

SERMON: *Trusting in God rather than Possessions!*

TEXT: 1 John 2:15

Introduction: We must place our complete trust in our Creator, obey His word and lay up treasures in heaven. We must not put our trust in other things such as possessions, wisdom, power, fame or fortune. Cf. Job 1:22. How can we trust in God rather than possessions?

1. **We must put our complete faith in God.** The word faith means, “trust, belief, confidence, conviction.” Faith to a Christian is like a foundation to a house. A house is only as strong as its undergirding and a Christian is only as strong as his faith (Heb. 11:1). Cf. Prov. 3:5; Jn. 14:1; Heb. 11:6.
2. **We must separate ourselves from the world.** Love for the world and love for God cannot coexist simultaneously in one person. Either we love the world or we love God, but not both (Mt. 6:24). We cannot walk with God and run with the devil. Cf. Rom. 12:2 Jam. 4:7, 8; 1 John 2:15-16.
3. **We must have the right priorities.** Our priorities show where our treasure is placed. If our heart is obsessed with material goods, our priorities in life will be to gain more of them. However, if our heart is focused on eternal things, our desire will be to gain heaven. Cf. Josh. 24:15; Matt. 6:19-21, 33.
4. **We must love God more than money.** Jesus declared that we “cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24). Jesus knew the enticements of this world would tempt some to set their affection on the earth (Col. 3:1-2), so He declared the difference between God and mammon (i.e., earthly gain). Cf. 1 Tim. 6:3-10; Jam. 1:9-11, 5:1-6.
5. **We must commit our lives to Christ.** This means having a vital connection to the church (Acts 2:41-47) and involving ourselves in serving God (Mt. 4:10). Cf. 2 Tim. 1:12. When Dr. David Livingstone was working in Africa, a group of friends wrote him: “We would like to send other men to you. Have you found a good road into your area yet?” To which he replied, “If you have men who will only come if they know there is a good road, I don’t want them! I want men who will come if there is no road at all!”

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Illustration: A young man once found a \$5 bill in the road. From that time on he never raised his eyes from the ground when he walked. Over the next 30 years he accumulated \$1.60 in silver, 22 pennies, 11,318 buttons, 27,501 pins, a hunch back, miserable disposition and a rotten character. He lost the glory of the sunshine, the smile of friends, the beauty of flowers, trees, blue skies and all that there is that makes life worth living. Let each of us set our affections on things ABOVE. 📖

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BECAUSE HE LIVES!

I find myself singing the words: “*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because He lives, all fear is gone; Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living, Just because He lives!*” The greatest hope of a Christian is the hope of the resurrection unto life eternal. Paul is clear on this point in 1 Corinthians 15:58, “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*” The word “therefore” draws our minds back to all that Paul has said in chapter 15; resurrection. He is telling us that the hope we possess is a motivator to spiritual action for God’s glory. Thus, the resurrection produces the kind of hope that makes daily living abundant. Notice lessons from Paul’s words and Jesus’ life?

1. **Be steadfast in your faith.** The word “steadfast” means “to be seated; settled and firmly situated.” It means we are to be grounded and rooted in the One Faith (Eph. 4:5; Jude 3). Biblical examples: Daniel 3:18, “*But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up*” and Esther 4:16, “*My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!*” Steadfast refers to something that is firmly fixed in place, secure and generally permanent; like faith. Therefore, because He lives I will remain rooted and grounded in God’s Holy and Precious Truths!
2. **Be immovable in your doctrine.** The word “immovable” means “not moved from a place; firmly persistent; motionless.” Initially “steadfast” and “immovable” seem to be synonymous, but there are key differences. **Steadfast** emphasizes being fixed in purpose, while **immovable** emphasizes the aspect of faith that will not be shaken even in the worst of circumstances. The former is concerned with the future, while the later deals with present. *Immovable* should be used in reference to the character and faith of any individual Christian. We must not allow anything to move us away from serving the Lord. Therefore, because He lives I will not be moved away from the Truth!
3. **Always abound in the Lord’s work.** “*Abounding*” has the idea of “exceeding a fixed amount; overflowing; exceeding.” Paul exhorts the Corinthians to go out and do the work of the Lord; not just today, but ALWAYS. Service to God shouldn’t happen just now and then in the Christian’s life, but should happen daily. We can’t work very hard for one day or week and say “Well, that’s it until next year.” We don’t number or measure the work we do for God, we just abound in it—Always! We must take up His cross daily. Therefore, because He lives I will not lose love!

Conclusion: Please remember that working for Jesus is not an exercise in futility. Activity in doing good is one recipe for being cheerful Christians; it is like exercise to the body, and it keeps the soul in health. Because our labor for Christ is never worthless, we can find encouragement to keep honoring and serving Him in all that we do. **(MNP)**

SERMON: *Dealing with the problems of life!*

TEXT: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Introduction: First Peter was written to people in the midst of a storm they had not caused and could not control. The storm was in the form of all kinds of trials. Peter said in 1:6, “*you have been grieved by various trials.*” The word *various* literally means, “many/multi-colored.” It refers to all kinds of trials. The word *trials* literally means, “adversity or problems.” Peter is saying, “I realize that you are going through all kinds of problems.” He’s not just talking about persecution and threat of death, but also means health, money, family, work and any kind of problem we might face. Furthermore, scripture is clear that we will face problems (Matt. 7:24-27; 2 Tim. 3:12). However, notice three principles that will help us endure problems that we did not cause and cannot control.

1. **The problems we face are only temporary (v.6b).** Notice the qualifying phrase in vs. 6, “*for a little while.*” Problems are not going to last forever and we need to remember that they are, by their very nature, only temporary (cf. Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17). In fact, we should have this attitude toward all things. We should not become too attached to this world’s pleasures or problems. We must keep in mind that we are pilgrims (1:1). The temporary nature of problems also applies to temptations. Temptation cannot last forever—it’s not that strong. If we wait, it will eventually go away. James said, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (4:7).
2. **The problems we face do not have to make us miserable (v.6a).** Peter makes reference to all the good things given to us by God. He lists them in vs.3-5. We have been given God’s mercy, new life, living hope, eternal inheritance and protection through faith until Jesus returns. With such blessed assurance, we should not allow a few temporary problems and trials to rob us of our rejoicing. The most important things (i.e., God’s mercy, power and eternal life) cannot be taken away from the faithful and obedient. Abraham Lincoln said, “A person is as happy as he makes up his mind to be.” Peter says even though we suffer grief, we have every reason to rejoice because of God’s goodness toward us.
3. **The problems we face will help us grow (v.7).** The principle is—PAIN PRECEDES GROWTH. Weight lifters have a slogan: “No Pain, No Gain.” The slogan can also be applied spiritually. There is no gain without the pain of discipline, perseverance and self-denial. Just like every workout makes an athlete a little stronger, so every problem/trial we endure increases spiritual strength. Peter said, “*the genuineness [proof] of your faith...though tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory.*” Remember, we have the power to overcome any trial that comes our way because God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Cor. 10:13).

Conclusion: Trials are not meant to take strength from us, but to put into us.

- Mark N. Posey

SERMON: *What Manner of Person Ought We to Be?*

TEXT: 2 Peter 3:8-14

Introduction: The key word in this text is *look*. It describes an attitude of excitement and expectation as we wait for the Lord’s return. Since the world and its works will be dissolved and even the very elements will be disintegrated, we fix our hope, not on anything in this world, but on the Lord. Because we do not know the day nor the hour of His return, we must constantly be ready. The Christian who neglects the “*blessed hope*” (Titus 2:13) will gradually develop a cold heart, a worldly attitude and an unfaithful life. If he is not careful, he may even become like the scoffers and laugh at the promise of Christ’s return. Therefore, this expectant attitude ought to make a difference in our personal conduct (2 Pet. 3:11). The word translated *manner* literally means, “out of this world, foreign.” Because we have “*escaped the corruption that is in this world*” (1:4), we must live differently from the people of this world. To the world, Christians behave like “*foreigners.*” Why? Because this world is not our home! We are “*strangers and pilgrims*” (1 Pet. 2:1) headed for a better world; the eternal city of God. We are looking for “*a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,*” because, here we have “*no continuing city, but we seek one to come*” (Heb. 11:10; 13:14). Therefore, “*what manner of person ought we to be?*”

1. **We ought to be STEADFAST (1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Pet. 5:8,9).** We must maintain steadfastness in the “apostles doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer,” as did the early Christians (Acts 2:42).
2. **We ought to be FORGIVING (Eph. 4:32; Lk. 23:34).** The Indians of New England had a means of ending conflict. They would meet with the opponents—dig a deep hole on the battlefield—take two hatchets—put them in the hole and cover them up. Therefore, we have the phrase, “bury the hatchet” (Rom. 12:18).
3. **We ought to HUNGER for God’s Word (Matt. 5:6; Ps. 1:1-3; 119).** So many are suffering from spiritual deficiency. They are starving for the nourishing Word of God. Their bodies are in shambles. Just as the physical body needs a steady diet of food, the soul needs a steady diet of Bible.
4. **We ought to be EVANGELISTIC (Mk. 16:15).** In this passage, Jesus gave them a command to obey. This was a command, not a suggestion. One man said, “Interest in missions is not an elective in God’s university of grace. It is something in which every disciple is expected to major.”
5. **We ought to SEEK FIRST God’s kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33).** In light of the fact that this world and the things associated with it will be dissolved, we should live our lives seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness – that is, having holy conduct and godliness.

Conclusion: Christians should be different, not odd. When you are different, you attract.

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