

WHERE DO YOU PUT YOUR TRUST?

I KNOW THIS IS VALENTINE'S DAY AND THE DAY SEEMS TO REVOLVE ALL AROUND LOVE. BUT, DID YOU EVER STOP AND THINK "WHAT DO YOU DO IN ORDER THAT YOU CAN 'LOVE'?" WE NEED TO PUT OUR TRUST, A "PRICELESS POSSESSION" OF OURS, INTO IT. HOW CAN YOU OR I 'LOVE' IF WE CAN'T PUT OUR TRUST INTO IT?

OUR WORLD TELLS US WE 'LOVE' OUR CARS, AND ON THE SURFACE WE DO TRUST THAT THE CAR TO RUN, TO BRAKE, AND DO A NUMBER OF OTHER FUNCTIONS. PEOPLE SAY THEY 'LOVE' FOOD BECAUSE IT WILL DELIVER 'SATISFACTION'. WE KNOW CARS WILL FAIL SOONER OR LATER. WE KNOW THAT SOME TIME FOOD WILL DISAPPOINT US, BECAUSE IT WAS OVERCOOKED, OVERRIPE, OR UNRIPE. THE THINGS OF THE WORLD AROUND US ARE NOT FAIL-SAFE, SO WHAT IS? **WHERE DO WE PUT OUR TRUST? IN WHO? IN WHAT?**

THERE ARE MANY THINGS IN THIS WORLD WE DO PUT OUR 'TRUST' IN AND EVEN AS CONFIDENT AS WE MAY BE THAT THEY WILL NEVER FAIL, THERE ARE EXAMPLES THAT THEY WILL AND HAVE FAILED DOWN THROUGH HISTORY. IN MATTHEW 6:19-21 JESUS, HIMSELF SPEAKS TO US TODAY *"Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being."*

CAN WE LOVE BEFORE WE TRUST? WITH ALL OF THE TALK THIS DAY OF LOVE, **DO WE EVEN KNOW WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT? IS IT THAT FEELING THAT OUR MOVIES, SONGS, AND ROMANCE NOVELS TELL US IS LOVE? OR IS LOVE THE IDEA FOUND IN PROVERBS 3:5-12?** *"Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil! Your body will glow with health, **your very bones will vibrate with life!** Honor God with everything you own; give Him the first and the best. But don't, dear friend, resent God's discipline; don't sulk under His loving correction. It's the child He **loves** that God corrects; a Father's delight is behind all this."*

THIS IS ONLY ONE OF THE MANY PROVERBS THAT SPEAK TO US ABOUT TRUSTING IN GOD. THE RESULT OF THAT TRUST WILL TURN INTO BEING IN LOVE WITH GOD, THE FATHER WHO WILL DO THE THINGS I HAVE JUST READ FROM PROVERBS AND MORE!!! **'TRUS'T OR TRUSTING IN GOD IS MENTIONED FROM RUTH TO REVELATIONS OVER 150 TIMES!** SEARCH ON THE COMPUTER FOR VERSES ON TRUST AND LOVE--YOU WILL FIND THESE TWO, TRUST AND LOVE, GO HAND IN HAND.

A NEWBORN IN THE LOVING ARMS OF A PARENT IS THE ULTIMATE PICTURE OF TRUST-- RELYING ON THE PARENT TO PROVIDE ALL THE BABY'S NEEDS. AND AS THE BABY GROWS, THEY THEN CAN EXPRESS THEIR LOVE FOR THE CARE THEY HAVE RECEIVED. **WHEN WE, CHILD-LIKE, TRUST GOD THE FATHER, HE WILL RETURN OUR TRUST WITH MANY BLESSINGS.** LISTEN TO THE WORDS FOUND IN

MALACHI 3:10 *“thus put Me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing of blessings.”* I HEARD A PASTOR AFTER HE READ THESE WORDS FROM MALACHI SAY **“YOU CAN OUT NEVER OUT GIVE GOD”**. NOW IF YOU DON'T TRUST GOD, YOU MAY APPROACH SUCH GIVING WITH A SKEPTICAL ATTITUDE, AND GOD MAY LOOK AND SEE OUR HEART IS NOT IN IT, BUT SURPRISE YOU ANYWAY.

OUR CHURCHES HAVE BEEN EMPTIED BECAUSE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HURT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER BY “GOOD” WELL-MEANING CHURCH PEOPLE AND THEIR TRUST HAS BEEN SHATTERED. WE HAVE TO END THIS!! ALL OF US AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER HAVE SPOKEN A CROSS WORD OR USED A TONE OF VOICE THAT DOES ANYTHING BUT CONVEY LOVE TO ANOTHER PERSON.

AS WE JOURNEY THROUGH LENT REMEMBER THAT YOU OR I HAVE NEVER OR LIKELY WILL EVER SUFFER LIKE JESUS CHRIST DID, SO WHEN WE THINK WE HAVE SUCH BIG PROBLEMS JUST AS THE SONG SAYS *“turn your eyes toward jesus, look full into his wonderful face and the things of this earth will grow strangely dim”* NOW I AM NOT SAYING WE DON'T HAVE REAL PROBLEMS. WE SHOULD PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH OTHER PEOPLE. THEN THAT WHOLE LAST HALF OF EPHESIANS 4 REALLY SPEAKS VOLUMNS AND LET US FOCUS ON VERSE 32 *“and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you”*. **NOW THERE ARE NO 'IFS ANDS OR BUTS' IN THAT VERSE.**

WHEN WE ARE A DISCIPLE, WE TRUST GOD'S WORD AND HIS TEACHINGS. IS IT EASY TO “TURN THE OTHER CHEEK”, NO, BUT GOD'S GRACE IS THERE, MAKING IT POSSIBLE. WE TRUST GOD FOR THINGS TO COME OUT, BUT IF THEY DON'T, GOD THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS GIVEN US THE FAITH TO ENDURE, TO COME OUT AT THE OTHER END, FAITH INTACT AND READY TO MOVE ON.

ONE OF BIGGEST HINDRANCES ARE THINGS 'UNFORGIVEN' IN OUR LIVES AND UNFORTUNATELY MANY TIMES THAT 'UNFORGIVENESS' IS WITH ANOTHER CHRISTIAN. WE WONDER WHY WE SEEM “STUCK” WHERE WE ARE, NOT GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST AND WITH EACH OTHER. SAD TO SAY, NOT FORGIVING SOMEONE IS A HURDLE WE CHOOSE NOT TO JUMP OVER EVEN IF WE ARE THE ONE OFFENDED. WE CAN CHOOSE TO GO TO THAT PERSON EXTENDING FORGIVENESS AND THEN IT IS UP TO THEM TO ACCEPT OR REFUSE IT. YOU HAVE DONE YOUR PART AND CAN'T MAKE SOMEONE EXTEND FORGIVENESS TO YOU. IF WE TRUST GOD, FOLLOW JESUS AS WE CLAIM WE ARE, THEN THAT IS THE WAY TO DO IT. IF WE DON'T, WE DO IT AT OUR OWN PERIL.

OH PASTOR, YOU ARE MAKING TOO MUCH OF IT. **NO, GOD'S DESIRE IS FOR YOU TO REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL.** YOU OR I WON'T, IF WE LEAVE SUCH HURDLES OR WALLS STANDING. IF CENTENNIAL IS GOING TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN IN THIS COMMUNITY THEN WE BETTER TAKE ON THOSE HURDLES, THOSE WALLS MAKING NO EXCUSES WHY NOT TO TAKE THEM ON. EASY, NO, BUT THE REWARDS, THE BLESSINGS WE WILL RECEIVE AS SPOKEN IN THE MESSAGE ARE THEIR FOR US *“pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.”*

CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL THING AND IF WE PRAY SEEKING GOD'S DESIRE FOR US, HE WILL HEAR OUR CRY AND ANSWER. **CHURCH IS NOT ABOUT WHAT ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL WANTS. WE ARE HERE TO WORSHIP GOD, THANK HIM FOR THE BLESSINGS OF OUR LIVES, AND DISCERN WHAT WE ARE TO DO FOR HIM – NOT US!!!!**

YOU CAN DISAGREE WITH ME ALL YOU WANT, BUT THIS CHURCH IS HERE BECAUSE GOD WANTS ITS PEOPLE TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE KINGDOM, PERIOD, END OF STORY. THAT MAY BLUR OR EVEN UPSET YOUR PICTURE OF THIS BODY OF CHRIST CALLED CENTENNIAL, BUT GOD IS CALLING US,

HE NEEDS US, NOT FOR US TO SIT HERE EVERY SUNDAY AND GO HOME AND DOING NOTHING, BUT TO GO OUT THERE AND REACH OUT TO HIS HURTING PEOPLE, BECAUSE HE LOVES THEM AS MUCH AS HE LOVES US HERE!!! JESUS' MINISTRY WAS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE, REACHING OUT TO THEM, LOVING THEM, AND BRINGING THEM TO KNOW CHRIST, JUST LIKE OUR MISSION STATEMENT SAYS.

GOD DOES NOT CARE ABOUT MONEY IN OUR ACCOUNTS, THE SONGS, THE COLOR OF THE WALLS OR ANY OF THE OTHER THINGS WE TEND TO INFLATE AND MAY SEEM SO IMPORTANT. HE LOVED AND SERVED AND HE DIED. HE DIED FOR YOU, ME AND THOSE PEOPLE OUT THERE. AND I WILL SAY IT AGAIN, WHEN SOMEONE COMES THROUGH THAT DOOR WE SHOULD FALL ALL OVER THEM, LETTING THEM KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST THROUGH US, EACH AND EVERY ONE US UNTIL THEY GO BACK OUT THAT DOOR.

YOUNG, OLD, I DON'T CARE, AS A FOLLOWER, A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST YOU REACH OUT AND YOU ACCEPT THEM. IF THEY DON'T GO TO YOUR SCHOOL OR WHAT EVER THE DIFFERENCES, JUST REMEMBER THE VERSES FROM GALATIANS 3:28 *“There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

DON'T LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING OR WHAT YOU SEE IN FRONT OF YOU, TRUST GOD, THEN YOU ARE FREE TO LOVE LIKE JESUS DID. GALATIANS 5:13 MEANS SOMETHING - It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then?"

THESE VERSES REALLY BRING INTO SHARP FOCUS THAT WE INDEED CAN LOVE AND FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER. EPHESIANS 4:32 *“Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.”*

IN TRUSTING GOD, WE WILL TRULY HAVE A LOVE OF HIS WORD. JESUS HIMSELF NEAR THE END OF HIS MINISTRY TOLD HIS DISCIPLES IN JOHN 13 THAT HE WOULD BE WITH THEM ONLY A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, BUT *“That you love one another, even as I have loved you”*

THIS VALENTINE'S DAY, 'LOVE' FOR US AS DISCIPLES IS DIFFERENT FROM THE DEFINITION MANY PEOPLE HAVE ATTACHED TO THE WORD., LOVE IS A VERB, AND A VERB DENOTES TAKING AN ACTION. THIS DAY WHEN LOVE IS SPOKEN OF SO MUCH, REMEMBER REAL LOVE BEGINS WITH TRUST, WHICH IS AN ACT OF THE WILL, NOT JUST A FEELING THAT COMES AND GOES. ONLY WHEN WE TRUST CAN LOVE GROW AND FLOURISH.

IN CLOSING HERE IS A STORY TO THINK ABOUT THIS DAY As an aged Christian lay dying, a friend called to say farewell. "I have just had three other visitors," said the dying man, "and with two of them I parted; but the third I shall keep with me forever." "Who are they?" "the first was Faith, and I said, 'Goodbye, Faith! I thank God for your company ever since I first trusted Christ; but now I am going where faith is lost in sight.' Then came Hope. 'Farewell, Hope!' I cried. 'You have helped me in many an hour of battle and distress, but now I shall not need you, for I am going where hope passes into fruition.' "Last of all came Love. 'Love', said I, 'you have indeed been my friend; you have linked me with God and with my fellow men; you have comforted and gladdened all my pilgrimage. But I cannot leave you behind; you must come with me through the gates, into the city of God, for love is perfected in heaven.'" AMEN.