

SERMON #4 TRUST

Reflecting the Heart of Christ

BE TRANSFORMED

JOHN R. MURPHY

Subject: Resembling Christ's Character Through Trust

Scripture references:

Romans 8:29 AMP.

"For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness],..."

This morning the question before is "Who do we trust?" I know most of us would say that we believe in Jesus. That is- we would say that we believe in who Jesus is and what He did for us. But we do not want to lose sight of the essence of this question, which goes beyond intellectual belief and asks "who do we trust?" If you take a moment to fully understand the meaning of the word "believe" considering context and usage in scripture, it means much more than accepting the truth. It is more than giving historical assent to the truth of Christ.

When the word "believe" is used in the context of Christ it always means much more. It means to:

- Adhere to
- Cleave to
- Have faith in
- Trust in
- Rely on
- Depend on

Best summarized, it is a healthy dependency on Christ for all things. We can trust Him to usher us into our conscious rest and well-being as believers. Our foundational sense of peace must rest on trusting Christ with every aspect of our selves. Isn't the abundant life that Christ came to bring about more than the certainty of salvation? Jesus came for it all. He calls us to rest in Him and be at peace. To experience a supernatural peace that reigns in our hearts despite the troubles of our world. Jesus did not come to take us out of this world but to bring us rest and peace while we are in this world.

Jesus also has no limits as to what He is here to conquer in our lives. Look with me at 1 Peter 5:7 AMP.

Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.

If we could really trust Him for all things, wouldn't that change our quality of life? Have you ever worried, had anxiety or been afraid? We all have at some time. Were we trusting God at that moment? Probably not. We were however probably trusting something. People display a tremendous capacity to trust. Consider all of the things that we trust in:

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- Your health
- Fidelity of a spouse
- The police (security)
- Farmers (food)
- Your job (provision)
- Your car (running)
- Hospital
- Your doctor
- The weather
- Planes not to crash
- Friends
- Clean water
- Teachers
- Pastors (trustworthy)
- Parents
- Electricity

Just think about it for a minute. Our sense of peace is founded on the things that we trust, yet everything I just listed that we commonly trust in for something very important will probably fail us, or at least could fail us. No wonder there is so much anxiety and depression in our world. Only the drug companies are prospering from our fearful, emotional condition. We go to their solutions when our world fails us or we begin to lose faith in some dimension of it. So our peace is built on things that can fail us, and because we know somewhere inside they can fail us, we rely on the drug companies to medicate our feelings about what we trust in!

Why is it so hard to believe God for His promises? Probably the one thing that people most commonly have fear about is provision. Our culture is nearly obsessed with money. There is the legitimate need for provision, but then there is the false belief that as long as we have money we can buy our way out of our problems. As a matter of fact, we trust money to bring us peace in all sorts of areas of our lives. We look to money for provision, security, safety, self-worth, control, purpose and peace. Think of the times you have been in a difficult situation and thought about how much money you had and comforted yourself with just knowing it was there. And probably more typically, many of us have not been able to get our peace back about some financial challenge, because without money we can't get peaceful.

What is your response to financial challenges? Do you sit down with your bank account, your IRA, your credit line, and your credit cards laboring to get your fragile peace back about your financial situation? And let's say that you were successful in getting peaceful. But how long will it last? It only lasts until the next surprise or challenge on your financial horizon.

We all share the challenge of the rich young ruler who was crestfallen when Jesus told him to sell everything and follow Him. Why did he respond this way? Certainly it was at least in part because he could not trust Jesus. He had come to depend on his wealth for his comfort, his self-worth, his provision, his well-being, and his security.

His crisis was that he could not move his heart to release his dependency on the things of the world and place all of his trust in Christ to sustain him. The rich young ruler looked Jesus in the eye and in effect said, "No, I will not trust you". He had his idol and he was not willing to give it up to have the perfect peace afforded by God. So he left crestfallen, and maybe began to realize that he didn't really own his wealth. His wealth owned him. So he left relegated to a life of worrying about how to hold on to his false source of peace.

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So is God trustworthy for provision? He says He is. The apostle Paul was specifically addressing the issue of provision when he relayed this message from God to you.

He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (Relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!] Hebrews 13:5 AMP

How would it change your life today, right now, if you actually believed that? Let's be honest, it would be a complete transformation of the quality of your life if you were to never fear for provision and you never allowed money to become an idol.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are addicted to a broken promise of this world for our peace, and we are ignoring the promises of the loving, perfect Creator of the universe. Some of you may respond that you trust God, knowing that you pray to Him all the time for the things you need. You may ask, "Isn't that trusting God?"

Think about that for a minute. How many of us are praying for what we think we need, then waiting to feel better about life, if and when what we are praying for shows up. Praying for something that we believe will bring us peace is not trusting. That is praying your will mixed with God's power. That is you making your peace contingent on His performance at your dance. That is not trust. That is not peace. That is control. Who do you want in control? You or God?

To better understand the point I am trying to make, let's take a look at a hypothetical situation, some version of which probably actually goes on every day in many places in this country.

Imagine a distressed mother and her five young children sitting in the office of a government agency or charity somewhere. This very situation is probably playing out right now, perhaps not too far away. The mother is distraught because she has five children to feed, no job for provision and she just barely has enough to keep them fed and off the streets for the next week. After that she has no idea what will become of her family; there is no dad around and no family that can help. So she is completely on her own, and the level of anxiety she is experiencing is beginning to overwhelm her. Her fear and hopelessness has her sinking into depression.

After a time of paperwork and much waiting in this room, an official comes into the room where she announces that the agency has decided that this mother's situation merits support and will guarantee her and her family room and board for the next three years. Also the funds are not available today but will be in about a week.

The mom glances back at her children through tears of joy and tells them not to worry everything is going to be alright. Peace about provision floods her and the fear begins to subside. The depression is replaced with hope.

The question for us today is, why does she feel this relief from her fear? Was she handed a check for three years of

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support? Had she signed any documents or been given any evidence that the promise would be fulfilled? Did she have a long trusting relationship with the individual who made the promise? If there was no proof that all would be well, how is it that she could be at peace when moments ago she was distraught?

Her sense of peace came about despite her emotions. She was experiencing tremendous anxiety just moments before, but became peaceful because she believed what she was told and did not question how the promise was going to be fulfilled. Let me repeat that. Her peace came because she believed what she was promised and had no concern for how the promise was to be fulfilled.

She could have waited until there was evidence that the promise was fulfilled in some measure before feeling relieved. Instead, her choice was to believe that something that had eluded her for a long time was going to appear in her life in a week and at that moment in time she began to experience more peace. Would that be a miracle? Yes! Is that miracle available to all of us today, right now? Yes!

Folks that is our call. To believe that God is trustworthy and that His promises are real. It is our choice.

What stands in the way of our being able to fully trust God? The Bible has a term for it in I John 2:16. It is called the “pride of life”. Simply put, it is “assurance of one’s own resources or in the stability of earthly things”.

Assurance in one’s own resources could be expressed as, “Thanks God, but I’ve got this”. This is not just about money but includes all the ways that we count on ourselves to get what we need in order to have peace. Another way to see it is that we want to stay in control. We want our life to work out the way we have it planned. You know where that leaves us? Striving. Fearful. Isolated. And we regularly choose that option with all of the suffering that goes with it because again, we don’t trust. You can’t read the first few chapters of Hebrews without concluding that entering into the rest that God has for us means trusting Him. There is no other way.

It has been the consistent theme of mankind to reject God’s plan in favor of man’s flawed plan which is totally dependent on our own works and striving. We choose a plan that has a goal of something we cannot achieve, and it is the pride of life that keeps us chained to the treadmill. We seek 100% assurance about things like provision that cannot be found in us or this world.

To break free, we have to first be willing to believe that God’s plan for our lives is better than our plan. We all have within us a set of needs that, when filled, will completely satisfy our longings. The struggle is believing that God knows better than we do what it will take to satisfy us at the deepest level of who we are and that He knows better what we need in order to be whole.

He knows us completely and has a perfect plan that is grounded in His perfect love and enabled by His all-knowing, all present and all powerful being. Ask yourself if there is any way in which God’s plan could not be better than your plan. And if you believe that He is more equipped than you are to make that plan happen. If you can believe that, then you can begin to trust Him, and begin to release control of your life to Him, and begin to have more peace in

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your life.

Folks, we have believed a lie that the benefits of our faith in Christ stop at salvation and then we just hang on and survive until we get to heaven. Consider that salvation is just the beginning. It is a key to heaven, but it is more importantly the key to a relationship with the Creator and the fulfillment of the Romans 8:29 call to be progressively transformed. That is His plan: for you to progressively be transformed to reflect the character of His Son. To share in the divine nature of Jesus. What plan could you have that could possibly be any better?

You have the opportunity to share in what it is like to feel the way Christ feels. To increasingly relate to God the way Jesus related to God when He walked the earth. To wield some of the power Christ wields. To share in the peace- the profound peace that Christ must live in. To get there, we will need to trust more the way Jesus trusts God.

Just think of how much Jesus trusted God. He had to trust God when He asked Him to humble Himself and sacrifice Himself for our sake. He needed to be able to trust God to give Him the strength to resist His flesh which tempted Him to sin. He knew that the consequences were great. He knew that giving in to sin would cut Him off from the precious, bright presence of God. We could not possibly begin to appreciate how much Jesus put at risk. And how much He had to trust God knowing that there would be a moment at the crucifixion during which He would feel forsaken by God. Even so, He trusted God to dispatch the Holy Spirit to raise Him from the dead and restore Him to the Father.

To Jesus, His faith in God was His trust in God. His faith was not about whether or not someone He had coexisted with since the beginning of time was real. His faith was about trusting God's plan for Him and His trust for God to fulfill His role in that plan. His trust was absolute. His trust made things that needed to occur in the future certain today. That trust empowered Him to accomplish the monumental feat of conquering death and defeating Satan.

This Kingdom principle that "trust in God brings peace" is no different for us. The peace that we all want is only available in Christ. It is only available in trusting Him for His promise to dependably provide what we most need to be peaceful. Despite our capacity to trust things which we know are flawed, there is no real peace in them. It is time to reject the lie that we can achieve the peace we want by trusting in the things of the world. It is time to put an end to our unhealthy dependency on the broken promises of the world and ask for the strength to rely completely on God to provide all of our needs.

Will you pray with me today to establish or reestablish a foundation of trust in God, which will bring you peace? You can have less worry and anxiety by resolving this in your heart. God will be faithful to hear your prayers and respond.

If you are ready to take this faith-filled step and to ask God to strengthen you to rely on Him, please pray this prayer with me.

Heavenly Father, I proclaim that only You are trustworthy. Please forgive me for trusting in the world and being

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satisfied with counterfeit well-being. Forgive me for trusting in myself and trying to control my circumstances in a vain attempt to acquire Your promises through my strength. Forgive me for depending on money and other things in the world to reach a place of peace that only You can give me. Father, I proclaim that You are the only true God, and I ask You to give me the faith and the courage to disregard what the world trusts in for peace and to completely rely on You, cleave to You and rest the whole personality of who I am on You. Lord, please remove from me the ways I have suffered from depending on the world and my own control to attain peace in my life.

I ask You to fill me with a supernatural peace in the midst of the circumstances of my life. Father, I ask for Your strength to hold on to my trust in You despite the pull of my flesh and the wisdom of the world that rejects You and challenges my faith. Lord, thank You for loving me and promising that You will never, never, never leave me helpless. Lord, open my eyes to see and my heart to embrace how You will work every difficult situation in my life for my good.

I pray this in the name of Your precious Son, Jesus.