

# **“Trusting God in Difficult Times”**

## **By General Pastor Peter F. Paine**

### **Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Have we had church? Have we had some church? You may be seated. I'm glad I came. Good God Almighty! I'm glad to be here. Some of you I haven't met yet; some of you I met this morning for the first time. Some of you, I've known you for many, many years. It's great to be back home, in Waukegan, Illinois, in Great Lakes. My name's Pete; you all heard from my wife, Debbie, a little while ago. I've had the privilege to be a part of this ministry since it was founded in March of 1974, and we've worshiped in lots of places through the years. We worshiped in our living room for a while. And, Debbie and I now reside in Norfolk, Virginia where our headquarters is. It's great to be here; it's great to be here. I'm glad to be here.

The theme this month is “Trust Issues.” I have a message today, but I don't think it's going to take long, so don't get too comfortable. No, no, I think I'll be able to preach this in a couple of minutes if you'll work with me. Not all my messages have titles, but this one does: “Trusting God in Difficult Times.” Tell me, have you ever had to trust God in a difficult time? Tell me, have you ever been all out of options? Have you ever tried everything you could try, you've done everything you could do? Help me, somebody. You're just out of rope, you don't have any more rope to tie a knot in, and you're at the very end; you ever been there? And, if God doesn't do something, and do it now, I just don't think there's going to be a good outcome; we're in trouble. We're talking about trusting God in difficult times. And, you know, we can quote lots of Scriptures, and we can talk about it, and we can find, in the Old and New Testament, lots of places where it tells us to trust. It's easy to tell somebody to trust, when they're the one that needs to do it. I'll say that again: It's easy to tell somebody to trust, when they're the one that needs to do it. And I'll tell you something else: It's more fun to be in a trusting mode when you get to tell somebody else, “You need to trust the Lord!” Yeah, but, when I point my finger at you, or you point your finger at me, and I say, “You need to trust the Lord.” How about this: I'm going to come alongside you and trust the Lord with you.” How about, “I'm going to walk with you?” How about, “I'm going to weep with you?” How about, “I'm going to rejoice with you?” How about, “I'm going to go the extra mile with you?” We tell our brothers and our sisters to trust, and they're get—I might preach today—we tell our brothers or sisters to trust in a difficult hour of their life, but have we stayed up and extra hour to pray for them? Trusting God in difficult times; trusting God's not for the faint of heart, it's for those who are willing to go the extra mile, to be their brother's keeper. Well, we know the words:

***Proverbs 3:5-7*** *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart...*

Don't we love to say that when everything's good, when all our bills are paid, we don't have a doctor's appointment because we don't need one. “You ought to be like me, trust the Lord!” What about when you're on your sickbed? What about when the creditors are calling, and they've lost their sense of humor. Somebody knows what I'm talking about. No? That doesn't happen in Waukegan? Nobody here...? Just where I live? Yeah, we live in times when we've got to trust the Lord. We live in times—and, you know what? It's not a new thing. It's not a new thing. Why, if Adam and Eve had trusted the Lord, instead of leaning to their own understanding, listening to the devil when he told them a lie! It sounded like the truth. What did he say, “Ye shall not surely die!” I haven't started preaching, yet, you don't have to write any notes. The devil lied to them and made it sound like truth and they believed the devil and they paid the price. You know, if you're not careful, you'll believe the devil's lies. I've believed it before; I've made that mistake. Somebody come with me, show me your hand in the air.

I've believed the devil's lie before, I've made that mistake. Once you realize you've done it, call him a liar, and tell him what he is. Jesus, in Matthew four said, "Get thee hence, Satan!" (Matthew 4:10) He didn't say, "Let's negotiate a truce, He said, "Get thee hence, Satan!"

Talking about trusting God, it's a frame of mind that's bold. You say, "I'm going to trust in God; I'm not going to lean to my own understanding. I shall acknowledge Him in all my ways, and He shall..." what? Direct my path. That's sometimes all we need, is the next step. All we need is to turn left or right at this next intersection. Debbie and I were driving down the road the other day, and she was navigating. She was doing a good job, don't get me wrong, I'm not making fun. But, you know what? She pointed, and said, "Turn that way." I'm sitting next to her; I couldn't tell which way her finger was pointing. And I said, "Talk to me, Goose!" She said, "Turn left!" I said, "Okay!" Am I pointing left or right (pointing his finger arbitrarily) I mean, if you're sitting next to me in a car, and you're the driver, and I'm the navigator. "Go that way!" I'm like, "Talk to me!" She said, "I was pointing left!" I said, "I can't tell that from over here." I wasn't mad at her; I needed direction. You're not mad at God; you need direction. Sometimes you might say, "Talk to me, God! I'm trusting You; where are You?" See, here's the problem, we've got to tune in, long before we need to hear from Him. You can't just scream at your radio, and say, "Give me the news!" You've got to tune in the dial to 780 or 720 or whatever the news station is. Some of us want to hear from God, but we haven't tuned into Him for so long, all we've got is static.

I'm not mad, I'm excited. I'm excited about Jesus. I'm excited that, in this day and age, with all our technology, God can still speak to us. Do you like that? With all this technology, God can still speak to us. We were in a workshop yesterday, and someone asked me, "I'd like to know where Facebook is in the Bible." I told them, "I don't know exactly in the Bible where it says those words, but I can tell you that in Mark chapter two, in the first couple of verses, it says it was noised that Jesus was in the house." (Mark 2:1) Somehow, someway, they put it out on tell-a-woman. They didn't have teletype, yet. They told somebody, who told somebody, who told everybody. Amen. I'm going to preach in a minute; I just wanted to know if y'all were here, today.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. What does that mean, 'all?' How much is all? "I'll trust in You, God, as long as it feels right." "I'll trust in You, God, as long as You keep reminding me that it will be all right." Let's look at—I haven't started preaching yet, I just wanted to lay a little foundation—let's look at Joseph. He has this dream; he knows it's of God. He's trusting in the Lord with all his heart. He winds up in a pit, he gets sold as a slave, he winds up in prison. Hmmm. How's God doing with our buddy? He knows he's a dreamer. He knows he's loved by God. He knows he's loved by his father. He knows he's got a mission, a purpose in life, and where's he at? And, even there he gets in trouble. Not because he did anything wrong, but someone lied on him. Sound familiar? Kind of like I'm telling your story? And, yet, we want to come up to Joseph and snapshot a moment in his life when he's there, and everything's going wrong and say, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, Joseph, and be a good person, love the Lord!"

Job, he's going around, minding his own business, praying for his sons and daughters. He's doing everything God's asked him to do, and more, it seemed like. The Bible referred to him as a perfect man, one that stood upright, eschewed evil. He loved God, didn't he? He didn't just pray for himself, he prayed for his family, if they sinned, God would forgive. He was doing it right, wasn't he? What kind of trouble did that get him in, that trusting the Lord with all his heart? Maybe he would have said, "Lord, I believe I trusted You a little too much." I came to tell somebody, today, "God's still got His hand on it." I came to tell somebody, today, "God's not asleep." I came to tell somebody, today, "God sees your victory, even in the valley of defeat." The story's not over until it's over. Amen? What's your favorite underdog movie? I don't need you to shout it out, I'm just saying, what's your favorite underdog movie? The reason it's your favorite is because it looked like they couldn't win, and they did. When the devil tells you, "You can't win, you won't!" You ought bark right back at him, "You know, devil, you keep

telling me how big my troubles are, but I want to tell you how big my God is. I want to tell you how great my God is. I want to tell you that nothing but the blood of Jesus. I don't have to earn it; I just have to claim it."

Anybody ever get a Christmas present? A birthday present? Anniversary present? You don't know what it is until you open it. Some of you have got presents from God you haven't opened yet. Some of you have gifts from God—we talk about trusting the Lord; God wants to bless you! Help me preach, today, say, "God wants to bless me!" Do you really believe that? Do you really believe? Some of you, you know it's the right thing to say yes, because the preacher's put you in that position, but you really don't feel it. I'm not criticizing you, I'm not pointing my finger at you today. I came to tell you today, He does want to bless you. He does love you. He does want a good outcome for you. He does have a plan for your life. He knows you slip, and He knows you fall, and He knows you fail; the Bible's pretty clear about that: We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. I'm not standing up here today because I'm the best among you; I'm standing up here today because this is my calling. That's all. I'm not brighter than somebody else; I'm not better than somebody else. I'm just living my calling, how about you? "Oh, the preacher, he's really living for God!" I fight the same battles you fight. I get told the same lies you get told. And, when I'm struggling, and somebody says, "Trust in the Lord, pastor, it will be all right." "Thank you very much. Go trust in the Lord yourself." Can I be honest with you, today, or do I have to be politically correct. Standing next to the casket of your loved one, and someone says, "God's got a better plan." Don't you want to just choke them a little? Straighten their tie real tight? "Thank you for that encouraging Word." "God needed them in Heaven." Don't you get comforted? "God just needed your child up in Heaven; that's why they died."

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Sometimes we mean well, but we don't do well. Does the Bible say, "Weep with them that weep?" Sometimes trusting the Lord is feeling someone else's pain. Sometimes trusting in the Lord is helping someone through it. Sometimes trusting the Lord is just walking alongside somebody that's lost their step. Hello? Hello? Hello? In Deuteronomy we read:

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5** *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

Pretty strong words, aren't they? We're not supposed to lean to our own understanding. If we lean to our own understanding, we're going to mess this thing up. We're not smart enough to get this spiritual thing right from our earthly perspective unless God is blessing us on our journey. The Bible says there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is what? Destruction! (Proverbs 16:25) Don't be wise in your own eyes! We need the wisdom that comes from God! Amen? I think I'm a pretty smart fella, but I'm not smart enough to do this thing right in God's eyes. I have to be dumb enough to do this thing right in God's eyes; you have to work to hear what I just tried to say on that. I have to let go and let God do it. I tried to tell God, "I got a plan, God, listen to this. What do you think of this one?" We plan; God laughs. We've got to yield to God. We're talking about trusting God in difficult times. Somebody say amen.

Maybe you're here today, and everything's perfect; nothing's wrong. All your bills are paid, you've got more than enough. Your family's great; everybody's saying, "I love you," three times a day, you're overflowing with blessings, you've got a new car you're driving, and another one in your driveway in case that one gets dirty. I couldn't be more happy for you. But, you've still got to trust the Lord with all your heart. You've still got to trust in the Lord with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength, or, otherwise, you'll find out those things go away. Amen? You know, rich people become poor in this world, and poor people become rich in God.

Why are we afraid to trust in God with all our heart? Work with that. Spend a moment, here, just spend a moment, "Why am I afraid?" Make it personal. Take a moment and pray, "Why am I afraid

to trust the Lord with all my heart?" Sonia, you've had your child, when they were on a bed or a chair or something, and you said, "Come on, honey, I'll catch you," right? And they want to trust you, but they're a little nervous about trusting you, because they know the floor's hard. They might not know everything yet, but they've been on the floor. They've fallen before, they know the floor's hard, and you're saying, "I'll catch you." And you will; you know you will. You're a good parent, and you know you're capable, right? But they've got to trust you. And you know what? When they jump, and you catch them, it builds trust. Why do you think God lets us get to the place where we've got to jump, sometimes, into His arms? To build that trust.

When David had to slay Goliath, how do you think he knew he was going to be able to slay Goliath? Was that his first time? He killed the lion and the bear. And he said, "This uncircumcised Philistine doesn't stand a chance." Sometimes God lets you go through a battle so that when the next one comes, you know that He's got you. Some of you are complaining about the very thing that God's given you to build you up. I want to say that again, because somebody can write that down and relearn it: Somebody's complaining about the very thing God's letting you go through, given you, so He can build you up, make you strong.

When I went to boot-camp in the military, my Company Commander—you might use the term Drill instructor, depending on what branch of the service you were in—but, he told us, the first night we were there—we hadn't got our uniforms yet, we hadn't got our military haircuts yet—we were just a bunch of guys that got off the bus from different cities around the country, and he said, "You know what?" He said, "Let me tell you what's going to happen. Tomorrow morning, you're going to wake up, and I'm going to call you every name in the book; I'm going to make you hate me. That's my job. I'm going to make you hate me, and then I'm going to give you orders." He said, "Let me tell you why we're doing that, because right now, you are 83 individuals. Right now, you think like individuals, and I've got to get you to think like one unit. I've got to get you to the place where you don't question an order, because, if you question orders, someone will die." The next morning, he came in and he said, "You maggot, you no-good maggot!" He looked me right in the eye. He said, "Your mother didn't want you, that's why you're here. She dumped you on my doorstep. What do you think of that?" And I said, "Sir, yes sir." You know why? Because, the night before, he said, "I'm going to call you names, and I'm going to make you hate me; I'm going to teach you to take orders," and he said, "If you'll learn it, it'll make you a better—" in my case, I was in the Navy—"it'll make you a better sailor." But, you do it, you find that, when you get out to the fleet, you won't question the order, you'll do it, and you'll save your life and your shipmate's, life. "What do you think of that, maggot?" I said, "Sir, yes, sir!" "You're too clumsy to be in my Navy." "Sir, yes sir." Do you think you're clumsy, recruit?" "Sir, no sir." "Are you calling me a liar?" "Sir, yes sir. No sir. I don't know, sir." Sometimes our walk with God just feels like that, doesn't it? We don't know whether we should say yes, no, stand, sit, whatever. And, yet, I come today to tell you to trust the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. Acknowledge God in all your ways and lean not to your own understanding. There's some powerful stuff in there, isn't there?

So, let's go back to Proverbs for a minute, and let's go to verse ten, and see what happens there. We're in Proverbs three, and we just read in verse five, about trusting Him, in verse six, in all thy ways acknowledge Him, verse seven, be not wise in your own eyes, verse 9, honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thy increase. "Oh, good God Almighty, he's not going to talk about money!" Oh, yes, I am, honey. Wooo! Why are we supposed to trust God with our firstfruits? That's a hard place to trust God, that's why. That's a hard place—and, by the way, we're not taking an offering, you don't have to—don't worry; don't hide your purse, don't hide your wallet, we're okay. I don't want your money; I want you to know that God wants us to trust Him with that area of our lives. I want you to know—my clear hope is that you would just relax, and say, "God, I know I can trust You with that area of my life. I'm going to dig a little here; watch out. I'm going to dig. Some of you are broke because you haven't trusted God in that area of your life. I'm not trying to be mean; I'm trying to call

the devil a liar. Debbie and I have been married forty-one years. And in that forty-one years of marriage, there's been times when we were able to pay our bills, and there's been times, frankly, when we had more bills than money. And, I can tell you that we never dug out of our financial challenges by being stingy with God. I have tried that; it didn't work. We're going to read verse nine; if you think I'm saying it, I want you to know where it's coming from:

**Proverbs 3:9** *Honour the LORD with thy substance...*

Parrish, what happened? Everybody was amen'ing me a minute ago.

**Proverbs 3:9** *Honour the LORD with thy substance...*

Did you put up a quiet sign or something? Can we have fun in church?

**Proverbs 3:9-10** *Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty...*

Does He not tell us, right there, why we should put God first in that area? It's true in every area of our life, and, by the way, let's talk about offerings for a moment in this light: If you're here, today, and you're struggling with giving, fine. I've been there. I've been there. I didn't understand that when I first became—and I don't think I was stingy, it was because I didn't have understanding. And, so, if you're here, today, and you're struggling with giving, this is not a rebuke; I'm going to give you a tool to help you. You ready? Say, "Help me, preacher." Okay, here we go. Pray for joy in that area of your life. Don't give until you get it. Pray for joy. Just pray for that piece of the puzzle. Say, "Lord, let me have a joy about this. Let it not feel like it's being taken from me; let it feel like I'm giving it." Amen? Amen? "Let me feel like I'm giving it, not like it's being taken from me." Does that make sense? Because, if you feel like something's being taken from you, there's no joy in that. There's no joy in that. And, so, if that's where you're at, I'm not criticizing. I'm saying that's a real, legitimate, stumbling-block, and there's a way to get over it, and that's praying for joy. And it will come. Think of it. Now, I give joyfully. I give joyfully, because, I've learned that, when I do it, verse nine and verse ten go together. It's an if-then verse. Verse nine is the 'if' verse, verse ten is the 'then' verse. We'll read them together:

**Proverbs 3:9-10** *Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*

When you trust the Lord in that area of your life, He can bless that area of your life, but, if you say, "God, stay out of this area of my life," He will. Remember when Jesus said He stands at the door and He knocks? And that's a salvation verse, and I understand that. But I think that's a principle that applies to several areas of our life. If I say, "God, stay out of my marriage," He'll let me work it out on my own. If I say, "God, stay out of my business," He'll let me work it out on my own. If I say, "God, stay out of my finance," He'll let me work it out on my own. But, I've found that God can do a lot more when I trust Him with my firstfruits. And He can do a lot more with what remains than I could do with all of it. Amen? I've seen it happen time and time and time and time again. Debbie and I had this happen to us not too many years ago: We were praying at our kitchen table. We had a financial need, and we were praying at our kitchen table, and the phone rang while we were praying. Someone said, "I felt it laid on my heart to give you a love offering." "Thank You, Jesus!" I said, "I'll go receive it." I love the Lord. Don't you know God loves us? Don't you know God knows what best for you?

And, I'm talking to you today about trusting God in difficult times. Why are we afraid to trust God with our firstfruits? We give up control. And, you know what? If I'm—I'm a control person. Anybody want to help me preach this message? I like to control things. Almost always, if I'm in a car, I would rather be the driver than the passenger. Anybody find it hard to be the passenger in a car? Three times, on the way to church this morning, Debbie had to use her brake on her side of the car, because I drove to church today. And, all three times it worked, because, I saw her hand go up. I said, "Debbie, I saw that car six blocks away from us; I saw it. I'm embellishing a little bit, but not too much. I'm looking around the room, and I see smiles. I know I'm not the only husband who gets help from his wife on when to touch the brake. That's okay. You know what my problem is? I want to be in control. I don't want someone to tell me when, and what, and how. But, the Scripture doesn't tell me to be in control; it tells me to let God be in control. Give the Lord a praise for that. God needs to be in control.

What happens when we honor the Lord with our substance? In verse ten it says what will happen: Our barns will be filled. So, if we get to the place where we can trust, if we quit trying to be in charge of something God ought to be in charge of. Hello? Hello?

I was trying to start the lawnmower. I was ten years old; my father had told me to cut the grass. I had cut the grass before, but I had never started a cold lawnmower. He had always done the trimming, and I did the rest of the grass, because I was ten years old. I wasn't—it was a time in my life when I was learning to push the lawnmower around the yard. Does that make sense? So, up until this moment, I had always done the cutting after my dad had done the trimming around the trees and the garden, and stuff like that. And, so, I always got the mower after it had been warmed up. And, even though I had started it, it had always been running, and my dad said, "You can finish, now, Peter, thank you very much." Then I went out, and I did the rest of the lawn. Does that make sense? You with me? So, when I was ten, I said, "I think I'm ready to cut the lawn by myself, dad. I think I can do the trimming." He said, "Okay, do you want me to help you start the mower?" I said, "I go this, dad." Because I was ten; I knew everything. I was brilliant. My dad said, "Peter, if, at thirty-five, you're half as smart as you think you are now, you'll be president of the United States. I called my dad on my thirty-fifth birthday—my dad was still alive—I said, "Dad, I just want you to know, I'm not calling from the White House." If you've ever raised somebody from age ten to sixteen, you know exactly what just happened. Some of you have infants; they haven't been here yet. We'll pray for you; trust in the Lord with all your heart. Acknowledge Him in all your ways. I told my kids when they were teenagers, "I'm going to live long enough to get smart again. And I did! All right, here we go, back to the message. So, I went out to that lawnmower, I was pulling that rope, I don't know how long; it felt like a long time. It might have been fifteen minutes, and I was soaking wet with perspiration, and I was exhausted, and the mower wasn't any closer to starting than the first time I pulled the rope. And my dad came out, and he said, "Peter, you want help?" You think I'd have said yes, don't you? I said, "I'll get it." He said, "Okay." I pulled the rope for another ten minutes. I came in to get something cold to drink; the next thing I hear is, "Vroom, vrrr, vrrr, vrrr." I came out, and looked at my dad; I said, "What did you do?" He said, "I pushed this button right here that says, 'Choke.'" Don't we want to tell God how to do it when He knows already? Don't we want to tell God how to do it, when He's already got a plan for us, but, He won't force Himself into our life, He just lets us pull the rope until we're tired, sill, and frustrated.

Trust in the Lord. I'm talking about trusting the Lord in difficult times. I'm trying to throw a few spoonfuls of sugar in to help the medicine go down, but here's the reality, none of us are trusting God as much as we should. The three Hebrew children, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, you read about them in Daniel chapter three. They were good guys, weren't they? They knew what they were doing, they were serving properly, they were about their business, they were doing God's work, they were doing the job they were assigned to do, they were good examples of God-fearing men. Well, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, they wouldn't worship the image that the king had set up, so they get called before the king. Nebuchadnezzar's too full of himself, and he says, "You've got to do it, men. I'm going

to give you another chance.” I suspect the king was hoping they would. He didn't want to kill these guys. He was going to have to, now, because he put a decree before the land. His reputation was at stake; what's he going to do? I love what they said—I don't know who spoke, Meshach, Shadrach, or Abednego, but they said, “We are not careful to answer thee, o king. We're not careful to answer you.” I'm just doing this from memory right now; does it say who spoke? I don't think it does. It just says, “They said...” They said, “We are not careful to answer thee, king. We are not careful to answer thee. You know what? You might be able to kill us. God might allow that.” Now I'm paraphrasing, “We're going to trust in the Lord with all our heart. We're not going to lean to our own understanding. We'll acknowledge God in all our ways, and He'll direct our paths. WE might die in your fiery furnace, or He might let us live, but here's what we do know: We're not going to bow to your image because God said don't do it, and we're trusting Him.” King threw them in the furnace, and said, “Well, I'll have the last word,” but, he didn't. God had the last word, because, after throwing Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego in there, they said, “Hmmm. This is nice. It feels good in here.” King looked in and saw a fourth, didn't he? Then he put out a different decree when they came out. They didn't even smell of smoke, it says. Good God Almighty. Read it in Daniel 3. Read it in Daniel three; if it's a story you're not familiar with, spend some time there. It's worth it. They didn't even smell of smoke. The king put out a new decree, “Everybody's going to worship the God of these three guys.” You know why the king did that? Because they trusted the Lord with all their heart. They didn't lean to their own understanding. They acknowledged God, they trusted God in difficult times. They trusted God in difficult times.

Maybe someone's here, and they're facing a business deal, and you're thinking, “You know what? If I just cheat just a little bit, I'll come out ahead.” I've met people that, they think it's their job to cheat on their taxes. The government cheats them 364 days a year, they ought to cheat the government one day a year. Isn't it fun how we can rationalize just about anything? Isn't it fun how we can rationalize just about anything? “What? The government won't miss what I've still got.” When you're talking taxes, I'm just glad to be out. Go home, erase that number, put in the honest one. Be honest. Live a life you can be proud of. You can try until you die, or you can trust until you must. You know what? You can do things your way, or you can trust God, and He'll put your feet on the right path. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to your own understanding. Acknowledge God in all your ways, and He shall direct thy path. I like that when He's directing my path. Have you ever had God say, “Do it this way,” and it didn't make sense, but you trusted Him, and it worked out, and you said, “Thank You, Jesus! I would have made a mistake.. Thank You, Jesus, I would have messed that up. Thank You, Jesus, I would have...”

Do I have a couple more minutes? I've just got one or two more Scriptures. When Peter and John went up to the Temple at the hour of prayer—it's in the Book of Acts, the third chapter—they saw someone that was lame. Everybody saw him. Everybody that went to the Temple saw him; he positioned himself so that they would, because he wanted to get an offering, a gift, an alms. He was a beggar. He needed the money; he couldn't work. He was dependent on the sympathy of others. Peter and John told him they didn't have any silver, they didn't have any gold, but they trusted the Lord with all their heart, didn't they? And they knew what God told them to tell him, “Rise up and walk.” I've got to tell you something, Saints, as I look at that—and I've preached that Scripture many times, and if you're tired of hearing from it, I would encourage you not to grow weary, because, you know what? that's a great application Scripture of how we ought to live our life. Don't you think it was a bold thing for Peter and John to say? “We don't have any silver; we don't have any gold, but such as we have, we give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.” Is that a pretty bold statement. Is that trusting in the Lord with all your heart? Do you think there were others watching, and they're thinking, “Man, if we lift this guy...” And, then, Peter reached out his hand and he lifted him up. What if he fell back down in a big fat puddle? Wouldn't that be embarrassing? Lift this lame man up, and he falls back down; you did him more harm than good? “No, no, we prayed in Jesus' name, and we're going to lift

you up, and you're going to get healed. That's what's going to happen here.” That's what faith is. It's the substance of things hoped for; it's the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Amen? When we prayed for an answer last night, I knew I was going to hear a praise report. Now, wait a minute, wait a minute, you say, “Does God answer your prayer the way you want Him too every time?” Of course not! Of course not! He doesn't answer anybody's prayer the way we want him to when we want Him to. It's His time; God's an on-time God. He's always on time. Some of you have been praying for something so long, you think God forgot. You think Daniel might have thought that? You think Joseph might have thought that? You think Job might have thought that? You think some others who have been through some stuff? We're not the only people been through some stuff! Talking about trusting God in difficult times. Talking about trusting God when it would be easier to do it yourself. Peter and John said, “In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.” Good God Almighty. Some of us—no kidding, I'm not trying to be mean, here; I'm trying to be helpful—some of us are afraid to pray for somebody in Jesus' name, because if it doesn't happen the way we're telling them it's going to happen they're... Where's our faith? Where's our trusting God in difficult times? Can I preach? Where's our trusting God in difficult times? It's going to be okay. It's going to be all right. I told our son, Adam, recently—he had a situation with his car—I said, “Adam, I'm praying, and I know God's going to answer.” Don't you think that put my faith to the test? I just told my adult son, “God's going to work this out. God's going to work this out.” He called me the next day, he said, “Dad, you're never going to believe what just happened! A guy at work said he knows exactly what's wrong with my car, because he used to have the same kind of car and it had the same problem. He said he'll help me fix it.” I said, “Thank you, Jesus.” He said, “You're right, dad. Thank you, Jesus.” I love that! I love that! Don't you love it when God comes, and shows up on time? Some of us quit asking God, because, if it doesn't come when we want, how we want, the way we think it should, then our reputation's at stake. They're not trusting in us. Our reputation isn't at stake. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not to thine own understanding. Amen? Give the Lord a praise.

I'm going to spend the rest of my time in this one chapter, and then I'm going to wrap up, here. I want you to get the picture of what was happening with David and Goliath. I touched on it a little bit ago, but I'm going to come back and finish up now. So, there was the Philistine army, they were on one side of the valley. The army of Israel, they were on the other side of the valley. The valley was the Valley of Elah. When we visited Israel, they said, “There's many stories in the Old and New Testament that we look at, and we don't know exactly where they happened. It happened in this town, but we don't know exactly where. It happened in this city, but... It happened in this territory.. But, the Valley of Elah, the battle between the army of Israel and the Philistine army, we know *exactly* where it happened.” I mean, the description is so clear, it couldn't have been any where else, geographically, right here in this spot. And I stood there on that spot, and it was a steep hill on either side of the valley, and you picture a whole army, and I believe armies is plural, here. “Now, the Philistines gathered together their armies (1 Samuel 17:1), so, we've got a mountainside of armies. Okay? On the other side, Israel. I don't know how many there were. In my mind, I picture thousands, great warriors, all of them, strong, and mighty. So, who does God send, for victory? One person with a sling and five smooth stones. Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me? If you're not familiar with the story, it's First Samuel, seventeen. Spend some time there; it's worth it. Are you kidding me? Do you know that God, right now, might be wanting to send the answer to your problem, but we're saying, “Are you kidding me? You think that's the way this going to work out? You think this is how to bring the victory so that You will get the glory?” What do we read—I'm still here in First Samuel, but—what do we read in Matthew six, thirty-three, the words of Christ?

**Matthew 6:33** *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*



Some of us stopped seeking God first. We've got Him in the top ten. We haven't kept Him first. We haven't kept Him first. We haven't kept Him first. We haven't kept Him first. Maybe you came today so that I can say to you, put Him back in first place. Put God back in first place. There isn't a wife here who's been married for any length of time, who hasn't had to say to her husband—unless you're just the perfect husband, in which case, write a book, I'd like to buy the first addition—there isn't a wife here that's been married any length of time, who hasn't had to say to her husband, I feel like you haven't kept me first. Wives, can you just say amen, or help me? Any wife ever felt that way? Mine has. Debbie's had to say to me, more than once, "Hey, Pete, I feel like you haven't kept me first. You're there for everybody else, but you're not there for me." Wives, give me some support here; is that an honest emotion, or you feel your husbands here for everybody else but not for you? It just happens sometimes, because husbands live busy lives, they're providing for their families, you know? And then the wife has to say, "Excuse me?" and you say, "Oh, yeah." Right? And that's why we're still married after forty-one years, because I said, "Oh, yeah. Hello! My name's Pete. What's yours?" Some of you are shutting me down, because you're single. You know what I'm saying. Keep God first. Keep God first. Keep God first. You're the only husband who hasn't heard that, because you're a newlywed. Keep God first. Keep God first. Don't let Him get second, third, fourth, and fifth. Trust God in difficult times. I'm pleading with you, today, as I wrap up this message. I'm pleading with you, today: Keep God first. Don't let the world creep in and take His place. Keep God first. Trust God in difficult times. He knows the difficult times you're going through right now. Health issues, financial issues, family issues, work issues. Some of you've got stupid bosses. That's the biggest amen I think I got. I said that one time, there was a guy that worked for me, at the time, he said, "AMEN!" I'm sorry I invited you to church. Trust God in the difficult situations. Trust God in the difficult choices.

So, here's all I came to say to you today: It's not meant to be easy; it's just meant to be worth it. And, if you'll get good a trusting God in difficult situations, you'll have the outcome that God intended for you to have. Every great story of victory has some chapters of challenges. Every great story of victory has some chapters of challenges. Every great story of victory has some chapters of challenges. Don't look at this gift of challenge that God has given you in your life right now, don't look at this gift of challenge that God has given you in your life right now as a bad thing; look at it as a gift that He's going to use to get you to the place where He can bring you the victory He has for you. Amen? Embrace the challenges. Embrace the challenges. Don't waste an opportunity for God to bring the victory out of the challenges.

Debbie, who sent you a text today? Bob Heirtzler? Bob Heirtzler sent a text today—no, it was on Facebook. So, Bob Heirtzler said something on Facebook, and Debbie shared it with me, every time that we're having a test, the teacher is quiet. Every time that we're having a test, the teacher is quiet. The teacher isn't teaching during the test. Maybe the challenge you're in right now, maybe he thing that you're finding it hard to trust God with all your heart is the test. Maybe you're wondering why God is silent; maybe He's just letting you finish your test. He's just letting you finish your test. You know, I've taken some tests over and over. I'm not talking about third grade; I did that, too. Best three years of my life. I've taken some tests over and over. Finally God said, "You got it. I was tired of giving you that one. I was tired of giving you that test." Let God give you the victory that He's using this test to give you. Some of you aren't embracing challenge, because you think it's a bad thing. I came to tell you that you need to trust God in difficult times, and that means trusting that the difficult times are going to work out to something good. Does not Romans 8:28 says all things work together for good? Somebody, today, just embrace your challenge you're going through, and let God work it for good. "I'll trust You with all my heart; You let it work for good. I'm trusting You with all my heart, God. You let it work for good." Pray with me, "God, Almighty, I thank You. I thank You for the privilege we have to be here, today. I thank You for the truth that You're a God that never fails. You're a God that loves us; You're a

God that still hears prayers, and answers them. You're a God that knows us better than we know ourselves. You know what we need. You know how to bring victory in our lives. Help us to trust You in difficult times. Help us to lean on You; lean not to our own understanding. Help us to acknowledge You in all our ways. Lord, thank You for directing our path. Thank You for keeping us. Thank You for loving us when we seemed to be unlovable, and for using us when we seemed to be unusable. Thank You, Lord, for this privilege we have to worship You here today; let this time we spend in worship bring forth fruit for Your glory. And the church said, amen.