

His Heart Is Fixed

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson's sermon emphasizes the importance of having a heart fixed on God to overcome fear and adversity through trust in His promises.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 22:31, Psalm 9:10, Psalm 13:5, Psalm 32:2, Psalm 37:7, Psalm 46:11, Psalm 62:8, Psalm 89:33, Psalm 112:7, Proverbs 18:10, Proverbs 28:1, Isaiah 26:3-4

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Righteous Living"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the importance of having a fixed heart in trusting the Lord, highlighting the privileges and blessings of a righteous man who delights in God's commands, including having blessed children, estate, soul, and name. The sermon emphasizes that a righteous man, rooted in faith, will not be afraid of evil tidings, as his heart is steadfast in trusting God's promises. Trusting in God in times of danger involves casting our burdens upon Him, staying ourselves upon Him, and committing our chief treasure to His care.

Transcript

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"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." Psalm 112:7

"A word fitly spoken," said Solomon, "is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." In this respect I have chosen this Scripture to treat at this time. When the winds begin to rise, and a storm threatens--it is time to get our spiritual tackling ready and to cast anchor. The mariner casts his anchor downward; the Christian casts his anchor upward within the veil. In the deepest danger, he casts out the sweet anchor of faith and is not afraid. So says the text, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

In this Psalm you have described the character of a righteous man, verse 1, "he delights greatly in God's commands." He not only keeps God's commands--but he loves them. They are the joy of his heart. He delights greatly in God's commands.

In this Psalm is set down the righteous man's happiness several ways:

First, his children shall be blessed. Verse 2, "His seed shall be mighty upon earth." Righteousness entails mercy upon posterity.

Second, his estate shall be blessed. Verse 3, "Wealth and riches shall be in his house." A man is no loser by being righteous; it makes his estate flourish.

Third, his soul shall be blessed, verse 3. It is righteousness that shall endure forever; that is, the joy and comfort of it endures forever. His grace shall be crowned with glory. This flower of paradise does not wither.

Fourth, the righteous man's name shall be blessed. Verse 6, "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." That is, his name shall be honored; it shall live when he is dead. The righteous man carries a good conscience with him when he dies and leaves a good name behind him. He shall be in everlasting remembrance. And so I come to the text. This righteous man shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for "his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

The text consists of these two general parts:

First, the righteous man's privilege, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings."

Second, the ground or reason for it, "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

1. I begin with the first of these briefly, the righteous man's privilege. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings." When there are rumors of evil approaching, the godly man shall not be discomposed in his mind. He shall not be in a panic or fear. Yet let me insert this for the right understanding of it.

First, not that the righteous man is insensible of danger, or how else could he humble himself under God's mighty hand?

Second, not but that some clouds of fear may arise in his mind. Though grace subdues nature, it does not expel nature. But the meaning of the text is this, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings." That is, a righteous man shall not be afraid with a distracting fear. Such a fear takes him off from duty and quite untunes him for God's service.

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings" with a fainting fear so as to have his heart die within him. Thus it was with Saul, 1 Samuel 28:20. "Saul fell full length on the ground, paralyzed with fright." He fainted away in his fear.

A righteous man shall not be afraid of evil tidings with a despairing fear. He shall not so fear but that the heart still sweetly rests upon God's promises. It is with a godly man in time of danger as it is with a ship that lies at anchor. A ship at anchor shakes a little on the water--but it is fixed, being at anchor. So, though there may be some shakings and tremblings in the flesh--yet a Christian is not so tossed with fear--but he is like a ship at anchor. "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

USE. See the difference between the godly and the wicked. The godly man is not afraid of evil rumors. He does not fear with a distracting or desponding fear; hope is still preserved and kept alive in the soul. But when the wicked see danger approaching, they are surprised with heart-killing fears. Isaiah 33:14, "The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness has surprised hypocrites." Guilt is the basis of fear. When Adam had stolen the fruit, then he began to tremble. "I was afraid," he said to God, "and hid myself." Sinners fall into

convulsions of conscience. Cain's mark was a shaking in the flesh. And a wicked man has a trembling in his heart. Isaiah 13:8, "They shall be afraid." The Hebrew word for fear signifies such a fright as casts women into travail and makes them miscarry. So sinners shall be cast, as it were, into such a fright as their faces shall be ashamed. That is, when troubles arise their faces wax pale. So much for the first thing in the text, the righteous man's privilege, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings" with a distracting or desponding fear.

2. Second, here in these words is the ground or reason why a godly person shall not be afraid or amazed at evil tidings. "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." There is the ground. This makes him as the leviathan, without fear, "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

So the observation is this:

DOCTRINE. It is the genius and temperament of a true saint, in times of imminent danger, to have his heart fixed by trusting in the Lord Jehovah.

His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. For the illustration of this proposition I shall answer these three Questions:

1. What is it to trust in God in times of danger?
2. Why ought we to trust in God?
3. How does trusting in God fix the heart?

I begin with the first of these.

Question 1. WHAT is it to trust in God in times of danger?

Answer. It is called in Scripture a "casting our burden upon God," the burden of our care, the burden of our fear, the burden of our needs, the burden of our sins. Psalm 55:22, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you."

Trusting in God in Scripture is called a "staying ourselves upon God," as a man who is ready to fall stays himself upon some prop or pillow. Thus a Christian stays himself upon God, Isaiah 5:10. I shall describe trusting in God thus--It is a heroic act of faith whereby we roll all our care and lay the stress of our salvation only upon God.

Now there is required in this trusting in God an absolutely necessary knowledge, and an absolutely necessary acquaintance with Him.

First, knowledge of God. Psalm 9:10, "Those who know Your name will put their trust in You."

Second, in this trusting in God is required acquaintance with Him through Christ. Without acquaintance there can be no trust; one cannot well trust a stranger. There must be some acquaintance with God. Job 22:21, "Acquaint yourself now with Him and be at peace." That's the first point, what this trusting in God is.

Question 2. WHY ought we to trust in God? I will give you but these two reasons.

Answer 1. Because God calls for this trust. Isaiah 26:4, "Trust in the Lord forever." Psalm 62:8, "Trust in Him at all times." Though you are in ever such straits and fears--yet remember to cast anchor upwards.

Trust in God at all times. The Lord would take off our confidence and trusting in other things besides Him. Jeremiah 17:5, "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord." We break our crutches because we lean too hard on them. God would have us make Him our trust. And the truth is, trust and reliance is the chief part of the worship we ascribe to God.

Answer 2. We must trust in God in all our straits and dangers. He is the proper object of our trust. My brethren, the creature is not a fit object of our trust as appears thus--it has two ill qualities that we cannot repose our trust in--the creature deceives and it fails. I shall deal only with the first.

The creature deceives. It is but a sugared lie. Where we think to suck honey, we taste only wormwood. And as it deceives, so it fades and withers. Like a rose, the fuller it is blown the sooner it sheds. So we cannot make the creature the object of our trust--but God deserves our trust. He is called in Scripture a strong tower where you may have safety. Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower." He is El-Shaddai, God Almighty, Genesis 17:1. There is no condition we can be in, no exigency--but He can relieve. He is God Almighty.

In particular, there are two glorious attributes in God in which we may safely repose our trust. The one is His mercy, the other is His truth. They are both joined in one verse, "You will perform Your truth to Jacob and Your mercy to Abraham," Micah 7:20.

First, we may rest and stay our souls upon God's mercy. Psalm 13:5, "I have trusted in Your mercy." Though I have sinned, mercy can pardon me. Though I am in need, mercy can relieve me. God's mercy is infinite; it is a honeycomb for sweetness, and a rock for safety.

Second, we may safely rely on God's truth or faithfulness. Remember this--truth is the object of trust. Heaven and earth may sooner fail than God's veracity. Psalm 89:33, "I will not allow My faithfulness to fail." Good reason, then, why we should trust in God. Where can we pitch our faith, but upon God's faithfulness?

Question 3. HOW does trusting in God fix the heart? That is the third thing I wish to show you, that trusting in God is the way to have the heart fixed. "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

Answer. Note two things. First, it is an excellent thing to have the heart fixed. Second, it is only faith, which fixes the heart.

First, it is a rare thing. It is excellent to have the heart fixed. This appears two ways:

1. Fixing the heart shows stability and stableness of spirit. A heart unfixed is just like a ship without ballast, blown up and down in the water. "The one who believes will be unshakable!" Isaiah 28:16
2. Fixing the heart is for holy duties. He whose heart is fixed upon God serves God with delight, with cheerfulness. Indeed, a heart unfixed--is a heart unfit for duty. A shaking hand is not fit to write. An unfixed heart is unfit to pray or meditate; it runs after other vanities. Surely, then, a fixed frame of heart is an excellent frame of heart. You know that when the milk is settled, it turns to cream. So, when the heart is settled and fixed on God, it is ever in the best frame. That's the first thing.

Second, trusting in God fixes the heart. The heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; that is--it is fixed by trusting. Faith frees the heart from those commotions which cause trembling and quivering. It fixes the heart upon

God. As a star is fixed in its orb, so a believer's soul is fixed on God. Faith makes the heart cleave to God as a needle cleaves to the magnet. Faith fixes the heart. Such a fixed star was Athanasius. Tertullian called him an invincible adamant. He could not be stirred away from the truth. Faith had fixed his heart on God. Now I will make some use of this point.

Use of Information. Here you see the misery of wicked men. They are unfixed; they do not know where to rest when troubles come; they have no God to trust. Sinners are like a ship without anchor, tossed with the storms--which has nowhere to put in for harbor. They are like the old world--when the flood came they had no ark to trust. The wicked are like King Saul in an hour of danger. 1 Samuel 28:15, "I am sorely distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me." A flagitious sinner is like a soldier in battle where the bullets are flying about and he is without armor and has no garrison to trust. Beloved, it is faith which makes the heart fixed in troublesome times. Faith engarrisons the soul in God's attributes, and makes it like an impregnable tower walled in with rocks.

Use of Exhortation. Oh! Let us above all things labor for this heart-fixing grace of faith. Trusting in God corroborates and animates and bears the heart up in death-threatening dangers. Oh, get this heart-fixing grace of faith!

But alas! Who will not say that he is resolved and fixed? If a storm arises, he, for his part, trusts in God. Who will not say he trusts in God? Therefore, we must bring our heart to a Scriptural touchstone. It is worthwhile. Let us try whether our trusting in God is right or not. You shall know it thus:

First, if our trust is right, then we commit our chief treasure to God. Our soul is the jewel, the chief treasure, and we commit this to God's care and custody. Psalm 31:5, "Into your hand I commit my spirit." We lay up all our hope in God. Psalm 39:7, "What do I wait for? Lord, my hope is in You." As in time of war a man puts all his money in a safe, strong place--so must we lay up all our hopes in God as a strong tower.

Second, if we trust in God aright, why then, in all our danger we fly to God. There are some who, when trouble arises, fly to their own wisdom and ability. Oh! But do we fly to God? Psalm 143:9, "Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies. I will fly to You to hide me." When Satan shoots his fiery darts of temptation, then we fly under Christ's wing to shelter us. When a hawk pursues the dove, it casts itself into the clefts of the rock, and there it hides. So, when Satan pursues us with temptation, we get into the bleeding wounds of Christ, these clefts of the Rock, and there we rest and are safe. Augustine said, "I lay myself softly, and rest upon my Savior's bleeding wounds."

Third, if we trust in God aright, then we can repose our trust in God when all creature refuges fail us. "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains!" Habakkuk 3:17-19. We can rely upon God, upon His promises, upon His attributes. Can we trust in God in the deficiency of second causes? Can we trust God without crutches? Then our trust is genuine, a true trust. When the pipes are cut that used to bring us comfort, can we still say, "Yet all our fresh springs are in God!" Psalm 87:7.

Fourth, we may know if our trust in God is right by having a spirit of courage infused into us. Unbelief breeds fear; faith breeds courage, Proverbs 28:1. The righteous man is as bold as a lion. Faith enables a

man to appear in a good cause and to withstand all opposition. Daniel 3:18, "We want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up!" See Hebrews 10:34. Such an invincible Christian was Basil the Great, who did not fear the threats of the emperor. He was like a rock which no water could shake.

Fifth, we may know our trust is right when we obey God in all things He calls for. There are two things in holy trust, there is reliance and obedience, Romans 16:26. Observe, they who expect what God promises--will perform what God commands, Psalm 26:1. They have trusted in the Lord. Where was the trial of this trust? Psalm 119:66, "I have kept Your commandments." They deceive themselves who say that they trust in God and yet will not serve Him. They deny to give God the kiss of obedience.

Sixth, true trusting in God is purifying. "Having purified their hearts by faith." Faith purges out the love of sin--as medicine purges out a noxious disease. 1 Timothy 3:9, "Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience." Faith is the wedding grace which marries Christ, and holiness is the child which faith brings forth. The woman in the gospel who touched Christ by faith felt a healing virtue coming from Him. Let not that man say his heart is fixed, trusting in God, who allows himself in any sin. What! trust in God--and yet you swear and are drunk and unclean! This is not trust; it is carnal presumption! Just like those Jews in Jeremiah 3:4-5, who called God their Father. But what follows? "This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can!" Those hypocrites would call God Father--yet they sinned as fast as they could!

Seventh, true trusting in God is a patient waiting, a waiting trust. Psalm 37:7, "Rest in the Lord--and wait patiently for Him." Though a believer does not have what he desires immediately upon the return of a prayer, those smiles and love tokens from God as he desires--yet he is resolved that he will be in a waiting posture. He will wait until mercy comes. That's a fine Scripture, Psalm 123:2, "Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He has mercy upon us." That man who has no patience to wait, has not faith to trust. Remember Isaiah 28:16, "He who believes, shall not make haste." A believer knows full well that the longer he waits for a mercy--the richer it will be when it comes. The longest voyages have the greatest returns. Thus you see what this trusting in God is--which fixes the heart in evil times.

Now let me, in a few words, resume the exhortation. Oh! Let us labor for this true faith and trust, to have our hearts fixed on God in evil times. Faith is the heart-establishing, and heart-strengthening grace. Psalm 112:8, "His heart is established." The Hebrew word for establish signifies this, "the heart is shored up." It is a metaphor which alludes to a house that is shored up by pieces of timber. Thus faith shores up the heart when it is likely to sink. Oh! Get this heart-fixing grace of faith. Thus you come to be resolved and undaunted even in the worst of times and dangers.

Now, that we may labor thus, consider but these three things:

First, there is nothing but God, which we can fix our trust in. Alas! Whatever else we trust besides God, will never shelter us in an hour of danger. There is no trusting in riches. Proverbs 23:5, "Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle."

There is no trusting in friends; they may die, or, which is worse, they may deceive, Micah 7:5. Our Lord Jesus was betrayed by a friend.

There is no trusting in great men; who can trust those who are not true to God? Psalm 118:9, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

There is no trusting in your own hearts. Why, alas! The heart is full of lust, full of deceit. It is a bosom traitor. Proverbs 28:26, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool." Oh! But my brethren, trust in God; He is a never-failing refuge. A little boat, while it is tied fast to a rock, is very safe. So, when the soul is tied by faith to Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, then it is safe. Psalm 46:11, "My God is the Rock of my refuge."

Second, fixing our trust in God brings sweet peace with it. Peace is the olive branch, which faith brings in its mouth. Turn to that excellent Scripture, Isaiah 26:3, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Observe, perfect trust is blessed with perfect peace. The word "trust in God" comes from the Hebrew word, which signifies to nourish. Why so? Because our trusting in God nourishes, it nourishes peace in the soul. Faith represents God as reconciled, and this gives peace. He who trusts in God has peace in the midst of storms and tempests. He is like Noah in the ark; when the deluge came he could sit and sing in the ark.

Third, and last, fixing our trust on God is that which brings in mercy, comfort, and deliverance to us. Psalm 32:2, "He who trusts in God, mercy shall compass him about." Would it not be a fine thing, in the midst of a fight, to be compassed about with a golden shield which no arrow or bullet could pierce? It is true! God's mercy, like a golden shield, shall compass him about! Oh, therefore, get this heart-fixing grace of faith!

To encourage your faith, remember these two things, you who travail for the church's deliverance, faith and prayer are the two midwives, which deliver God's Church when she is in travail. I will give you a clear Scripture, 2 Chronicles 14:11, "Help us, O Lord our God"--there was prayer; "for we trust in you alone"--there was faith. When we build our reliance and confidence on God, He is obliged in point of honor--to defend and save us. Isaiah 28:7, "My heart trusted in You, and I am helped."

To sum up all, let us above all things, labor to have our hearts fixed on God by holy trust. Trust His heart--where you cannot trace His hand! Trust God for protection in this life, and salvation in the next life.

Beloved, trusting in God is a prescription for all diseases. Faith is the universal cure! Does the orphan trust himself in the hands of his guardian? Does the patient trust his life in the hands of the physician? And shall we not trust our souls in God's hand? 2 Samuel 22:31, "He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him." If ever we would get mastery of our fears and disquiets, let us be done with carnal reason and nourish faith. So, then, you shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for the heart will be fixed, trusting in the Lord.

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