

## TRUST IS A BIG WORD

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### 1 JOHN 5:13-15

Trust is a big word. It's difficult for some of us to trust—maybe because of past history or events. Yet, when you accept Jesus you have confidence in him for your eternal salvation.

But there's more to it than that. You must put your confidence in him every day, and place yourself in his hands no matter what's going on in your life. You must rely on him.

Last week I urged us to become troublemakers for Jesus. We cannot be troublemakers for Christ unless we have the courage of our convictions—that we trust God's word, and are willing to stand up for its truth.

Trust is a big word. We wonder what the future holds for our health, our job, our family, our friends, our finances—and a hundred other things. That's natural, that's being human!

But there's a difference between wondering and worrying. What you think about the future determines how you live today. And, trusting Christ today determines your attitude about the future. Ultimately we choose to live either in faith or in fear.

Faith: If you choose to trust Christ with your future, most likely you are living in faith today. If you have faith for tomorrow you probably have faith for today.

Fear: If you are afraid of the future you probably live in fear and uncertainty today. If you have fear about tomorrow, you are probably full of fear about today. You can trust God's promise.

### 1. God's promise:

The apostle John wrote, 1 John 5:13, 'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.'

This is the promise of God—those who believe in Jesus Christ have eternal life—you can know it and you can claim it. When you believe in Jesus you have His life. To have His life is eternal life. This is God promise to us.

A woman told a preacher that she could not understand salvation. He asked her, “Mrs. Smith, how long have you been Mrs. Smith?”

“Why, ever since I was married,” she replied. “And how did you become Mrs. Smith?” he asked.

“When the minister said, ‘Will you have this man to be your husband?’ I just said, ‘Yes.’”

“Didn’t you say, ‘I hope so,’ or ‘I’ll try to’?” asked the preacher.

“No,” she replied, “I said, ‘I will.’” Then directing her to the Bible, he said, “God is asking if you will receive His Son as your Savior? What will you say to that?”

Her face lit up and she said, “Why, how simple that is! Isn’t it strange that I didn’t say ‘Yes’ long ago?” That is the simple believing the Bible calls for—for you to say, “Yes,” and God will receive you as long as you come in the name of Christ.

This is what trust is. In simple faith you trust Jesus for your salvation—and you trust him to go with you through this life. On the other hand, if you don’t believe in Jesus you do not have Him and do not have His life.

Not to have His life means you don’t have eternal life. The whole point John is making is to remind believers that our future is secure—we have God’s promise, not just for the by and by, but for today.

## 2. God’s assurance for today:

Sometimes we make the mistake of believing in Jesus and knowing we’re going to heaven, but act like God just leaves us on our own in the mean time.

God’s promise is not just about the future, future. His promise is also about today and tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that. The life we live until we go to our eternal home.

That’s the clear teaching of 1 John 5:14-15, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.”

Your salvation began the moment you accepted Christ. So then, live your life in light of eternity. Your relationship with God and the assurance of spending forever after with Him should make a great difference in who you are and how you live your life.

People who trust God find the greatest fulfillment in life. They look back over their lives and know they have lived honestly and with integrity. They are concerned about those who will come after them—they want to leave behind a legacy of a life well-lived.

I want to briefly tell you about a man who effectively lived his life trusting God and with the as-

urance of God's love and promises. His name was Caleb.

The Children of Israel had followed Moses forty years in the Sinai wilderness. Now they were at the Jordan River, the border of the Promised Land.

Moses was dead. Joshua was the new leader. Caleb had served with Joshua years before when the two of them had helped spy out the land. Joshua and Caleb were the only two of their generation allowed into the Promised Land. (Num. 13, 14)

Joshua 14:6 - 13 (NIV) 6Now the men of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. 7I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, 8but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. 9So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. 10'Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! 11I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. 12Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said." 13Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.

Notice the trust of Caleb—the faith steps which he took in light of eternity because of his faith in God and God's promises:

### 3. He stated what he wanted:

Caleb knew exactly what he wanted. He didn't come to Joshua with some vague offer. When he said, "give me this mountain. . ." he made it totally clear to all Israel that he was claiming a specific possession.

He very specifically said that with God's help he was willing to do whatever it would take to conquer the mountain country. The brother of our Lord said about too many of us, (James 4:2) "You do not have, because you do not ask God."

Jesus told us, (John 16:24) "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."

Oswald Chambers said that every time we pray, our horizon is altered, our attitude to things is altered, not sometimes but every time, and the amazing thing is that we don't pray more.

In light of eternity it is amazing how many of us pray in vague generalities. Make your requests known and be specific. If you have a need, clearly identify it, and tell it to God. Be bold in your requests. Pray in His will and for His glory and honor.

## 4. His life was focused on the promise:

Caleb had to wait 40 years for the fulfillment of the promise Moses had made to him. Yet he never lost sight of what he was promised. He knew the promise would be fulfilled because he knew the one who made it.

A promise is only as good as the word of the one who makes it. We have Christ's promise that He will be with us forevermore. That means that we have His daily presence, strength, and guidance.

Faith in God will not get for you everything you may want, but it will get for you what God wants you to have. For us Christians that's enough.

## 5. He never stopped believing:

Three times in the 14th chapter of Joshua we read that Caleb followed the Lord God wholeheartedly. He was deeply committed.

What's amazing is that during the 40 years wandering in the desert he watched an entire adult generation die off. He and Joshua were the only exceptions. Yet, he never lost confidence in the promise God had made to him.

The Bible reminds us that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Men and women of great faith have always been willing to believe God for the impossible simply because He said it was so.

The story is told of a monastery in Portugal, perched high on a 3,000 foot cliff and accessible only by a terrifying ride in a swaying basket. The basket is pulled with a single rope by several strong men, perspiring under the strain of the fully loaded basket. One American tourist who visited the site got nervous halfway up the cliff when he noticed that the rope was old and frayed. Hoping to relieve his fear he asked, "How often do you change the rope?"

The monk in charge replied, "Whenever it breaks!"

Discovering halfway up a cliff that you're being held by a frayed rope doesn't make for much security! Unfortunately, many people believe they can have no better security in their relationship with God.

Yes trust is a big word, but trust in Jesus can make a big difference in your life. Like Caleb, never stop believing.

## 6. He claimed the promise:

Caleb was given the mountain country by the promise of God. It was his, but he still had to claim it—he still had to take hold of the possession personally.

Suppose someone left you a million dollars in an inheritance. All the legal papers were signed and the money was guaranteed yours. It was deposited in a bank in your name. What a great inheritance.

But it wouldn't become your inheritance until you went to the bank, withdrew the money, and made use of it yourself.

Don't be one of those who haven't taken a hold of their godly possessions. Determine to discover God's divine purpose, then claim it. God is not limited by our limitations.

Once you come to grips with the purposes of God in light of eternity, you'll never be the same again. You'll face the future in faith and confidence, in the assurance of God's promises.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:7).

Because of God's promise, do not look forward to the changes and chances of this life in fear. Rather look at them with full trust that, as they arise, Jesus, will deliver you out of them.

Jesus has kept you to now. Hold fast to His precious hand, and He will lead you safely through all things. And, when you cannot stand, He will bear you in His arms.

Do not be anxious about what may happen tomorrow. Our precious Savior will either shield you from suffering, or He will give you strength to bear it. That's his promise to believers.

Be a Caleb in your own sphere of influence. Live a life of confidence. Make a difference in the world of your friends, your family, and the society in which you live. This is your God-given responsibility.

## Application:

As you face 2010 and beyond, if you will trust your life to God's plan and purpose, you will discover that you count for something, and that you can make a difference.

God has promised that, regardless of the problems and difficulties that may lay ahead, God will use you for His glory. By God's grace you can make this a glorious year. Yes, trust is a big word, but we can confidently trust our great Lord.

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