God is calling us to act, then we need to act. I wonder, do you think it is possible a reason (not the only reason – cf. Judg7:2) God used only 300 men to conquer Midian is because He wanted Gideon and company to trust Him?</p>	<p>Respond: Have you ever “put out a fleece” in the past? What happened?</p> <p>Obviously Gideon was a man of faith (cf. Heb11:32), but is it possible his desire for clarity got in the way of God using him in even greater ways?</p> <p>Pray for the trust to act when God calls you to act.</p>
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Pray: Pray for the ministry of Cookson Hills (a Christian Children’s home and mission New Life supports). Thank God for His patience with us when we should be more trusting. Pray for Brent McCrory, the preaching minister at New Life Christian Church; pray he will truly trust God. Continue to pray for open doors to share God’s Word (Col4:2-6).