

Not According To Our Sins (TGC 2011)

by James MacDonald

This sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God, especially during times of betrayal, adversity, and uncertainty. It highlights the need to lean on God, learn from His ways, and choose to trust Him even when facing challenges. The speaker encourages personal reflection and surrender to God's will, pointing to Jesus as the ultimate example of trust, embodiment of trust, and enabler of trust in our lives.

Scripture: Psalm 25:1, Psalm 25:4, Psalm 25:8, Psalm 25:12, Psalm 25:15, Psalm 25:20

Topics: "Trusting God in Adversity", "Surrendering to God's Will"

Description

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Transcript

Hey, good morning. I did hear a little cheer from over here, but I just want to acknowledge all of my team members. The pastor stands up front, but he's supported by a lot of people in ministry, and I'd like to just recognize those who serve.

Some of our ministry team from Harvest is here, why don't you all just stand quickly and I can just honor and acknowledge you. All right. Thank God for these partners, thank you for that.

And I'm very thankful for the opportunity and the privilege to open God's Word with you today at this great and needed conference. It seems like it was almost, boy, seven or eight years ago when I had the privilege of meeting with Don Carson, and he shared with me this great vision for the Gospel Coalition. God is blessed.

He and Tim's leadership immensely, and I feel greatly privileged and blessed to be a part of that. I actually sat under Don Carson at Trinity, and that was quite an experience, and I learned a great deal from him. And frankly, I was scared of him, and I still am.

I kept waiting, Don, for the end of the semester when you'd kind of just wink or just smile at me knowingly, or just give me some sort of sense that, you know, we had a thing going on, and yeah, I'm still waiting for that. So when Don gave me Psalm 25 to preach on, I couldn't decide honestly if it was a gift or a gauntlet. I

didn't know if he was kind of like, let's see you preach Christ from this passage, yo.

But as I've studied it, honestly, I really do think it is a great gift, and so thank you for that, Don. I want to make sure, however, that even though this conference has a great theme, preaching Christ from the Old Testament, I want to make sure that we're not assuming too much there. So, before we can preach Christ from the Old Testament, we have to just preach, right? And 2 Timothy chapter 4 is very instructive about our responsibility to preach the Word.

Luther said, *predicatio verbum Dei, est verbum Dei*, which means that the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. Calvin said that God deigns to consecrate the tongues and mouths of men in order that His voice may resound in them. Many pulpits today are not preaching the Word of God.

They're between red-faced pulpit rants and self-indulgent intellectual meanderings through the dark forest of it seems to me. Many are not actually heralding the Word that God has given, and what our nation is crying out for, what our world is crying out for, is thus says the Lord. We have to come back to that, alright? So yes, preach the Word, and then preach Christ from the Word.

Preach Christ from all 66 books from Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21. Let's preach Christ from the Word of God, amen? Preaching Christ as my mother went to, my mom went to heaven last summer, and she died of ALS, and she suffered greatly. To go through that experience has caused me to treasure in a deeper and a new way what it meant for my mother to get 40 little elementary schools down in the basement every Tuesday afternoon after school and teach the Word of God to us.

I treasure more than I ever could have as a child the chorus that she taught us. The Bible is the written Word of God, we used to sing. The Bible is the written Word of God, it tells about the living Word of God.

On every page, on every line, you'll find the Son of God divine. We used to sing this. If you want to learn to know the King of Kings, if you want to learn of all the heavenly things, read the book.

Learn the book. Let the book teach you. That was a great chorus, I don't know if Keith is going to be able to get that up for us later on, but I love what that's saying, and so I love the theme of this conference, preaching Christ from the Old Testament, absolutely.

Open your Bibles to Psalm 25. That's my privileged assignment for this hour, Psalm 25. Now we understand that you don't just rip open the Bible and start reading it, you've got to understand what you have in your hands, and so just four things by way of background in regard to Psalm 25.

At the risk of stating the obvious, but understanding what it is, it's a psalm. Psalms are the most quoted book in the Old Testament, incredibly, in the New Testament from the Old Testament, incredibly. Isaiah is second, Isaiah is quoted 40-some times, low 50s.

The psalms are quoted over 400 times in the New Testament. One of our authors on the Gospel Coalition website said recently that the psalms are the songbook of Jesus, and what a great perspective to have as we gaze into this great book. It's a psalm, and written over a thousand years, the psalms, 150 of them, 100 named the author, 73 named David as the author, and this is one of those psalms.

Notice this secondly, it's a psalm, it's a poem. Psalms are ancient Hebrew poetry, not rhyming as we would think of poetry, but artistic structures, and there's two main artistic structures in Psalm 25. First of all, it's an acrostic, almost every verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Secondly, the truths come in couplets, repeating the same message with different words. We learned in seminary, synonymous parallelism, that's what's happening again and again as we go through this psalm that is a poem. But then notice this, there's a pattern here, Psalm 25, first of all, follows the typical pattern of creed, a prayer, or pardon me, a prayer, and a creed, and back and forth, eight verses, seven verses, eight verses, prayer, creed, prayer.

The subject of the psalm is crying out in desperation and despair. It's David in pursuit of total trust upon God. And so the title I've given to this message is, when you don't know what to do.

Have you ever had a time in your life when you don't know what to do? The answer to that question, when you don't know what to do, is to trust. When you don't, let's just kind of work on this together. I like people who talk back a little bit.

I'll say my part, your answer is trust. When you don't know what to do, lift up your voice and say it. When you don't know what to do, sometimes you don't know what to do and you should.

That's what's coming to us now in Psalm 25. Now when I sit in my study and prepare to feed the people at our church, I find some challenges related to a scripture like this, especially because of the repetition in it. And so I've chosen a couple of themes to kind of help us here.

I tend to think when I'm training pastors about preaching, I like to think about buckets. And a lot of the content from Psalm 25 could go into a bucket called learn. Things we need to learn about God so we trust him better.

And then a second category of things that are here are more along the lines of ways of trusting God or things that we do that account to trusting God. I'm going to call this leaning. Some of the truth in this text is going in the learn bucket.

Some of it's going in the lean bucket, but all of it's going to be about this matter of trusting God better, especially when you don't know what to do. Now, past the genre of the psalm, past the literary device of the poetry, past the pattern and structure, even this learning device, is the plea of a brokenhearted man. As you study God's Word, don't ever let your structure or your analysis cause paralysis in the matter that this is a person's life.

This is a person's relationship with God that is modeling under the inspiration of the Spirit something very important for us. Though the setting of Psalm 25 is not known, I would give you this final point of background. This is a plea.

This is a plea from a heartbroken man, a king. Now some debate the background for Psalm 25. I think the text supports that David was in a very desperate place.

He speaks of his enemies and his foes. He speaks of treachery in this psalm and hate. He speaks of the threat of ambush and profound loneliness and sorrow.

David has been betrayed. He's crushed in his spirit. He's crushed by what's happened to him.

I probably thought in my 20s that I had been crushed. I never had been. I'm sure I thought in my 30s that I had been crushed.

I never really had been. It wasn't really until my late 40s that I understood what it was to be crushed by some things. And a psalm like this can only come from a person who knows what it is to be in that vice and to be crushed by something.

Some would suggest that this was David's experience with Saul, but in the text he says, remember not the sins of my youth. And so he's not a young man when he's going through this. And this has led scholars generally to agree that the backdrop for this song is Absalom.

That story begins in 2 Samuel 3. Absalom was David's third son to his second wife. Anybody got a problem just with that part? Sometimes I hear guys, you know, I wish we were in the Old Testament, man, where you could have more wives. I feel sad for your wife, bro.

OK? This is, he's already into trouble. This is not God's best plan. We have that in Genesis.

One man, one woman for a lifetime. David's already off plan. And born to this second wife is this third son, Absalom.

Eventually David's kids grow up and by 2 Samuel 13, his first son rapes one of his daughters. And his third son is angry appropriately at the brother for what he did to his sister, but at the father who is so incredibly passive and just weirdly codependent that he can't even deal with the sin of his first born son, Amnon. And so Absalom hates his brother and he murders him.

And David banishes him. He doesn't confront him. He doesn't deal with him.

He just puts him away from himself. After a long period of time the chapters continue and David begs his way back into Jerusalem and then he begs his way back into the palace and finally at the end of chapter 14 the king kisses the murderer's son but puts him out again. And so in chapter 15 verse 1 he's like, not me, not this, no more.

And so he gets in his chariot and he starts rallying the people around and as the people would come to David for counsel to solve problems, he'd step in and say, yeah I know a little bit about that. Oh, he's kind of old, you might want to talk to me about that. And so the text says in chapter 15 and 16 that more and more the hearts of the men were going after Absalom.

The people were following him. The people were looking to him. It was a coup.

It was a mutiny. It was a betrayal of the highest order. As Psalm 25 was written, David had fled from the palace, taken a few friends and soldiers that didn't betray him with him.

And the king of Israel is encamped outside the city. People have to bring him food so that he can survive and he's just trying to avoid a conflict where his son will be killed. If you're watching all this, this is like a Jerry Springer episode.

If you're living it, it's crushing, devastating, despair-inducing. You're like, why did he kill the kid? The kid is scum! Yeah, you say that. Till it's your dearest friend.

Till it's your closest ministry partner. Till it's your spouse. Till it's one of your kids.

Joab just can't understand why when the battle ensues and Absalom is killed, why David weeps and says, oh Absalom, oh Absalom, would that I had died in your place. He cannot comprehend, Joab can't,

because he hasn't been crushed as David has been. And it's this circumstance, I believe, that leads to the writing of Psalm 25.

Let's go through it, brothers and sisters, together. This wonderful passage. Verse 1, to you, oh Lord, I lift up my soul.

Oh my God, in you I trust. That's the theme of the entire psalm. The word there, soul, nefesh, 750 times in the Old Testament, it means the seed of desire.

The internal, non-material part of man, but it can mean the whole being. David comes in desperation and he lifts up all that he is to God. To you, oh Lord, I lift up my soul.

Oh my God, in you I trust. And with that theme stated, he launches into the content of his prayer. Verse 2, let me not be put to shame.

How clear is that prayer? The word there, shame, means to fall into disgrace, to be shamed. Don't let this end badly, God. Don't let this end badly, God.

And David cries out in desperation. He's afraid of being shamed. He's afraid that his, he saw how Saul died.

He's afraid that his enemies are going to gloat over him. Have you ever been afraid? I mean like afraid, afraid, like really afraid something's going to happen to you? I've been a Chicago Blackhawks fan all my life and we went to, me and some friends went to the game in Philadelphia to see the Stanley Cup final. And okay, all right, I was afraid.

Most of the people in Philadelphia aren't sweet and kind like David Paulus and they're a little crazier, kind of picture Paul Tripp, you know, like that. And so, they're like, what's coming now? What's coming now? And you don't know, you know. And scary going to Philadelphia and you've heard about their fans, not like fans anywhere else.

So I'm going to tell you what I did. I was embarrassed. I put on my Chicago Blackhawks jersey but over it, I put a Philadelphia Flyers jersey.

So when I was walking into the game and all my brothers were getting called out and they were saying stuff your mama doesn't know about. And they're calling these things out and everything and I'm walking in with my Philadelphia jersey, you know, just. But then when I got inside, I felt kind of bullied like I beat you, you didn't say nothing to me.

And so I ran into Mark Giangreco, the Channel 2 newscaster from Chicago here. And so anyway, here's what I did, it wasn't very smart. Look at this little video clip.

Thank you, Ryan, and I am ready to handle the cup myself with kid gloves. Big angry Flyer fan here, right? Uh-uh. Check it out.

And this is actor Pastor James McDonald, so we got the big guy on our side tonight as well. JR, we'll see you later. I love it.

That's great. Kudos to number 20 there. Thank you, Mark.

And thank you, big fella. Get that off. Get that off.

All right. Yeah, yeah. So.

OK, so here's the thing. OK, that seemed like a great idea, but all the fans watched me do that. So now I'm looking around, and I would have been better just to wear the jersey in.

Now I was like enemy number one, and I'm telling you, when the Hawks won, people were getting punched. I mean, they're Blackhawk fans. It was crazy, and I was freaking out, and I'm like, this is not going to end good.

And all the guys I walked in with, they were hard to find at that point. And I was scared that this was going to end badly. Now take that and multiply that by a factor that's unimaginable, and you'll begin to encroach upon what David is feeling when he says, let me not be put to shame.

God, don't let this go where it looks like it's going. And notice, though, this great addition, something David was learning. He's like, wait a minute, wait a minute.

What am I so stressed out about? Verse three, indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame. They shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. It might look bad today.

Your son may be pretty far out there. Your test results may look very bad. Your heart may be in a vice over some crushing reality.

But look at verse three. Nothing is over yet. None who wait for the Lord will be put to shame, will fall into disgrace.

Not ultimately, not in the end, not when the Lord is done. And so, our first kind of main thought here that we want to go through is this theme right here. This thing we've got to learn in this passage.

I don't know where this is going. I don't know how it ends exactly. But here I understand that in the end, everyone say no shame, say it.

No shame, not in the end, not when God's done. And so, something as I seek to trust more and better, something that I desperately need to learn. That word there, wantonly, New American Standard and NIV say, without excuse.

But is there ever an excuse or a reason to be betrayed? No one deserves what David was experiencing. Pastors don't deserve betrayal. Parents don't deserve betrayal.

Children, people who've experienced that. How comforting to embrace and learn that reality. No shame.

And then this, notice in verse four. God's way. God's way.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me.

Beginning of five really could go with four there, I think, in the parallelism. But notice the plurals there. Your ways, God.

Your paths, God. Make me to know them. This is not a prayer for specific guidance.

This is a petition to understand God's pattern. Make me to learn your ways, God. God has his ways.

You know that, right? Turn to your neighbor and say, God has his ways. All right? Hosea chapter 14, verse nine says, do not be unwise, for the ways of the Lord are right. Isaiah 55 tells us that the ways of the Lord are as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are God's ways above our ways.

God's got some different ways of doing things. Would you agree with that? God's got some very different ways of doing things. One of the great joys has been being on this gospel coalition council, and we're all, we're different.

Just say that. We're different. We're just very different.

Same Savior, same gospel, but we're also different. And we have our ways. Listen, listen.

God has his ways, and David's like, I can't get through this if you don't help me understand your ways better. He's saying, in effect, really God? You're in this? This is your way? Really this, this is the way you want this? He's saying, in effect, I think, I want to understand God's way, but I'm not seeing it right now. April 2008 and April 2009 were the two worst, by far, no close second, months of my life.

In God's providence, they were also the months of the gospel coalition meeting. And in those two years, I was in the throes of finding out that I had prostate cancer. Our church was in major, major turmoil and upheaval at the leadership level, but things that I couldn't talk about.

You know what I'm talking about when I say things I couldn't talk about? And I had a prodigal child who was breaking our hearts in ways that I couldn't imagine. I forced myself to go and sit in on some of the sessions, and I remember at one of the breaks, Colin Smith, who's been a real pastor to me and a pastor in our area, I don't know if you remember this, Colin, but I was over in the corner, and it was dark, and he came over to me and he put his hand on my shoulder like he would, you know, pastors need pastors too, right? And he came over and put his hand on my shoulder and he said, how are you, brother, you know, in his beautiful English accent, and I just hung my head and started to sob, and I said, I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do. If you've never been at the place where the trials are so significant that you don't even know what to do, then you don't understand Psalm 25, right? David is pleading, God, I'm not seeing it, I know you have ways, but I have to learn them because everything that's happening makes no sense to me at all.

That's a big part of trusting, is learning, learning, learning that. Well, in August of 2009, I taught Psalm 25 in my church. Ninety-eight percent of our people knew nothing about what I was facing and dealing with, just the smallest part of it, really.

But it sure causes me to understand verse 5 where he says, lead me in your truth and teach me for you are the God of my salvation. The word salvation there can have many meanings in Scripture. Most literally it means to make wide.

It's spoken of a person who is, it's contrasted with a person who's in a narrow place full of trouble and distress, I'm stuck here, I can't move, it's too tight, God, it's closing in, it's very dark. And he's saying here, you're the God who gets me out, that's what he's saying. If you've ever been in a place where I need God to get me out of this, that's what this is about.

I wait for you. No one but you can get me out of this. You are the God of my salvation.

Well, when you say that you're waiting, that means you're accepting God's timing and the wisdom of it. You're confessing this, I'm not fussing, I'm not fuming, I'm not fixing, oh, I could. I could do a few things to get me out of this situation.

I got some insights, I could say some things, I could do some things, I could get some balls rolling, I could take hold of this if I had to. I say this to my own shame, I've had to learn the meaning of the words, the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. We learn as pastors and we learn as parents that when you want it for somebody more than they want it for themselves, that's not going anywhere good.

And so that's what you're saying when you say, I'm waiting on God for my salvation. He has to get me out of this narrow place. It's a phenomenal truth.

As I said to you three years ago today, my world was just about as dark as it could possibly be. And today, today, everyone say praise God. Today praise God, our church is flourishing, my health has returned, our daughter has come home and given us a beautiful grandchild with a wonderful son-in-law that I had the privilege of baptizing three weeks ago.

Praise God, amen. But it was not like that then. I remember at the Gospel Coalition two years ago, I was going out for dinner with some people I hadn't met, Justin Taylor and Joshua Harris, I was kind of excited to have dinner with them, and Erwin Lutzer, another pastor in the city, it's kind of cool how we pastor each other.

And Erwin Lutzer was driving me over to the place where we were going to eat dinner and I couldn't even get out of the car. And he was like, what's wrong? And I sat there in the car and just poured out my heart to him and told him everything. And he prayed a prayer for me.

You ever had someone pray? I pray that you have someone pray a prayer for you like that. And he sat there with his hands on the steering wheel and he opened his heart to God and he poured out a stream. And when he was saying the things that he was asking God to do, I'm telling you, yo, it was darkness.

It was like, that will never happen. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief, right? And yet, two, three years later, all that he prayed has happened and beyond things that God, he didn't even know to think or ask. That's why you're doing this, all right? I'm waiting for the God of my salvation, all right? That's part of leaning.

I'm going to wait. I'm going to wait. I'm not going to take hold of this myself.

That's what David's saying. I could rush back into town. I could get off to that palace.

I could take hold of it. God is the one I'm waiting on. I love that.

Wait for your salvation. Through the text, further, it should be fairly easy to follow Bible teaching. Verse five's done.

Guess what verse we're in now? Verse six, verse six. Notice it says three times in this next little section here. I'm going to call this seek mercy.

The word remember is used three times. It's a poetic imperative, rousing God to action on his behalf. David is rousing God to action on his behalf, and so he speaks of his mercies, plural.

Notice, remember your, it should be mercies. I think it would be better there. Remember your mercies, oh Lord, and your acts of steadfast love.

This is a plea. This is not a plea for God to review his nature. Hey, God, don't forget you're a merciful God.

That's not what he's saying. He's actually asking God to review their personal experience together. Hey, haven't you done some merciful things for me? Remember your mercies, God.

Remember your mercies to me. Remember your chesed love, your covenant love, your unimpeachable loyalty, God. Remember what you're like.

I love that when he calls upon God to do that. He's saying in effect, you know what you're like, God. You know what you're like.

Again, I just, because it's our context, I'll just reference some of the great guys on the council. They're all real different, and I'm probably as different as any of them. Last night I was walking down the hallway, and here comes C.J. Mahaney and John Piper.

I'm always kind of excited to see them. They're not the same, you know. They believe the same stuff.

They're not the same, you know. C.J. Mahaney nearly tackled me in the hallway through his arms. He's always touching you, touching you.

Tim Keller, not so much. And he was grabbing me and telling me, hey, are we good, are we good? And then John Piper was standing over there, and he was like this. He was like, let's hug, James.

We all have our own style. God has a pattern. God has a pattern.

And David's saying, you know what you're like. You know what, do that thing you do, God. Do that mercy thing that you do.

Do it for me. Do it now, God. I love that.

Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. And then he says this, remember not the sins of my youth, my missing the mark 580 times in the Old Testament. I've missed the mark, God, and it wasn't because I didn't know.

He adds the phrase, and my transgressions, and IV there says my rebellious ways. It's the casting off of allegiance. I know better than God does I'm going to do what I want to do, my way, what I said.

I do what I want. You get to a place where you don't know what to do. How many people have rebellious ways? Just a little honesty in church today.

How many people? Put up your hand if you have some rebellious ways. All right. Don, that was reluctant, but I appreciated it.

No, I just want to bless and honor you. What I'm getting at is this. We all have it.

Even the people that we esteem most highly have rebellious ways. Turn to your neighbor and say, you have them, all right? Now calm down, calm down. Ease up on each other here, we'll fight at the break.

Now here's the thing, all right. We all have these rebellious ways, but here's the thing. When God gets you in a place where you don't know what to do, you're not doing a surface makeover anymore.

You're cleaning into the corners. You're like, anything that would hinder the answer to these positions now has to go. The convenience of secret sin and petty offenses and the nonsense that separates brothers and sisters in Christ, it all has to go now, all right? I can't have no sin in my life, God, because I have to have the answer from you.

You get to a difficult place in God's providence, you will scour every corner of your soul to know that you know that you know that God's mercies have touched that place, and the river of his grace has flowed into those dry corners. Remember not the sins of my youth, and then this additional thought. For the sake of your goodness, O Lord, according to your steadfast love, remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

Let God get you to the place where you say, I don't know what to do. Let God get you to that place, and when he gets you there, everyone say this, lift up your voice, say it. When God gets you to that place, all right, this is part of leaning, leaning into God and doing that business that so often is neglected, even for people in ministry.

Now he transitions here a little bit and begins to talk to the congregation, verse 8. What David wants for himself, he wants for others, and so he writes this, good and upright is the Lord, therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and he teaches the humble his way. These are repeating now some themes that we've seen, but that word there, instructs, it has a peculiar translation, I'm not sure, I'm not the one to answer those questions.

But a careful study indicates that the concept here is literally to cast or to shoot. When I used to sit in seminary, I felt like the teachers kind of laid it out there and instructed you, you could get it if you wanted it, if you were lazy you didn't get much. But this is more than just take it if you want it.

This is God moving toward us and casting us into the way, placing upon us the pressure to get the things that we must get. Like oil down a funnel, like a bowling ball down an alley, like an arrow through a bullseye. That's what it feels like in this moment, when he casts sinners in the way, he leads the humble in what is right, and teaches that leading there is the verbal form of way.

It's saying in effect that God weighs you in the way. That's what it is. The way God gets you in the way is He weighs you into the way, so that the way that you used to weigh, you don't weigh that way no more.

OK? And then you say, well, does that happen for everybody? No. There's actually a cause here that is an exception. I don't want to miss it.

I hope you won't either. Notice, all the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness. Sweet! All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

But sometimes we don't keep His covenant and testimonies. Sometimes we fail to keep His covenant and testimonies. And so this leaning into the Lord is a renewed determination when I don't know what to do.

This is what I'll do. I'm going to receive the correction that God has given to me. I'm going to obey the correction.

I'm going to learn the lesson. I'm going to get to a better place. God help me.

And to really commit to doing that. Notice that it says, to those who keep His covenant, covenant. God's made some covenants with us.

And you know, I think, hey, do you remember that rainbow guy? Does anybody remember that guy who used to go to golf tournaments and stuff like that with the weird hair? And he used to hold up signs? Hold up your hand if you remember that guy. Remember that guy? I think I got a picture of him here. We got a picture of him? Yeah, there's the guy.

Yeah. Totally counterintuitive, but he ended up in jail. And he's promoting there the most important evangelistic verse.

Would everybody agree? Interpretation by voting. How many people would say that's the most popular evangelistic verse? If we vote for it, I'll never change my mind. John 3.16, John 3.16. But I was thinking that if he ever gets out of prison, I'm going to ask him to come to our church and hold up what John 3.16 is to the lost.

This verse is to the saved. Do you know what I'm writing? Do you know? It's the John 3.16 for Christians. Do you know what it is? I need rainbow man to come and hold this one up.

He can walk around the back of our church as long as he wants. I don't know if you'll be able to see this. I didn't do such a good job of it with my sharpie, but it's, can somebody down front call it out? What is it? Matt, Matt, what is it? Romans 8.28, alright? See, we believe that there's a covenant God who is, even when He has to step toward me in correction, He knows what He's doing.

Everyone say He knows what He's doing. He knows what He's doing, and when He steps toward me in that covenant relationship, the way for me to lean is into that and to obey His correction. How critical.

Lean in and embrace what God is doing. It comes back to a theme we've hit already here. When the hand of God is heavy upon you, you can't carry any extra burdens, and that's what verse 11 is about.

For your namesake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Can't carry this sin anymore, God. I can't carry this sin and your correction.

The weight of my sin and the weight of your correction is too heavy. I can't carry all that. I should drop something.

What should I drop? And if you were my counselor, and I said, I can't carry the weight of all my sin and God's correction, but I'm kind of new to this Christian thing, what should I drop? No one knows. What if I drop my sin? That's what He's saying here when He says, for your namesake, O Lord, for the fame of your great name, for your reputation, God. We know what you're like and what you've said about yourself, and we've experienced it.

For your namesake, O Lord, pardon my guilt. Pardon my guilt, for it's great. And I'll tell you what, thank God for correction.

I'm not the person I was five years ago, I can tell you that. And I don't want to be that person. Thank God for the correction that brings us to the place where we see the pride and the self-centeredness and the things in our life that injure others and alienate us from the one that we serve.

For your namesake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Amen. Well, pretty straightforward there.

Not a lot to really debate and discuss. Just this, I need forgiveness. Need forgiveness.

Desperately, desperately need God's forgiveness. I'm laying it down before you have to pry it from my cold, lifeless hands, God. I'm going to lay it down willingly.

And you came to Chicago to look. You came to Chicago to learn. I'm suggesting that you came to Chicago to learn.

But let me ask you this, God knows what's going on in your life. Is there something you need to leave here? Have you been on the edge of something? Have you been fiddling, playing, bothering with something that's got no business in the life of a follower of Jesus Christ? Have you? Is there something that you long to leave in Chicago? I'm not on a sermon now, alright? This might be God's word for somebody here right now. I don't judge you, I've been that person.

So I'm just saying. Is there something that every time you think of McCormick Place for the rest of your life, there's a relationship that you've been allowing to encroach on your previous commitments? I don't need to probe further. God's Spirit is very capable of directing your heart to the thing that every time you think of McCormick Place, you're going to think, I left that there.

I left it there. Am I telling you truth? Is it right that some things should stay here and not go home with you? Alright? That's a big part of leaning. I need forgiveness, God.

I can't go forward the way I am. If I have to go through another trial like this, I at least want it to be about something different. I want to learn these things.

And so then I love verses 12-14. It talks about, I'm going to call this choosing covenant. Look at verse 12.

Who is the man who fears the Lord? Fear of course is the attitude of heart that seeks a right relationship to the fear source. If I fear the fire, I don't put my hand in. If I fear the police, I drive the speed limit.

Fear is the attitude of heart that seeks a right relationship to the fear source. A problem in ministry is that we fear the wrong stuff. We fear, as Tim was teaching us yesterday, the loss of our reputation.

We fear the failure of our ministry. We feel the disapproval of others. When the one that we ought to fear is we ought to fear God.

The surest antidote for the fear of man is, I love what it says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, or pardon me, chapter 4. 1 Corinthians 4 verse 3. Paul had this nailed. He said, to me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. Why Paul? You don't care what people think? Well, sort of.

But here's the deal. He who judges me is the Lord. That's the thing.

Maximizing your focus on what God thinks of you will defeat the fear of man quickly. Who is this man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being.

I prepared a lot of thoughts on that point, but I'm not going to share them. His offspring shall inherit the land. Just a further statement of the blessings.

Notice the things that come to the one who fears the Lord. He'll instruct him. His soul will abide in well-being or prosperity that means.

What? What? Every time? All the time? No, normally speaking. That's the pattern of how God works. And then notice this.

The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him. Some translations have there the secrets of the Lord. There's an intimacy that comes to those who choose that covenant relationship of fearing God.

And to them, verse 14, He makes known to them His covenant. How phenomenal. All right, we've got that now.

Choose covenant. This is covenant, theologian in the best sense of the word, all right? One who makes the covenant relationship that God offers the great study of their lives. That's what He's calling us to and that's something we have to learn when God takes us through a time when we don't know what to do.

Let me just ask you, how's that going with you? I've experienced that when you go through trials you get, well, the same sun that melts the ice also hardens the clay. And you get better or you get bitter. You get closer.

It's true with Kathy and I. These trials that we've been through, thank God we're up this morning together praying together. I'm closer to my wife than I've ever been before. Twenty-seven years married, so thankful for her.

But I can tell you there were critical junctures and the difficult times where we were either going to come together or we were going to come apart. We were either going to cause this to force us into relationship or it was going to cause us to separate and be distant from one another. Thank God that we pursued relationship and of course what's true in the horizontal must be true in the vertical.

And so many people who have gone through ministry trials didn't get better. They got bitter. I remember one of my best friends in college, so much more gifted than me, so capable of serving God, had a bad first experience in ministry and he hasn't been with the Lord for more than two decades.

I was like, dude, why don't you want to be a pastor anymore? He said, crap treatment for crap pay. That was his assessment of serving Jesus Christ. How sad that that should happen.

But people get bitter and maybe you're here and you're bitter and you need to allow what's happened in ministry to force you deeper into relationship with your covenant, keeping God not away from it. Well, the next phrase is always expectant. My eyes are ever toward the Lord for He will pluck my feet out of the net.

Now I just want to acknowledge, everybody just look up here for a minute. I've learned a lot from the Gospel Coalition. One of the mistakes that I made as a young pastor is I would take a passage, study really hard, always be afraid of standing up there going, um, I don't know anything else.

There's still twenty minutes left in the service. So I was so afraid of that happening that I would overprepare. Put up your hand if you've overprepared a message.

Now, here's what happens. Now, I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I'm not a dope either. And I know that I'm supposed to get to Jesus.

I know I'm supposed to get to the cross. Problem is, is that I overprepare and then there's no time left and the best part of the message is like, let's pray. Okay? Not good.

Everyone say, not good. Alright? So I don't want to do that now. I've prepared comments on the rest of it, but I want to give the remainder of the time that's been given to me.

Let me just read these verses and make, in a very speedy fashion, the things that I wanted to say and save the rest of the time for what remains. This is another part of leaning from verse fifteen. My eyes are ever toward the Lord.

He will pluck my feet out of the net. What a fantastic truth and promise. You could preach a whole sermon on that great reality.

And then, this is an important point. The brothers talk like this. Feel me.

That, actually, that concept came from a rapper from the Bay Area who claims to have coined this. Jay-Z also recorded a song with these words in it. It's, it's a great concept.

What David says in verses sixteen through nineteen is he's really saying, you feel me God? You feel what I'm feeling? I need to know God. You've got me here and I need to know that you feel what I'm feeling. I'll just read the verses.

Turn to me and be gracious to me for I'm lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged. Bring me out of my distresses.

Consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins. Consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me. It's all there.

I need to know that you feel what I'm feeling God. I need to have you connect with me there. And then finally in verses twenty and twenty-one, I believe is, I guard my soul.

Deliver me. I don't know how long this is going to go on God, but I'm not going to be able to go another day if you don't keep me. I take refuge in you.

May integrity and uprightness preserve me for I wait for you. Alright, so let's ask this question then. Is Jesus Christ in this passage? Is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is everywhere in this passage, yo.

He owns this passage. Jesus Christ is everywhere here. Let's, just three thoughts here to try to tie this together and I hope a biblical emphasis.

Number one, Jesus Christ embodies my trust. Jesus Christ embodies my trust. Five times in the text here it says, O Lord, verse one.

O Lord, verse four. O Lord, verse six. Is the Lord, verse eight.

Ten, of the Lord. O Lord, of the Lord. Toward the Lord, verse fifteen.

I hope you know this. If you don't, it's precious truth. The Lord here capitalized is Yahweh.

It's God's covenant name. It was what was revealed to Moses by the burning bush. Tell them I am has sent you.

The proper noun very closely related to the verb to be. God's name. I am that I am.

I am self-existent. And so the Lord is Yahweh. But it's further than that.

Yahweh is I am. Now I don't understand the trinity. Turn to your neighbor and say I don't understand it.

Alright? I don't understand the trinity. I'm not going to be able to help you with that today. But I see it in Scripture and I believe it.

And here's the thing. Jesus is the I am. Jesus is Yahweh.

Now, sometimes clearly the Father is referred to Yahweh as in 2 Corinthians 6, 17. Where he says come up from among them and be separate. Says the Lord and I will be a father to you.

Sometimes Yahweh is the Father. Sometimes Yahweh is the Holy Spirit as in 2 Corinthians 3, 18. We all with unveiled faces are beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.

Our daily being changed into that image. This comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Alright? But here's the thing.

Every gospel writer agrees that the Lord is Jesus. Every gospel writer agrees on this point. Much, much could be said in this regard but just a couple of points.

Each gospel saying that the voice crying in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord. They say that's Jesus that's being talked about there. Notably John 12, 34 says that, this blows my mind, that Isaiah's vision, I saw the Lord high and lifted up.

John tells us that that was Jesus. Numbers 21 says that the Lord sent the fiery serpents. 1 Corinthians 10 Paul says that it was Christ who sent the fiery serpents.

Alright? So the Father calls Jesus Yahweh. Hebrews 1, 8 and 10. Jesus Christ calls Himself Yahweh when He said before Abraham was I am.

Now He could have said before Abraham was I was. That would have been scandalous. But He said before Abraham was I am.

That's blasphemous. It would have been except that it's true. Alright? Jesus called Himself the I am.

John beautifully lays out this thesis in the seven I am statements. It was Jesus by the burning bush. It was Jesus in the fiery furnace.

It was Jesus on the throne high and lifted up. It was Jesus that David brought his crushed spirit to. The one whom the Father was pleased to crush.

Isaiah 53, 10. So Jesus Christ is the one who I trust. Alright? I hope that that is clear and makes sense to you.

Secondly, Jesus exemplifies my trust. Okay? Jesus exemplifies my trust. Jesus is the example of trusting God in the midst of betrayal.

Okay? All of these things that we've studied here that don't I hope need review at this point but all of them, each a truth here. Jesus is the one who embodies that kind of trust. Jesus is the one who personally exemplifies that kind of trust.

Because His pain was deeper. Can you believe that we worship a God who was betrayed? Can you believe that we worship a God who took that upon? And if we wonder about the impact that that had upon Him, we only need to gaze into the upper room discourse. Not only was He sold cheaply for 30 pieces of silver, of whom Psalm 41, 9 says, and my own familiar friend in whom I trusted.

But Jesus sitting at the table, I mean how weird would this be? He is there with His closest friends and not one or two or three or four, but at least six separate times when you put the gospel accounts together, Jesus breaks into the middle. They're like, could you pass the bread? And yeah, I'd like to have a little more of that. And how's things been going with you? Six times Jesus breaks into the conversation.

One of you will betray me. Matthew 26, 21. It's the one who's dipping His bread with me right now.

Behold my betrayer's hand is on the table. Woe to him by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. One of you will surely betray me.

Do it quickly. How many people think that would be a distraction to the dinner? Jesus was already feeling the crushing weight of the betrayal. And so Jesus isn't just the one who embodies, He's not just the one in whom I trust, but He's the one who exemplifies how to trust.

Because His pain was deeper than David's, because His passion was fuller than David's. I love the song we sang about the trial of the Garden of Gethsemane. And I've been to the Garden of Gethsemane or the area where they believe it to have been.

Jesus was alone. He pleaded for the cup to pass. Take it away from me if it's possible.

If it's not possible, I mean, the example of how He processed what God had providentially brought Him. It's so exemplary. We should really worship and follow an awesome person.

He went into that garden. I'm not doing this. I cannot do this.

Take this cup away from me. If you can't take it away from me, your will be done. If it's not possible for this cup, one of the verses my mom taught me, I remember her teaching this, John 18, 11.

Jesus leaving the garden. Peter's swinging his sword. Jesus turns to Him and says, the cup which my Father has given to me, shall I not drink it? What else am I going to do? And so Jesus taking the theme of David's prayer in Psalm 25, takes it to its greatest conclusion of total submission to God the Father.

He embodies my trust. He exemplifies my trust. And finally, He enables my trust.

Jesus enables my trust. Alright? He is the one not only upon whom I lean, not only the one from whom I learn how to lean. Check this.

He is the one at work in me, giving me the desire to lean. I'm prone to wander. Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love. But Christ in me is the hope of glory. I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. He is the one who gives me the desire to go through a trial.

He is the one who keeps my soul that I'm not lost in bitterness or upside down in a ditch in despair. He is the one who not only embodies, not the one to whom I trust, and not only the one whose pattern I follow in trusting, but He is the one by His grace who enables me to trust. Now, just this, pastorally, we're learning a lot here.

We're hearing wonderful things. I hope you're being stretched and ministered to. The best way I know how to conclude a passage like this is to encourage you to think about it very, very personally.

And so the way that I know how to do that is just to invite you without packing up or even closing your Bible or anything, but just bow your head with me for a moment. And by bowing your head and closing your eyes, you are in effect looking inside, gazing upon your own soul. To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

In you, O God, I put my trust. And I'm sure I don't have to invite you to call to mind those things about which today it is most difficult for you to trust God. But I have specifically on my heart those who are in the kind of place where I have been at a gospel coalition gathering.

Thankfully not there today, but with great compassion for those who are. We're on the elevator with a dear woman this morning who just blurted out the words, my son was killed in a car accident. We were able to put our arms around her just briefly for a moment.

All kinds of burdens expressed in a room like this. I would love the privilege to pray for you as others have prayed for me. I would love the opportunity to bring before the Lord through your humility whatever burden is filling your heart and mind today and crushing your spirit.

And so if you have something very heavy like that, I want to just encourage you right now, not everyone I understand, but just you. I want to just encourage you just to stand where you are. You won't be coming forward, but just in faith you say, James, I really have got more than a message here or an explanation of a passage.

This is a word that I have needed. I'm at a very difficult place. It's hard for me to trust God right now.

I'm not ashamed to say it or admit it. Just anywhere where you are, let your humility and standing be the acknowledgement to others that I'm not afraid to say that I'm at a hard place right now. I need the Lord to touch me here in this place.

I need the Lord to help me. Let us not forget that even in these wonderful discussions of Jesus, I would remind you as my brothers and sisters, He is here. He is here now.

And by His Spirit, He can do for you what no one else can do. He can lift that burden that you're carrying. He can give you the oil of gladness for your sorrow.

He can give you the capacity to wait upon Him for another day, another week. He can carry that burden with you. He's a great Savior.

And if you're determined that you will wait for that, and not give up, and not quit, and not become bitter, and not look away, anyone else to stand before I pray, just you now. Alright. If you're close to someone that you know who's standing, if you know them, just place your hand upon them as agreement in this

prayer.

We're going to ask the Lord to minister to people right now. Just go ahead and do that. Father, I just want to thank you that you are here today by your Spirit.

Lord Jesus, we just thank you that you are the head of your church, and that your ways are perfect, that you know the end from the beginning, and though you've appointed to each of us seasons of adversity, you are a gracious and you are a faithful God. And I pray for my brothers and sisters who are standing right now, that you would minister to them. Come alongside them, Spirit of God.

Give comfort where it's needed. Give courage where it's needed. Give stamina, God, where it's needed.

Give understanding where there's only been perplexity and darkness. Give healing where there's been woundedness or sickness. Thank you that you are the God who heals.

Thank you that you are the God who does miracles. And I pray, Father, that you would touch people, and I pray that you would do it in an obvious way, so that their spirits would be lifted, so that their faith would be strengthened, so that their heart would be encouraged in the Lord. Minister to them, we pray.

Bless them. Help them. You know how to give good gifts to your children.

We know what you're like. Thank you that you are doing that now. Give us faith to receive it.

In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

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