

TRUST IS A STREET

Trust. This is a key word for the Body of Christ in today's world. Everywhere we look we see anger, rage and hatred. It seems to be exploding all around us. We see the attack in Orlando. We are seeing shocking videos of people being killed. We see the events that took place in Dallas and Baton Rouge. Just recently we know of the terrible attack in France which killed over 85 people. Terror, whether we admit it or not, is gripping the hearts of people even though we say we will not be deterred by terrorism. Lawlessness is pervading the land. Racism and prejudice from all backgrounds, religions, ethnicity, and color is worse now than it was 40 or 50 years ago.

Even in the Body of Christ, divisions and lines are being drawn. They are not so much being drawn through denominationalism as in times past but with "hyper" doctrines that are invading and perverting the truth of the full Word of God. Doctrines such as "hyper-grace," "hyper-faith," "hyper-worship," "hyper-holiness," "hyper-whatever..." You name it. There no longer seems to be any balance concerning the "fullness" of the entire Word of God. Everything seems to be going crazy and out of control.

That brings me back to "trust." When we hear or think of the word "trust," what should immediately come to the mind of the believer? Obviously, it should bring us to the aspect of "trusting in the Lord," in which you would be totally correct. There are numerous scriptures concerning this aspect of our walk with the Lord. One scripture that comes to mind when we speak of trust is that which is found in Proverbs 3:5,6 - *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* If we look at this scripture it clearly directs God's people, even to the point of it being a command to, *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart..."*

This is true with all of the scriptures concerning trusting in the Lord. All of them give a very strong imperative emphasis in that this is what we must do. Trusting in the Lord is what we are to do and must do as children of the Most High God. Never, never, never, do we see the Lord telling His people or any of us today to "try" to trust Him. No, the scriptures are written in such a way that in every one they are literally giving a command by God to His people to trust in Him.

The word "trust" in Proverbs 3:5 is from the Hebrew word, "*batach*." It means "to have confidence, to be confident; to be bold; to be secure; to feel safe, to be carefree." This is the essence of faith. The word we use when we express our faith in our God comes from the Greek word "*pistis*." The definition of this Greek word, "*pistis*" is as follows: "a belief with the predominate idea of **trust** (or confidence) in a person, philosophy or god." The "god" in our case as being believers, is the one and only true God, Yahweh Adonai, who is the triune God - Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit. Notice that within the definition of the word we use for "faith" in our God, we find the term "trust." Therefore, we must understand that the fundamental aspect of a believer's relationship with their God, as well as the fundamental aspect of having faith in their God, is "trust."

Now, I know that this may seem very obvious to many of you. I am very aware of that. This is not new. It is really basic Christianity 101. However, somewhere along the line over these past years we, as the Body of Christ, seemed to have lost our way in this aspect of our relationship with God. We have taken this most basic but yet fundamental truth and placed it somewhere in the "back row" of our Christianity. We seemed to have "graduated" from this aspect of our relationship with our God and moved on to more "weightier" stuff. It's as if we are saying to God, "Thank you, but we'll take from here." However, I believe that our Heavenly Father does not want us to necessarily "move on" from this. Yes, we are to grow and mature in the things of God. I believe that this becomes a dilemma for us. Many of us move on and desire to be "mighty men and women for God." We have "faith to move mountains." This is not incorrect. On the other hand, some of us stay in our infancy of being born again and never grow in maturity. We're saved and going

to heaven and that's good enough for us. Hey, the Bible encourages us to have that simple "childlike faith." Okay, again, this is not necessarily totally incorrect. Ergo, the dilemma that I mentioned.

I believe we need to find a balance and be able to mesh the two above-mentioned thoughts into one type of lifestyle. This is where the understanding of true trust in our God is vital. It is the basic fundamental truth of trust that brings a balance to the believer. Jesus was our role model in this. Yes, He was the Son of Man and Son of God. Yes, He did mighty acts. But He also never forgot who His source was. He always made the time to be with His Abba, Father. To do what He did, Jesus had to trust the Father. He had to trust in God's plan and trust that every aspect of that plan would work out for the glory of the Father. Did Jesus have difficulty in this? I believe we see this in the account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when he went back and forth with His Father. We know He yielded to the will of the Father. He yielded because, bottom line, He trusted His Father no matter what it may have looked or seemed like to Him or any one else.

Jesus also spoke of this as He was explaining one of His parables. The parable I am referring to is found in Luke 18:2-8 - the parable of "The Widow and the Unjust Judge."¹ Without going into detail, this parable was spoken by Jesus in response to a question by the religious leaders concerning the end times as found in Luke 17:20. The traditional view of this parable is that it is one that tells us to be continually persistent in our prayers and God will eventually hear us and come around to answering our prayers because of our "persistence." However, the context of this parable is really about the end times and the coming of the Kingdom of God. It is about the true disciple of Jesus being in prayer, as well as being continually watchful and alert concerning the "signs of the end times" and Jesus' ultimate return. In Luke 18:1, Jesus prefaces this parable with the following, *"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."* We see the phrase, "to this end" used. This refers us back to Luke 17:37 and up to this point, in keeping this parable in context with what Jesus was teaching about concerning the end times.

In the parable, the widow was asking the unjust judge to "avenge her of her adversary." Jesus specifically uses the character of a "widow" within this parable. Why, because this would be a person who would be desperate. A widow would usually be thought of as one who would be in tremendous need. Being a widow obviously meant that her husband had died and she would be left to herself. She may or may not have had children. Whatever the case may have been, the widow represented a person who was in desperate need who was being taken advantage of by an "adversary." She was in need of someone to listen to her and help in her case.

It is vital to understand that Jesus was NOT symbolically representing God, the Father by equating Him with an "unjust judge." That would be absurd for Jesus to do so. It would give ammunition to His own adversaries, those who were against Him, if He would refer to God as "unjust." and really did not care about His people. Instead, Jesus was using this "unjust judge" as an antitype of the Father.

In the parable, the widow was asking the unjust judge to "avenge her of her adversary." The word "avenge" used here means to "vindicate a person; to protect, defend one person from another; bring punishment to the offender/adversary," which the "unjust judge" finally did. However, unlike the "unjust judge," our God **does care** for His people and is always willing to protect them. That is our Righteous God's character and nature. That is what Jesus was referring to when He said in Luke 18:7, 8 (Amplified Version) - *"And will not [our just] God defend {and} protect {and} avenge His elect (His chosen ones), who cry to Him day and night? Will He defer them {and} delay help on their behalf? I tell you, He will defend {and} protect {and} avenge them speedily."* Jesus reveals to His listeners the truth concerning the absolute true "Just God," which is of course God, the Father. Jesus was saying that **unlike** the unjust judge in the parable, God would **not delay** in protecting His people against our adversary, the devil, as these "signs of the end times" occur.

¹ Information used is from the Study Guide "Let Those that Have Ears to Hear" - This is a Study Guide to all of the parables of Jesus. You can find this at <http://www.simplysimpleworship.com/resources.html>

As previously mentioned, the purpose of Jesus using this parable was to encourage His disciples "*always to pray and not faint.*" He was telling His disciples, as well as believers today, that we are to continually pray with an attitude of heart which has complete and total trust in our most Just and Righteous God. We must always be watchful and alert for His return. We must trust that He will "avenge," (vindicate, protect and defend us, as well as bring punishment to our adversary) on our behalf as we see these "signs of the end times" approaching. This must be the believer's attitude of heart during every difficult and perilous situation or circumstance that will arise and/or we will face.

Jesus concludes the parable with, "*...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" This is the key verse to the parable as well as to the teaching He was bringing concerning the end times. Jesus was simply asking the question that when He does return bringing the Kingdom of God, would He find those who call themselves His disciples standing firm in their faith and trust in what He just told them? Would they be confident in trusting, without a shadow of a doubt, that their God **WILL** "*avenge them speedily from the adversary?*" Jesus was actually saying that it was not persistence that causes God to "avenge our adversary" but rather it is a simple faith and trust that believes that He is a God who cares for His people. He is a God who not only desires to avenge (vindicate, protect and defend) His people from their adversary (the enemy, the devil), but **He will**. Yes, He will, even in the midst of perilous times. Notice, that it does not say that He will remove His people from out of the perilous time(s). He does ask that in the midst of those times will He find people who are still standing and trusting in the Father's plan of the end times no matter what it may look like or if it may be different than what we thought it was to look like.

As mentioned previously, this parable "traditionally" has been thought of and used as a parable concerning how we are to pray. However, as we have seen, in its context, this parable is really about believers in the end times standing fast in their confidence, **trust** and faith in whom their God is. Jesus was saying that when He returns, He would be looking for those people of faith who have placed their total trust in Him and the Father's plan. Will He find them? Will each of us be found by Jesus to have this trust and faith that He will avenge us of our adversary's desire to bring us to destruction? Will He find this kind of trust and faith in His people? Will He find it me? Will He find it in you? Hmmm....

This brings me to my next thought concerning "trust" that has been deposited within my heart for these times we are in lately. The question that keeps popping up within me is this; "Can God trust me to trust Him?" Did you "hear" what I just wrote? "Can God trust me to trust Him?" If we apply the definition we previously discussed concerning what "trust" is than we can put the above question in this regard: Can God "be confident, secure, and not be concerned" with me trusting Him? Can God be "carefree" and not be concerned with His people possibly losing their trust in Him? I believe this is the question that God is asking His Body in this hour. Can He trust His people to trust in Him no matter what things may look like or seem like? Can He trust His people to trust Him when all that we thought was supposed to happen might not turn out the way we thought it was to happen? Can our Father trust us to trust Him with total trust and assurance that He is in total control of all things and that nothing takes Him by surprise? Can our God trust us to "cast not away our confidence" in Him and His plan in these ends times? Can the Father trust His people to truly believe that all things will "*...work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose?*" (Romans 8:28)

An example of God being able to trust His people to trust Him is found in the account of Mary and Joseph. There is no need to review the account found within the Gospels. We are all very much aware of what took place. God was able to trust both Mary and Joseph to trust Him in what was a most awkward and difficult situation that literally followed them throughout their lives. God was able to trust that Mary would trust Him and do all the right things when asked even though she really didn't understand or grasp it all. We hear this as she answered the Lord, "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.*" (Luke 1:38 KJV)

God was able to trust Joseph to trust Him when told that Mary was pregnant during the betrothal period and to still take her for his wife. We see this in Matthew 1:24, *"Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife..."* God trusted both of them to trust Him. And look what happened - this relationship of trust brought about God's plan of salvation to the world.

Trust is a very important character trait. It is important to be able to trust others. It is important that others can trust you. It is most difficult, however, when we are asked if that person can trust in you to deposit your total trust in them. It is indeed difficult when we are doing this when humans are involved in the equation. However, when it is God presenting and posing the question, even though it may seem to be a "no brainer," it seems to be the most difficult for us to do for some reason. Can God trust his people to trust Him? I believe the answer is, "Yes." Notice what I said. I used the term "His people." That is key. If you are a true believer in Christ, truly born again and truly a member of the "Household of faith" then no matter what may happen you will remain steadfast and trust in God. If it looks like "everything is breaking loose and the enemy seems to be winning," it doesn't matter because God will be able to trust you to keep trusting Him. Yes, we are to continue to pray. Yes, we are to continue to do spiritual warfare in this hour. We are to continue to do all we are to do. Just remember that when we pray we are to keep in mind that it is to be for His will to be accomplished, not mine. When things may not be looking the way I thought they should look - it should not matter - I will "not cast away my confidence" for my trust is in the Lord. And He can trust me to continually trust in Him, His ways and His plan for the end times all the days of my life.

As we conclude, I would like to leave you with the following scripture found in Malachi 3:13-4:6. These are the last verses of the Jewish scriptures found within our Bible. I believe that they speak mightily and is a prophetic word of encouragement to God's people, those of the "Household of faith," in these last of days in whom God can trust to trust Him. (I am using the Amplified Version. **Bold** emphasis added by this writer.)

Malachi 3:13-18 - *"Your words have been strong {and} hard against Me, says the Lord. Yet you say, What have we spoken against You? You have said, It is useless to serve God, and what profit is it if we keep His ordinances and walk gloomily {and} as if in mourning apparel before the Lord of hosts? And now we consider the proud {and} arrogant to be happy {and} favored; evildoers are exalted {and} prosper; yes, and when they test God, they escape [unpunished]. **Then those who feared the Lord talked often one to another; and the Lord listened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who revered {and} worshipfully feared the Lord and who thought on His name. And they shall be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I publicly recognize {and} openly declare them to be My jewels (My special possession, My peculiar treasure). And I will spare them, as a man spares his own son who serves him. Then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God and him who does not serve Him.**"*

Malachi 4:1-6 *"FOR BEHOLD, the day comes that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud {and} arrogant, yes, and all that do wickedly {and} are lawless, shall be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. **But unto you who revere {and} worshipfully fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings {and} His beams, and you shall go forth and gambol like calves [released] from the stall {and} leap for joy. And you shall tread down the lawless {and} wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.** [Earnestly] remember the law of Moses, My servant, the statutes and the ordinances which I commanded him on [Mount] Horeb [to give] to all Israel. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he shall turn {and} reconcile the hearts of the [estranged] fathers to the [ungodly] children, and the hearts of the [rebellious] children to [the piety of] their fathers [a reconciliation produced by repentance of the ungodly], lest I come and smite the land with a curse {and} a ban of utter destruction."*