

The Calmness of the Trusting Believer Pt 1

by Aeron Morgan

The sermon explores the calmness of the trusting believer, and how faith in God's work can bring joy and peace amidst life's adversities.

Duration: 1:01:53

Scripture: Psalm 25:10, Psalm 25:12, Hebrews 12:28, Revelation 2:8-10, Revelation 15:3-4

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Persevering Through Trials"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of preaching the Word of God in the Philippines, specifically among rebel tribes and in areas of extreme poverty. He emphasizes the importance of focusing on the greatness of God and leaving a spiritual impact on the people rather than teaching them new methodologies or keys to success. The speaker highlights the courage and dedication of pastors like Yolando Salem, who risk their lives to bring the gospel to rebel tribes, even in the face of persecution and danger. The sermon also mentions the desperate need for food and the overcrowded prisons in the Philippines, illustrating the challenging circumstances in which these pastors and believers are ministering.

Transcript

We are here again. We turn up like the proverbial bad penny, but the Lord is good. And Pastor Powell asked me if I'd just share a little about my recent visit to the Philippines, to Mindanao.

If I can take just a few minutes on this, I was privileged to receive an invitation from Pastor Rudy DeLappu. He is the General Superintendent of the Independent Assemblies of God in Mindanao, to be their guest speaker at their 15th Annual Conference of Ministers and Workers. I thank God for the opportunity of being able to minister the Word of God there at the conference for two and a half days, which meant speaking at seven sessions, and I was given a very warm and generous welcome at a very precious time with those very fervent and dedicated and sacrificial pastors.

Now they had assured me that they would take care of me in the sense that my life would be safe. I had some idea of the warnings that were going out about people traveling to the Philippines and to Mindanao in particular, and I later discovered the week after I had come back, during the week after I had come back, through the SBS Dateline Program, that Mindanao is now one of the most dangerous places in Southeast Asia for the training of insurgents. A strong, disturbing, Islamic, extreme Islamic presence in the southern part, even though the Philippines is 80% Roman Catholic.

And added to that, of course, there's the tribal areas in the hills where the militant rebel groups reside, who are in opposition to the government. But, thank the Lord, I felt so wonderfully relaxed, with a sense of God's overshadowing presence and I concentrated simply on delivering the Word of God, as he had burdened me with for those pastors and workers, and then after that to the churches. What a joy to open the Word of God to hungry people, the hunger for the Word of God.

And I found myself simply extolling the greatness of God, so that those dear people would go away from the conference, not with some new methodology of how to grow your church or keys to success in God's work, but with a greater appreciation for the God that they serve, knowing that such a view of the Almighty would be the greatest spiritual deposit that I could leave in their hearts. In fact, I made it very clear at the outset of my sharing with them, I was not there to tell them how they could get the job done. They know better than us.

We are so arrogant. We are so proud. We think that we've got the answers to all the problems, and that we can go to these nations and tell them how to do it.

Listen, they've got the language, they've got the culture, and they've got God. And they've got the Word. And they need to see the One who would call them and commission them.

And so I felt that my burden was to share with them from God's Word, that they may have a greater appreciation for their mandate and their message, and above all, their Master. Well, as I've intimated, they were hungry people, and they seemed to just hang on to every word and were so appreciative, and I give God praise for that. May I say that those dear leaders there in Mindanao, they are good, godly, faithful, self-effacing, sacrificial men.

I was going to say earning, but perhaps it's not so much earning as simply receiving what those dear people in their poverty would be contributing to their support. And so they were simply receiving about five to eight dollars a week to live on. How wonderful that our local fellowship up there in Landsberg, on the day that I left, our pastor said, now we are not taking up an offering, but anybody would like to just help those pastors over there, that I was going to this conference of pastors, then just give me something before they left the hall.

And when we went away from the meeting, I just took the money that people had stuffed in my pockets, and I gave it to Dinah, and she began to do a little calculation, and altogether, including a couple of other gifts that had come in just a little earlier, I had a total of one thousand four hundred and fifty dollars. That amounted to approximately sixty thousand pesos. So when you consider the pastors receive only about two hundred and fifty to four hundred, four hundred and fifty pesos a week, sixty thousand pesos in my pocket, wow, that was to them like a fortune.

Well, it was so wonderful because some of the pastors had responded to the superintendent that they did not think that they could make the conference because they couldn't afford it, they couldn't afford to get there. And then it was only approximately seventy cents a day, for three days, in Australian money, seventy cents a day to cover the free Methodist church camp where they held the conference. And they said two hundred and fifty pesos, that's about five dollars a day for all their food, they couldn't afford it.

But he said, listen, come, we'll trust the Lord. And you know, we were able to give those pastors, out from that amount, a gift to cover their expenses, and a bit over in order to cover the cost of the food. It was just about right to the very dollar.

We've got a wonderful God, made that wonderful provision, and I think there were only about seven pastors who couldn't get to that conference. And so it was a joy to see God responding to them in their need and ministering to them. And so we thank the Lord.

As for my own expenses, of course, I look to the Lord. In fact, when I had received the invitation to go to the conference, I felt I should go and said yes. And the next day, I had a check from a couple in Colorado, in America, I did not know, have never met.

And they sent me this check that covered my fare. And so I said, well, must be the Lord wants me to go. He's made that provision.

Praise the Lord. Then I visited some of the churches. Yeah, give God praise.

God is so good. I visited some of the churches on all kinds of transport. We've been to the Philippines, the jipneys and the trikes.

And I went on a coach. And I said, when I got to Cagayan City, that was about four hours drive from Butuan City, I said to the pastor, I said, I know the name of the driver of that bus. He said, you do? I said, Jehu.

In the scriptures, the man who rode furiously. I'm glad the angels were encamped around about me. It was quite an experience.

But being with those churches also was truly inspiring, though very emotional. Those folk reminded me of the church in Smyrna, abjectly poor in terms of what is material, but rich in the things that matter most, what is spiritual and what is eternal. I think, friends, that too many of our churches in Australia are like Laodicea.

They are rich with the false gospel emphasis, as we have heard even earlier, on material prosperity and yet abjectly poor when it comes to what pertains to the kingdom of God. So it was quite an experience to be with these people. Now, the Philippines, may I say this, has great poverty and enormous economic problems.

Their national debt now stands at a hundred million, sorry, a hundred billion Australian dollars, their national debt. So a third of its revenue is spent annually on just serving that debt. And employment is around 12%.

There are 86 million people, and this year alone they estimate there will be 1.7 million children born there in the Philippines. That will only compound their problem. Going to the pastor's house in an outer area of Cagayan City, where I was preaching, we pass an extensive garbage dump with its smoldering fires.

The air was filled with smoke and stench, and scavenging around among that filth were men and women and children carrying off whatever they could find of use. I was told they would be picking up out of this scraps of food in the dump to eat, which had been dumped there by local restaurants off the plates of people who had left it. And they would retrieve just plastic water bottles and clean them out and sell them for recycling to earn a few pesos to live.

Prisons are extremely overcrowded. One young, shy teenager from Mindanao is in Navatos Municipal Prison. She had her 14th birthday in prison the other day, just two weeks ago, arrested and charged with

stealing.

You know what she did? She picked up some discarded pieces of fish at the local fish market to take home to her aunt who had lost her job and was now without any income. The teenager is in prison until the court hearing because she can't pay the \$40 bail money they want. And so she shares a cell, no bigger than an average bedroom in our homes.

She shares that cell with 47 women, including accused murderers, drug addicts and prostitutes. And in the next five cells, there are 485 men and boys. You know, there are 36 children a day that are jailed in the Philippines.

They have 2,100 children in just over a thousand of their jails. And 20 of those minors, listen, are on death row. Child malnutrition, according to UNICEF, rates higher than North Korea.

A third of the children go hungry every day. And I picked up some of these statistics from the Australian newspaper published on Monday of last week. So it's not just hearsay.

It's just the surveys, the reports are now being published. But here's the point. I've given that as a little picture.

It's a tremendous need in the Philippines. But there in the midst of that, we have faithful pastors. And we have dedicated believers who are seeking to reach their desperate people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And they are planting churches. One pastor I was with, and we had a very precious meeting in his church, Pastor Yolando Salem. I refer to him as Alan.

Alan goes up among those rebel tribes I referred to a few moments ago. He goes up to those rebel tribes every week to preach the good news and to teach those new believers. He walks sometimes 12 hours through the forest to get to those people scattered there in the hill region.

And talking about courage, he is so courageous. Five of his fellow pastors were killed by those rebels. He himself was abducted.

But God alone knows why five were slaughtered. But he was spared and freed, but not without telling the commander-in-chief that he needed Christ, that that is why they had come among their people. They weren't there representing the government.

They weren't there preaching politics. They weren't there to see what they could get out of people. They were there to give them the good news of the gospel.

And this commander-in-chief of that rebel force was in tears. And he said, we will not kill you. We let you go.

Then Alan said, I want to do one thing before I do go. What is that? I want to pray for you, he said. And now Alan goes up there every week to preach the gospel in that rebel area amongst those tribes as God has opened that marvelous door.

Praise the Lord. They are poor men in terms of material things, but uncomplaining and uncompromising. And they are building their own churches.

I was in one church. I'll mention the pastor in a moment. But they build these churches.

They are three or four feet of bessa blocks. That's the wall. And then they put up a few stanchions and put a roof on.

And that's their church, air-conditioned. And he's got a lovely place that he has built, this Alan. But another godly, humble pastor working among the tribal people, Giulietto Perez of San Mariano.

I met him. One of the humblest men you could meet, godly. He has erected the outer walls, but he can't afford the cost of putting an iron roof on it.

Well, it was a dry season when I was there, but the rains will come, if not already come. And sitting in the meeting under an open heaven with rains coming down is not all that comfortable. I asked how much it cost to roof the church.

And they said, oh, it cost 16,000 pesos. Well, that's only about \$400 to put the roof on the church. And just last week, a young lady, when I mentioned this, she gave me \$100.

So soon we'll help that pastor to get the roof on. And another pastor, Joel Sosuelo, with a light knee to extend his roof for about the same cost. Joel is a fine young man, again marked by his humility.

These men impressed me greatly, marked by their humility and meekness and godliness. I won't forget being at his little church, and when I felt so strongly to preach about the, from Acts 3, the man at the gate of the temple had been placed there from being but a child, laying from his mother's womb, 40 years of age. And how the apostles going up to the temple were moved upon, wrought upon by the Holy Spirit.

And there saw that man miraculously healed. And we had this very wonderful service, and some people, intimated they wanted to know the Lord, came from the village into those meetings. And at the end of the meeting, we had concluded, and some were having just what you're having tonight, some refreshment after the service.

And Joel came to me and said, will you pray for my daughter? And I said, certainly, where is she? Oh, she's not here. She has been laying from her birth. She is unable to walk.

In fact, she's in a chair, she has no use of her limbs whatsoever. Her name is Hannah May. She's just five years of age.

She's a twin. The other twin, her little sister, is wonderful, but Hannah May, helpless, totally helpless. So I prayed with Joel and his wife that God would touch this child.

I could tell you of other needs. But perhaps you'll remember the pastors. Remember the work in your prayers.

They're in Minden now. And the preaching of the gospel, the planting of churches. Pray for these dear people.

I feel I've met some of God's giants. They are not household names. They are not on television.

But I tell you what, friends, they are doing a great work for God. They've not begged or sent from me. They didn't ask me to raise funds for them when I got back to Australia.

But they are worthy of help. They simply asked that we'll pray for them. And I trust that you will pray.

It was a privilege to be with them. And I trust that God will continue to bless. I'd like to ask Peter if he will pray.

He's been to the Philippines on a number of occasions, knows the situation. Pray for these needs with us. Let's stand and pray, shall we? Before I bring you the word of God this afternoon.

Thank you. Yes. Amen.

Yes. Praise the Lord. Yes.

Praise the Lord. Yes. Hmm.

Thank you. Amen. Praise the Lord.

Amen. Amen. You may be seated.

Thank you. Let us come to God's word this afternoon, please. Psalm 25.

Psalm 25. I want to share simply with you on the calmness of a confiding saint's life. At least I'll commence a meditation today.

And well, what we don't finish this afternoon, because we've got the fellowship tea, we can continue at the end of this coming month when I visit again. From verse eight, good and upright is the Lord. Therefore, will he teach sinners in the way? The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. And as such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.

One man is he that feareth the Lord. Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease.

And his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. And he will show them his covenant.

Amen. You know, pastoral ministry is a most interesting vocation. In the face of the varied demands and events that a pastor encounters on a daily basis, one has to be truly called of God.

And exhibit faith in God to endure. Especially when there is not the visible response you naturally hope for. Though may I say very quickly, friends, what is visible can be very deceiving.

The visible is never to be seen as coextensive with the invisible. When you talk about the church, you may get a large church. But it may not be coextensive with what is the true representation of God's people in that church.

As I thought upon that, and a reason for mentioning that, is I am reminded of J. C. Ryle's comment and what he saw in his day as a morbid craving in the public mind for a more sensuous, ceremonial, sensational, showy worship. And he adds this, that men are impatient of inward, invisible heart work. And interestingly, when you read what he has to say, he saw this as something that tended to make what he called the assaults of false doctrine peculiarly dangerous.

Now I don't think that that is a distinctive symptom that's uniquely descriptive of Bishop Ryle's day, which is 125 years ago. It's so today. Not simply with the people who are in the pew, but it's evident in the pulpit.

Leaders being so readily carried about with every wind of doctrine. And so I guess there are times when even the best of pastors are tempted, because they will not compromise, they are tempted to give up. Discouragements face them when they see the slowness of the work and the slackness of the people and the shallowness of much experience.

Even when they have faithfully and devotedly poured out their lives for the saints. There is that on the one side. But there is another side to this, of course.

There's the joy and the triumph and the encouragement in God's work that make it so worthwhile serving the Lord. And if there are any pastors or former pastors among us, you will have known this, that times when you felt that you wanted to give up, but you soon repented, you never thought of quitting. Because God is so good at to see the Lord working deeply in people's lives, bringing glory to His name.

There is a joy and a gratitude in beholding God at work. When I was in Nambor pastoring the assembly there, we had a very precious sister known to a few folk in the meeting this afternoon, Mari Hovi, and she is now with the Lord. But how she suffered, and as I was meditating, you see, I recall this.

This particular occasion when I visited her in one of her times in the hospital. Though she was suffering, yet she was a delightful person, a joy to visit. And while she went through many trials with physical affliction, she was buoyant in spirit, she was full of faith.

There were some who said she couldn't have had any faith because she was still in that physical condition, that painful condition. So I tell you what, she had incredible faith. In all truth, she ministered to me when I used to visit her.

And on that occasion, I was at her bedside and I picked up her Bible to read to her this very psalm, Psalm 25. A psalm that's designed to express the feelings of devoutness in the calm contemplation of God. And of His perfections.

Because this is what seemed to occupy Mari's heart and mind. And how wonderful it was as I read through this psalm to her to see her reaction. Particularly one verse, which I've included in our reading this afternoon, which he even had me to read to a man, a believer, who was visiting his wife next to her in the ward.

I didn't need to do anything else but to read it. The Holy Spirit took his word and ministered to them. And it's that verse 10 in the version that she used.

When we obey Him, every path He guides us on is fragrant with His lovingkindness and His truth. Hallelujah. Every path.

The ones we don't understand and those we think we understand, but we often get it wrong. Notice what he goes on to say there in verse 12. Where is the man who fears the Lord? God will teach him how to choose the best.

He shall live within God's circle of blessing. The King James Version here has it, His soul shall dwell at ease, a calmness amidst all of life's adversities. And His children shall inherit the earth.

Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence Him. With them alone He shares the secrets of His promises. And so I've had a precious little time pondering this lovely psalm and this particular section I've read to you as I consider what I should bring to you today because here we have the calmness of a confiding believer's life.

It's a splendid psalm. And as you read through it, David alternates between petition and contemplation, which of course is the most proper and commendable thing to do. For such alternations of petition and contemplation are the very heartbeats of devotion.

Either attitude is incomplete without the other. And so we are there with the Word of God open. This is my own particular mode of devotion, waiting upon the Lord.

I've got my Bible and then I see my situation. I see my needs and I see the needs of those I'm concerned for and praying for. And there is this alternation.

But here's the reality, friends, of the truth. The beholding of the character of God is that which always assists calmness and confidence in prayer. To see God for who He is, it becomes a stabilizing factor amidst life's unpredictable circumstances.

Let me just touch upon a couple of things this afternoon if I can. And then we'll take it up again in our next meditation. But I see at least a five-fold mark, or the five-fold marks of a true and trusting saint.

And the first that I would draw your attention to is that this life, it's lived out in true reverence of God. Notice in verse 12, What man is he that feareth the Lord? Verse 14, The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. I have noticed as I've just browsed through the Psalms, that at least 50 times David refers to the fear of the Lord in the Psalms.

It is crucial to a life that pleases the Almighty. And I think it's summed up in his impassioned plea, if you go over a few Psalms to Psalm 34 and verse 9, Oh, fear the Lord, ye His saints, for there is no one to them that fear Him. And go down to verse 11, Come, my children, hearken unto me.

I will teach you the fear of the Lord. One of the designations for the Scriptures in Psalm 19 is the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is clean.

This is that which instructs us in the true fear of the Lord. Now, what is this fear then that David talks about? Well, it's not a slavish or cringing fear. It's not an unhealthy dread that leads us to hide from God.

It's a holy awe of God. It's a reverential awe. It's a wonder.

It's a high esteem that's mingled with affection and with adoration. It's that appropriate disposition of heart and mind that's manifested in our relationship to God by reason of who He is. We reverence Him.

We esteem Him. We are standing o'er before this mighty God. And dear friends, if anything is urgently needed in the Christian church today, it's a renewed disposition of godly fear.

Some of the things that we hear, some of the men that perhaps have been referred to from time to time with their false teachings, some of their statements, we say, how can they make those statements if they had a true knowledge of who God is? They can't know the Lord to express the things they do express. As one man said the other day that upon this revelation he'd been given concerning someone's adulterous association. He said, I went back to my hotel room and said, God, Jesus, Jesus, don't you ever do that to

me again.

He said, you nearly gave me a heart attack on a solemn revelation. Of an adulterous association. And you talk in those terms to the Almighty and all the crowd roaring with laughter.

We need, friends, the true fear of the Lord among us. Observe these scriptures with me. There's Hebrews chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 12. And right at the end of that passage, verse 28, wherefore we receiving a kingdom, mark the words with me, wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire. Do you see that with me? The character of the kingdom and the character of our service and above all, the character of our God.

These demand that we show this disposition of reverence and godly fear. Over in Revelation chapter 15 and verses 3 and 4. Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy. For all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest. How proper it is that we fear Him when we have in view this day of accountability which we know, friends, is soon to dawn.

Oh, come back to the Psalms in Psalm 113 and verses 3 and 4, where David says, O Lord, if thou shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. Friends, this afternoon we must fear Him in the light of His gracious dealings with us. How mighty and how merciful God is.

And when we are talking about this, this is more than a mere religious life that's bound up in external observances. Here is the person who has had a revelation of God, of who God is, what He has done for sinners in grace, that sinner whose heart is now turned to the Lord, who is committed to serving Him and honoring Him. May I say today, friends, there is no one who truly fears the Lord, who does not bow before Him in repentance of sin and trust Him to pardon and save them out of the goodness of his heart.

It's not of works. Thereafter, following and serving the Lord in all humility of mind and godly fear. It's not of works.

It's of grace. And we worship Him today. I believe that if we are to see a renewal of godly fear among us, then more than ever we will need a greater and more thoroughly biblical perception of God in His holiness, in His sovereignty, in His faithfulness, in His all-sufficiency, and in His transcendent glory.

Such knowledge of the Holy is the greatest spiritual grace that preachers can deposit in the people's hearts as they face a morally decadent world when leaving the house of God. It's not a new methodology that we are needing today in our churches. We need a return to practical biblical theology of getting to know God for who He is.

And may I say that preaching that does not have the aroma of God's greatness may entertain for a while, but it will never touch the hidden man of the heart that might be crying out, show me Thy glory. I would say, friends, that in the majority of churches today, people are starving for the greatness of God. They need to hear, using a phrase of John Piper, they need to hear God-entranced preaching.

God help us that our people may behold a whole panorama of His excellencies, especially in a day when a tsunami of secular humanism has crashed through the church, engulfing people in the destructive tidal flow that makes them more concerned about temporal opulence than eternal glory, more about self-image than Christ's image, more about the favor of man than the fear of God Himself. God help us. When there was that tsunami in Indonesia, wow, what a response in multi-millions of dollars, and yet we've got a tsunami that's gone through the church and no one seems to... Well, there are some who are concerned.

There is an attempt to make the church relevant, whatever they mean by that term. What I find, friends, is that with all the efforts of man, and it's all humanistic, it succeeded only in making the church utterly irrelevant. It's not our affluence.

It's not our cleverness. It's not our techniques or even our acceptance that is going to help the church to be what Isaiah describes as a sharp, threshing instrument, having teeth, affecting our world, but it will be our obedience to a holy God, faithfulness to His righteous standards, an acute sense of the true fear of the Lord in the midst, and this uncompromising exposition of the word of truth and faithful preaching of the true biblical gospel. God help us.

We must live out our lives, not only on an individual basis, as individuals, but as a church. It's something that must characterize the church, lived out in true reverence of God. When I read the Acts of the Apostles and see what God did, oh yes, there was miraculous exploits, but you know what it did? It brought the fear of God upon people.

People were afraid to join the church or join themselves to the church. You can't join the church. You have to be born into it.

But they would not associate with the church because there was the fear of the Lord among them, or that it will be seen among us in our day. The second thing is, concerning this believer's life who is trusting in God, bringing such a calmness then into his faith, not only this fear of the Lord, but it's a life submitted to the will of God. Notice what it says in verse 12.

Him shall he teach. This one who trusts God, this one who fears of the Lord, him shall he teach. God shall teach in the way that he, God, shall choose.

Now, looking at this, there are two possibilities in understanding David's thoughts here. First, when David says in verse 4, notice, Show me your ways, O Lord. He is not meaning the manner in which God deals with man, but rather the conduct of man as prescribed by God, what God is demanding of us.

Show us your ways. What is it you want us to be? How is it you want us to conduct our lives? What are you requiring of us? What is it about us that alone can receive your approval, your blessing? Verse 8 helps us here because David says, Good and upright, or righteous, is the Lord. Now, just pause there a moment, for David is declaring something about the character of God.

And he binds together two infinite perfections in God in profoundest harmony. He says, Good and upright, or loving and righteous, the loving kindness of God, and the righteousness or justice of God. And we might assert this afternoon that neither of these incomparable aspects of God's moral nature reaches its highest splendor and unmatched potential and power, except it is associated with each other.

Love without righteousness is mere sentiment, while righteousness apart from love may well be as white as snow, but also will be as cold as ice. It might evoke fear, but it will be fear of the wrong kind. However,

when they are seen together, goodness and uprightness in God, they induce a wholesome reverence for the Almighty.

So, he says, goodness and uprightness, goodness and righteousness, good and righteous is the Lord. And then he goes on, Therefore, in view of such a resplendent nature, therefore will He teach sinners in the way. The way.

It's the way of goodness and righteousness in verse 8. It's the way of mercy and truth in verse 10. It's the way of integrity and uprightness in verse 21. It's interesting, isn't it, that when you go through the book of Acts, before Christians were referred to as Christians, they were people of the way.

People knew they belonged to the way. As they saw their behavior, as they looked upon Him in their whole disposition of mind and heart, they were people of the way. They were different people.

They were distinct people. They were not the same as the world. They were not the same as the unrighteous, the unregenerate.

They were different. God help us. Go over to Psalm 139 and the last couple of verses, verses 23 and 24, were David who has been viewing the wicked.

And my word, his heart is filled with great anger at the wicked. That God will deal with the wicked. And he did so out of a right spirit.

It was his passion for God. As these were in opposition to the Almighty God, these wicked people. Then suddenly, he looks into his own heart.

He says, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me.

And then he says, Lead me in the way everlasting. Literally in the Hebrew, the way of old. The way of the wicked.

That is the ancient paths. The proved and trusted paths of the patriarchs and of the prophets that are pleasing to the Holy One. The way that endures forever in contrast to the way of the wicked that perishes.

Back in Psalm 16, notice at the end of the Psalm, verse 11, Thou wilt show me the path of life. In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Hallelujah. It's walking in accord with God's will. As Paul admonishes us in Thessalonians, For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

We are to be a people, friends, who are separated unto God, walking in ways that He reveals and He requires. In fact, Paul, if I might turn your attention to Colossians 1.10, Paul has this as a prayer for those believers in Colossae. He says, I am praying that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

And so when David says, Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose, it could well refer to those ways that characterize the path that God demands of us, requires of us, a way that honors Him because we walk in truth and in righteousness. But it might also be seen as referring to God's will for our lives, the way that He shall choose. How blessed to have our steps ordered by the Lord, being consciously

instructed by God so we will be found in the path that's ordained by Him.

But if I will remember the motto of Howard Carter in his Bible school at Hampstead in London, then later became Kenley Bible College when the Assemblies of God made it the official training, ministerial training school for its pastors and people. But the motto of Howard Carter was a simple prayer. It was, Grant me to know that to be in Thy will is success and to love Thee more than Thy service.

The will of God for our lives. Go back to verse 10 there in Psalm 25. When we obey Him, every path He guides us on is fragrant with His loving kindness and His truth.

I guess, friends, that one of the disappointing features of our lives is that we are so often questioning why. We might perhaps be having a difficult path, sometimes with physical suffering or even financial setbacks and other kinds of unwelcome adversities and especially when, like David, we are tempted to compare our lot to others who seem to be having it so good. I made reference earlier to that church in Smyrna in relation to those dear believers there and pastors and churches in Mindanao in the Philippines that would just turn with me for a moment to Revelation chapter 2 verses 8 to 10.

For the Lord says to this church, Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. He had said in the previous verse, I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich. And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogues of Satan.

Then you would have thought He would have said, Fear none of those things. That's all over with. No.

He says there's more to come. Cheer up. Which thou shalt suffer.

Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison in order that you may be tried and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful even to the point of martyrdom and I will give you the crown of life. It's like that sometimes.

No sooner has one wave of difficulty passed over us than another one rolls our way. Why, Lord? May I suggest to you that what our Lord looks for is the humble, obedient following of the way that He chooses and leads us in, where we might demonstrate that durable faith that pleases Him. What we ever need to keep before us is that God is always at work, not just for us, but perhaps more importantly, in us.

And I choose to believe it is God who chooses my path for me and not the devil. I always remember dear Leonard Ravenhill, what a wonderful man of God he was. And he said, oh, he says, how many times have I heard those people? Oh, the devil's been after me this week.

He said, you know, to be honest, I don't think the devil knows them. He said that they do nothing for the kingdom. There are paths, friends, that the Lord chooses because He is sovereignly in control.

You know, my son, Philip, told me about his little lad, Sam, the other night. Philip is in America. He was praying with Sam before going to bed.

And with a boy's innocent impishness, Sam prayed. And he said, Lord, let there be a snowy day tomorrow with so much snow I can't go to school. Well, when he'd finished praying, Philip said to him, Sam, it's late spring, almost summer.

There's no way you're going to get a snow day tomorrow. To which my lovely grandson replied, Dad, this is God we are talking about. And Philip said to me, I couldn't argue with his theology.

But I had to explain the verse to him about asking anything according to his will. But isn't that so like us very often? Personal preferences, they are so natural. And very often they are legitimate.

I think we make a mistake very often of deeming that the will of God must always clash with our own desires. The secret, friends, of a calm and confident life that receives true guidance from the Lord, it lies in this matter of truly fearing the Lord and yielding ourselves unreservedly to His will for our lives. It's not a matter of struggling, but submitting.

Notice in verse 9, David says, The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way. You see, the arrogant will want to go their own way. That leads to death and to damnation.

But the humble will gladly receive God's infinitely wise counsel and walk in His way because His way is perfect. Moses was reputed to be a great man in respect of meekness. He sought to know God's way.

And that is where in Exodus 33, he prays, Lord, show me, show me Your way. And God answered that prayer. It's in the Psalms where it says that God made known His ways unto Moses.

You can know the will of God for your life. You should desire to know the will of God for your life. Whoever you are today, the will of God is not just for the pastors, for the preachers, for those who are in office within the church, who have ministries.

The will of God applies to every one of us, in our homes, with our families. What a joy it is to know the will of God or to trust Him implicitly, to willingly accept His will for our lives. What does Paul say? It's good and acceptable and perfect.

And then will our hearts be filled with this calm confidence. Let me conclude with a reference to Isaiah, who affirms, Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon Thee, because he trusts in Thee. And then he makes this appeal, trust ye in the Lord forever.

Forever. For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Praise the Lord.

Press in to know the Lord, friends. Press in to see Him for who He is. Morning by morning, ask Him to open your ear, to hear Him speak into your heart through His Word, revealing something of His greatness, of His glory.

I tell you, you will be able to face the day whatever it brings. You're not questioning why is it that God has allowed this. But you will have a calm confidence in the Lord and see God working on your behalf and God being glorified, fearing the Lord, walking in accordance with His will.

This is what brings calmness into the soul. Father, thank you for the privilege this afternoon of just meditating together. Thank you for your goodness to us.

We are not deserving of the least of your mercies, but daily you lord us with benefits. Grant, Lord, today that we shall have such a passion to know you for who you are.

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