

“Can We Really Trust Jesus?”

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.” Jesus

Trust. Have you ever struggled with trusting someone? Have you ever hesitated to trust God?

Trust is one of life's core issues....

They had finished dinner. She was washing dishes, and could hear her husband and pre-school son playing in the son's bedroom. She occasionally heard that great request children make when having fun, “Do it again, Dad!” Curious as to what it was they were doing, she left the kitchen, walked down the hall and turned to enter her son's room. Just as she entered the room she saw her little boy leap off the bed toward Dad's outstretched arms, only to watch her husband step away and watch his son crash to the floor. As the little boy burst into tears, mom looked at dad and yelled, “Why did you do that?” With strong conviction and a flash of anger, dad replied, “You can't trust people in this world, and our son needs to learn that lesson now before he gets hurt.”

“To Trust” = “To have trust or confidence in; rely or depend on. To believe, to expect confidently; to hope.”

Some of us have been hurt deeply by people we thought we could trust. Now we hesitate, at the very least, before even thinking about trusting someone.

Some of us have been loved well by trustworthy people and we enjoy the freedom of being able to place our trust in others.

Whatever our particular experience, the issue of trust is a part of every day of our lives.

And that is why we automatically and mostly sub-consciously perform regular **“Safety Audits.”**

Have you ever noticed how we “check people out” when we first meet them? It can be in person or over the phone, on television or the internet. We are listening to what they say and their tone of voice and we are also watching their nonverbals. The fundamental question we are asking is, “Is this person safe?” Can I trust them at all, and if so, how much? And we come to a split-second initial conclusion regarding their “safety-quotient” and proceed from there.

We do this all the time. Some of you are conducting an audit on me even as I speak! That's ok. I've audited a few of you too.

Adding to the calculations is the fact that in the past 30 years or so people have developed a widespread “distrust of distant messengers.” In other words, if I do not know you I will begin by not trusting you. Over time, you may be able to earn my trust. That is true of personal relationships, but a lack of trust also impacts our interaction with the institutions of our culture.

A recent issue of Time magazine addressed this issue and said, “For more than 35 years, Gallup has polled Americans about levels of trust in their institutions – Congress, banks, Big Business, public schools, etc. In 2008 nearly every single institution was at an all-time low.” They also commented, “This crisis of authority extends beyond narrow ideological categories: Big Business and unions, Congress and Wall Street, organized religion and science are all viewed with skepticism.”

And Jesus said, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.”**

Although we can do little to make other people or distant institutions trustworthy, the good news is that we can make choices that will show others that we are worthy of their trust. We can become “safe people.”

The following are 3 choices we face every day that are crucial in creating safety in our relationships.

Choice #1: With regard to the issue of commitment, will I choose Covenant or Contract?

- Contract commitment says that as long as you fulfill your end of the deal I’ll stick around. If you blow it, I’m gone.
- Covenant commitment says that I’m planning to stick around even when you do blow it.

Choice #2: With regard to the issue of forgiveness, will I choose Grace or Grudge?

- 1 Corinthians 13:5 says, “Love keeps no record of wrongs.” Yes, but people do!
- When we forgive we don’t deny the wrong that was done. We don’t condone what was done or pretend there are no consequences. But when we forgive we decide that the person and the relationship are more important than the wrong that was done.

Choice #3: With regard to the issue of power, will I choose Service or Selfishness?

- Will we use our skills, influence, relationships, intelligence and energy primarily for our own benefit or for the benefit of others?

We make micro-decisions related to these three areas everyday. And the accumulation of our choices leads to a by-product.

Result = Intimacy or Isolation

Another way to assess if we are living as a trustworthy person is to ask two simple questions....

- **Is my heart in the right place?** Do I truly love and wish the very best for others?
- **Am I making appropriate promises?** Good intentions only have so much impact. We need to be careful to make sure we can follow through on our promises.

This can help you become a more trustworthy person. And, by considering these issues you can discern more carefully if others can truly be trusted.

And yet, sooner or later we need to realize that no one can be totally trusted with all the issues of our lives.

So we often turn to the other two most common options; trusting in things or trusting in myself. And yet, sooner or later we realize that neither of those options satisfy.

There are some things in life only God can do.

Question: Is there someone or something you have currently placed your trust in to do for you what only God can do?

That brings us to the most important question of the day...."**Can we really trust Jesus?**"

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."

These words are recorded in John 14:1. They are surrounded by an amazing context!

In John 12 Jesus triumphantly enters Jerusalem. He predicts his death to some of his followers and in chapter 13 we learn that his disciples are gathered with Jesus for the Last Supper. He "showed them the full extent of his love" by washing their feet, predicts his betrayal by Judas and tells Peter that he soon will deny Jesus three times.

As the disciples are reeling from all that Jesus has said, he says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."

Jesus points to the choice we all have in life....trust or be troubled. And he says, "Trust me."

So how safe is Jesus?

- With regard to **commitment**, within hours of the last supper he asked his father if there was any other way, and there wasn't. So he gave his life for us.

- With regard to **forgiveness**, even as he hung on the cross dying, he repeated again and again, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”
- With regard to **power**, he stated that “the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.”

You will never meet a person you can trust as much as you can trust Jesus.

And yet trust sometimes does not come easily.

Please consider **4 practical ways to build trust in Jesus...**

1. **Remember.** Jesus is not just a theory. Jesus was a historical person, he taught, he performed miracles, he was killed, he was resurrected and he ascended to heaven.

2. **Listen**

Story of Danny, spelunking in Iowa, cave got narrow, had to stoop, then down on his hands and knees, then had to lay on his back and push forward with his feet. Finally the ceiling was so low that he had to exhale to lower his chest to have space to move forward. In too far to back out, started to panic, guide says.....

“Danny, close your eyes and listen to my voice. I will keep talking, calmly, and guide you through this. We will be okay. I have been here before, I will get you to the other side. But you must listen to my voice. It will not work for you to let your thoughts run wild. Just focus on my voice.”

How do we listen to God’s voice? Read the Bible and pray.

3. **Switch Seats**

I am a lousy passenger seat driver. I am sometimes a lousy passenger seat driver because I know where I want to go and how I want to get there, and I’d just as soon do it myself. That’s just selfishness.

Other times I am a lousy passenger seat driver because I am not sure I can trust the person in the driver’s seat. (Of course, I don’t spend much time wondering if others are scared to trust me when I am in the driver’s seat)

Do you know what the essence of obedience to God is? Simply choosing to move from the driver’s seat to the passenger seat, because we have decided that God just might know how to get us safely where we most need to go.

And, do you know what happens when we “try God out”? We learn that He can be trusted. We will never discover how trustworthy God is until we actually obey his

directions for life by switching seats and letting him drive.

4. **Welcome God as your shepherd.**

We often come to know the heart and power of God best through life's most difficult times.

There is a reason Psalm 23 is one of the most popular and beloved passages in the Bible. It's all about the fact that God can be trusted.

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

God never promises to exempt us from life's pain and brokenness. He does promise to be with us as we face them and to bring His good into our lives even as we struggle.

Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.”

John also tells us this....

In **John 12:27 – 28** Jesus says, when speaking of his death, “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!”

In **John 13:21**, John writes that, while Jesus was predicting his betrayal, “Jesus was troubled in spirit.”

Being troubled is not a sin. It is the natural, human reaction to difficult times. Jesus was troubled in anticipation of his execution. He even asked his Father if there was any other way. But He trusted even as he was troubled. Don't be too hard on yourself when you are troubled.

As we conclude remember these words....

Words of wisdom from Proverbs 3:5,6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Words of promise from Psalm 121 “I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will

not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you – the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

Words of comfort from Jesus, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me.”

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