

Life Verses: Trust

Proverbs 3:1-8

Trust In the Lord with All Your Heart

I remember sitting in the church office of my first appointment on the Monday after the first sermon I preached there. I had worked on that first sermon for weeks, now I was faced with having to come up with another sermon and in a comparatively short amount of time.

I remember thinking, “Oh my goodness I’ve got to do this again in another week and I don’t have a clue what I’m going to preach.” To be honest with you, I wasn’t quite that calm. Truth be told, I was a bit panicked.

I have learned since that Sundays come around all too quickly.

I remember that Monday like it was yesterday. I spent time leafing through the Bible trying to find just the right passage. I go about things a bit differently now.

On that Monday though I ran across Proverbs 3:5-6. It just sort of jumped off the page. It’s been a life verse ever since.

Proverbs 3:5-6 is a life verse for many. I have seen it on cards, needlepointed, and adorned on more than a few refrigerators. If a verse makes it on the refrigerator, it’s pretty important.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.”

What’s written here summarizes what God expects of us. Trusting in God is the very place he wants us to be.

Trust is fundamental. It strikes to the core of what it means to live in relationship with God. It also strikes to the core of what we believe about God and how we go about living our daily lives.

God Is Worthy of Our Trust

In a word, God is worthy of our trust.

I enjoy taking the grandkids to the playground. They seem to love it as well. They love climbing on the monkey bars. Since I walk alongside them, they do so with a lot more courage. They know I can be trusted to catch them if they fall.

I’d never let them fall. It’s just not in me to let that happen. I am all about protecting them and seeing to their best interest and so is God with us.

Again, God is worthy of our trust, but do we really believe that? Are we entrusting ourselves to him?

Charles Blondin was an accomplished acrobat back in the late 1800's. He was most famous for crossing Niagra Falls on a tightrope.

Blondin marveled crowds worldwide. He even performed for the royal family in England.

As a part of his act he made his way across a tightrope with a wheelbarrow full of potatoes in front of him.

Upon making his way successfully from one side to the other Blondin then asked the Duke of New Castle, who seemed to be particularly taken by what he had just seen, "Do you think I could take a person across in the wheelbarrow?" The Duke replied, "Of course, you can." "Then get in," said Blondin.

The Duke declined. He believed it could happen, he just didn't trust it could happen. There's a distinct difference.

God calls on us to trust him with our very lives, to lay it all on the line, to offer ourselves to him without caution or concern.

God Will Make a Way

This stuff of trusting God is for the most part contrary to the collective wisdom that prevails in the world today.

The world says, "Don't trust anyone, especially God," and because of that God is left out of the equation.

The world asserts that it's nothing short of foolish to put your trust in God. "If you are going to lean on anybody, lean on yourself and your own understanding." After all, you know best what you need." God begs to differ.

For me, I'd much prefer to lean on God. I have found that running on my own energy only gets me so far.

Leaning on God has helped me persevere like nothing else.

I know you are like me when it comes to the day in day out grind of life.

There are always those things that challenge us. It's good to know that God is at our side and can be depended upon to see us through. It's refreshing to know that God sees what we can't.

Cheryl and I have yet to sell our house in Lexington. While there have been times of doubt, we have sought to trust in God. We don't have to have it all laid out to know God has a plan. We know he will ultimately see us through.

We just know that and because of that the journey is made that much easier.

Our friend Goeff Moore wrote a song years ago where he pretty much states the same.

In writing about the tough stuff of life he says, “And I can’t go over it. And I can’t go under it. And I can’t go around it. I gotta go through it, but there is very, very good news. We are never left alone to journey on our own. He is before, he goes behind, and is right beside.”

The old hymn puts it well:

“Trust him when dark doubts assail you. Trust him when your strength is small. Trust him when to simply trust him seems the hardest thing of all.

Trust him, he is ever faithful. Trust him for his will is best. Trust him, for the heart of Jesus is the only place to rest.”

One Step of Faith at a Time

Life calls on us to take steps of faith all the time.

God’s way with us is to “live by faith and not by sight.” That’s often times easier said than done.

Most of us want all the facts, all the contingencies before we move forward. That being the case we’re more apt to lean on our own understanding.

We are all about control. Our timetable is not the same as God’s and because of that we are apt to be impatient. In the mix of that we’d do well to ask, “What’s God saying to me and what am I going to do about it?”

Let’s admit it we are slow to give up the reins. The New International Version translates our passage for today this way, “In all your ways submit to him.”

Letting go is not easy.

Let me say it again, God is worthy of our trust. He will always prove himself true, if we’d just give him a chance.

This past week I met with a fellow from St. Paul who is writing a book about some mutual friends of ours. Sal and Cindy Rubino own The Café, just adjacent to Louisville Stoneware on Brent Street.

They employ a number of people from around the world. They also have a number of people who are in recovery. About a year ago they were featured in the *Courier Journal* for their efforts in this regard.

The author of the book asked me about their move from The Antique Mall on Goss Avenue to where they are now. I responded that it was a real step of faith.

Sal had contacted a number of business people asking their opinion. To the person they said the move was a bad idea.

Sal felt different. He had a deep sense of God's leadership. Sure he had thought things through, but in the end he trusted God for what was ahead.

As they say the rest is history. The Café is well-situated in an area that is one of the more vibrant in the City of Louisville. They've done very well since.

It's remarkable what can take place when we strike out trusting in God. We may not always see what's ahead, but at least we know that God is there.

That's the way it is with life. We may not know what the next bend in the road may bring, but we can be well-assured that God will be there.

One Leap of Faith at a Time

Sometimes life calls on us to take a leap of faith. I'm talking about those situations that are so big, so challenging that nothing but an abject trust in God will get us through.

Remember how you felt jumping off the high dive for the very first time. You tip-toed out to the end of the board and wondered if you live to tell about it.

John used to lifeguard at Lakeside Swim Club. He was regularly stationed in the diving area. He witnessed more than a few kids get right to the end of the board, only to turn around.

Others stood there for what seemed liked forever. Eventually, they would jump and off they'd go. They'd hit the water only to emerge triumphant.

There's nothing quite like the exhilaration of taking that leap.

A more apt analogy is that of a person standing on a window ledge of a burning building with the firemen down below ready to catch them. Life can certainly be that way.

In that moment the person has to put his/her life in the hands of the firemen. Once the decision is made that the firemen are trustworthy the leap is not that tough.

What flames are threatening to overwhelm you? Whether it is a problem with a relationship, a financial bind, a situation at work, or a health problem, God stands ready to catch you.

Not Just Good Advice, But Wisdom

The first seven chapters of Proverbs contain a father's wisdom offered to his son. The father takes great pains to teach his son as to the ways he should go.

For those of us who are parents or grandparents, let's face it, we are always teaching whether we do that overtly or not. It would behoove us then to be more intentional to teach those things of ultimate importance our children need to hear.

What the father imparts in Proverbs 1-7 is more than advice, but the sort of wisdom one can live by. "Don't forget my teachings," he tells his son in Proverbs 3:1.

His teachings are summarized this way, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.*"

In preparing for today's sermon I ran across an account about skiers who are blind being taught how to slalom. Can you imagine such a thing?

Those who are blind are paired with those who see. First, they are trained on how to turn right and left.

When they master that, they are taken to the slalom slope, where their sighted partners ski beside them shouting either "left" or "right."

As they obey the commands, they are able to negotiate the course, depending solely on the sighted skiers' word. It is either complete trust or catastrophe.

That's the way it is for the Christian life. In this world, we are all too often blind when it comes to the direction we are to take. We must rely solely on the word of the only One who is truly sighted—God himself.

His word gives direction. His presence helps to see us through.

We'd do well to trust in him and his direction for our lives.