

The Ensign

of the Christian Israelite Church

‘And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.’ Isaiah 11:12c

Trusting in God

by Trudy Adams

Understanding Trust

The Bible repeatedly exhorts us to trust in the Lord, but translating that into something that is meaningful for us on a practical, every-day level can sometimes be challenging. There are many things that can worry us – an injustice committed against us, or our families, finances, job, past, future, or health, to name but a few. Even so, the Bible clearly says to be ‘anxious for nothing’ (Philippians 4:6).

Trust is an unshakeable belief in the reliability of something, to the point where we have no fear of it failing us. Trust cannot cohabit with anxiety or worry. As we will see, God is the only one in our lives who is totally reliable and worthy of such unshakeable trust. However, often we say we trust in him but continue to worry about our problem, which is a contradiction. Trust can only exist when we truly give up our fear-based need to control a problem or situation, and allow God to take control of it instead.

Why Trust God?

‘They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.’ Psalm 9:10.

Most things in our lives shift and change – people come and go, our health changes, or we may have a particular job one day but not

the next – but God and his son, Jesus Christ, are ‘the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever’ (Hebrews 13:8). His word is also unchanging and therefore ever-relevant to us: ‘the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever’ (Isaiah 40:8). While people’s moods, values, and intentions are subject to change, we can always rely on God, ‘with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning’ (James 1:17). Others may let us down, but God will ‘never leave thee, nor forsake thee’ (Hebrews 13:5).

Moreover, God *wants* to help us with our problems:

‘Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.’ Hebrews 4:16.

As Peter said, we should cast all our care upon God because ‘he careth for you’ (1 Peter 5:7). God never runs out of compassion or faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23), nor condemns us for our mistakes or problems (Romans 8:1). He doesn’t faint or get weary with us (Isaiah 40:28).

In Psalm 103, David tells us more about who God is, writing that he forgives all our iniquities, heals all our diseases, redeems our life from destruction, ensures our needs are taken care of, executes judgment to all who

are oppressed, is merciful and slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, and has ‘not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities’ (vs 3-10). David goes on to remind us that ‘the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him’ (vs 17). He loves justice and, in his time, will always ensure we receive justice when we have been wronged (Isaiah 61:8). Unlike people, God has an eternal amount of mercy and compassion for whatever may be concerning us.

David also wrote about God as our protector:

‘The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.’
Psalm 18:2.

Each of these images represent unwavering protection and safety from an enemy – or whatever might be troubling us. God represents himself as a fortress, buckler (shield), or high tower because he is as strong and as unmoving as they are. If they do come under enemy attack, they take the brunt of any harm whilst protecting inhabitants behind or inside them, just as God protects us. As is written in Deuteronomy 31:8, in times of trouble, God ‘will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee.’

We can also rely on God because he has all wisdom and knowledge:

‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?’ Romans 11:33-34.

He has the whole picture of what is happening in our lives as he exists simultaneously in the past, present and future (John 8:58). While we only ‘know in part’ (1Corinthians 13:9), there is no end to God’s knowledge or ‘no searching of his

understanding’ (Isaiah 40:28), as it is infinite (Psalm 147:5). As God said to Isaiah:

‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ Isaiah 55:8-9.

His thoughts towards us are also incredibly detailed and caring:

‘O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether ... How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.’ Psalm 139:1-4, 17-18.

If we are to trust anyone, surely it is better to trust the one who knows us better than we know ourselves, is infinitely wise, reliable and unchanging, has our best interests in mind, and wants nothing more than to help us.

God Promises to Help Us

Because of who he is and his love for us, God continually promises to never leave us to deal with life’s difficulties alone, such as in Isaiah 43:2:

‘When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.’ Isaiah 43:2.

Psalm 91 is also a well-known passage about God’s promise to help and deliver us from

traps, pestilences and plagues (sickness), terrors, attacks, war, fear, and evil in general, further promising to give his angels charge over us. It concludes:

‘He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.’ Psalm 91:15.

God says in Isaiah that he will strengthen and help us (Isaiah 41:10). David describes God as our helper, too (Psalm 54:4). It was also David who wrote that, ‘many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all’ – not some, but ‘all’ (Psalm 34:19). Psalm 121 says:

‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.’ vs 1-3.

God doesn’t take time off when looking after us – he is always there and always working to bring about a good outcome and future for us (Romans 8:28). The only condition that must be fulfilled in order to truly receive his help and blessings is that we trust in him (Psalm 28:7).

The Blessings of Trusting God

Fully trusting God means allowing him to take control of a situation to the point where we no longer worry about or try to figure it out ourselves. It means focusing on God and his kingdom (through prayer, singing, fellowship, reading the Word etc) rather than on the problem itself (Matthew 6:33). It also means casting down thoughts or ideas that rise up against or shake the belief that God can be trusted, including thoughts where we try to reason and/or control the problem ourselves (2 Corinthians 10:5). Because we are used to taking care of things ourselves, trusting God can feel irresponsible and unnatural, but it is essential if we are to enter into peace and receive the blessings God has

ordained for us. As David wrote, ‘blessed are all they that put their trust in him’ (Psalm 2:12).

In fact, in entering into this care-free trust – as children trusting a good father (Matthew 19:3) – we open ourselves up to many blessings. Deuteronomy 28 provides a long list of blessings we can receive when we ‘hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God’, including long life, safety, and prosperity. This is an idea Jeremiah reiterates when he says:

‘Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.’ Jeremiah 17:7-8.

Trusting God preserves us (Psalm 16:1) and can lead to salvation from persecution and trials (Psalm 7:1). It gives God the opportunity to shower us with goodness (Psalm 31:19). God also shields those who trust in him from attacks (Psalm 18:30).

David wrote that those who trust in God have reason to rejoice: ‘let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them’ (Psalm 5:11). Trusting God means no longer living in confusion (Psalm 71:1) or fear (Isaiah 12:2), and that God will direct our path so that our lives unfold in the best way possible (Proverbs 3:6). It also means we are blessed with ‘perfect peace’, because our minds aren’t troubled, trying to figure out a solution to our problems (Isaiah 26:3).

However, we often forfeit these blessings when we try to take care of matters ourselves or hope others will take care of them for us, thereby placing mankind above God.

Trusting Mankind

Before writing that we are blessed when we trust in God, Jeremiah issued a strong warning to those who place their trust in mankind instead, i.e. who seek and believe that mankind (whether that be themselves or another) will deliver them from their problems or meet their needs:

‘Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.’ Jeremiah 17:5-6.

While the blessing of trusting God promised prosperity and good health, the curse of trusting mankind brings only dearth and desolation.

We trust ourselves or another when we dwell on and try to solve our own problems or meet our needs without God. In so doing, we are actually making mankind *as* gods – believing (perhaps inadvertently) that mankind alone has the wisdom and power to resolve an issue. But the first commandment is ‘thou shalt have no other gods before me’ (Exodus 20:3). To trust in mankind ahead of God is a form of idolatry – of making something else of greater importance than God. We are clearly instructed not to worship and serve ‘the creature more than the Creator’ (Romans 1:25). Doing so is a breach of the first commandment and, therefore, brings about a curse. God will not bring life to ideas and decisions that honour mankind above him.

Trusting ourselves or others also brings about pain and disappointment, as mankind inevitably lets us down. The Bible tells us that mankind is fleeting, but God is not:

‘As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the

place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.’ Psalm 103:15-17.

As David said, ‘it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes’ (Psalm 118:8-9). Or, as Psalm 146 says:

‘Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.’ vs 3-4.

While it’s perfectly okay to seek and receive support from those around us and to discuss our issues with them, we need to keep this in balance by ensuring we’re not looking to mankind to do what only God can do, that is, that we’re not trusting mankind more than God. We can hear what others have to say and receive their help, but we are to look to God alone for our salvation and care. It’s also important to pick our confidants wisely – God can certainly work through our godly friends to impart the wisdom and guidance we may need, but urges us not to give consideration to the advice of the ungodly:

‘Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly ... But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.’ Psalm 1:1-4.

Furthermore, we should never rely on our riches more than we rely on God; we should trust God to take care of our financial needs

more than we trust our own ability to gather riches:

‘Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.’ 1 Timothy 6:17.

As the proverb says, ‘the fear of man bringeth a snare: but whosoever putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe’ (Proverbs 29:25).

Anxiety-Free Living

When we truly trust in God, our mind is at peace. It follows then that, when we don’t trust in God, we feel worried and/or anxious. Fear is a symptom of a decision to take matters into our own hands, or to take responsibility for something that’s outside of our control or influence of change. If we allow it to grow, the worry and anxiety can reach a level where it impacts our emotional and physical wellbeing. We need to be sensitive to when we are feeling worried, and consciously make the decision to ‘cast our care’ – to shift the worry back to trust in God. We worry when we think we won’t get what we want, when we want it. But we need to trust in God’s timing and his plan more than our own (Psalm 31:15):

‘For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.’
2 Timothy 1:7.

In fact, it is when we are fearful that we should trust God more than ever:

‘What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.’ Psalm 56:3-4.

God commands us many times throughout the Bible to not give into fear, such as in Joshua 1:9:

‘Have I not commanded you? Be

strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.’

Paul encouraged us to take our problems to God rather than worrying about them:

‘Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.’ Philippians 4:6-7.

Doing so allows us to keep our mind in the perfect peace Isaiah spoke about (Isaiah 26:3) and for God to have the control he needs to be able to do his work for us on our behalf – control he is not willing to share with us. There is a part we need to play, but we need to always ensure we are not trying to do God’s part.

The Part We Play

Although they are often subtle, there are indications in the Word about what part we can and should play when waiting on or trusting God. Yet, our part usually has nothing to do with actually solving the problem – something that can be challenging to our human nature – but bringing the problem to God.

Paul’s instructions above tell us that our part is to actively take our concerns to God in prayer and with thanksgiving. The first two verses of Psalm 91 also tell us we have actions to take if we are to receive God’s generous protection, i.e., we are to dwell in his presence, and believe and trust in him. Psalm 37 assigns us many actions for us to take in order to receive God’s blessings:

‘Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity ... Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and

verily thou shalt be fed. *Delight thyself also in the Lord*; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. *Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him*; and he shall bring it to pass ... *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.*' vs 1, 3-5, 7 (emphasis added).

We need to seek God to direct our paths constantly. As is later written in this same psalm:

'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.' Psalm 37:23-24.

Because we can never be as wise and knowledgeable as God, we shouldn't rely on ourselves or others to find the way forward or to know what to do. We should, however:

'*Trust in the Lord* with all thine heart; and *lean not* unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways *acknowledge him*, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: *fear the Lord, and depart from evil*. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.' Proverbs 3:5-8 (emphasis added).

When we have a worry or a problem, we need to actively seek God:

'Then shall ye *call upon me*, and ye shall *go* and *pray unto me*, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall *seek me*, and find me, when ye shall *search for me* with all your heart.' Jeremiah 29:12-13 (emphasis added).

We need only ask God for help, and then trust him to bring it to pass:

'*Ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek*, and ye shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you.' Matthew 7:7 (emphasis added).

'Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.' Psalm 143:8.

But we must ask in full belief that God will answer, 'in faith, nothing wavering' (James 1:6). Without faith, it is impossible to please him (Hebrews 11:6). Of course, the answer we receive from God may not be the one we were hoping or asking for, but even in such times we must continue to trust God – that he knows the situation better than us and is working things out with our ultimate best interests at heart (Romans 8:28), even if we can't see it right now. God and his son are truth (John 14:6), love (1 John 4:8), light (1 John 1:5), and peace (Romans 15:33) – those are the elements they will bring into our life, if we trust and obey.

Trust and Obedience

'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.' James 1:22.

If we are going to truly demonstrate our trust in God, we must not only seek his direction, but obey it when he gives it. A Bible search on what it means to love God invariably returns the same answer – to keep his commandments and do as he instructs:

'If ye love me, keep my commandments ... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' John 14:15, 21.

Keeping his commandments is a loving act that comes with the blessing of making our way prosperous and giving us 'good success' (Joshua 1:8), or, as is written in Deuteronomy 5:33:

'Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live,

and that it may be well with you,
and that ye may prolong your
days in the land which ye shall
possess.'

Christian Israelites believe that the 'land', while literal, can sometimes also be symbolic of our physical body (it also being made of earth) and that following God's commandments can lead to us 'possessing the promised land' (Leviticus 20:24), or receiving the salvation of the body in the end days:

'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.'
Ezekiel 18:21.

In our lifetime, we will face many battles – with ourselves and other people – but we must remember that the battle belongs to the Lord and that he will fight for us. When Jehoshaphat faced a great multitude of war-seeking Ammonites, the first thing he did was seek God's advice and favour. A priest then told Jehoshaphat:

'Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's ... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.' 2 Chronicles 20:15, 17.

Jehoshaphat and his men did as they were instructed and were victorious, just as we will be victorious when we seek God, trust in him and his directions, and obey.

Even if we have been treated unjustly, we need to remember not to avenge ourselves but that 'vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord' (Romans 12:19). It is God who will

'cast out thine enemy' (Zephaniah 3:15). As is written in Exodus:

'The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.' Exodus 14:14.

In other words, there are times when we need to keep still and quiet and let God do the work. Or, to put it another way, we should:

'Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.'
Ephesians 6:13.

Overall, trusting in God allows him to do the work that is too big, complex, or worrying for us. While we do our part in seeking and trusting him, and residing in peace, he gladly takes care of things on our behalf and in his infinite wisdom. We can trust that he will resolve our problems in the best possible way, and often in a way we could have never foreseen or contrived ourselves. God knows when we trust him (Nahum 1:7), and is eager to bless us when we do:

'O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.' Psalm 34:8.

When we are feeling anxious, trusting in God is the first and most important step we can take to return to peace and confidence.