

Walking With God gen.8v1-22 24.3.8

by George Verwer

The key to walking with God is faith, and we must trust Him to guide us in our lives and decisions, and to make our trials temporary.

Duration: 1:06:08

Scripture: Genesis 8:15

Topics: "Walking With God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on verses 6 through 19 and highlights four things that we should pray for regarding those under our spiritual authority and responsibility. The speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on God's word to bring about changes in people's lives, as our own abilities are insufficient. The sermon references the story of Noah and how he followed God's instructions based on what was happening around him, but then God spoke directly to him in verse 15. God commanded Noah to leave the ark with his family and all the living creatures, and promised that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the constancy of God's promises, such as the cycles of the seasons, and how God responded positively to Noah's sacrifice, making a covenant with him and his descendants.

Transcript

If you didn't understand spiritual life, that would be a very strange song to hear people singing, wouldn't it? Power in the blood. You know, we talk about power in high-octane gasoline or power in the atom, various sources of power, solar power, and yet for the spiritual life, we know that the source of power is the blood of Jesus Christ that never loses its power. It is the eternal blood of Jesus Christ.

Only it can cleanse us from sin and free us up to serve God and enable us to serve him. And so when we claim the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, it is the very life of Jesus Christ, his own eternal life and power and includes all of himself. And so we sing of the blood of Jesus Christ.

We're singing of that which is God's vehicle for giving us the ability to live on the eternal spiritual heavenly plane. Wonderful hymn speaking of the blood, the crimson thread that runs all the way through the Bible. We're going to see something of the blood in our passage this morning as we open our Bibles to Genesis chapter 8. Genesis chapter 8. Let's bow in prayer.

Heavenly Father, whenever we approach your word, we recognize our own inability with our own finite minds to understand it. And yet you have promised that you have given us your Holy Spirit to be our teacher indwelling every believer. And so we pray as your word is taught and declared and looked into today that the teacher of all teachers, the Holy Spirit, might teach and instruct and guide us into the truth and apply individually to each heart and mind and each need of each person here today.

We pray it in Jesus name. Amen. Have you ever wondered how can I know what God really wants me to do? Perhaps you've come to the place where you've said, OK, all right, I'm a Christian.

I've put my trust in Christ. I'm saved and I'm willing to live for God. And I start the day and I say, God, I want to do your will today.

But many times during the day, you end up sort of wondering what it is. Well, you know, it's not as well to do sinful things and awful things, you know, would be wrong. But you wonder about decisions and choices that you have to make throughout the day and not only little choices, but especially those big choices.

Which road to take, which way to go, how can we be sure that we are doing God's will in an individual basis? How can we learn to listen to his voice more carefully? To tune in, as it were, to his channel and to hear his voice speaking to us. There are many places in the Bible where the basic general principles for knowing the will of God are clearly expressed in doctrinal forms, such as in Romans 12, 1 and 2. That if we want to experience or prove the perfect will of God, that we must offer ourselves as living sacrifices, not being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the will of God. By the renewing of our mind.

And then we will prove we'll know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. And perhaps we understand somewhat of the principles of yielding our life to God and generally following the teachings of the Bible. But what about the particular guidance of God in our lives? I'm sure you've heard people say, well, God just really showed me that this was what I had to do, that I had to go to Albuquerque on Tuesday.

Or I had to marry not this woman, but that woman, or I had to marry this, you know, or I went to this college instead of this college. Or I took this job instead of the other one, even though the other one paid more because God showed me that this is what he wanted me to do. And you're saying, no, I'm sort of making my own decisions and hoping God will bless.

But does God particularly guide people, especially we sometimes hear of evangelists and pastors who say God called me to the ministry. You say, well, I'm doing what I know how to do, but I don't really sense that God has particularly called me in any particular kind of a way. How does the individual particular will of God work out in a real life case study? I believe one person in the Bible or many, but one person in the Bible who is very tuned in to God's individual will for his life was Noah.

Now, it may have been that the fact that the flood was coming, the flood was there and all those other things particularly motivated him to listen carefully. But he did listen carefully and he did follow God's commands. He did walk with God, as it says here in Genesis.

He was a man who completely obeyed God in his commandments when God told him to do it a certain way. He did it and he knew what God wanted him to do. He followed through on those details, how sad it would be to come to the end of one's life and to realize that although you did many good things.

That you didn't do exactly what God wanted you to do. You see, God has made us all differently. He didn't cookie cutter us out as all stamped out of one mold.

We don't even look alike. We look different. We have different abilities and different strengths and different weaknesses and different skills and talents and many other things.

And God has uniquely designed you and I for a particular task in this world. I meet so many people today who don't know why they're alive. I talked to a man just recently and I said we'd talk for quite a while and I felt that I could ask this question.

I said to him, what is your purpose for living? Do you have a purpose for being alive and living? They thought about it. They said, well, no, not really. How sad to be just existing, to be just going to work, coming home, doing what you're reading, doing the things that everybody does and somehow surviving and yet not really living.

God wants every believer to fulfill a particular task that he has laid out for us to do. We must find what it is and do it and be tuned in to God's direction along the way to walk with God. God does not just send us out into the world to do something in a general kind of a way.

He wants us to walk with him in this world to do his will, to go where he's going and to do what he is doing. Now, sometimes we think of people like Noah as colossal figures, you know. I think somehow in our minds, if Noah walked in, we would expect him to be 20 feet tall or something, you know, just a colossal figure, not any.

It's very hard to identify with some of these colossal figures in the Bible. Men like David and Moses and Elijah and others. And yet in regard to Elijah, God says he was a man of like passions as we are.

He got discouraged. He got upset. He got angry.

He was a sinner, just like you and I. He was made of flesh. He was a human being. He didn't always know automatically what he was supposed to do.

He had to get his directions just like you and I do. I believe we have to realize that the people of the Bible were people just like you and I, the same kind of problems and strengths and weaknesses, generally speaking. And yet somehow God communicated to them and they received that communication.

They did as well. And they stand before us as examples, not examples that can in any way be imitated by us because they are so great, but examples that can be imitated and followed. Of course, the great example is Jesus Christ himself, who was completely human, except for having sin, which is not essential to our humanness.

It came in the fall. But we can look at these examples and learn, and that's why God has given us the Old Testament that we might learn by its examples. And I believe that we see five areas in which Noah trusted God, and I believe that's the key to walking with God.

Without faith, it is impossible to please him. For him that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. God says faith is the essential function of the human heart in regard to God.

And there are five areas in which I see in chapter eight Noah exerting faith in God. The first key to walking with God by faith is found in verse one. And that is that we must trust God to never forget us.

Have you ever felt like there was a situation in your life that God had forgotten about, that it just didn't seem like anything was happening? A desperate situation, perhaps the deadlines have been passed many times, and yet nothing seemed to be happening. And you started to wonder that little seed of doubt began to grow. Has God forgotten me in this? Always helping others, and I hear wonderful stories, but has he forgotten me? Look at verse one.

And God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the cattle that was with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth and the waters of swath. God remembered Noah.

He said, well, does that mean that God forgot him and he remembered him? Well, if God were like us, that might be true, but God is not like us. Our computer breaks down. We have memory lapses.

If you're like me, this is your memory. You know, if you don't write it down, you have trouble remembering it. And I praise God for papers and pencil.

And that helps my memory a lot. But God has no problem. His computer does never break, never breaks down.

He has more K than you can imagine for you that are into computers. He has it all together. He can remember every little detail of every little thing he remembered.

That word remembered means that an impression was made in those days. They had writing on clay tablets was the way they really made an impression on the soft clay. They would mark it with a stick and they would make letters in that way.

We still have a lot of them today because they're made on clay. They wrote on stone, as it said, and they wrote on the clay. They made an impression.

It was like it was written on God's heart. God remembered Noah. What it literally means here is that God, in regard to Noah, is now ready to show that he hasn't forgotten him, even though it might look like he has.

When it says God remembered, it just means that now God is ready to act on that which he has remembered in Genesis 19:29. It says, and God remembered Abraham. And it's talking here about the situation where God came to Abraham and told him that he was going to bring down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, those two evil cities.

And Abraham says, but my nephew, Lottie, lives down there. And won't you spare the city and all the negotiations and prayer there is as Abraham intercedes on behalf of Lott. And the intercession of Abraham is successful.

And on the basis of prayer, it says God remembered Abraham and spared Lott. Somebody prayed and God acted and this is God remembered in Genesis 30, 22. Rachel wanted to have a baby.

Her womb was closed and she prayed and prayed. And it seemed like she would never have a child. And then it says God remembered Rachel and she conceived in her womb and she had a child.

First, Samuel 119, by the way, Rachel had prayed also. It says that God remembered Hannah each time the same Hebrew word. God remembered Hannah.

Remember how Hannah prayed again, a two wife situation. And the other wife had all these children and Hannah wasn't having any children. And so she prayed and prayed and she went to the tabernacle before Eli and she prayed.

And then it says God remembered Hannah and she had a son that was Samuel. God remembered her. Had God forgotten her? No, God had never forgotten her.

But he chose then to act on the basis of faith and prayer. Trust God to never forget you. You notice he not only remembered Noah, but he remembered every living thing and all the cattle.

God says Jesus said this, he said that God takes note of every sparrow that falls, keeps track of all the sparrows. He's got one part of his computer that just keeps track of sparrows. And then he's got another part of his computer, if we could say that in his of his mind, his intelligence that keeps track of hairs.

Every hair on your head is numbered and he's got a little you just see it all down through there. How many hairs? And he's constantly updating his computer as the hairs fall. God keeps track of everything.

He knows it all and he remembers everything. He remembers you. He hasn't forgotten you.

It might not be his time to act yet. Perhaps he has not brought you to the place of faith and trust and prayer where he can act as a result of that. But he hasn't forgotten.

Don't ever forget that God doesn't forget. Trust God to never forget you, no matter what it may be and no matter how long it may seem that you're waiting. God has not forgotten and he will act on your behalf.

Then secondly, we see trust God to make your trial temporary. Look at verses two through five. They spent a total of three hundred and seventy one days in the ark.

And it must have seemed like it was going to be forever, but it wasn't forever because God remembered them and he began working on their behalf. First to the fountains, also the deep in the windows of heaven were stopped. Remember, we talked about the subterranean waters in the ocean water that came up and flooded the continents and then how that great vapor canopy around the earth, the shield came and and inundated the earth with water.

And God said, OK, that's the end. That's the stop of that. And he closed them up.

The waters returned from off the earth continually. That is, the continents were now draining back into the oceans. The oceans apparently deepened and the continents were thrust up.

The waters returned from off the earth continually, and after the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated and the ark rested in the seventh month in the 17th day of the month upon the mountains of Ararat, Armenia, present day Turkey, and the waters decreased continually until the 10th month in the 10th month. On the first day of the month were the tops of the mountains seen. That must have been a big day.

What a big day that must have been. He said, well, it's still there. Tops of the mountains seen.

Look at Psalm 104, verse six with me, which is a description, I believe, of this particular event. Psalm 104, verse six. The first few verses of this chapter, he's praising God for his creation.

And here he is praising God for his abating of the flood. Thou coverest it with the deep as with a garment. The water stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke, they fled. At the voice of thy thunder, they hasted away. They go up by the mountains.

They go down by the valleys. Literally, the mountains go up and the valleys go down. Apparently, it was a shifting of things, some things up and some things down to take care of that water.

Unto the place that thou hast founded for them, thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over, that they turn not again to cover the earth. He sent the springs into the valleys which run among the hills and give drink to every beast of the field. And it goes on, describes the water cycle that we experience today.

God said, all right, water, go back to your place and the water all obeys God. You say, could that happen? Well, Jesus demonstrated on a small scale out in that great storm on the Sea of Galilee where he said, peace, be still. And all of a sudden, peace, it was still.

And God said to send that water back where it belonged. He didn't need it to be judging the earth and cleansing it anymore. And it went.

And that flood must have seemed to be eternal to them over that year. And they probably wondered what was going to happen. But God kept his promise and brought them through and drained that water out.

I imagine they could have been sitting that flood, figuring and figuring, how is he going to get rid of all this water? Number one, we didn't know where it all came from. And number two, where is it going to go? How is he going to dump it? The whole earth is covered with it. Where is he going to put it? God had it all figured out and he took care of it.

This is true of our own trials. Look with me at Second Timothy, Second Corinthians four. What about that physical trial that you're going through? Perhaps you have some disease, some illness that is chronic and it just seems to go on and on and on and on.

And the prospects are only for it to get worse. Perhaps other problems in your life, pressures that you might have, emotional problems, financial problems. And you say, I don't think it'll ever be over with.

I've been fighting the same problem for years and it seems like it's going to get over with and then it isn't. And I'm just under this pressure constantly. And it seems like it'll never be over.

Perhaps in your family, with your children, problems that keep recurring time after time after time, or in your marriage, perhaps you're. Tempted to give up and to think that, well, this is just the way it's always going to be, I'll always be miserable. Many people taking their lives today because they figure that things cannot get better, they're only going to get worse.

But what does God have to say to us here in Second Corinthians four sixteen? But for which cause we think not, in other words, we don't give up, we don't lose heart. Literally, that word faint means doesn't mean just to physically faint, but it means to faint in the inner man. But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day for our light affliction, which is but for a moment.

Look at that phrase. But for a moment. And Adamos, an indivisible amount of time, the same amount of time that it's going to take for the rapture to occur, he says in a moment.

Very short amount of time work it for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, he says, in comparison to eternity and heaven and blessing, the trials of this present life are like a split second of time. Indivisible in time. You know, you can put up with most anything if you know it's temporary and you know it'll be over with soon because you still have hope.

But if you lose hope and do not see the light at the end of the tunnel, then even the slightest thing, having the flu can make you feel like you want to die. If you lose sight of the fact that people usually do get over the flu and don't always feel like that. Trust God to make your trial temporary.

You know, whatever trial you have today, if you're a Christian, someday going to be over with. Matter what sickness or disease or problem or weakness or pressure or difficulty you have, someday it's going to be over. Live for that day, be faithful in it, but there is going to be an escape, there's going to be the light at the end of the tunnel and that light will last forever.

Light is in sight. And so he says in verse nine of chapter five, wherefore, we labor in 2nd Corinthians, we labor that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him because I know that he says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord and someday my number is going to be up. So I'm going to live for God.

Now, we persuade men. Verse 11, we live for God because we know that the trials are only temporary. May seem like forever to us, but in terms of eternity, a very short time, the third area in which Noah trusted God and we need to trust him.

Is in the area of trusting him to give us indications of his will, indications of his will and verses six to 14. This is where we have the sending out of the raven and of the dove. He opened the window in verse six, took a lot of faith to open the window.

If he'd opened the window a little while before, he would have been drowned, probably. Then he sent out a raven, verse seven, a dirty bird, not a clean animal, but one that lives on dead things, probably sent that out first, figured how the best chance of surviving, probably the world was just floating masses of vegetables and dead animals floating all over the place, and perhaps the raven could have found a place to land there. He sent forth the raven and which went to and fro came.

It commuted, went back and forth between the ark and other things. It was into apparently. And then he sent forth the dove, the probably the cleanest of the birds and symbolic of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

A symbol even today of peace with the olive branch in its mouth symbolized here taken from this reference, symbolizing the peace now that had come upon the earth, the rest, as Noah's name implies. And so he sent out the dove and the dove couldn't find rest at first, returned to the ark, and then eventually sends out the dove and the dove comes back with the olive leaf plucked off in its mouth. And then no one knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

How did he know God's will? One of the things was he just thought about things and did a little scientific experimentation. He didn't just wait around and just wait for God to speak to him directly. But he did a little checking out.

Nothing wrong with that. We don't have to leave our brains at the door when we come to Christ. God has given us brains to use for him.

We ought to study and observe and experiment and learn and put our minds to work as God has told us to have dominion over this world. And we see him doing that, doing a scientific experiment. One interesting word is in verse 12, and he stayed yet another seven days.

What patience he showed. Word stayed means to expect or to hope for something with expectation, to wait with expectation. In Psalm 119, 74, the psalmist says, I have hoped in thy word.

In Job 13, 14, 15, he used the same word, though he slay me, yet will I trust him. I will wait expectantly for him even though he kills me. I will wait for him in Psalm 42.

Hope now in God, hope now in God. He was willing to wait. What patience he showed.

I think I would have had enough of that arc, you know, a lot earlier and would have just sort of piled out and gotten out of there. But no, he was waiting for the right time and he observed what was happening. Science is not opposed to the Bible.

It is not the science versus the Bible. A truly understood Bible with a truly understood science always fits together because God made both of them. He made the world and he made the Bible, the two ways in which he has revealed himself to mankind.

There is a science falsely so-called spoken of in First Timothy 6:20, which often is seen in conflict with the Bible. But true science never conflicts with the Bible. If there is a conflict between the Bible and science, either we don't understand our science correctly.

Or we don't understand the Bible correctly or perhaps both. So the earth was dried up and scientific research and experiment was in order and it gave him some helpful information and he knew what was happening. But it alone wasn't enough on which to base his decision.

Secular knowledge is helpful, but it's not enough in itself. We must have a word from God and we'll see that in the next area. Now, Jesus Christ did many signs and wonders and miracles.

But it was his word that did the job. It was the word of God that he used to really change people and cause them to have faith in him. Remember the story told about the rich man and Lazarus while they were both there in hell and the rich man says, couldn't you send somebody back and tell them, my brothers, about this place so they won't come here? And he says, if someone came back from the dead, they would listen.

Send Lazarus back. And the answer is, even if someone came back from the dead, they wouldn't believe they have Moses and the prophets. Let him hear that.

Jesus constantly said, yes, I'm doing signs and wonders, but it is my word that is going to do the job. And we need to know God's word. We must have a word from him.

It's not enough to just use our own unaided human reason to guide our steps. It is not within man to direct his steps. We do not have enough ability, even with all of our technological progress and everything else.

We still don't know enough to run our own lives without a word from God. And that leads us to verses 15 to 17. The fourth area, not only to trust God to give us indications of his will by observing the circumstances,

but we must have a word from him on the subject.

Verse 15. And God spake unto Noah, saying, finally, God actually does give his word in this chapter. Up until now, Noah has been proceeding on the basis of what is happening around him and is responding to that properly and is tuned into what God is doing because he knows God.

Now, God speaks in verse 15 and he says, verse 16, go forth of the ark, thou and thy wife and thy sons and thy sons, wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh, both the fowl and cattle and explains all the things and then to be fruitful and multiply gives two commands. Go forth, be fruitful and multiply.

God gave his command. He told him what to do. It is God's word that is essential to knowing God's will.

In Second Timothy 3:16, we find that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. But the man of God may be mature and equipped, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. God has given us his word in Romans 10, 17.

We're told faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. It is the word of God that will guide us and direct us. That's why we have to be in it every day, every day.

God will communicate definite instructions from his word to us. I remember a few years ago, several years ago. I had been here a couple of years at Faith Bible Church as assistant pastor.

I enjoyed the ministry here very much. But I began getting, you know, the old other side of the fence syndrome, I guess, began thinking that perhaps God wanted me to go somewhere else. I began considering that and I was reading the scriptures.

I came across God's promise that you'll hear a voice behind the saying, this is the way walking in it. When you turn to the right hand, when you turn the left. And I said, God's going to guide me as to where he wants me to go.

And I began looking around at the various other possibilities. Then one day, on the very day that I had decided I was going to make a decision, my deadline I'd set, I came across a passage that said this. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left, but let thine eyes be straight before thee and consider the path of thy feet.

I became convicted. I wasn't concentrating on my ministry here, I was thinking about elsewhere and other things. And God said to me, concentrate on what you're doing.

If I want you somewhere else, I'll show you that. But right now you concentrate on what you're doing and what you're doing right here. And God direct me to stay.

I'm so glad I did. I praise the Lord for the opportunity to minister here. I've seen God direct me in that kind of a way out of his word.

That sounds a little mystical and it always makes me a little nervous when I say, when people sort of, you know, this verse right here. And you go out and do it. I'm not saying that in some kind of a horoscopic, a superstitious sort of way.

But in your reading and study of God's word, God will direct and guide you out of his word. If you want to know his will, don't spend more time thinking or even so much more time praying, but spend more time studying and thinking and allowing God to tell you something out of his word. Spend time in the word and he will lead and direct you.

And when he leads and directs you, you'll know it. Somebody says, how do you know when you're in love? You'll know it. You won't need to ask me.

You'll know. There is an inner knowing that takes place in our spirit when we know God's will and no matter what the circumstances or facts that come before us from that point on, we know what God wants us to do. No one knew what God wanted to do.

God told him, you say, wouldn't it be nice if God just sort of spoke an audible voice out of the sky? He may do that. I don't deny that he could do that. Of course, I always wonder whether it's the devil or the Lord.

But if it comes out of the Bible, I know it's the Lord. My father tells a story about how he was trying to make a decision one time about whether to marry my mother. He was down at the state house in Providence, Rhode Island.

Nobody else was around. He's walking around the grounds. He was going to Bible school at that time, didn't know what to do, was walking around and really considering the matter.

He didn't have a job, didn't have any money. He was about to take a church, but he didn't know how things were going to work out. And he didn't know what to do.

He was getting cold feet. He already promised to marry her, but he was having his last minute questions. And he claims that somebody said, marry Ruth.

He heard a voice, he looked around, he thought maybe it was, you know, somebody saying. Now, I don't know. I think it was the Lord.

But usually God doesn't speak that way. And I wouldn't go around seeking for voices because the devil can talk to you, too. OK, there's all kinds of strange thing going on in this world.

But find him in the word. Let him speak to you out of the word. And if you're spending time in the word, God will direct your paths.

He really will. He will guide you. It is his responsibility to do that.

He said, I will guide you with my eye. You notice the two commands here are very similar to our commands today. He said, go forth into the world out of the ark.

And he said, be fruitful and multiply. And on a spiritual level, we as believers have been given those same two commands. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and multiply disciples unto me.

Reproduce yourself spiritually in the lives of others by sharing the gospel and discipling them to be like me. We've been given the same command, and I believe every major decision in life ought to be considered with those commands for us today. How does this enhance my going forth into the world with the gospel? How does this enhance my making disciples of all nations? This marriage or whatever

decision we're making.

My dad heard the director of teen missions, this mission, Loris Custer's going with speak over Hillthorpe Church the other week, and he said, there's there's two words that keep more people from going to missionary field than any other two words. I do. I do.

Marrying a person who is not committed, many young people come up and they're committed to God there, they believe that God's calling him to go out and to reach the world with the gospel and to go somewhere and serve him, and they're ready to go anywhere and do anything, and then they meet someone who's very nice, a Christian, very fine, but is not interested in going to mission field. It's very rare to find a young person who make the kind of choices that I've seen some people make and say, if you're not going where I'm going, then we can't go together. If we're not agreed on that, then as much affection and love as we may have for each other, we cannot marry because we're not going the same way.

Trust God to communicate definite instructions from his word, and those instructions often are the same ones that he got. Go forth and be fruitful and multiply. God will let you know what he wants you to do if you are committed to doing it ahead of time and if you are seeking for his will in his word.

By the way, that's the reason why we called our broadcast Faith from the Word, because that's what we need is is to trust God in a deeper way. And how do we do that? By hearing more of his word, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. And then fifthly, to trust God, to keep his promises and wonderful promises are given to Noah here in verse 18 through 22.

Noah went forth, he obeyed and his sons and his wife and his son's wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, every fowl whatsoever creepeth upon the earth after their kinds went forth out of the ark. That was better than seeing the elephants come down the street to the circus.

Can you imagine that all those animals coming out of the ark? They must have been excited, too. They'd had enough of the ark, I think, by then also. And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings to the Lord.

We see went forth. It took faith to leave that ark. That ark had been all that stood between him and the terrible cataclysms that had come upon the whole planet.

And I imagine sometimes when he was in those storms and that thing was tossed around like a cork, like it very likely was that he was thinking, I hope those nails that I drove in are going to hold. I hope those beams don't crack. And you can just imagine him when he finally comes to the end of where that ark saved my life and then to go out of the ark.

How did he know it was going to happen again? Only God's word told him that maybe there's going to be some aftershocks. He didn't know, but he went out of the ark by an act of faith. Then he builds an altar and you notice he doesn't worship the ark.

I think today, if it had happened to us, we probably would have gone out and worship the ark. That's one of the reasons it seems to me why some people, not all people, are trying to find the ark so they can go worship. I think that's one of the reasons why probably it's been hidden for so long.

You could see it. Everybody want to go there and be bowing down and they'd be, you know, praying to the ark and everything else. And the sad things we saw over in Israel's people praying to a wall.

I know they're praying to the God who is symbolized by the presence of that wall, but when we see the Jewish people, how sad it is feeling that somehow that wall puts them in touch with God. Noah didn't direct his worship and thanksgiving to the ark. He knew it wasn't really the ark that saved him.

He knew it was the Lord of the ark that saved him. And we need to give credit where credit is due and all credit is due to God. He offered burnt offerings, not only an offering of gratefulness for the salvation that had been given him through that ark, but here a blood sacrifice, perhaps thousands of animals burned up upon the altar, not only showing the gratefulness of his heart, but showing the propitiation, the substitute for himself, realizing that he should have died in that flood, that he should have been offered on that sacrifice.

But in his place, God allowed him to bring an animal as a substitute. Later on in the book of Genesis, we see or rather in Exodus, we see the story of how God killed all the firstborn of the of the human beings, of all the families of Egypt and even of the animals, the firstborn. God took that one in death, but he allowed the Jews to redeem the firstborn by a lamb in its place, in his place.

And that's what God has allowed us to do, to offer to God a lamb in our place, we deserve to be offered on the altar, we deserve to hang on the cross, we deserve to go to hell, we deserve to be killed and in a flood. But God has given us a sacrifice, a substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has suffered in our place. And then we see the Lord's response, verse twenty one, the Lord smelled a sweet savor, give or go by a steakhouse.

And I think they have a machine in there just cranks out that steak odor, you know, all of a sudden you're interested in stopping at the rustlers or whatever it is, you know, and really gets you interested all of a sudden, doesn't it? What a sweet savor supper is cooking and if it's not burnt and things like that. And here it says God literally had a positive response is what it's saying here. God had a positive response.

He accepted the offering and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake. He responded to that sacrifice, that blood sacrifice. And he says, OK, I will not do this again.

He makes a covenant. With no one, his descendants, and he says, I won't curse the ground anymore. For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.

That sounds like a strange kind of thing, he says, I'm not going to bring judgment because he's evil. Now, literally, the Hebrew could also be translated, though the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. I don't think people, mankind was any better after the flood than before the flood.

We see that right away. We're going to see how Noah gets drunk and there's immorality going on and all kinds of problems happen and the whole mankind gets started all over again. He says, even though man is still evil, even from a youth, even from a child, he starts going wrong.

I'm not going to curse the earth because I love man, even though man is still evil and people have not changed. People are not any different after the flood than before. People are no different now than they were then.

Or even in Jesus time, people have always been pretty much the same. We're still just as evil and God is just as faithful and loving and kind to us. And he says, neither again will I smite the world, smite anymore.

Every living thing as I've done. And then he makes a wonderful promise. Verse 22, while the earth remaineth, here's some new things you can mark down and be sure of.

Seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease. Will the sun rise tomorrow? Yes, it will. Will the summer come? Yeah, eventually it will.

Springtime will come. Seed time and harvest, he says, those things are sure. Many people have today because of the constancy of the physical cycles of our earth in these areas have said that it always was that way, but they forget that there was a great flood and they forget that things were not always uniform in the way they work.

They are now because God has made it that way. But previous to this, the flood tossed everything up in the air and stirred it all up and has led to much of the geologic evidence that supposedly is evidence of great periods of time for the earth. There really is evidence of God's cataclysmic judgment of mankind because of sin, of which he is willingly ignorant.

We see in Second Timothy two thirteen, even though we are not faithful, he remained faithful. He cannot deny himself. We see God's constant love.

He cannot change. He loves us with an everlasting love and he will keep his promises and you can trust them. How many of God's promises do you know? If we were to hand out a sheet of paper and say, write down all the promises that you know and you could claim, how many would you know? I encourage you to make a study of God's promises and to study all the wonderful things that he's promised in his grace to us.

Are you walking with God daily this past week? Did you walk with God? Did you make decisions in regard to his will and his way, seeking his guidance day by day and step by step? Ask yourself these questions. Do you think that God has forgotten you? Do you think that your trial will last forever? Do you think logic has nothing to do with God's will and you just sort of some imaginary way, work it all together? Do you think God can't clearly tell you his will? Do you wonder if God will keep his promises? What I want to leave with each one of us today is this statement. You can trust God.

You can trust God. You can trust him. He is trustworthy.

You can trust him never to forget you. You can trust him to make your trial temporary. You can trust him to give you indications of his will that you can understand.

You can trust him to communicate definite instructions for you individually, and you can trust him to always keep his promises. If you're not saved, God has a will for you. And John 6:39, God's will for you is that you should believe on the son of God, Jesus Christ, and be saved.

That's the first obedience to his will. He says, I've offered you salvation. If you will receive it, you'll have eternal life.

It's my will. You should believe on my son, Jesus Christ. That's God's word to you.

How do you do that? By admitting you're a sinner, by believing on Jesus Christ, putting your trust completely in him. And then confessing him openly that you're believing in him, let's bow in prayer just before we pray, I'd like to ask you, has God been working in your heart today? Are you one that walks with God? Perhaps you say, I don't even know God, I don't really know what the spiritual life is that you're

talking about. It's something that I can't even understand, but I want it.

I want to know God. I want to come to God. I want to walk with God.

Well, first of all, you have to come through Jesus Christ. You have to put your trust in him. How many here today would say just by raising your hand, saying this to me, I want to put my trust in Jesus Christ.

I want to have eternal life. That's a desire of my heart. As far as I know, I'm not saved.

I've never done this before, but today I want to put my trust in Jesus Christ. I want to be saved. How many just by the upraised hand, nobody else looking around, but just put up your hand and say, that's the decision I want to make.

Praise the Lord. You can put it back down again. Thank you.

Here in these verses, the Lord Jesus shows us by his example how to pray for those under our spiritual authority. How many parents do we have here tonight? Parents, you're a parent. OK, grandparents, how many grandparents? Great.

Double blessing. How many Sunday school teachers? I want to workers. OK, anybody not raise your hand yet was a few kids that didn't, but I'd say the great majority of us do have spiritual responsibility, not only for ourselves, but for others.

And there is sense in which every believer has a responsibility for other believers in the sense that we are our brother's keeper. And so I believe there's something in this passage for each one of us tonight. We're looking at verses six through 19, just briefly four things that we should pray for, for those under our spiritual authority and responsibility.

Let's bow in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have given us your word. Now open it to us, apply it to our hearts in a way that we can live it this week.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Have you ever wished that you knew a way to get inside of people and make some improvements in them? Have you ever been frustrated in trying to bring about changes in people's lives, but just not knowing how to get inside the works and and see a change? Do you know you can? There is a way.

The way that Jesus exemplifies here, intercessory prayer, intercessory prayer, where we as priests intercede on the behalf of others before God, Jesus as the great high priest in his high priestly prayer here, we are to imitate Jesus in the way that he lived. It's a wonderful way to study the Gospels, by the way, not just studying what Jesus did, but thinking of it in terms of how does that translate into my life? Now, we can never equal the Lord Jesus Christ, but we can seek to imitate him. And we are to that is the Christian life is the imitation of Christ.

And so we see here in his intercessory prayer for his disciples, he prayed for four basic things, four requests. We see that he is praying for his disciples in verse nine, where he says this, I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them, which thou hast given me, for they are thine.

Now, he did pray for the world on other occasions, but here he's saying I'm narrowing my prayer interest and I'm praying for the whole world right now. I'm praying for those whom you have given me, my disciples. And he had four requests for his disciples that I'd like us to look at, first of all, in verse 11.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to the Holy Father, keep through thine own name those who now has given me that they may be one as we are. One of the things that we should pray for, for those under our spiritual authority and responsibility, is that they would be unified, that they would be one, they being one together, unified, just as. Jesus said, Father, you and I are unified, we agree, we work together in complete harmony, and that is the same sense in which I want these disciples to work together in harmony.

Now, they needed prayer because they weren't a very harmonious bunch. They had a lot of problems. They had a lot of rough edges, just like we do.

But his prayer for them was that they would be unified. And they were. They became unified and they worked together and they were used of God to begin what we know today as the New Testament church.

They were unified. They were one. We want our children to get along with each other.

And if we were praying like Jesus prayed, we would pray this way as parents, we would say, Lord, help my children to get along with each other just as well as I get along with my spouse. So I don't want to pray that or not. I don't get along so well with my spouse.

Well, that's probably the first thing that we ought to look at if we want our children to be unified. Right. He said, let them be as unified as we are.

Wives, can you say that to God, would you be willing to pray that prayer and have God answer it? Help my children to be as submissive to me and as kind to each other as I am to my husband or husbands. Lord, help my children to be as loving and giving with one another as I am with my wife. But that's the way Jesus prayed and he is our pattern, isn't it? Unity, we should want our children, our students, those under our responsibility, whether we be elders who have a flock group or as a pastor, those in the flock that we pray for, we should want one of the things we should pray for is they would be unified.

What do we see Satan doing across this country? We see him dividing churches, dividing families, dividing believers in general. His method is to divide and conquer. God's method is to unite and be victorious.

Well, how do we keep the unity? What are some keys to unity in the detail of praying? Look at verse six. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were and thou gavest them me and they have kept thy word.

What do you notice? Thy, thine, thou, thy. He gives credit to the father. He gives credit where credit is due.

And I believe we see here a pattern for how to see unity created in our family by encouraging one another, by giving credit where credit is due. If the child does something right, encourage him. If the wife does something right, encourage her, thank her, show gratefulness to God for her.

And that is one area of unity. When we're tearing each other down and criticizing one another, we are not going to bring about unity as we praise God. And then as that filters and overflows out into even giving praise to others who have done right and thanking God for them, then it produces unity.

If you bite and devour one another, you'll be consumed one of another. Verse seven. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou has given me are of thee.

He says, I've manifested your name and they know that all that I've got came from you. Speak well of your own family. Don't criticize your spouse to others.

Don't criticize your children to others. Children don't criticize your parents to others, not if you want to have that unity that God desires. And then verse 10, all mine are thine and thine are mine and I am glorified in them.

What is that? He's talking about sharing. He says everything that you have belongs to me, everything I have belongs to you. That's a sharing, a commonness of ownership of all things.

Sharing the early church in Acts 4:32 had that kind of love. It was a temporary situation that was very much needful because of these people from all nations that were gathered to Jerusalem and they wanted to stay longer than they'd expected. And so they ran out of money and food and other things.

They needed a place to stay. And the Christians there, Jerusalem shared with them. And they didn't count that the things that they owned were theirs, but they shared and they held things in common.

We don't see that carrying on through necessarily, but that they had that kind of love that shared whatever they had. And that kind of unity is what the Holy Spirit desires in us. And he says, I'm glorified in them, he says, my glory comes from what is happening in them.

What is your greatest joy? Is your greatest joy that your children walk in truth is your greatest joy when you see those under your spiritual authority and responsibility, growing spiritually, coming to Christ, going on for God, that should be our greatest joy in our ministry to others. The ultimate key is in verse eight. For I've given unto them the words which thou gavest me and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee and they have believed that thou didst that has sent me.

The greatest key is in the area of faith. The word was given, the word was received and the word was believed. It is in the area of the word of God and the faith in what the word of God teaches.

That is a center of our unity. Some people today are saying that all Christians everywhere that even name the name of Christ or consider themselves to be Christians should get together in one big church. And they claim this verse and they say that it's a sin to have all these different denominations.

Well, I think a lot of denominationalism is sin, but I believe all of it is because I think you have to draw the line somewhere on believers and unbelievers. And just because a person says that he is a believer does not mean that he is. He must be given some kind of evaluation on the basis of does he agree with what the Bible says about Jesus Christ? The basis of the unity that we have as believers is what the word says about Jesus Christ.

It is a doctrinal unity. That doesn't mean they have to agree on every little point, but it is a doctrinal unity on the essence of the Christian faith, the fundamentals, if you will. And the greatest fundamental is Jesus Christ.

He is the son of God. He is God, the son. He is the only savior.

Anyone who disagrees on that cannot be included in unity without destroying the meaning of that group. If being a Christian means anything and everything, then it means nothing. If being a Christian means that I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life as a son of God who came to save me, then

that means something and we can have a genuine unity.

Now, sometimes the labels are a little funny on some of these things and people that we didn't think could be Christians and be in that kind of a group are and we can have fellowship with them. But we need to discern and have that unity that is based on truth. We must pray for this kind of genuine word centered unity among Christians.

And anything that divides us other than this matter of the basic truths of the Bible is sin and divisiveness, as we see in First Corinthians. The second thing that we should pray for for those under our spiritual responsibility is found in verse 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in my name.

Those that thou gavest me, I have kept and none of them is lost. But the son of perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled, the protection we should pray for protection for them, the keeping of them. Look back now at verse 11.

Keep through thine own name those whom thou has given me that they may be one as we are keep them. And he says, I have kept them. Now, keep them.

I'm leaving. You keep them. We should pray for the keeping or the guarding of those under our responsibility and care.

We cannot get into their hearts and guard them from sin. We can't even with our own children. We cannot get into their hearts, but God can through our prayers.

He can deal with them in their hearts and turn their hearts to him as Christian school teachers. Christian school teachers can do many things, but only God can reach into the heart and make it desire God's truth. What a wonderful guard we have.

We have the guard who is Jesus Christ himself, who says, I hold you in my hand and I'm in my father's hand and no one can pluck you out of my hand. We need to call upon God and to claim his keeping, guarding power. Who are they to be guarded from? Look at verse 15.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Out of the Greek that could be translated either as it is here, the evil, speaking of evil and sin in general or the evil one, and they're always connected, the evil one and evil to keep them from sin and to keep them from Satan. The evil one who is a roaring lion goes about seeking whom he may devour, and if he can't devour them and keep them from coming to Christ and salvation, then he can seek to devour their testimony and their effectiveness for God.

We need to pray that Satan will not get an advantage over those under our spiritual care. We need to pray for our children's protection. There's much talk today about child abuse.

But do you know who is the worst child abuser in the world? Satan himself, who is abusing children by polluting their minds with thoughts that call into question God's truth through the public schools, through the media, through many other ways. Satan is seeking to destroy and thereby spiritually abuse the children of our world. And we must pray for our children's protection from the evil one in their minds as well as their bodies.

I praise the Lord for parents who pray for me every day, and as far as I know, they've prayed for me ever since I was conceived. They just prayed for me every day. How many times, you know, I'd come in or I'd be around the house at night and I'd hear them in there.

They weren't doing it for effect, you know, so I'd hear them, but I'd hear them in there kneeling by the bed every night praying for me and my brother and sister and a hundred other people. But they interceded on my behalf and I praise the Lord for that. We need as parents to pray for our children, that they would be spared from the devil to claim the blood of Christ as protection in their lives.

In Romans 8, 31 to 39, we're told about the wonderful protection that God gives to believers. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. We say, what about Judas? What happened to him? Did he get saved and he's lost? Well, he says, I've kept all of them, none of them is lost, but the son of perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Well, was he saved and then lost? Now, the Bible never says he was saved. Judas was never saved. He went to his place when he hung himself.

In fact, Satan entered into him. He was the son of perdition, which is a title in Second Thessalonians 2, 1 to 12, put on the Antichrist. Perhaps Judas himself will be the Antichrist come back.

We don't know. But he was a man that was so indwelt by Satan. That he was ruled by Satan.

He was possessed by the devil and he was never saved. And if you've been saved, you will continue to be saved. And if you can constantly turn away from Christ and die in that condition, you will be lost.

So Judas is not an exception to the keeping power of the Savior. He rather proves the rule rather than disproves it. So we must pray for the protection of believers under our care from Satan.

And we ought to pray for them. I think that was one of the keys to Job's success as a parent. You say success.

He lost his children. They all died. But, you know, he got them all back in double, didn't he? Well, actually, he didn't.

It's the only thing that God didn't give him double later on. And that's because his first set of children were already in heaven and he was having another set ready to go because he prayed for them. Bible says every day Job prayed for his children, offered sacrifices on their behalf.

And I believe that's one of the reasons why God chose him out of all the people in the world as an example to the devil in the world and all the demons as a person who lived for him because he prayed for his children. And then thirdly, we see that we should pray for them in regard to joy. We want our children to be happy, don't we? We want our students to be happy.

We want those under our care to be happy, don't we? We want them to be joyful. And he says in verse 13, in praying for his disciples, and now I come to thee and these things I speak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. Joy.

Now we say joy isn't the same as happiness because happiness depends on happenings. Joy depends on the inward state of the heart. But sometimes we can so objectify joy that it is no longer an experience, but actually joy is an experience.

It is not so deep down that we can't feel it. It is an actual experience of the Christian life to be joyful. And he says, my joy, not the world's joy, which passes away, but my joy that is lasting.

My joy that is fulfilled and the idea fulfilled is overflowing joy, joy that is in them. So joy is that pleasurable experience of knowing that God is working in and through you. And I don't know how you experience it.

I know how I experience. I experience it by a song in my heart. I experience it just by just really feeling good, even though my circumstances might not be so good at that particular moment of knowing that God is working.

As Sherlock Holmes used to say, that something is afoot, something's happening and knowing that God is working in our lives. That's joy. Feeling a pleasurable experience of knowing that God is working in spite of what I can see.

We're commanded to rejoice in Philippians four, rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice. And then he goes on and tells us in Philippians four how to keep rejoicing.

You might want to study that over and see the instructions given there. In Nehemiah, we are told that the joy of the Lord is our strength. When you lose your joy, you lose your strength.

That's why when you get depressed, it's a vicious cycle, you feel low and you feel depressed, you lose your joy, your experience of joy. And then what happens is then you lose your energy and then you don't do much and then you get more guilty and you get more depressed. And it's a vicious cycle somewhere by confession of sin and getting right with God.

We have our joy returned and then we're able to begin doing what we ought to do anyway. And we begin being lifted up out of that depression. Joy.

We want people to be happy. But so many times I hear parents saying, yeah, well, I know it's not right for her to divorce her husband and go marry that other guy. But I just wanted to be happy.

Total disregard for God's will and God's word in the situation, but I just wanted to be. I know it's not right for him to live together, but I just wanted to be happy. So I'm not saying anything about it.

Well, what really makes people happy? I mean, in the joyful kind of sense, it's walking with God that makes them happy. And that's what we ought to pray for, for those under our spiritual responsibility. Pray that they'll walk with God.

And I'll guarantee if they walk with God, if they are filled with the spirit of God, controlled by the spirit of God, they will have a song in their heart. They will have a pleasurable life because the inside of them will know that God is working. So we need to pray that those under our authority will be joyful and then fourthly, holiness, holiness.

And he says, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth, verse 17, sanctify them, sanctify them. Verse 19, and for their sakes, I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Again, he says their sanctification is linked to my sanctification.

Why is he saying that? Because he wasn't holy. No, he was always holy. Completely holy.

But as our example of a high priest, as a priest praying for others, he says, if you want other people to be holy that are under your care, then you be holy and then ask God for their holiness. What is holiness? It means being set apart for God, being special to him, being clean and sharp and usable for God, because we are not filthy with this world. The opposite of holiness is worldliness, as he says here.

It is separation from the world unto God, not separation out of the world, but separation in the world from the world. He says neither, he says, I pray not that they should be taken out of the world. But that they might be kept from the evil one, and he says, thy word is truth, it is the word that sanctifies us in Ephesians five, twenty five and twenty six and speaking about marriage and then talking about Christ in the church.

He says that Christ sanctifies it with a washing of water by the word. It is the constant washing of the word of God in our lives that keeps us holy and makes us holier to be like Christ set apart for his use. How would you like to go to a doctor, a surgeon and have him operate on you with dirty instruments? You say, oh, I wouldn't go to a doctor to operate with.

They've got to sterilize him. It's got to be clean. Yeah, but what if they looked clean, but they hadn't really been sterilized and they had germs on them? Would you still want to be operate? No.

God's standards are very high for the tools that he uses. And if we want to be used of God, there is no shortcut. Our lives must be clean and holy or God will not use us.

We may use this to some minor extent, but if we want to be fully used for God in the full extent, our lives have got to be clean. How do we get it clean? By confessing our sin, renewing our mind, forsaking that sin and replacing it with something good. And then we can be used of God.

What does he mean by the world? First John to 15 to 17 says that all that is in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. These are in the world. They're not of God.

And it is these areas that we need to deal with in our lives if we're to be holy. Isn't that we want for our children, our grandchildren, our students, those under our spiritual responsibility? We want them to live holy, clean lives. We want them to hate sin.

And as we pray, we ought to examine our own hearts and make sure that we are holy. And then we see in conclusion here that we have a wonderful high priest who is praying for us and he's still praying for us. He ever live to make intercession for us.

When he went back to heaven, he's still praying for it. You say, well, I don't have a mom and dad like you do that prays for you. I feel sort of terrible when you tell that you have a savior who prays for you.

You have a perfect priest, an intercessor in heaven who prays for you every day and every minute, who ever liveth and never sleeps. He ever liveth. You have a perfect umbrella over you of prayer and protection.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself. Are you praying, though, are you doing that for those under your care, are you praying for them? Abraham did it. Job did it.

Moses did it. Daniel did it. Samuel did it.

David did it. Solomon did it. Elijah did it.

Elisha did it. Nehemiah did it. Ezra did it.

Jesus did it. And Paul did it. I think it's a good thing to do to pray for those under our spiritual responsibility.

Parents, grandparents, teachers, elders, leaders. Would you be willing to make that commitment that before God, as you remember, as God prompts you, that you'll pray for those under your spiritual care every day? A lot of responsibility, isn't it? Let's bow in prayer. Heavenly Father, we pray that we would be like Samuel and say, forbid it, that I should sin against you by failing to pray.

And Lord, we have often committed the sin of omission in not praying for those under our spiritual care. What a responsibility it is. Lord, I pray that there might be many here tonight who would commit themselves to praying for those under their spiritual care, that you might work in those lives and that we might see people living this kind of a life, a life of real unity with the brethren, a life of protection from Satan and evil and sin, a life of joy, the joy of the Lord and a life of holiness and purity.

Lord, may this be true of each one of us as we seek to intercede for others. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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