

Trust in the Lord and Do Good

- **Reading: 2nd Corinthians 1**

- This morning we would like to talk about two important facts about God
 - 1) That God is all-powerful
 - 2) That God loves us
- These two things working together in our lives can bring us incredible peace
- Independently, these two thoughts don't really bring us any comfort
- If God were simply just all-powerful, then he could be like the mythical Gods
- The Gods of the ancient Greeks were capricious and highly emotional
- They got upset all the time and had to be appeased with a sacrifice of a virgin
- Living in fear of an all-powerful God because he might rain fire down on you is not a very nice way to live
- And, if God were simply just loving, but not really in control of your life is like having a "Heavenly Santa Claus" who means well but can't really insulate you from trouble or grief
- Having a God like that would fail to inspire you to trust in him
- But, our God is both loves us supremely, and He is sovereign
- Sovereign means that His power is supreme, unlimited, and totally independent of any other influence
- So, if you really believe that God is both Sovereign and Supremely Good, then you will be able to trust and obey him in the midst of even the most difficult circumstances
- What you come to learn is the more you trust in God, the easier it is to do His Will

- Another thing that we have to come to believe about God is that God takes a personal interest in even the smallest details of our lives
- It's sometimes hard to really believe this because God seems so distant and far away
- He seems so large and powerful and important you can't imagine that He would care enough about the silly little things going on in your life
- But He does
- God wants to be a part of everything that happens in your life
- He pays attention to everything, and He wants you to invite Him in to your life
- Remember what Jesus said about God?
- Luke 12:6-7
 - 6) Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God.
 - 7) Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.
- I also love the way David spoke about God's care for him:
- Psalm 56:8
 - 8) You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?
- What an awesome God!
- Every time you toss and turn at night, he keeps record of it in a book
- Every time you cry, he stores them up in a bottle
- Nothing that happens in your life escapes Him
- He knows everything, and even more importantly, he cares about everything

- The tricky part to grasp is that God’s power is so complete that He exercises ultimate control even over painful and unjust experiences in our lives
- This is hard to accept, because we tend to judge God’s actions according to our reality of right and wrong
- God is above us, and we can’t judge Him based on OUR reality
- I like the way that Isaiah explains this...
- Isaiah 29:16
 - 16) You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, “He did not make me”; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?
- God is in control, and He allows suffering and permits unjust acts even though he has to power to stop them
- Consider what Peter said about Jesus
- Acts 2:22-23
 - 22) “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know —
 - 23) this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
- Obviously, God had the power to stop his own son from being crucified, but he allowed it to happen for a better reason
- Psalm 62 talks about how God is Good
- Psalm 62:11-12
 - 11) Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,
 - 12) and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

- The foundation for our trust in God is constructed of both power and love
- He is not only in control over us, but he also loves us!
- Remember though, the fact that God is good does not mean that he will insulate us from all suffering
- Rather it means that he will be with us in our suffering
- Isaiah 43:1-2
 - 1) But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.
 - 2) When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
- God also uses our trials to teach us how to minister to others when they are suffering
- We learn a lot in our own lives from the experiences that God brings us through
- We often don’t go through these painful experiences simply because God wants us to learn something, we sometimes go through suffering so that we can be better prepared to help others
- That is what our reading said this morning:
- 2nd Corinthians 1:3-7
 - 3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
 - 4) who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
 - 5) For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

- 6) If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.
- 7) Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

- As you go through a painful experience, you really come to appreciate that the best comfort you receive is from others who have been through the same thing

- Another reason that God allows suffering in our lives, is that He teaches us to rely more on him through those experiences

- Continue reading in 2nd Corinthians 1

- 2nd Corinthians 1:8-9

- 8) For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.
- 9) Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

- Who better to rely on than God?

- What a great lesson to learn

- Even Paul had to learn that Lesson, and we should too

- The trials that God gives us also require that we practice the character qualities that make us like our Lord

- Romans 5:3-5

- 3) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
- 4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,
- 5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

- Although you can be sure that God is always working for good in your life and the lives of those around you, you will not always know exactly what good is
- In many cases his purpose will not be evident for a long time, and in some cases they are simply too profound for us to ever comprehend
- This is the key to dealing faithfully with painful situations and situations that seem unjust
- God may not tell us everything that we WANT to know, but he has already told us everything that we NEED to know
- Instead of wasting time trying to figure things out that are beyond your comprehension, turn your attention to the promises and instructions that God has revealed to you
- God is both all-powerful and good so we can trust him
- Trusting God does not mean that we will never have questions, doubts or fears
- Trusting God means that IN SPITE OF our questions, doubts and fears we continue to believe that he is loving, and that he is in control, and that he working for our good
- What is it that allows a person who experiences extremely difficult problems, and wrestles with doubt, to keep going in spite of these challenges?
- Among other things, it is the humility to recognize the limits of your own understanding and wisdom to bow before God's eternal purposes
- Through prayer, study and experience you learn to trust in the power of God
- This trust releases you from burden of unanswered questions and helps you overcome the fears and doubts that challenge us
- Trust is a decision
- Your view of God will have a profound effect on how much you trust him
- If you really, truly believe that God is both all-powerful and in control of every part of your life...

- And supremely good and loving, caring about every part of your life...
- Then trusting in God will be easy
- Which brings us quite nicely to the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus...
- Who in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the last night of his life, perfectly reflected these two beliefs about God
- Jesus summed it up in seven words, *“Not my will, but yours, be done”*
- Jesus knew that God was all-powerful
- He knew that God could remove all the Roman Soldiers with a single flash
- But, he also knew that God is Good
- God loves us, and wants the best for us
- Jesus trusted in God that what God wanted was best
- What a perfect example for us as we leave here today to face our trials, and try to remember these two important things about God
- That He really is all-powerful
- That He really does love us