

Trust in the Lord

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[0:00] We may now look to words in the chapter we read together in the book of Proverbs, and the chapter is chapter 3, and verse 5.

Proverbs 3, verse 5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.

The subject that I should like to confine ourselves to this evening is the one mentioned in the very first word of that verse, trust.

And the trust especially that is commended to us in the verse, trust in the Lord.

I need not expand on the, especially for those who are learning something of what it means to live our lives in this world.

[1:32] It is unnecessary to expand upon the many reasons why we need trust, why we need to have confidence in something or someone to enable us to go on living and doing, serving the Lord day by day as we go on life's journey.

None of us can escape burdens. None of us can escape tests and trials to prove us.

None of us need hope to escape difficulties. And as all of these are true regarding the lives of men generally, on the purely natural level, they apply also, and perhaps in more numerous ways, and in a special kind of way, in the lives of those who seek to live to the glory of God.

They must be tried and proved. They must be confronted with duties. They must be made aware of their own insufficiency, their own unfitness, their own want of strength and wisdom, their own inability to give glory to God in their being and in their doing.

And this is our only hope, our only source of strength and of encouragement and comfort, to trust in the Lord.

[3:49] And it seems that this is our last resort. Not in God's estimation of what we ought to do, but in our estimation of what we ought to do.

In other words, we are disposed by nature as sinners to incline in some other direction, to seek our strength and our comfort elsewhere.

We choose rather to trust in ourselves, or at least in some other created power, thing or passion, rather than to trust in the Lord.

Now, we find that want of trust in the Lord is something that is displeasing to God himself, something that is sinful, something that has exulted in the corruption of our nature, and especially in the sin of unbelief, that is so deeply ingrained in the corruption of our nature, that many are of the opinion, that is, many who know the word of God, and who have come to understand fallen human nature to some extent, from experience, that the sin of unbelief is the root sin, the sin on which all other sins grow.

And we find little difficulty in agreeing to that contention regarding the power of unbelief.

[5:58] We find instances, many, many instances of the sin of unbelief in Scripture. We find, I say, the prophet beginning the most well-known chapter in his whole prophecy with these words, Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

We read of the Lord Jesus Christ, during his sojourn on earth and the flesh, that he did not many miracles in a certain place, for this reason, because of their unbelief.

We see how this sin is ingrained in our nature, especially as it breaks out on occasion in the lives of some of these saintliest of God's people.

You remember, for example, how when Abraham was promised a child by God and from God, that he met it with doubt.

The very word of God, Shall a child, he asked, be born to him that is one hundred years old, and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

[7:23] We read on one occasion when Moses, none less than Moses, was told, that the people upon his care should be fed by God in the wilderness.

He too wondered, and wondered to the extent of questioning. The people, he said, are six hundred thousand fruit men, and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Even Moses, on occasion, we discover, was subjected to the power of this evil in our fallen nature. not only questioning, the veracity of God's word, but ready to disbelieve, to distrust the God who cannot lie.

there was one occasion on which the disciples, and you know that none in all the world was closer to the Lord than the disciples.

[8:52] You remember how they were a very special number, a very small, comparatively small number, closely related to the Lord, brought into that fellowship by the Lord himself, by his word, and by his spirit, and how they too are full of spiritual lessons, their experiences, the manner, the variety of ways in which they showed their qualities, their virtues, but also their faults and their feelings.

And you remember, remember on one occasion when three of them, after three of them, had been on the mount of transfiguration with the Lord, they came down from the mount, and they came down in order to face trial.

As I indicated at the beginning, we cannot avoid trial. We cannot avoid being put to the test, proven as to what we are ready to face, what we are capable of doing.

Why couldn't we cast him out when they were inquiring about someone possessed of an evil spirit? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief.

For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

[10:39] You remember what happened in the case of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, when God sent a heavenly messenger to inform him of the great son he was to have not very long after.

Later, the Lord has to say to him, Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed.

Why? Because thou believest not my words, which shall be filled in their season. The word of God is as sure as if it were already fulfilled.

Its veracity, unchanging truthfulness, does not depend upon its being fulfilled.

It was as sure at the moment of its utterance as it ever shall be. Unbelief, lack of trust in the word of God, is a heinous, a sin.

[12:08] You remember what is said of the disciples when they were told of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is said of them that their informish words were as idle tales.

Just imagine how God thought of such a response from the hearts of his own people to the news of the greatest miracle that ever had been divinely performed in this world and performed for the redemption of his people.

The news to them was as idle tales and they believed them not. That's another example to you of the terrible power of unbelief in the hearts of men.

And God and Christ warns his people against unbelief and want of trust. He warned them after the resurrection of their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after his resurrection.

Whosoever believes on the Son he tells us has eternal life but whosoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's wrath abideth or remains on him.

[13:46] If ye believe not that I am he ye shall die he says in your sins. When he speaking of the Holy Spirit is come that is come to the world he shall convict the world of sin of righteousness and of judgment of sin because they believe not on me.

Is it any wonder then that the apostle writing to the Hebrews warns them and exhorts them let us labor therefore to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Remember when the Lord beheld Peter's failure after his adventurous act of faith when he leapt onto the waters to walk toward Jesus and he began to sink you of little faith he said to him why do you doubt all unbelieving and pervers generation how long he said shall I be with you how long shall I put up with you why are you afraid he said to them in the midst of the storm do you still have no faith all fools he said to the two on the road to Emmaus and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken time after time we find the Lord God meeting with unbelief unbelief on the part of men and

God denouncing unbelief as a heinous sin offensive to himself grievous to the Holy Spirit harmful to those guilty of it and for a while tonight I should like to encourage you in the name of the Lord to trust in the Lord I shall try and mention to you and perhaps explain to some little extent in way reasons why you and why I should trust in the Lord and when I thought on these words or on that question what are the encouragements to us to obey this exhortation to trust in the Lord well the thought that immediately sprung to my mind was this the one in whom we are to trust trust in the Lord what greater encouragement can anyone have than the one in whom you are invited to trust who is he and you know how you can place trust in someone because you know them to be worthy of trust and you discover that your trust is not disappointed because you have discovered that the passion is worthy of your trust you if he proves your faith to be true genuine faith will discover that your trust was not misplaced well that is the sort of thinking that

[17:45] I invite you to for a few moments just now when God the Lord commands us to trust in him we ought to know we are without excuse if we are still ignorant of the fact that we are commanded to trust him by someone well worthy of our trust so worthy of our trust that none else ought to have any share in our confidence because his worthiness is so great that it is exclusive there is as it were no room for anyone else no need for anyone else whatever circumstance I find myself in however desperate my situation however weak I am myself and insufficient to cope with the situation there is one who is so worthy of my trust that

I need not look for any other and if I were led to believe that someone else was of such a character as to deserve some measure of my trust with the Lord that I ought to know by now that I should then be sinning against the Lord because to the extent into which I was to share my trust in him with someone else I was sinning against him because he's the Lord all of us or most of us at any rate were taught in childhood an answer to the question what is God or who is God what being is with us whom we call God the God whom we know as God because we have his self revelation disclosed to us in his own infallible and inerrant word of truth what is he a spirit infinite eternal and unchangeable but all these these three attributes as it were relating him to time and to space infinitude and eternity

I should say in that order to space and to time his unchangeableness they can leave his character as it were morally a very obscure to all minds we are still left with the question what kind of being is he in the way in which we assess men's characters what kind of being is the being we call God he is infinite eternal and unchangeable in his being but still we know not what kind what is the nature of that being but then we go on to learn from his word that he is possessed of infinitude eternity and changeableness not only in his being but in a being who is possessed of wisdom and immediately you are called upon especially as someone who is confronted with problems with difficulties that test you you are at once confronted with your need of wisdom and so often some of us here have been confronted with our own total lack of wisdom see

God places people in situations to which they have no answer that is an extremity perhaps during most of the normal living we feel that day by day we have some glimmering of light on the solution to any given problem confronting us but there are times and if you have never discovered this for yourself beyond the watch tower looking out and remember my words to you at this moment please remember them you are going to find yourself someday at some hour confronted with circumstances where your lack of wisdom proves to be total you have none you have no understanding you have no light at all as to how you can extricate yourself out of your difficulty none at all that is an extremity well there are those in every generation who discover that these circumstances perhaps especially these circumstances are manifestations in themselves that is in

the fact that they are around you and blinding you and rendering you incapable of taking any step in any direction that they themselves are manifestations of the wisdom of someone else nobody sees that at the time perhaps you have to confess that you see nothing at the time but darkness but later on when God is pleased to as it were open up the mystery to you you will realize that those circumstances were themselves revelations not only of wisdom but of glorious wisdom the wisdom of an infinite an eternal and an unchangeable being to whose wisdom and understanding there is no limit whatsoever what was darkness to you was in fact light glorious light the reflection as it were of the light of a pure understanding to whom nothing is darkness whatsoever but you will be led to that discovery children of God have led to that discovery because his wisdom has revealed itself in discovering to them a way out of that dilemma in other words in letting light shine upon their path when they themselves are actually in darkness the wisdom of

God goes on to bring about new situations and in those new situations there are doors opening into avenues perhaps that gradually sometimes suddenly but most often gradually lead them out into a place of liberty and of peace and ultimately of joy trust in the Lord because he is wise infinite in wisdom and you are to trust in him as a being who is holy who is powerful first of all we may follow the order of the words in our own catechism infinite eternal and unchangeable in power in other words when you are invited to trust in the Lord you are invited to trust in someone who not only has light but to prepare avenues of escape out of difficulties but you are trusting in someone who has ability to lead you out who has no end of ability whose power is such that you cannot think of any situation that will confront him with any problem with any problem in so far as it requires the exercise of strength you are so weak it is as if you were about to draw your last breath as if your life was draining out of you as if your spirit had been crushed and broken beyond all healing by the circumstances of life and how can you ever hope to rescue yourself out of such a situation when moment by moment your strength all your energy mental and physical is being drained out of you well you are commanded and invited a royal invitation is a command to trust in the

[28:12] Lord who is well worthy because there is no weakness in him and consequently no fear at any given moment that possibly your situation is too hard for him such a thought never crosses the mind of the divine being the Lord in whom you are to trust and he is holy he is holy now when you talk about character and trust worthiness you cannot think of any quality that takes precedence over the quality of holiness if I ask you to trust me you are bound to question of what caliber are you morally are you someone whom I can rely on to be basically and wholly so pure morally in your nature that on no occasion in any circumstance can I allow myself to accuse you of having failed in what you have uttered of overstating your promise of over commending yourself as one worthy of my confidence

God is infinitely holy before he has spoken as he speaks and ever afterwards he is the same yesterday today and forever the holy lord god and he is just he shall not air slightly to the right hand or to the left he shall always follow what he is in his own being he follows it out in all of his utterances in all of his actions he is a god of justice and you know I sometimes think we are so far from being like him so far from being unchangeable that even our views of him we would like them to be so strictly conformed to his own thoughts that they are not and consequently at times you feel that such and such equality is the most glorious in

God's being at other times you think it must be such and such another quality some other quality and at times I feel convinced that there is no higher quality or attribute in God himself than that of his justice his when someone is infinitely and eternally just he as it were demands your confidence confidence his very nature draws out your confidence in such a way that there is injustice in you if you refuse him your confidence if you refrain for a moment from placing your trust in him alone you are shown up to be unjust trust his very nature as the

God of justice demands of all creatures and creation that their trust be placed in him and then God is good God is good when you are asked to put your trust in God you are not expected to put confidence in someone who appears to be good there is a great deal of trust put in men in this world because they have the appearance of being good and indeed at times because they have proved to some extent to be good but when you are asked to put your trust in God you are asked to trust goodness itself he is essentially good he is non-existent apart from goodness the being who is

God is in himself goodness personified if there is any other goodness it must have its source in God he is the creator of all goodness from him it all outflows all the goodness that is in creation has its source in the nature of God and therefore when he commands you to put your trust in him it's your bound and duty if you entertain a hope for escape from your adversities if you entertain any hope that you shall have comfort in the midst of your sorrow that your mourning be turned to joy there is only one to whom you can look the God who is himself goodness and he is truth he makes a promise when he invites you to trust in him he makes a promise and you ought to know how far from misplacing your trust you are in trusting

[34:34] God in that your God is the God who cannot lie he is the God of truth the Lord Jesus says I am the way the truth and the life in whom else should I place therefore my confidence but we have been speaking mainly about God the divine being and the divine being can appear to your heart and mind so foreign so far removed from you and from your circumstances he can appear to be a vague abstraction whose qualities whose attributes are to you no more than clouds that seem to hover up above you in the heavens that come nowhere near to you are your trials and your circumstances but then when you are commanded to trust in the

Lord you are commanded to trust in someone who has come to you when we could not go to him to place our trust in him he came to us not because he trusted in us but to draw forth our confidence in him he drew nigh to us now in what sense has God come near to us he has come has he not by assuming to himself into himself into his own very person bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh he has as it were come over the immeasurable distance that separated the uncreated spirit who is God from all creation not only from little specks upon his creation such as we are he has come over that distance and taken upon him our nature and nature conceived as ours in a way was conceived in the womb of our mothers although his was conceived miraculously for all that he partook of the very substance of a mortal and sinful mother even as all of us have done and he was born of her into the world and lived in dependence for a time upon her although she and all creation existed in him and in dependence upon him he humbled himself he denied himself in assuming a nature in which he lived in dependence upon one of his own creatures during all those years of his infancy now I think if there is any truth that brings before you and me in order to draw our trust in the Lord as one who has come near to us surely the very fact of his own personal experience of dependence ought to encourage us to put our trust in him and when he appeared we must remember that he entered into our own experiences in life we have to recollect when he commands us tonight to trust in the Lord that he was one confronted with temptations even as we are you remember how he was led of the spirit into the wilderness for the sole purpose of being tempted by Satan you remember how in his humiliation he underwent poverty declaring that the birds of the air had nests and that the son of man had nowhere to lay his head you remember how he endured infirmities although sinless he experienced the sinless infirmities to which human nature is subject in this life he endured hunger he endured thirst he endured exhaustion he knew what it was to bear the infirmities of others not one special to himself primarily but he bore the church of God says our infirmities and he carried our sorrows and therefore we are encouraged to place our confidence in him you remember how he lived in the world as one who experienced loneliness perhaps in a measure and in ways in his inwards man in his inwards souls experience that are foreign to us he was the only begotten eternal and heavenly son of

God in his passion from everlasting to everlasting transcend and over all the infirmities in the that fill up the experiences of men in this life and he entered upon a condition not only that tested him in our human nature but he entered upon experiences where none could follow him and I think this is symbolized to us his loneliness in his humiliation in certain places in his experiences such as the garden of Gethsemane and the wilderness of temptation that I already mentioned when he went into the wilderness accompanied only by the wild beasts of the wilderness and the assaults of the evil one he entered into the garden of Gethsemane having taken with him Peter James and John whom he had as companions on other occasions but at a certain point he walked on his own as stones cast from them as if signifying that he had to go through periods in his experience which he must face all alone and of the people that there should be none with him sharing as it were the pains and torments of soul that only he must endure and we all know how although he was accompanied on Calvary by many reproaching and reviling and mocking him and also with two

malefactors hanging on crosses on either side of him he trampled the wine press alone in that spiritual world of soul experience dealing with

[42:31] God and God dealing with him as the representative and substitute of all who were to be saved he was all alone in the midst of the darkness and when we therefore are called upon to trust in the Lord however deep our sense of loneliness we are called on to trust someone who has taught a far more lonely path than any of us ever have done or shall do we are called upon to trust someone who experienced the forsakenness that only he experienced you remember loving though his mother was and no doubt Joseph his adopted father was he was a stranger to his own mother's sons in the psalm we find in making that declaration to brethren strange he says to mother's sons an alien

I became and although he said of his friends the disciples that they were such as had remained with him in all his tribulations yet we know that it is also written of him moments later you might say after that declaration had come from his lips they all forsook him and fled we know that he endured betrayal on the part of one of them we know that one of the best of them cursed and swore declaring that he knew not this man well there are people in the world tonight and there are Christians beloved of Christ tonight in the world who find comfort only in the knowledge that there is a friend who sticketh closer than any brother but who has trod this path of loneliness of forsakenness by friends and betrayal by one of one who was a professed friend but who was his worst enemy do you have that feeling have you at any time recently felt as if all your world had collapsed through the betrayal of a professed friend who proved by his betrayal that he was not a friend but an enemy

I suppose some people pass through life never having had such an experience but Christ had to have that experience and one of the reasons why he had to have it was that he must be able to succor them that are tempted them that undergo such sufferings in the world must have strong consolation and they can only arrive at that position of comfort as they are weighed down by the pains of soul engendered by these experiences by knowing someone oh there must be at least one in whom they can place their trust well again I say to you trust in the Lord trust in the Lord and you are to trust in the

Lord surely because he even died for our sins have you ever thought in this way about that truth of revelation that someone has died for the sins of others you would find perhaps easy to believe that someone would be prepared to die for the virtues of others that someone had been so impressed with another character as a virtuous worthy character that he would even die for such an one perhaps you yourself have some loved one and because of the relationship between you and that passion one concerning which your heart testifies that you have never betrayed that passion that the thought of betrayal would never enter your mind regarding that passion that you have in fact poured out your heart's love upon that passion that that you would at any moment die for them but what he tells you is that he died for your sins he died for you because you were a sinner he did not have died for you had you been virtuous had you been a wonderfully

God pleasing character there would have been no need for him or anyone else to have died for you then but he died and he died because men are sinners and women are sinners and children are sinners and I tell you therefore that he has a claim upon your trust someone who loved a sinner to the point where he not only was prepared to die for him and her but that he actually died to death was made a curse bore heaven's wrath heaven's finally consuming wrath against sin in the room and place of a sinner trust in the Lord I say to you and to myself but better still is it not the

[49:07] Lord himself who says it both to me and to you trust in the Lord as if we're addressing you by your very name trust in the Lord I don't like naming Christian names in a congregation for the simple reason that I cannot name them all if I were assured that I could name every name here tonight I would do so in the name of God commanding each and every one of us to trust in the Lord but not only did he die for the sins of sinners to lay a claim upon their trust but he also lives he ever lives he ever lives he ever lives in the power of an endless life and therefore whoever you are wherever you are however tried you are however tempted you are or lonely you are

Christ lives then at the point of your greatest need Christ lives and therefore put your trust in him supposing you put your trust in one of your friends who knows but that the next item of news you will hear is the death of the very friend in whom you had hoped but you shall never hear of the death anymore of this one friend who claims your total trust he is no beyond death as he is beyond all infirmity of any kind beyond all trial of any kind he can never more be distracted by any pains or sufferings of his own in fact he is so wonderful that even in the very depth of his own pains and torments when he was confronting the cursed death of the cross it is written that having loved his own who were in the world he loved them unto the end and in his prayers in their hearing and in his conversation with them he displayed so indubitably that his heart love was fixed upon them and their problems their present problems and their future problems rather than on his own even as he faced the cursed death of the cross there were his concern primarily not himself let not your heart be troubled he was not talking about his own heart's trouble but let not your heart be troubled he believe in

God believe also in me trust in me the Lord and we have to remember that his word is truth we have to remember that he honors the confidence we place in him we have to remember that others have trusted him and that we would fail miserably were we to try and discover even one who might or who can never eternally claim that their trust and confidence were misplaced when they trusted in this Lord the confession of everyone from the beginning of time until now is and shall be that he was worthy of their trust that he fulfilled all of his promises that by his wisdom and power his holiness justice goodness and truth he proved himself to have been infinitely more worthy than they were ever able to believe he was beyond what they believed that is the glory of

God that he is beyond even what we are able to believe and he will prove himself in the experience of everyone who trusts in him for even at the point of death the king of terror the Lord shall prove trustworthy to all his people and even on the judgment day because it is in view of the trials of the judgment day that people ought to live here day after day there is a book being filled up by every one of us and for every one of us which shall confront us on the judgment day and if there is anything that we need to do in view of the trials of the parish of the judgment day it is to put our trust in the Lord and if we do we shall discover on the judgment day that the

Lord our judge has in fact honored their confidence how shall he do that well he shall by publicly acquitting us in that great and awful day of the Lord and what about the rest well the rest did not place their trust in him did they for acquittal at the judgment day or for anything else there were those who had another confidence confidence in themselves confidence in other men or women or some other power some other Lord who was not a true God or Lord they lived in sin despising the one who alone was worthy of their trust then I exhort you to trust in the

[56:10] Lord by taking notice of this question a question addressed by one of the disciples Peter when the Lord Jesus said to them were they going to follow the example of others will you also go away and Peter answered and said to whom shall we go glory eternity and then there is this finally that there is a great destiny awaiting all who put their trust in the Lord.

God shall be glorified in you and you shall be glorified in him. How shall God be glorified in you? Well, you remember the song of praise that we sang from one of David's psalms. Psalm 18 and verse 16 And from above the Lord sent down and took me from below.

That is how God on our trust placed in him. He took me from below. From many waters he me drew, which would me overflow.

He me relieved from my strong force, and such as did me hate. Because he saw that they for me too strong were and too great.

[58:30] You remember Psalm 107. It begins, praise God for his good. And then he goes on to tell about circumstances. People who were freed from the hands of enemies, such as strayed in deserts' powerless way, such as fainted from thirst and hunger, such as were shut up in deep darkness, yea, and in death's shades abiding, who were bound strongly with affliction, tied as with irons.

Their hearts, he tells us, were brought down with grief. They fell, and they were alone and friendless without help in their grief. As if bound with bands, their souls applaud all manner of food, and were near the gates of death.

They were like people who trade in great waters. They mount up, he tells us, to heaven, and then to the depths they do go down again.

But they call on God, and he delivers them. They put their trust in him, and the result is praise, and glory, and honor, and wisdom, and power to the God who is worthy to be trusted.

And then are they glad, then are they glad, because at rest and quiet know they be, so to the haven, he then brings where they desired to be.

[60:27] That is the ultimate result of trusting in the Lord. May he bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. Do thou, Lord, pour upon our hearts that Holy Spirit of truth, who is the comforter, who will lead our hearts into the experience of that peace that thou dost promise to all who come unto thee, all who labor, and that have elated, I will give thee rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls, and pardon all our sins for thy name's sake.

Amen.