

Last week we concluded a series of messages (seven in all) from the Psalms. We touched on some of the important issues that we all face in life and what the Psalms say about these things.

We began with Psalm 1, which says, *Blessed is the one ... whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.* A blessed life results from building your life on the Word of God. Those who follow God's directions for living find stability, they are fruitful in their endeavors, and they are constantly refreshed by Holy Spirit strength and wisdom for each new situation in life.

Then we concluded the series of messages last week with Psalm 37. *"The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand,"* Psalm 37:23-24. Though we may face desperate, life-changing circumstances this year or next, God will not allow us to be utterly destroyed. Nothing can happen that will sever our relationship with him. God is trustworthy. *The word of our God stands forever,* Isaiah 40:8. Woven throughout these Psalms is an underlying theme of trusting God, which brings us to today's message and a new series on trusting God. The foundational Scripture for these messages is Proverbs 3:5: *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding...*

Here's a verse that is striking in its simplicity. There is nothing difficult about it. It can be understood by the newest believer and give comfort to the oldest saint of God. And it is good for every Christian in-between. It has been the hope and encouragement of countless multitudes of God's people across the centuries. Still, we find it difficult to put into practice. Let's take a look ...

### 1. Trust - *Trust in the LORD with all your heart...*

A dictionary definition of "trust" says: "to rely upon or place confidence in someone or something" (From Dictionary.com). *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart"* the Scriptures tell us. In Hebrew it means something like, "to rest the full weight upon" – like stretching yourself out on a bed or laying on a hard surface. To trust in the Lord is to lay your whole weight upon Him.

Did you hear this one? Two partners from a small law firm were having lunch when suddenly one of them looked alarmed. He announced, "I have to go back to the office right away! I forgot to lock the safe!"

"What are you worried about?" asked the other lawyer. "We're both here."

We talk about faith and sometimes that is hard to describe, but we can understand what the word trust means, can't we? We all find ourselves having to trust people everyday. We trust whoever built our house that it's not going to

**fall in on our heads. We trust the doctor we go see, we even trust that diploma that is hanging on his wall is real! We trust the brakes on our car or we trust someone else's driving! We trust the food that we eat is not sprayed with harsh chemicals that will kill us, when digested!**

**Trust is the practical outworking of faith: when we trust God we show that our faith in Him is real. C. S. Lewis wrote, "To trust Him means, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way."**

**Around 1855, When Charles Blondin (28 February 1824 – 22 February 1897), a tightrope walker, claimed he could walk from one side of Niagara Falls to the other on a rope, some people thought it was impossible. But crowds came and paid to watch him make the attempt. Before crossing he asked the crowd "Do you believe I can walk across to the other side" the crowd yelled "We believe!" He said "do you believe I can cross with a man on my back?" The crowd yelled "We believe!"**

**"So", Blondin said, "Who will volunteer to take the trip on my back?" You could have heard a pin drop, if the falls weren't so loud. Finally one man raised his hand and said "I Believe!" and he climbed on Blondin's back & the two crossed Niagara Falls together. The man was Harry Colcord, Blondin's manager. He trusted Blondin's strength and ability with all his heart.**

**There is a difference between believing in God and trusting Him with all your heart.**

## **2. Lean - *Lean not to your own...***

**Leaning is what you do when you walk with a cane or a walker because you are unsteady. The word used in the Old Testament means to lean against a tree or a stone cliff – something solid and strong. You lean on something when you are not strong enough to stand alone, and it must be something or someone you can trust will be able to uphold you.**

## **3. Understanding - *Lean not on your own understanding...***

**This is about your mental faculties; the processes by which you analyze a problem and then make a decision about what you are going to do. It's like your "to do" list or plan for the week. You use your understanding to chart out the priorities of each day. You use your own understanding any time you plan your life or solve a problem. Understanding is the analyzing and decision-making ability that God has given you.**

**When you take the word "lean," put it with the word "understanding" and add the negative, you get an idea like this: "Use all your mental powers, but do**

**not lean on them for total support.” Don’t trust in your own ability to figure out your life. Lean instead on the Lord! Rest your weight on him!**

**I am grateful that not everything only works if I understand it... I mean if a microwave oven only worked when I understood how it worked, I would still be waiting for my food to heat up! If my car wouldn’t run until I understood the functioning of every mechanical and electrical part then I would be walking a lot! I’m glad God only called me to believe cause if He called me to understand everything He did, and everything that has happened in my life, I would be so far behind as to have no hope!**

**People say they want to understand God’s ways, but they put little effort into trying to understand. “I don’t understand why God let this happen to me?” We would be better off to acknowledge that our understanding is limited and is based on the limited knowledge that we have. Some people have book sense but no common sense, and some people have common sense but no book sense. Even if we had both, we still couldn’t lean on our own understanding because it is faulty, because we cannot see into the future where God has already been. He sees the big picture!**

**So often we miss this wisdom found in the Bible. When we get up in the morning, and we say, “O God, help me. I’m busy today. I’ve got a lot of stuff to do. Lord, I don’t even have time to pray so here’s my list. Bless it all, Lord. I’ve got to run.” We throw our list up toward heaven while we run out the door. What we are saying is, “God, here’s my schedule, rubber stamp it with your blessing.” Is it any wonder our days are filled with frustration.**

***Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person, John 2:23-25. Our Lord trusted no man or woman. Yet he was not suspicious of anyone nor did He despair of mankind, because He put His trust first in God. He trusted absolutely in what God’s grace could do for any man or woman. (Oswald Chambers, May 31).***

**There is good reason for Jesus to trust God rather than people. Think about it: many of us want to go through life leaning almost completely upon our own understanding. A lot of us want to keep all under control. I have been known to be like that myself. I like to be in charge of my own destiny – that’s why it’s hard for me to trust God day to day, and for the near future. But our own understanding is short-sighted. If I put my trust in people or my own understanding, I will end up despairing of everyone. I will become bitter and hopeless because when I trust in others or myself completely, I am expecting them and myself to be something that no human can be: absolutely right on every choice and decision. Do not lean fully on anything but the grace of God in yourself or anyone else. This passage is a warning to all of us control freaks who**

lay out life the way we want it and then say, “Here, God, you stamp it with your blessing because I am going to go out and do it for you.”

God says, “I don’t work that way. Know me first. Put me first in everything including all your plans and all your thinking and all your scheming. Put me first. And I then will make your way straight.”

### **Relationship Not Formula**

Here’s the secret to trusting God: you must first know God. “But Pastor, just give me the three steps I need to take ... so I can get on with my life.” Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us that the secret is a relationship with God. But we want a formula.

So Henry’s been dating Shirley for over nine months. Every Friday night they go out to dinner. When he picks her up, she asks the logical question: “Where do you want to go tonight?” “I don’t know. I want to take you someplace you really like. I wish you’d just give me a three-step formula so I could know where you really want to go on Friday nights.” How would Shirley feel? Don’t you think she’d be a little frustrated, if not upset? She might blurt out, “We’ve been dating every week for nine months, and you don’t know what I like and don’t like? Where have you been all this time?”

We want to reduce our relationship with God to checking the boxes of worship, a little giving, a little service, and then just do our own thing. God says, “Know me. Spend time with me. Put me first in every area of your life because when you do that I will take care of all those details.” Wow! What a revolutionary way of looking at life!

God is more concerned about what kind of person you are, than what you do or what you have.

We have to constantly restate to ourselves our purpose in life. The destined end for you and for me is not happiness, nor health ... but holiness. The one thing that matters is whether you and I will accept the God Who will make us holy – that is, more like Himself. At all costs God desires us to be rightly related to Him.

### **Trust God In Your Present Circumstances**

Regardless of where you find yourself in life today, place your trust in God. In fact, when you trust God with all your heart you will experience:

- 1) peace in your soul,
- 2) strength for living through any storm,
- 3) abundance of spiritual blessings,
- 4) assurance of God’s presence that gives confidence for living and for speaking His praises.

*Isaiah 40:31 Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and*

***not become weary.*** These words are sung at the close of our Chapel Service each Sunday. I've always hung onto that last phrase - they will walk and not become weary - I think because it touches on that aspect of life most of us know: walking through the day to day. Maybe a better way to say it is, "plodding" or "trudging," through life. A lot of times life does not bring us to great spiritual vistas, nor necessarily drive us into darkened canyons. Rather, we find ourselves plodding along the flat (maybe dusty) trail across the plains of life (as it were). Day after day we go to work, raise the kids, do the house repairs, take the car for repairs, pay all the bills, look for a break on the weekend, maybe even a vacation, then it starts up all over again. Now and again a health challenge intervenes, or an expense you hadn't foreseen, but you get through it, though a bit wearied; and you wonder if God hears your prayers ... prayers for help when the trials confront your routine, and prayers for help when you're tired of the routine and wonder where it all leads.

So I take hope in hearing those words again, how God ***"... gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power,"*** Isaiah 40:29. Those words pull my eyes upward again reminding me that God desires relationship with me through it all.

Though I cannot see into the future and I cannot predict what new challenge I may face, I can put my trust in the Lord today; trusting that He knows my destination and the purpose of my daily journey through life. As I confess that I trust in Him to teach me what it is He wants me to learn in this day ... well the days go better.

Trust the Lord with all your heart for when you do: No evil can defeat you. No enemy can stop you. No opposition can derail you. No obstacle can stand forever when the Lord leads the way.

***Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom,*** Isaiah 40:28.