

HOW TO TRUST GOD

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How Shall I Trust God About My Family?

Is God interested in my family? Have I any reason to believe that God would be interested in the kind of home I have? I want to talk to you today about something that will be very close to your own personal life? I want to talk about your family. I wonder whether we realize that our idea of a home, our American idea of a family, actually is the Christian idea. The idea of family in our society, is actually derived from the Bible and I want to talk to you about that by raising this question – How shall I understand the will of God about my family? Can I count on it that God is directly interested in my home, and is there any way in which I could act in my home and about my home that would bring the blessing of God?

Families of course begin with marriage. A man and a woman come together and they marry and start a family. Right at that point we could ask the question. Does God have any interest in whom a boy marries or a girl marries? Immediately we would say that if the boy or girl is a Christian, he may very well keep in mind that according to the New Testament he is free to marry anyone whom he will only in the Lord. Now that is the way it reads – "Only in the Lord." And I would like to say with all sympathy and with all my heart to any young person, if you are a Christian and you are interested in having the blessing of God upon your life and upon your home, by all means keep yourself to the point where you will marry a Christian. If you marry a person who is not a Christian you cannot possibly expect that you will have the blessing of God in your home that you yourself would want and that you could have. Now I know men and women get married without being Christians – that happens all over the world. I understand that. It's just a natural thing for men and women to get married and have families and set up homes. But when we are talking about Christian homes then I want to say that it just makes sense that if you want to have the blessing of God in your home, it would be a fine thing if the person that you married was also a believer. Then the two of you could work together on these things.

Now when you come together as husband and wife in the Christian home, is there anything that you should have in mind so far as God is concerned? One of the first things from God's point of view is something like this – that husband and wife are equal to each other. Actually the husband is considered in the Bible in various ways as being the head of the house and we have that idea in our culture. If the man's name is Smith we call him Mr. Smith and we call his wife Mrs. Smith. You see the name is Smith but his name is the one that counts. Now that is just an indication of the very way in which we understand it. The man is the provider and the wife is the helper. If you want to say that she is the comforter that will help because she certainly can do it. And this would seem to indicate that so far as God is concerned, the normal idea of blessing in that family would be if the wife helps the husband to be what he could be, what he might be as a man. The Scriptures themselves will say something definite to the husband, "Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them." This has in mind that a husband is to seek the welfare of his wife, keep her needs in mind, watch over her with the protection that he can give and take care of her in any way that he possibly can. Husbands love your wives. This does not mean love them only when they are lovable, or love them when they are lovely, although it is a great help if the woman is a nice woman, and if she is kind and if she is sweet. That is a very fine thing, but a Christian man will accept a certain responsibility about the woman who is his wife and he will seek her welfare seriously and genuinely in any way he can. The Bible has something to say to the wife, "Obey your own husbands in the Lord." Now a good many people flinch when that word obey comes out. I think all that that has in mind is work along with him, follow him, help him in anything that he is doing. And do this as unto the Lord.

If husband and wife come together in a normal home, you can expect children. And the children are called a blessing from the Lord. Now we look to see what the Bible has to say about them. First of all the Bible says something to the children, "Obey your parents . . . Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise." The child should be obedient to the parents, should follow the parents' guidance. That is the normal expectation. On the other hand, the Bible would say that these children should not be provoked, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger." There are several different ways in which a man could provoke a child. I think one would be if the father demands things of the children that he will not do himself. The father insists the children act in a certain way, but he does not act that way himself. Or something like this: we will say that Monday he doesn't complain about a certain thing, Tuesday he doesn't complain about it, Wednesday he doesn't complain about it, Thursday he doesn't say anything about it. Maybe on Friday something happens down at the office, or happens downtown and he just gets to feeling bad. He comes home and suddenly he complains about something that he has all week long allowed. In other words – Inconsistency. You don't object. You don't object. You don't object. And all of a sudden you object, and you insist, and you want the child to change immediately. That is provoking to a child. There are other similar ways, and parents generally should be asked to be consistent with the children. By the way, I can say this to parents just in passing, it is no particular help from the standpoint of being a parent to be soft with your child. But you can be fair, and you can be considerate, and you can be kind and that will always be good. Now these children should be disciplined. They should be chastened for good. The Bible would always bring out that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child but the rod of correction shall cure him. No matter how you word it, no matter how you go about it and no matter how this is applied, the truth of the matter is the Scriptures bring out that our earthly parents chastened the children for the good that it is going to do so far as they were concerned. In addition to that we are told that these children should be brought up in the faith. Christian parents will bring the children up in nurture and admonition of the Lord, and that will include such things as that they will have family worship. There will be a worship of God in the home and there will be a going to Sunday School. There will be a going to church. I suppose I ought to say right now so far as parents are concerned, you will have children who do not want to do it. Well, that's not surprising. Your children don't want to wash their face either. They don't want to wear shoes. There are lots of things they don't want to do. They don't want to go to bed at night. They don't want to get up in the morning. There are any number of things they don't want to do. They don't want to come when you call them. They don't want to go when you send them. So they don't want to go to Sunday School. That's normal. So they don't want to share in prayer. That's normal. They may not even want to say their prayers at night. Well that's normal? Do you let them do as they please in other things? Let's be sensible about this. Act the same all the way around so far as this is concerned.

So far I have talked to you about the fact that God is very much interested in what goes on in your home. Suppose there is trouble. Suppose husband and wife do not get along and you have real trouble. What then? In the seventh chapter of I Corinthians you will find that Paul says that if you are married to a wife, seek not to be loose. If the woman is married, seek not to be loose. It is possible that the unbelieving may depart and in that case according to I Corinthians, Chapter Seven, you let him depart. "A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases," but there is a strong indication that the Christian would not do the departing. If there is trouble of any sort, do not seek any change.

What shall we do if there is sickness in the home? What did David do when his child was sick? He prayed. He prayed to God. As it happened, the child died and then David washed his face and went about his work. People will say, "Well that's a strange thing, while the child was alive you were praying all the time. Now the child is dead; you have washed your face and changed your clothing and have gone about your work as if everything were all right. David answered, I know he is not coming back. I know I If your child is sick you pray to God but you trust God. Remember this about your child. He is not going to live

down here forever. You are not going to live down here forever. If your child is going to pass away, if your God is going to take your child, just you keep in mind that your Heavenly Father knows best. And what about his fortune and his welfare? What about your child's experience day in and day out? Trust them to God. Commit them to God. Do this any day and every day. It would be a fine thing if in the morning you commended your family to God. Keep in mind throughout the day that God will take care of them. When night time comes commend them to God. As long as you have breath and you have loved ones and you carry them in your heart, carry them to God. Turn to God about all things and understand one thing, that your Almighty God in heaven will do more than you can ask or think. If something happens to your family that seems to be hard and heavy remember that God thinks more about them than you do. He loves them more than you do. You can be perfectly sure that even if it is real trouble that God's hand is upon you for good. You can trust the Lord. So if you will follow these things that I have suggested in your daily life and in your family life and take all these things as from the Lord, you can have the blessing of God upon your home, and that will be the nearest thing to heaven you will ever have on earth, your home, where you are together with those whom you love and those who love you.

How Shall I Trust God In Shame and Disgrace?

What I am going to talk about today is something that will not happen every day and perhaps not happen to everybody. I could wish it would never happen. I am going to talk to you about the experience that some people have to endure in what I would call shame and disgrace. Can I trust God and how can I trust God when I am plunged into shame and disgrace? This can happen. It may be that it is our own shame. In some way we have been judged to have failed in something we ought to have done, or to be guilty of doing something we ought not to have done and it is of such a nature that we only could use the word shame. It may be the shame of our loved ones. It may happen that in our family something has happened that makes us just feel ashamed. Perhaps it may even bring shame upon the family and the family name and upon the home. Can we turn to God at a time like that? Is there any help from God at a time when this sort of thing takes place? It may be that this shame comes to us because of something we actually did. It may be our fault. It may be that this shame comes to us through a set of circumstances and it is our misfortune, but it is very real.

Now there is one thing we should understand right at once. There are people in the world that are not kind people, that are not nice people, that are not generous, and some people that actually take a malicious delight in seeing other people put to shame. Still society has certain rules that it follows by which it protects its important values. In cases when conduct threatens to hurt these values that we all hold, we have the recourse that we may condemn and despise the person who has broken the rules of society. In other words, a person can fall into shame and disgrace because society will defend its values. Shame and disgrace come from other men.

In contrast we can be guilty before God and we can be condemned before God but when we use the word shame we are thinking about the way we look in the eyes of men. When we are thinking of the word disgrace we are thinking of the way in which people treat us. Actually shame and disgrace in a very real sense is a case of hurling stones at the guilty person. It is judging somebody as guilty and then stoning them because of it. Such a thing for example happened to Joseph. You remember the story. He was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. She told the kind of a story that is easy to believe. She said that this servant came into her room and molested her. Now we know the truth of the story and nothing like that happened. She took advantage of the situation, but who would believe that? When the story had been told in that day and time what sort of chance did Joseph have to ever get the truth told? No chance at all. That he was falsely accused is true, but the shame was real and the disgrace was real. And he was thrown into prison and that was real and he was left there.

I am thinking of something that happened even in our own experience not too many years ago. I can remember a young student that was falsely accused of seeking to molest high school children. Actually a man driving a certain car of a certain color was known to have parked his car near a high school and to have made advances to some of the children in that high school. Now it happened that the student I have in mind drove a car of the same make and of the same color, and he also parked his car at that high school. Actually the truth of the matter is that at that particular time he was as we would say courting one of the young high school teachers. His own schedule was such that he was able to come over there to high school and take her home. But this other man who had a car of the same make and of the same color parked his car near there and actually made advances toward high school children. The day came that the police picked this young student up. They did not believe his story. He said he was there for the purpose of taking a certain high school teacher home. The high school teacher came and said that was

the truth, but the police listened to the neighbors and the neighbors said that this man in this car had actually done this thing. The student was ashamed. He dropped out of school and his name was up before our faculty. We were told to withdraw our confidence from him because of the accusation against him. It was several years before the man who actually had been the criminal in the case was caught and he confessed to the matter. It was established that he owned a car of that make and color and that he had been at that high school. All these matters were brought out in court and they established that this young man, this student, was innocent. So the word came back to us, we were told that he was innocent, and our faculty was told that it should be all right. But can you understand that his name would never be actually fully cleared from a thing like that? It is like a smear that stays on a man. Sometimes the wrong may actually have occurred. There may have actually been something done that was wrong and the worst that you could say for it is that it is sin and you and I know that God forgives sin. But when there is shame attached to it and disgrace attached to it, what can one do?

I am going to suggest several things that you can do according to the Bible and that you could do in a case like this. You could trust God. Whether you are responsible or someone else is responsible, whether shame has come to your family, or to a relative of yours, or in some way you feel shame is coming in upon you, humbly submit yourself to God. Don't fight against God about this thing. Trust Almighty God about this. There will be a reason why He will let this happen to you. Confess your own weakness. If you have an absolutely clear conscience, keep it before God. If by any chance you do not have a clear conscience, then confess any involvement to God, yield to His will and then take your refuge in Him. Remember that He is ready to receive you. You see, all sin is open and known to God. I suppose any sin is shameful to Him if you want to put it that way, but He forgives. Remember that the judgment of men is not the judgment of God. There will be a day coming when you will leave this world and the shame behind you. It will stay down here in the grave where your body is laid. Now it is true that shame may prevent certain benefits. You may not have the satisfaction of certain honor that you would very much desire. It will produce a certain humility. I realize that. But you can still put your whole trust in God. Sometimes I think that shame and disgrace work almost like a disfigurement.

Perhaps once in a while you see somebody who throughout life has to carry a certain birth mark. It may be that there is a disfigurement in the face or that someone is crippled. You may have to cut off an arm or a leg. In some way there is actually a blemish that will last as long as that person lives. It may actually hinder that person's life. It may mean that he will get no comfort from men. Let me tell you something. The Lord will share your shame. You can put your trust in God. God would not treat you that way; He is touched with all the feelings of your infirmities.

If you by any chance are suffering in shame and disgrace, read the Psalms. You will be surprised how many of them were written from the depths of despair and from the depths of misery. By the way, if it's one of your own, perhaps a child of yours, that has done some shameful thing, by all means do not forsake that child. Draw near to him. How about yourself? Would you want God to turn away from you? You know what that makes me think about? It makes me think of the story that we read in the New Testament of the woman that was taken in adultery. Certainly that was a shameful thing. And you remember how they brought her before the Lord Jesus Christ and asked Him whether or not she should be stoned. Now the casting of stones would be just like putting her to shame. You remember what the Lord Jesus said? "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And you will remember that no one did. And then do you remember what He said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Now if anyone has personally suffered shame or disgrace, I realize that is bad. It is as if you had lost an arm or leg. It may stay with you as long as you live in this world. But you know that God will take care of you. And if it should happen to be your child, don't you ever forsake that child. God would not forsake you. How will God deal with you? Well you deal with the other person like that and trust in God.

How Shall I Trust God In Criticism And Ridicule?

If you ever do anything worthwhile somebody is going to criticize you. If you ever have anything that is worth anything, somebody is going to envy you. It is too bad it's that way. Actually when we are doing something that is good it would seem to us that everybody would be happy to have something worthwhile. Why can't people just be glad? You will have to look into human nature to see the answer to that. But I want to talk about the fact now that just as surely as you try to do things as they ought to be done and you manage to get them done right, someone is going to criticize you. If you should manage by some means to get something that is good, either if it is given to you, or you earn it, or you have it, or you make it up, just as surely as you have something that is desirable to other people, someone will envy you. Human nature is like that. Now the question I want to raise for our hearts just now is this. How can I turn to God at a time when I am suffering criticism and ridicule, when I am being mistreated by people? Is there any help from God about that? And by the way, some of us will almost be inclined to think that if God were going to take care of us He ought to protect us from that kind of thing. I am sure that some people would have the feeling that if you do what is right and good and you are good that God would surely protect you. Well now there is a sense in which God will take care of you and there is a last sense and a final sense in which He will certainly watch over you forever and ever. But so far as this world is concerned, we will have to say that the servant is not greater than his master. Our Lord Jesus Christ was perfect, and they criticized Him. They ridiculed, opposed and envied Him. They are going to do it to you and to me.

You remember the first two people born into this world of human parents were Cain and Abel. And right there with the first two brothers you will find this story – that Cain killed Abel because he had envy in his heart. He was jealous of him. Today we have laws that prevent the killing part. The result is that we are protected from physical violence in any way, but there is no law that I know of that can stop people from criticizing us. And no law that I know can keep them from envying you and hating you. It can happen. Take for instance the case of Joseph in the Old Testament. You will recall that Joseph was one of the children of Jacob and that Jacob loved him. He gave him a coat of many colors. In many ways Joseph was in a sense preferred above his brethren. When you read this story you can't help but feel that Joseph was worthy of the special attention. He was a good boy, a trustworthy person, and a faithful person; but his brothers envied and hated him and finally they sold him. You will recall that when he was in Potiphar's household as a slave he was faithful, obedient, diligent and took care of the property so well that his master made him ruler over everything. He was right next to his master in power and authority. Then his master's wife cast eyes upon him and she wanted to seduce him, which he refused. She turned on him with fury, falsely accused him, had him thrown into prison; and he had a miserable experience following that because of the false accusation. That will happen over and over again. It may happen to you. All in the world that is necessary is that you be what you should be, that you do what you should do; and just as surely there will be people who actually will criticize you. I know that God can watch over you and take care of you, but some unfair treatment is going to come your way.

Now take the case of Moses. He was a great leader for the people of Israel, and through him Israel was blessed in many, many ways. But there came a day when his sister, Miriam, envied him and criticized him. The result was that Miriam herself was stricken with leprosy and the progress of the whole nation was slowed down while Miriam was under this judgment of God. Also there was Korah and his sons who broke out into open rebellion against Moses because they claimed Moses took too much authority. And

then there was the occasion when they came to Kadesh Barnea and all the people would not go forward. They believed the ten spies who told them that it was impossible to go, and they decided not to enter into the land at that point. They turned on Moses and accused him of having brought them out there just because he wanted to kill them. In spite of every good thing Moses had done for them, in spite of all the burden that he had borne for them, yet they turned on him and would have stoned him to death.

Take the case of David. If you will remember, David as a young man came to Saul at a time when Saul was at war. The army of Israel was encamped against the Philistines when the great giant of the Philistines, Goliath, would come out and challenge the Israelite army asking if any one man would come out and fight with him. They settle the whole issue right then and there. David came along and heard that and immediately said, "Why doesn't someone go out and fight him?" The result was that he was brought before Saul, and Saul encouraged him and authorized him to go out and fight against Goliath. You remember how it turned out. David killed Goliath, and then he became very popular. The people made up songs about him and in these songs they said, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Of course that gave David a very high degree of popularity, and we read that Saul eyed David from that day onward. He was jealous of him and tried to kill him again and again.

In the book of Esther do you remember Esther's uncle Mordecai who was a Jew? There was a counselor of the king by the name of Haman and this man Haman hated Mordecai. Why? Because Mordecai was wise, and Haman feared he was wiser than he and that maybe Mordecai would get his job. So Haman actually tried to get Mordecai killed. The way he thought was to engineer it so that all the Jews would be killed, and Mordecai would then be killed. Mordecai found out about it and persuaded Esther to go into the presence of the king and tell him the whole story. So it worked out that the Jews were not killed. Haman actually was killed, but Mordecai had all that trouble. It was all brought upon him by this man who just was jealous of him. What could he do? Put his trust in God. Abel put his trust in God; Cain killed him but Abel, "being dead yet speaketh." Joseph put his trust in God. His brethren sold him, and Potiphar's wife slandered him, and they forgot him in prison. But when the time came, Joseph did good; and when the brothers asked him to go easy on them, he told them they had meant it for evil when they sold him, but God meant it for good. And so, he refused to take any advantage of them or to hurt them in any way. Moses, a meek man, just put his trust in God. And David of course put his total confidence in God at all times. This man Mordecai did the same way.

All the way along we find that when this inevitable criticism comes and when this ridicule, this opposition comes, the way in which one does is to trust the whole thing to God. You can be absolutely sure, whatever is your situation, that Almighty God knows about it and that He can take care of it in His own way. There is a New Testament person that brings all of this to our minds. You will remember the case of Mary. On two different occasions Mary was criticized. One of the times she was criticized was by her sister, Martha. Martha complained that Mary left her to do all the housework. She come to the Lord Jesus to ask Jesus to do something about making Mary help her, claiming that Mary was neglecting her work because all she was doing was just listening to the Lord Jesus. You remember how Jesus answered telling her that Mary had chosen rightly, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." That Mary was criticized is what I want to say to you. The Lord defended her, but Mary was criticized. You will also remember that when she was anointing Him she was criticized then. There were people who said, "Why did she want to do that? Why did she want to waste all that ointment? She could have sold that and given the money to the poor." Her conduct was accused of being in bad judgment because the person who was criticizing her was actually envious of her and wanted her place.

We are reminded of the Lord Jesus Christ who "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." When He was reviled He reviled not again. How then shall I endure criticism and ridicule? Take it to the Lord. Absolutely take it to the Lord. Trust your case in Him whatever the situation

may be. No matter what it is.

Now you and I should try and prepare ourselves so that we will not be criticized. If we find that people are opposed to us or criticizing us when we have done something that is good, you can depend upon it "that they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." What can a person do? Trust God. Absolutely put your trust in God. He knows about it, and the trouble you have is not a sign that God has forsaken you. You will find that God will be with you in the day of trouble and will keep you.

How Shall I Trust God In Sickness And Death

Some years ago while I was pastor in Dallas, Texas, I received a phone call, from a friend of mine to go to the hospital and to visit a certain couple. The man was very sick and the wife was a stranger in the city. She belonged to our denomination and so she wanted one of our ministers to come and visit her. I went to the hospital and as I came by the information desk I inquired about his condition and was told that he was critically ill, not likely to get well. So I came on up to meet the woman. She immediately rushed to me with great eagerness, thanking me for coming and urging me to come in now and to pray for her husband. I went into his room and I found a man very seriously ill. He was unconscious and was breathing with difficulty, and it seemed to me, as much as I could see from my amateur eyes and my layman view, that he would not live long. So she asked me to pray for him. And I did. I don't remember the words that I said, but I know that I prayed as it would be in my heart to pray for a stranger who seemed to be dying. When we came out from his room, this wife turned to me almost in a fury. She practically flew at me and shouted, "But you didn't pray that he would get well." Well, as a matter of fact when I thought back over it I expect she was right. I probably did not pray that he would get well. I was taken back by her manner and I said, "Well, perhaps I didn't. Did you want me to pray that he should live?" I don't remember the exact words, but she gave me to understand that that was what she called me over for. "I thought that if you would come and pray for him that you would pray that he should live."

This raises a question to my mind that I want to discuss with you. Do you think I should have prayed that he should have lived? Do you think that when we go to pray for anybody we should pray that he should get well? The Book of James says that if a man is sick the elders of the church are to gather around him. They are to anoint him with oil, and they are to pray for him. This is James 5:14; "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." Now does that say that if the elders will gather round this man and pray for him that he will get well? Is that what it says? How shall we understand the language that says that, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Does raising him up mean that He will raise him up in this world to live longer here? Or does this mean that the Lord shall raise him up in spirit and make him able to endure the pangs of death as they come upon him as he is taken into the Lord's presence? When it comes to praying for people, especially for sick people, you can sympathize with the friends and relatives who naturally want their loved one to continue to live. But does it follow that we should ask God to make all people well? Is this how I am to understand sickness and death? Am I to think that when there is sickness that this is a case of God having forgotten? Does it mean that God has His back turned? And when there is a case of death does this mean that God has failed? Now the moment I say it I think you would at once agree with me, "Oh no, that's not what we mean." Well if that is not what we mean, then what do we mean? And what should we do when there is a case of sickness, even sickness unto death? I am going to suggest to you that it would be important to know what the will of God is. Sometimes it will be the will of God that this person would get well. But sometimes it may be the will of God that the time has come for this person to go with Him. Sometimes this sickness is for a purpose.

Do You remember Hezekiah? Do you remember that Isaiah went to him when he was sick and told him that he was going to die? Isaiah told Hezekiah to set his affairs in order because God was going to take his soul? Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and wept. He did not want to die; and because he was a

believing man and had dealings with God, God hearkened unto him. God gave him fifteen Years. You will remember that during that fifteen years the life of Hezekiah was blemished with vanity and pride. He sinned in a way that he had never sinned before, and certain dire consequences followed in his life. I don't think this necessarily means that God punished. I would think that I should learn from this that it would have been better to have had God's way. It does not follow that it would be better if a person lived longer in this world. It is better to live, as long in this world as it is God's plan that a person live. Then what shall we do with reference to those who are sick? Does it mean we should not pray for them? Certainly we shall pray for them but before we pray that they get well, let us say, "if it be Thy will." And let us have very clearly in mind that if it is the will of God to take this person, it is far better that they go to be with God than that they be alive in this world without God. Let us yield, ourselves unto the will of God about a matter like this.

I have reason to speak this way because in our own family we had a baby boy that was taken from us when he was just a little fellow. He was just seventeen months old when he died and the sickness that took him struck him very suddenly and very unexpectedly. He had been well and strong in a remarkable way from the time he came home from the hospital when he was about five days old until this time. He had never been taken to the doctor. As far as we could see, he was perfectly healthy and well. Suddenly it seemed to us that he wasn't looking so well. We took him to the doctor to see if the doctor would prescribe something for him in the way of a tonic or something of that nature and found to our great shock and amazement that the child was stricken with leukemia and would live only several days. As a matter of fact, he lived only about three days. On the fourth day he died. On the very first night when we knew that he had leukemia and in the opinion of the doctors would probably not live, I remember going to the Lord in prayer seeking the mind of the Lord to know whether this child should live. It came very clearly to me that if I would insist on the child living, it would be as if I were to take responsibility for that child's life. Now I have great faith in the Providence of God. I really believe that God does well. But do you know that I could not bring myself to ask God to spare this child because I said so. I wanted God's will to be done and we were given peace, as much as one can have when your heart is broken. We were given peace about the going of this child because we felt that the child was in the hands of God.

I remember years ago when I was first starting out in the ministry of the Word, when I was an acting pastor in a church in Winnipeg, Canada. A woman of about forty-two was suddenly stricken with an infection in her blood stream, and she died in three days from the time she first went to see her doctor. On the first day that she knew that she was going to die just in a day or two, she sent for me. It was the first time I had ever gone to talk to anybody who was on the verge of death. I remember with what fear and trembling I went into her bedroom to talk to her for fear she would ask me something I would not understand. I found her very quiet, very peaceful and quite cheerful about things although she was leaving her husband and two little girls, eleven and thirteen years of age. While we were in conversation I remember it seemed to me that she should be crying, or she should somehow be wishing she did not have to go, or in some way being upset emotionally. But she was not. And I remember how I asked her if she didn't have something she wanted to ask me. Presently she turned to me and she said, "Do you mean, am I afraid to die?" And I said, "Yes, don't you have some feeling about it?" And then she said to me, very quietly and with joy, "You taught me to say, 'The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want,'" and she went through the 23rd Psalm. I learned something then that I have cherished ever since – that when people have faith, when they believe in God, the matter of passing out of this world and going into His Presence is not such a dreadful thing. I remember another one of my friends that I saw just a day or two before she died. She made this comment to me, "There are lots worse things than dying." No, so far as you and I are concerned, when it comes to sickness and death, let us trust God. What our friends who do belong to Christ need, any one of our loved ones need, if they are sick unto death, is strength – strength of spirit to endure the physical weakness that comes with the passing away of one's strength and even of one's life.

You can be quite sure of one thing – that the living Lord Jesus Christ is waiting for them with open arms. Don't ever be too sorry about the person who is going to be with the Lord. "If you loved me you would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father."

How Shall I Trust God In Accident or Lose?

Some years ago I experienced the first automobile accident that I was ever in. I had driven for many years and for more than a hundred thousand miles personally in which I had never so much as bumped anybody's fender. I felt in my heart that I had been blessed of God with good fortune and also that I had been a careful driver. Then there came one morning when my wife and I were on a trip through the mountains, coming down a mountain side when it had been raining and the pavement was slick and wet. I saw a car making the turn into the road below us and coming up to meet us. I did not like the fact that I was going about twenty miles an hour and I wished I was even going slower. I stepped on the brakes. It turned out that at the particular time I was driving a car that had this mechanical feature that once in a while the brakes would lock and on this occasion when I stepped on the brakes one of the front wheels froze. The car began to skid right over across the highway, head on into the car that I was meeting. I was terrified to see something happen that I had often dreaded might occur when someone else might skid into me. This time I skidded down hill head on into another man's car. Fortunately we were not driving fast. But we had a terrific collision and people in the car were considerably hurt. My wife suffered a severe gash in her forehead and in the other car the man's wife suffered a severe gash in her scalp. It was altogether a very unhappy experience. Our cars were practically wrecked. We were fortunate that we weren't hurt worse than that, but it was my first experience in an automobile accident. In this particular case I was utterly helpless, although actually so far as the situation went, I was at fault.

Now what I want to mention to you is that that morning we had done as we ordinarily do when we are on a trip. In our morning devotion and our morning prayer, we had definitely committed ourselves to the Lord. We had asked Him again, as we do each time, that He would watch over us and that He would guide us and that our travels that day would be under His personal control. Now in a situation like that, when I was not going fast, and was not driving carelessly (as a matter of fact if I had not put my foot on the brake, I probably would have gotten by this other car all right), this happened. How shall I understand such an accident in the will of God? Am I to think that God did not hear us when we prayed?

Some years ago I remember an experience that a good many people of my age will recall. We had in this country what we called the *Depression*, with the result that a great many good people lost their jobs. And folks who had been living for years in a comfortable fashion suddenly found themselves without money enough for ordinary food. People really did not have money to buy the food to eat. I was living in Dallas, Texas at the time and I remember a man coming to our home selling silk hose. Now that doesn't seem so strange except that this man trying to sell my wife a pair of silk hose was a man who had been a bank manager. He had owned a portion of a bank and had been the manager for over ten or fifteen years. Now he was down to the place where he was out doing this because he had a wife and child and they simply did not have any food in the house. Now this was a good man. I mean he was a Christian man. He was a member of the church and an officer in the church. Because he was an honest man he had put everything he owned in trying to save his bank from failure so that the people who had deposited money in it would not lose every penny of their money. The bank went broke and he lost everything he had right down to even the money with which to buy food. What should we say for a man like that? Does this mean that God has forgotten him. When there is loss of that kind shall we say that God was unable to help him?

Some years ago I had an unusual experience when a woman came to me to ask for advice. She dearly loved her husband, but her husband was a man who had rather impractical ideas in business. She had inherited some money. I don't know how much – let us say something like one hundred thousand

dollars in real estate. Her husband was in a certain line of business and every now and again he would get the idea he wanted to go on his own. It would involve investing money, buying machinery and doing the things necessary to set up a business of his own. Whenever he made his plans they always looked good. When she came to me he had just tried for the third time to go into business on his own and had just failed for the third time. Each failure absorbed about twenty thousand dollars of her family inheritance. She came to ask me what she ought to do. Should she now in her own way clamp down and give him to understand that she would never again finance him in anything or should she go on and lose more money? She had about forty thousand dollars left. We talked about it for some extent. Now these were good people, members of the church. The man was an officer in the church; the woman was very active in the church, and I really believed them to be sincere Christian people. How was the woman to understand the will of God in these things? Was God blessing them? Was God watching over them and taking care of them when they were suffering loss of this kind? We estimated at her age and his age that she had about enough money to pay him out of two more failures and that when they were both ready to leave this world she probably would not have any money left for the rest of the family. Her one hundred thousand dollars would have been spent in her lifetime in financing their family life together. She told me at the time with tears and with smiles that she loved this man, and I asked her, "Do you mind putting up the money for him?" She said, "No I really don't care. I'm just wondering what is wise." So we tried to work that out the best that we could. But with these repeated failures did that mean that God was not being favorable; that He was not watching over them? How shall we understand God and His blessing in time of accidents or in a time of loss?

I am thinking just now too of a woman that asked for me to come and see her, and when I went to see her, she was bitter. She had three sons, but her youngest son had just been killed in an automobile accident. It was a foolish accident. Some high school boys were in a car and they weren't wise. The boy wasn't driving. He was a small lad for his age and was sitting in the middle of the front seat, because that's where the gears were to be shifted. He was small and fitted in there. When they had this collision he was killed. Nobody else was hurt much. The other five boys were just shaken up, but this boy was killed and the mother was disconsolate. It seemed that she could not be comforted. Some friends asked her to ask me to come by and I went to talk to her. Now what could I say to her? You know what her problem was. That boy was a good Christian boy and no problem to her. She had three sons, and she said if she was to make any judgment of the three he was the best one. Now this had happened.

I recall another incident, and this was in a sense possibly even more tragic. I was in the home of a mother who had one son and he had gone off to war. He had served in the Air Corps in the Pacific Theatre during combat and had been unhurt. After having come out of the army for a length of time, he had reenlisted and had gone over during the time of the occupation of Europe. Our forces were flying over the blockades of Berlin and had flown all the necessary missions to have completed his whole time of service. He was waiting over there for a trip home. He had three days to wait until he would have passage on the plane. On one of those days he went out with a friend just to put in the time. He wasn't even flying the plane. He just went along as a companion to another man and the plane crashed and the boy was killed. He was the only son. The father and mother had just doted on him and were looking forward to the time when he would come home to be with them. Should we say to this mother that God's hand was not in this, that God somehow had neglected the boy?

I remember one time when a pastor had heard me say that God is in control of all things and that God is to be trusted at all times. He came to me rather sternly, "Do you mean to tell me that God has His hand in everything that happens?" And I quietly said to him, "Yes." (And I really believe that.) He said, "Right now I am going to try and help a mother. She just had word from the War Department that her son was killed in combat in Europe. You mean to tell me that I can go and tell her that God had a hand in that?" I remember how I turned on him almost with fury. I said, "Do you mean that you are going to go

and tell her anything else than that? Are you going to tell that woman that our Father in heaven is a well meaning person that does not have any power; that He just means all right but He can't do what He wants to do? Far better for you to tell her that His hand was in it for reasons good and sufficient to Him." We don't understand everything about this world. The ways of God are past finding out. But God is to be trusted in all accidents, in all loss. Put your trust in the Lord. Listen. When you are living in this world you are running the chances of an accident. Just living in this world you are liable to get hurt. It's going to happen to you. You're going to die sooner or later. Don't be afraid about that. Put your trust in God. God made the world. God made you and God will take care of you.

How Can I Trust The Providence of God?

In all of our thinking about the things of God, more and more the truth comes in upon us that the living God has an interest in us, and we are counting upon it. We look to Him for blessing. We depend upon Him. If it should happen that we are in any trouble we feel that it is perfectly right to pray to Him because He could help us. If we are in distress of any kind we feel that we can turn to him and pray to Him because He will be interested to comfort us. This is our confidence as we go along in studying the Bible. I want to raise the question with you now for our consideration, "How can I trust the providence of God?" As far as my daily life as a whole is concerned, on what grounds could I put complete confidence and trust in God? When I realize that so much of what affects me is so little under my control, so many things happen to me that I can not do anything about, I'm inclined to feel almost helpless. How can I look at everything that is around me, over me, affecting me, happening to me and not become just hopeless about the whole matter? Actually when I look around at life and at the world, it seems to me that things look as though they were just going helter skelter. There is a confusion about things, and there seems to be a conflict of things. There are things working for me, but there are things working against me. Some days it's good and some days it's bad. Then sometimes it just seems empty. It seems as though there isn't anything much happening that seems to have any bearing one way or another. One time I don't have enough and I feel as if I were in the midst of a famine and another time I have too much and just surrounded with surplus. All of this is inclined to create in my human heart a sort of suspicion about God. I begin to wonder whether He is even interested in me, and if He is interested in me, could He do anything about it? When I was first thinking about the things of God, I was inclined to be suspicious about His nature, whether or not God was really God, or whether or not He wasn't just arbitrary and just did what He pleased regardless of how it affected me. So that out of it all a very real question haunted me through the years: how can I trust Him when so much of the evidence seems to point away and seems to indicate that I really have no reason to think that He is going to take care of me.

Having that in mind now, we notice an incident that happened in the life of Jacob. If you will turn to Chapter 42 in the book of Genesis you will see Jacob's response when he was confronted with an issue by his son. You remember that in the latter part of the life of Jacob, he sent his sons down into Egypt that they might buy grain for the food of the whole family. There was famine in the land of Canaan but there was corn to be had in Egypt. One thing and another happened to these brothers down there as we read it in the book of Genesis. Then there came a time when Joseph, whom they did not recognize, sent them back home and said that Benjamin would have to come down with them in order that he might receive the supplies that they wanted. They came back and told Jacob. In Verse 36, "And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have you bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and you will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." When he says that "Joseph is not," he is referring to the fact that he thought that Joseph was killed. You will recall that they had thrown him into a pit and sold him and they brought his garments back covered with blood. Word was left around that he had been destroyed by wild animals and so far as Jacob was concerned, Joseph was dead. "Simeon was not" because when they had gone down to Egypt to get their food, Joseph had managed it in such a way that he kept Simeon as a hostage. If they would bring Benjamin down, then he would let Simeon go. That's the way it was. So Jacob adds it up in this fashion. Joseph is not. Simeon is not. You will take Benjamin away.

"All these things are against me." I am particularly interested in that statement. I wonder how many times you have had that feeling as you have considered things in your life? It just seems as though

everything is going contrary to you. This is a question that so often confronts us as we try to understand our way in life: Can I trust God? Is it all right the way it's happening? Is God in His providence actually watching over me? Now think about your life as a whole. You had nothing to do with being born and you had nothing to do with whether you were a man or a woman. That was all settled ahead of time. You had nothing to say about who your parents would be, what kind of work they would be doing, what kind of circumstances they would live under, whether or not your family had money. You didn't have anything to say about that. Whether you would be strong, or whether you would have a frail body. You had nothing to say about that. Whether you would be a healthy person or a sickly person. What kind of privileges you would have, whether or not you would have opportunities in front of you. All these things were in the situation that you were born into about which you had nothing to do.

When I look back over my life I remember that my mother died when I was three and a half years old. I wonder whether anybody would plan that for a boy's life to take his mother away when he was just three and a half years old and leave him for several years living with relatives without a family of his own? That was my early life. When I look back on it now and consider the effect that it had on me, I can almost see the evidence of the providence of God for good. But even when I could not see it, do you think God had forgotten me? Do you suppose that all of that means that He had turned his back on me? Why should things happen just when they do? Sometimes they happen too late for you to do anything about it. Other times they happen and it's just not the right time. It could have happened last week, and it would have been different. I wonder if there are times when you feel you go for several days in a row, when it seems that everything just happens to be against you? Perhaps you are recalling things that happened in your own life that did not happen to anybody else that you know. Perhaps when you were away from home, your house burned down and you lost everything in it. Or perhaps you live on a farm and your barn burned and was destroyed. Or perhaps you are in business and your business collapsed for no real fault of your own. What I mean by that is that something happened for which there was no relief. Take for instance when you have made certain plans to do certain things, and then suddenly you are taken sick and you can't do anything. Even when you are doing good, or you are planning to do good, you are rendered helpless.

I remember one of the times when I was traveling to a conference where I was to conduct a series of services. En route to that conference I was involved in a highway accident. A girl coming home from a factory came out onto the highway, did not see me at all, and drove out under such circumstances that I could not possibly avoid her. I tried to dodge her the best way I could but her car hit my rear fender and we were involved in a pretty serious accident. I was on my way to teach Bible. Should I think that God had something against me for that? Perhaps it is more serious than that and there happens to be the death of a loved one. So far as your own life is concerned, it's different. It just changed right from that moment on because of this. How shall we trust the providence of God about these things? Going back to Jacob, when Joseph was gone, Simeon was gone, now they were going to take Benjamin away, all these things were against him. What shall we say?

I am going to propose this to you – that the ways of God are past finding out, that providence may be mysterious in its proceedings. You and I don't always know what God has in mind. Sometimes we are not going to find out in this world. Things can happen to us that we cannot understand, that don't make either rhyme or reason so far as our life is concerned and yet this can be in the providence of God. Perhaps before the years are past we can see where it would be good and maybe we'll never know. I can remember on one occasion when the lord Jesus said to His disciples, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The ways of God may well be obscure, unknown, hidden to us. Providence may be mysterious as far as we are concerned. There is no guarantee that God is going to make His particular action something that you and I can understand. On the other hand there is another thing that you can keep absolutely sure in mind and Jacob could have kept in mind. God is good. God is benevolent. Now you might say to me how can a man think God is benevolent when an accident has occurred and he has lost an

arm or a leg, or perhaps his eyes have been crushed and he has been blinded. Now can you say that God is good? Often in looking at a particular accident or at particular circumstances, you would not be able to see the goodness of God. Here is a child that is born crippled. Here is an instance where someone has been accidentally harmed. How could that possibly work out to the glory of God? Sometimes the mother has been taken away and the children are left without a mother. How can that possibly be good? It can happen over and over again in the affairs of men that the actual event itself may baffle our understanding and the ways of God are past finding out. He can let them happen to us in such a nature that their real meaning is obscure, but I keep saying God is good. God is benevolent.

Now perhaps some of you might even wonder how I can think that. And my answer to you will be the answer I take for myself. Look into the face of Jesus Christ. Remember that the Lord Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Call to mind everything that you know about the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know anything at all that would make you think that He would not mean to do you good? Do you know any reason why you should think that the Lord Jesus Christ would not be compassionate, that He would not feel for you, that He would not plan for you? You keep looking into the face of Jesus Christ, because when you look at Jesus Christ you will see not only that he meant well but that He served other people at the cost to Himself. You will see when you look into the face of Jesus Christ that He actually suffered for us, that He took it on Himself to bring things to pass. He made no money out of anything He did. He got no personal credit out of anything He did. He didn't lift Himself up in any way to be made much of by any thing that He did. What He did He did for us in the will of His Father and did for our benefit at cost to Himself. You can believe in Him even though the things that you see are contrary and hard to figure out. Even so, you can look into the face of Jesus Christ and be persuaded that God is good. His ways are past finding out, but His ways are not bad. His ways are beyond us to understand, but His ways are good and for the glory of God. When I say for the glory of God, everything that God does is something that will praise His Holy Name and be to our benefit. This being so, you and I will be able to trust God about anything, no matter what it is.

You will recall that when Joseph was just a young boy, his father loved him and distinguished him, made him a coat of many colors. Then you will remember too that as Joseph got a little older his father entrusted him with missions that required integrity and faithfulness. And Joseph was. You will remember that his father sent him to check up on his brethren and bring home an honest report of what was actually going on. You will also recall that Joseph was hated by his brethren. It wasn't his fault. They hated him because their deeds were evil. He was doing the right thing. They were not doing the right thing. So the very sight of him just filled them with resentment, and anger, and envy and jealousy. They had it in for him. Well, the result of it was, Joseph was sold as a slave. That certainly wasn't nice. He was first of all thrown into a pit, then he was sold as a slave by his brothers, and then he was taken down into a foreign country where he was made to work as a slave. That certainly is not what you would call good. While he was working as a slave for Potiphar, he had the experience that Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. When he would not yield to her desires, she lied about him. She cried out and claimed that he was trying to force her when he was in the house with her. Well that kind of a story no man can refute. The result was that Joseph was put into jail. Being put into jail is bad enough, but he was put there under false and slanderous accusation. Then you will remember that while he was there the butler and the baker were thrown in there as prisoners and they got to know about him and know his story. They both promised that when they came out they would do something to bring his case to the attention of the authorities. When one of them was spared and came out he forgot about Joseph. We don't know how long but certainly he forgot about him and left him there. I often think that of all the things that happened to Joseph which could have disturbed him and made him feel deep down in his heart that he was certainly not being rightly dealt by, it was that they forgot him when he was in jail. Even when they could have let him out, they just left him there. All of that, don't you think, could have made Joseph a surly person, a kind of a rebellious person. Couldn't he

have been somebody that would think everybody is against him, and he would be against everybody? Yet you know what happened. When Joseph came out of there he was given a high position of responsibility and let me tell you right now that men don't get high positions of responsibility whose attitude is belligerent against people and surly against people. No, this man Joseph must have been a man with poise who could go about his work in such a way as to create no unnecessary disturbance. Later on, after his brothers and father came down, there came a time when his father Jacob died. When his father died, his brothers became uneasy. They began to think now that maybe Joseph would get back at them for the evil that they had done to him. So they made up a story and came to Joseph and told him. They said to him that their father had left word that Joseph was to treat them right and treat them nice even though they had done wrong to him in his earlier days. Now I have told that whole story to bring you around to just what Joseph said: "Ye thought evil against me: but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Through all the years when Joseph suffered because people didn't treat him right, He must have had this as a source of strength in himself – that God meant it for good.

So things go against you – God means it for good. You can trust the providence of God. I am referring to the kind of things that are forever. I'm not referring to some little set of circumstances where some day you have a picnic and it rains and you can trust the providence of God that next week you can have a picnic on a real nice day, I'm referring to the kind of things that happen when a man is stricken with an illness and he has to lose a leg and walk around with crutches the rest of his days. That man can put his trust in God. I am thinking about somebody who suffers a permanent loss. Perhaps in your own particular case it is the loss of someone in your family, maybe a husband or a wife that passed away, and your life will never be the same again. There's no possible way of saying, "Well you'll get over it." No you won't get over it. This is a permanent thing. Your wife is gone. Your husband is gone and it's not ever going to be made up to you so far as this world is concerned. I want to say to you – you can trust God. God is good and if you need to be reminded of the goodness of God, look into the face of Jesus Christ. Don't look at your circumstances and try to figure out. Don't break your heart trying to understand why God does this, why God does that. Leave it in His hands. Put your trust in Him. Believe in Him and you can keep one thing in mind, you are not going to stay down here all the time. This world is not everything. Soon you are going to be through with it. You can completely trust God because God is able and God is good and God will honor Himself in doing good to you.