

# If Any Man stand..

by Ron Bailey

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's faithfulness and provision, and recognizing the significance of present sense faith in our lives.*

**Duration:** 44:46

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:23, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 13:5

**Topics:** "Confidence"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in God and not turning to rationality or other things to guide our lives. The sermon is based on the book of Deuteronomy, which is described as the second edition or giving of the law. The speaker highlights that these are Moses' last words, which hold significance and reveal his understanding and poise. The book of Deuteronomy represents Israel's second chance, as they are the next generation who will inherit God's promises. The speaker also mentions the switch between pronouns in the organized version of the Bible and emphasizes that regardless of one's past experiences or successes, everyone stands at the same point when God brings His word and asks for obedience.

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## Transcript

You realise that this is making a nonsense of my statistics. Once every five years and then twice in a month. It just, it just doesn't go.

Thank you very much for praying for Ruth's family and Elmer and the family. In fact, all three of the children have come to faith during the course of Ruth's illness. And real faith too.

It's been a great joy to see them going on and finding God in the midst of this pain that they've carried all this time. Can you remember the time in your life when you were most conscious of God? That'll be different for each one of us, I guess. But if you can imagine the time in your life when you were most conscious of God, imagine what it's like for Ruth now.

Your consciousness of God isn't even on the same scale. It doesn't even deserve to be compared with it. One of the things that Elmer was saying to me was that although in the last couple of days when she was in the hospice, she was mostly unconscious, when she did come to consciousness, it was almost always at a time when she was pointing some member of the family to the Lord.

And that's why I said to Les there was a real kind of God consciousness. But imagine her God consciousness now, with no distractions. I'm envious.

I'm envious. And it doesn't always go with yours, does it? It doesn't matter how far your hand stretches over your head. It doesn't mean that you're the next one if you can reach right around and touch the other ear.

It doesn't mean you'll be the next one to go. It doesn't work in that kind of pattern. I have something in my heart I want to share today.

I'm going to begin with a verse that I was required to learn when I first became a Christian. Maybe you'll know it. It's 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13.

1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13. And according to the counselling patterns that I was subject to in those days, this is one of the verses that you had to learn within the first week. Maybe some of you will know it as well.

It's 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13. There has no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

I'm going to read the whole of that chapter now, or most of it at least, to put that verse back into its context. It can stand on its own feet, but it's even more amazing if you put it into its context. Verse 1. Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual food, and did all drink the same spiritual drink.

For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now, these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust at the evil things as they also lusted.

Neither be ye idolaters, as with some of them. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also were tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now, all these things happen to them for examples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come.

Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, free from idolatry, I speak as to wise men, judge what I say. So, that little gem of a verse is really set in a chapter of very strong warning and admonition, in which Paul talks of, you can see that he's constant in Paul's writing, he's constantly got as the backdrop to much of what he's saying, events that took place in the Old Testament, which is one of the reasons you need to keep on reading it. You need to keep on reading the Old Testament so as to understand the New Testament.

Although you'll only understand the Old Testament if you understand it in the light of the New Testament. Okay, so that's nice and simple to start off with. But the Old Testament is given to us in this sense and it is recorded.

It's not intended to be a chronicle of all the events that took place, not even for the people of Israel. But it is a highly selected God's eye view of key events which are recorded for you and me. It's not an accident, there's nothing arbitrary about this.

The Old Testament is a careful selection of history that God has preserved for our benefit, our examples, warnings to us. And this event, this time of the wanderings in the wilderness, is a time which comes up again and again in the New Testament. You remember, if you do, that when you get into the book of Hebrews, again it's part of the background.

They wandered and they died in the wilderness. God was grieved with that generation and said, they shall not enter into my rest. And it's constantly there.

This constant, permanent warning of people who had such an amazing inheritance and experience. I've not got time to do it now, but here's a Bible study for you at some point. Study the life and history of a man named Narshan.

If you can't spell it, you'll find his name in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 1. And if you look at Narshan, and you look up there, you're spelled in different ways so you'll need to kind of trace it through, but you'll discover that Narshan was an extraordinary man. He was what was known as the Prince of Judah. In the days when the people of Israel were in Egypt, Judah had become the prime, the supreme tribe, the most important, the most influential one.

And the one apparently leading that tribe was this man named Narshan. And Narshan almost certainly, 99.9 certain, was one of those people that are referred to in the Bible when it refers, tells Moses to go and speak to the elders of Israel. He would have been one of the leaders of his people.

If you think of Narshan and then begin to trace his history, you'll find it really is extraordinary. Do you know this man? Hands up if you know Narshan. Oh good, then I can speak with confidence.

It will be worth your study, to study Narshan. Narshan would have been one of those who, think of my language, who met the mediator face to face. One of those to whom Moses spoke directly.

One of those who heard the promise that God would bring them out and make them His own people. Narshan was one of those who would have witnessed the extraordinary events of Egypt when God unveiled His power by His bare arm, set the people free. He would have seen all the different plagues that came upon Egypt.

He would have seen the corresponding miracles that preserved the people of Israel. Narshan would have been one of those who fled and was trapped by the Red Sea. He would have been one of those who saw God's astonishing intervention when the Red Sea was opened and the people of God went through absolutely dry shod, which when the Egyptians tried to do, they were utterly wiped out.

Narshan would have been one of those who gathered to Sinai and saw the mountain in flames. He saw God come down upon the mountain. He heard a voice, the sound of which increased in trumpets to such a degree that everyone except Moses said, we can't stand this anymore, we are backing away from this.

He would have seen all these events. If you follow the story of God giving the law to the people of Israel, you will know that not only Moses, Moses went to the uttermost point to receive the law, but the other people of the elders of Israel went also and they saw God and Et in His presence. Narshan would have been one of those.

He would have seen God. He would have been one of those who personally said, everything that God says, we will do it. Three times they said that.

Everything that God says, we will do it. Everything that God says, we will do it. Narshan would have been one of those.

Narshan would have been one of those who saw Moses strike the rock and the water gush out of it. Narshan was one of those who saw, he saw the manna, he saw the daily provision of God, day in, day out, never ending, never failing. He saw all this.

Narshan would have been one of those who saw the way that God was leading His people. He would have been one of those, without a doubt, who received the Spirit that was upon Moses. When Moses was told to gather 70 of the chief elders of Israel and God said, I'll put the Spirit that's upon you upon them.

Narshan would have been one of those. Narshan would have seen all this. Just think of this man's CV, if you think in those terms.

What had this man seen? He'd seen the deliverance from Egypt from beginning to end. He'd been an intimate witness of every intimate part of it. He'd seen all the events, he'd seen all this.

He'd seen now God's provision for them in the wilderness. And yet astonishingly, Narshan is one of those who left Egypt and never got to Israel. He's one of those who at a certain point in his life, the Bible says, they all took up stones to stone Joshua and Caleb.

Almost certainly it was Narshan that chose Caleb to be the representative of the tribe of Judah. And yet when they came back from the Promised Land, Narshan was one of those who rejected their testimony, who took up stones to stone his own witness, Caleb. Astonishing, isn't it? This man, he had so much.

He had everything. He had the promise, he had the experience, he had the stature, he had every benefit you could possibly imagine. He'd received the covenant, he'd had the blood sprinkled upon him.

He'd seen God, he'd heard God, he'd had the Spirit of God and he never entered into that that God had prepared for him. Can you see why the Bible takes an illustration like the wilderness wanderings and says, Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall. If a Narshan can explain all this and then miss it, what about you? There's a wonderful little piece to this story which some of you may know.

I'm a bit of a romantic. I'm a lot of a romantic. Forty years later, when the time came for them to enter the land and they sent some spies again, this time not to spy the land but to look particularly at the city of Jericho.

And the spies that got to Jericho went into the home of a prostitute whose name was Rahab. And this is where we move now. I'll close my Bible so you know I'm not talking.

This is me speculating now which I always say Bible teachers should not do. But what happened was this. These men who went in saw the astonishing faith of a woman named Rahab.

Now Rahab is the polar opposite to Narshan. She's got nothing. She has no promise, no experience, she has no status, she isn't part of the promised people, she's got nothing, has nothing, deserves nothing, has nothing on account, absolutely nothing.

And yet when the spies come to her hand she says, I know God's given you the land. Isn't this extraordinary? Narshan who's seen God in all his power doesn't believe that God has given them the land and loses it. This woman, she's probably just heard a word.

Maybe from one of her customers. And she believed it. It's no wonder that this woman then becomes number two in the list of Israel's heroes of faith.

When James wants to illustrate what real faith is like he goes first to Abraham and second to Rahab. Amazing isn't it? Amazing. Now that is absolutely true.

So I could have had my Bible open to show you that that was absolutely true. But, what about these spies? Who were they? Well we're not given their names. But the astonishing thing is that an Israeli young man, an Israelite married Rahab.

His name was Salman. His father's name was Narshan. Isn't that an extraordinary name? This man who, on one side has the arch-unbeliever, the man who had every possible opportunity and blew it.

And on this side he takes a woman who has absolutely nothing but faith and receives all the blessing of God. It's a wonderful story. My bit of romanticism is I think Salman I think Salman was one of the spies.

Tell you something else. Here's another speculation for you. Close my Bible, take me through the speculation.

I think when Salman and Rahab were married and they were, they had their first child and I can imagine times when Salman would take the little boy on his knee and maybe tell him some of the stories of his granddad and how his granddad failed at the final test and stories about his mother and how his mother believed God against every against every obstacle. I tell you another thing to do sometimes. Try and work out, try and calculate how long Rahab was in Jericho on her own before she was rescued.

The spies went back to the comfort and the support and the encouragement of their families. She's on her own. She's on her own with a banner out of the window that says I'm a traitor.

She's on her own believing God when nothing is happening. She's an extraordinary woman. I think Salman would have told all this to his little boy.

And his little boy grew up with an understanding that it wasn't inheritance and it wasn't the past that really set the pattern for a person's life. It was the way they responded to God. In other words, the important thing is not what has happened, but present sense faith.

Trusting God now. And I think those stories went deep into the heart of his little boy. Because as his little boy became a man his little boy apparently turned his back on all the people of Israel who would have had amazing inheritances and amazing family lines and actually set his affection upon a little Moabite woman called Ruth.

Boaz was the child of Salman and Rahab. It's extraordinary, really. It's one of those little gems that you have to work it out, dig it out but go through it.

Go through it and look at it and see the astonishing faith of Ruth, too. Anyway. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

We had a reference made, Les made a reference earlier on today to the fact that every funeral involves everybody at it and everybody who knows about it. The old preachers used to call death the old preacher. It was a sermon whose voice could not be silenced.

And whatever else you're doing with your life there comes this reminder again and again that there will be an end to it. If you want it in the words of Hebrews it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment. I suppose the people of Israel had that illustrated to them in a way that we can hardly imagine.

I enjoy numbers. I'm not a mathematician but I enjoy numbers just because they're kind of safe and they're predictable. Here's some numbers for you from the book of numbers, not speculations.

It's my school of numbers. They did a census of the people who were able to fight in battle when they first came out of Egypt. And we'll keep it in nice round numbers.

They came to the conclusion that they had 600,000 men who could bear arms. Now a little bit later on the story we can tell you exactly how old these were. But I'll tell you now there were 20 and upwards.

So there were men of 20 age and upwards maybe up to about 40 or something like that. 600,000 of them. Now let's give each one of these a wife.

I'm trying to work out how many people there were. So you're now up to 1.2 million of your population whose age is probably in between 20 and 40. Let's add a few more thousand for a few grandparents and let's leave it at that.

That whole generation perished in the wilderness. That whole generation came out of Egypt and never entered into the Promised Land. Here's some calculations.

It's four deaths an hour for 38 years. It means that for the whole of Israel's travelling through the wilderness they were never out of the sound of the lament for those who were lost. They were never out of the sound of the shovel for the burial of the dead.

Something like, I guess, about 1.5 million minimum died in 38 years. You can do the sums yourself. I'm rounding them up.

It's about one death every 15 minutes. One reminder every 15 minutes let him that thinks he stands take heed. Thirty-fourth.

If we turn our back on God when he offers such astonishing things to us this is the risk. And that's why it's captured in this book for us. It's captured as the most powerful illustration of what happens when people do not put their trust in God.

When they turn to rationality. When they allow other things to make them consider the way in which they should live their lives. Now that's just the introduction.

It's not a very cheerful introduction but I wanted it to be solemn. I want you to realize that the people I'm going to talk to now are people who have just passed through that experience. Because I want to talk to you a little bit from the book of Deuteronomy.

And Deuteronomy it really means the second edition or the second giving of the law. And it's a remarkable book. It's a wonderful book.

I hope you've read it. And I hope you will read it constantly. It's not just a repeat of Exodus which is where you get the Ten Commandments and the law of God.

It's what I like to call revelation plus reflection. In Exodus you've got the revelation. You've got God revealing truth that they've never seen before.

God making it very clear. In Deuteronomy you've got Moses repeating it but with the experience of the 40 years to go with it. And he adds it all together and they are poised on the edge of that inheritance.

They can see it across the river. They know where they're going. Moses knows where they're going but he knows he's not going to go with them.

Of that generation from 20 years and upwards at this point in time there are three men left. There's Moses, there's Joshua and there's Caleb. It is to say in the Sunday school Joshua the son of Nun, Caleb the son of Jephunneh were the only two who ever got through to the land of milk and honey.

At this point there were three. There's still Moses. But Moses, these are Moses' last words in the book of Deuteronomy.

And it's a very wonderful book because of that. A person's last words are always of note. They tell you a lot about the person.

And these words tell you a lot about Moses and a lot of his understanding. And they're poised. And all the promises of God are in front of them.

Now why am I saying all this? Well it was as though they were the next generation. They were the people who were now going to inherit everything that God had promised to them. But it's more than that.

It's Israel's second chance. Some people say you should never talk about a second chance when you're preaching the gospel. But God often gives us a second chance.

We can't depend on it. You certainly mustn't rely on it. But He often gives us a second chance.

There's this little word in the book of Jonah when it says and the word of the Lord came the second time to Jonah. That's God's grace. There's no need for God to speak more than once.

But it's the grace of God that the word of God comes a second time. And here it comes now to these people a second time. And God is speaking to them.

And He's reminding them of what's gone in the past. And He's reminding them of what lies in front of them. And if you are interested in the book of Joshua and interested in understanding the typology of entering in to the promise, you need to read the book of Deuteronomy.

Because the book of Deuteronomy will tell you more about possessing your possessions than the book of Joshua will. If you look up the word possess, you'll find it scattered all the way through Deuteronomy. In fact, what God was saying to the people of Israel was this.

If it's me shortening it and trying to make it as easy as I can, God effectively was saying, here is a land that I am trusting to you. You will be my tenants. This will be my land.

And here is the tenancy agreement. And if you keep to the tenancy agreement, you can stay in the land. And if you break the tenancy agreement, you lose the land.

Now that's me just putting it in very human 20th century terms. So that's what God is saying. And He gathered them together to this place so that again they could make their choice.

I think it's wonderful how often God brings us to a place where we can make these choices. And for me, it isn't just one choice. It's again and again and again.

There's a wonderful old song of Greg Kendrick. He must be 30 years old now I think. And there's a couple of lines in it which says something like this.

He says, I see that you are asking for much more than I first bargained for. I seem to stand once more at the beginning of it all. Have you ever felt like that? That suddenly you stand again at the beginning of it all.

And all the goodness of God, although it's part of your consciousness and it's part of your knowledge of Him, there's a sense in which it has no significance compared with this moment of time where we hear what God is saying to us. You do, don't you? That your future is not dependent upon your past. It's dependent upon your present.

Your future is not determined by your past. It's determined by what you do now in the present. It's determined by your choices now.

Which is wonderful. Wonderful, because it doesn't matter whether you've blown it or whether you've been a glittering success. We all stand here at exactly the same point again when God brings His word to us and says, now will you obey me? This is what He was doing to them.

Giving them this law. Giving them a law, and I just want to touch at the beginning now on a couple of things. If you read this story in the authorised version, and you'll have to dust off your authorised version and read it to pick this up.

Notice how it switches between the pronoun you and thee. You see, you can't do this with a modern version of the Bible. Notice how it switches from you to thee.

The Bible goes back to the New Testament too. Maybe you know that Jesus actually said to Peter, Satan has desired to have you, plural, that he may sift you as wheat, plural, that I have prayed for thee, singular, that thy faith fail not. I'm not trying to get you back onto kind of archaic ways, but there are times when God has revealed things so carefully to us that if you take a shortcut, you miss the things He's saying.

For example, God has not said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. He has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. These are personal words from God to the heart.

And if you read through the story of Deuteronomy in an old version, you'll see that there are times when God refers to the people of Israel as you. That's the plural. That's the great company of them.

But again and again you'll see He refers to them as thee because they had become a corporate entity. They had become one people. They were God's church.

That's actually the language that's used. They are the congregation of Jehovah. They are the church of Jehovah.

That's what they're referred to. They are God's people. They are one.

They became one through circumstances which involved their being brought out from their bondage, of them being baptised into Moses in the clouds and in the sea, of them saying yes to the word that God spoke to them, of them receiving the sprinkling of the blood, of them receiving the law and becoming God's people. That's how they became God's people. And from that point in one sense they became a vow.

They became one people with one destiny, one responsibility to obey the word of God. And at this point Moses gathers them to this point and as individuals and as a corporate oneness he speaks to them and he says well he didn't quote Graham Kendrick but I will quote it. I see that you're asking for much more than I first bargained for.

I seem to stand once more at the beginning of it all. Where are you in your experience? I'll tell you where you are. You're at the beginning of it all.

Whenever God speaks you're at the beginning of it all. And the past with all its wealth of experience it really counts for very little in one sense. What matters is the next step that you take.

Don't you love that simple symbolism that the Bible uses of the Christian life when it speaks of it as a walk. It speaks of us following His steps. And Peter writes to those in his letter.

And the wonderful thing about a step is that it doesn't matter who you are you can't do a step in any different way to the way anybody else did it. You see if you've got a very long arm or a very small head or you're very old and you can put your arm right the way around it and you're 97 or whatever it is if God says to you take a step the way you will do it will be exactly the same way that you did it when you were about 15 months old. You've not actually become more of an expert you still walked by putting one step, one foot in front of the other.

And if you try any modification of that you end up on your nose. If you try two steps at a time or anything different other than a simple one step and then another one you end up on your face. Doesn't matter who you are doesn't matter where you've been, doesn't matter what you've done, doesn't matter how much God has blessed you doesn't matter how many experiences He's taken you through you stand again at the beginning of it all.

And God says this is what I have prepared for you. One one of the things I was mentioning and it's often spoken to me is from this same passage we haven't even looked at the book of General Emily but you know where we are. From this same general area where God begins to tell them about the land that they're going to inherit.

And the way God illustrates it is this, He says well it's not like Egypt where you where you watered your gardens with your hut and where it was a garden of herbs. Do you understand the significance of that? Well what it simply meant was that the flowing, the flooding of the Nile was absolutely predictable. You knew almost to the day when it was going to take place.

So the way you did your gardening was you created these little irrigation channels and when it began to flood you then watered your garden with your you dug your heel in, you broke down some walls, you made up some other walls so that the water gradually went over the whole of your land and your garden of herbs as God refers to it. I like that. I'm working currently in Jersey and there's a I have to do a journey to the office each day and there's one place where they're growing vegetables and they're absolutely they must have set them out with set squares I think or protractors or something that absolutely, all these cabbages thousands of them in these lines in these little boxes and then something else in these boxes and I suppose that's kind of a herb garden, it's a vegetable garden it's all very orderly very predictable, you know exactly where the next cabbage is and tomorrow you don't have to go looking for it because you know where the cabbage is it's all absolutely predictable.

And God says to the people, the land I'm bringing you in isn't like that it's a land of hills and valleys it's a land that receives its water from heaven it can't rely upon earthly predictability the land that I'm bringing you to has to depend entirely upon heavenly provisions not earthly predictability. Do you see the difference? It's a hairy way to live, isn't it? It's scary and of course that's the story that comes out again and again through the scriptures that true faith in God whether it was Old Testament or New Testament has this terrible tendency to degenerate into religion to degenerate into patterns and predictable things and as it was in the beginning and as now and ever shall be, a certain denomination has that unwritten motto I hope it isn't ours as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be that's Egypt that's the kind of land where everything is utterly predictable, that's the garden of herbs God has before you something which is hills and valleys and is utterly dependent upon His care there's this lovely little phrase in it that says you can look it up but it says something like this it's a land upon whose eye God always rests isn't that wonderful?

So what would you prefer to have? Would you prefer to have a nice careful project planned for the rest of your life with all the little boxes filled in or would you prefer to have a life upon which God looks with care? It matters to Him about you, Peter wrote cast all your care upon Him for it matters to Him about you I don't know whether God got a project for your life I know His eye is upon you I know He knows you, I know He speaks to you I know He will speak in a unique way that everyone else around you will miss, intentionally so, because it was God's word to you and you're to hear it and to respond to it and it doesn't matter I don't know who I'm speaking to maybe I'm not speaking to anybody for this next sentence, maybe you've wasted 40 years going round in circles maybe you heard this 40 years ago and you know really you should have said yes to God at that time, well here we are, we stand again at the beginning of it all this is the goodness of God, this is the extraordinary riches of God, the generosity of God, this is the throne of grace this isn't the throne, this isn't the place for judgement and exact punishment measured to exact crimes this is the throne of grace where the writer of Hebrews says we may come boldly to find mercy mercy is a backward looking word in the Bible it's mercy for what you've done for what you've been for what you are but grace is a forward looking word, I think it was Paul Evans who always used to say, he used to distinguish between mercy and grace by saying mercy is when you don't get what you deserve, and grace is when you do get what you could never have deserved, but in fact even in the language, mercy really means to stoop down, mercy is God coming down to where we are, grace is God lifting us up to where He is we need both we need both, that's why we need both of these verses, that's why it is actually very dangerous to quote this verse on it's own 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 13 There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man for God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it. You should never quote that verse on it's own there are at least two verses around that you

need to quote Wherefore let him that thinks he stand take heed.

And this one Wherefore my beloved, my dearly beloved, free from my idolatry. If you read Deuteronomy as I hope you will, you'll see that whenever God repeats and reminds them of the conditions of the covenant into which he has brought them, the thing he majors on every single time is idolatry The thing he settles on every single time is this idea What is an idol? It's a static picture, that's what it is It's a static representation of something of some attribute perhaps, maybe the attribute is right but to fix it is wrong I am really so pedantic When I sing I actually put some words into capital letters when I sing them. You wouldn't notice that but that's what's happening We were singing here this morning Your Majesty You probably didn't notice but I always sing Majesty with a capital M Did you notice that? I always sing it with a capital M because if it's a title I do serve him Your Majesty I serve you If it's an attribute I do not serve an attribute I do not serve God's Majesty, I do not serve God's Holiness, I do not serve anything that God is, I serve God Now what God said to these people here was, you mustn't fix it You mustn't fix one aspect of my character and worship that You must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Listen to the tense that proceeds, that is in process of proceeding from the mouth of God You must live by the thing I'm saying to you at this moment that you're receiving Not by some past image Do you have your idols? You know this astonishing book in the New Testament, John's first letter which is to me an idealist it's wonderful because it's all so clear It's black and white, you're in or you're out, you're dead or you're alive you're of God or you're not, it's wonderfully simple. And then the very last verse, do you know it? He says, little children keep yourself from idols You say, what? What kind of P.S. is that? So this, this that we've just had, this absolute crystal clear clarity of what it means to be born again of God. What kind of P.S. is that to put right on the end? Keep yourself from idols.

Because brothers and sisters, we all have the ability to remember what God was like last week or to remember what God said last week or to remember last week's obedience or last week's blessing and make a pillar of it and movements that settle around pillars become monuments and we're not to become a monument we're to remain as a movement. I'm playing with words, but we're moving. You have to keep moving you have to keep on responding to God.

So there's no temptation taking you but such as is common to man and God is faithful, that's categorical truth. So put it in this context, you too need to be vigilant. You need to have your eyes open and your ears open and your heart ready.

You need to be like the people of Israel were all those years back when they heard the word of God coming to them on their feet, standing with their sandals on their feet and their packs on their back and their staff in their hand ready to go. Not ready to make an elaborate decision when you've heard what the conditions are. Ready to go.

You know in ancient times for example in the times when Jesus preached it was the preacher who sat down and the congregation stood up. Did you know that? I think we should reinvent that. I think that's a as I get older I think that's a good idea.

Psychologically it's a good idea, because it's more difficult to go to sleep standing up than it is sitting down. Not impossible but it's more difficult. But I think, I see something else it's this, to me it's almost symbolic.

So, next time you sit to listen, be sure you're standing in your heart. That you're waiting for the word of God you're ready. So that when the word of God comes, you go.

You've made all your decisions, you've packed your bags you've settled it all, you're just waiting for the thing that says now. And you go. That's all that God ever asked of any one of us.

There are so many things that we try to do that we can't do. We try to get guidance, possibility to have a heart that's wide open. And God knows where you are, and He knows what you are and He knows how best He can speak to you.

It's a simple very simple pattern for you for guaranteed guidance all the time. Are you ready for this? It's Proverbs chapter 3 verse 5 and 6. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Leave not until understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him. That's the end of your responsibility. Three things you must do.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Leave not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him.

And that's it. Don't add another thing to it. The next thing you add to it, you'll mess it up.

Don't add another thing to the next that says, and He shall direct your path. If you do your three things, the responsibility passes absolutely into His hands. And He is faithful.

And He will do what He's promised to do. Let's pray.

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