

A God We Trust

A long, long time ago, when I went to Bible Camp in Wisconsin, we often did a team building exercise called “**The Trust Fall**”. There are a couple of ways you can do “The Trust Fall”. One version consists of a group of 8-10 people, who are in a circle and one person is standing in the middle blindfolded. The person in the middle, with their arms folded across their chest, would fall back trusting that someone in the circle would catch them. After falling, the person who caught them, would stand them back up. The person in the middle would proceed to fall again until someone else would catch them.

The other version, the one we did, consisted of three people. Two people standing across from one another with their arms extended holding on to the other persons arms. The third person standing with their back towards the outstretched arms of the other two people would fall back trusting the two would catch them. In most cases it was simple for the two people catching to keep the third from falling all the way to the ground. Eventually the leaders would pick the two smallest kids and tell them they would have to catch one of the counselors. Then the leaders would ask the group if they thought the counselor trusted the two campers to catch them?

The truth is that everyone of us puts our **trust** in something. We **trust** our cars to get us where we want to go. We **trust** our employers to pay us for our labor. We **trust** a chair to hold us when we sit down. We **trust** the food we buy will be safe to eat. We **trust** people to keep their promises. We **trust** seeds will grow if we plant them.

The bible tells us in Proverbs 3:5-6 to ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

The difficulty we as Christians face today is the reality of living in an increasingly secular society. We have people all around us who are bowing down to the idols of our time such as; gender identity, homosexuality, power, money, comfort, sports, and convenience. We are living in a nation where people have exchanged the worship of the creator for the worship of created things. Not only are these idols of society being celebrated, but in many cases, we hear the mocking voices of our society saying to us “If your God is real where is your He?” “Why is He silent?” “If your God is so great why doesn’t He do something about all these horrible things that are happening in our world?”

Donald M Williams, in his commentary on Psalm 115 asks, “What can we say when God seems to be absent or silent or both? What happens when, amid suffering and tragedy, God doesn’t act according to our expectations? What do we say to people when we have assured them that God is real and that He will provide for us, and then the evidence doesn’t seem to back up our claim? What do we have to say to the scoffers?”

It is my hope from our study this morning we find answers to many of these difficult questions.

Please turn with me to Psalm 115. We will be reading verses 1-11. Read Prayer.

We don’t know who wrote Psalm 115 or when it was written, but many scholars think that it was after Israel returned from the Babylonian exile. Israel was at a point in their history where they were trying to rebuild the temple but were encountering opposition and taunts from the pagans who had moved into the land during their absence. The Jews were weak, and few in number. During their time in Babylon, Israel had observed the futility of idol worship. But now they are back in the land and seeing the pagans around them worshiping idols. Appalled by this, the Psalmist could no longer allow the mocking voices of the unbelieving nations to go on, so He answers them. Psalm 115 conveys a sense of need, as well as deep trust in God’s ability to care for the needs of His people.

We will see the Psalmist declaring, there is one true living God, there is no other and we should put our trust in Him to deliver and protect us.

I have divided this passage into three sections this morning. First, Concern for God's Glory (vs 1-3), Second, Condemnation of Counterfeit God's (vs 4-8) and Third, Calling to Trust in God Alone (vs. 9-11)

I. Concern for God's Glory (vs 1-3)

For us to understand Psalm 115 we must turn our attention to verse 2, where we see the context of the current situation Israel was in. Israel was experiencing a very difficult time in their history. As many of them were returning to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon, they saw the land they once knew, full of people from pagan nations. They were surrounded and bombarded by the images of idols. Their condition as a nation was in such distress that even the surrounding nations were mocking them, saying, "Where is your God". Clearly, He doesn't care for you. If He is this "loving and faithful God, why doesn't He do something? I don't know what you are going through today, what trials you are facing, but maybe you hear the mocking voices of this world crying out to you saying, "Where is your God?" "Why isn't He helping you?" I trust God will use His word this morning to give you hope and strength to trust Him in all situations.

The Psalmist responds to the mocking voices and the towering Idols of the pagan nations around him by declaring; You have no idea what kind of God we serve. Our God is merciful and trustworthy. These two words, in verse 1 (Mercy and

Truth) are expressing the idea of God's loyal covenant-keeping love and His faithfulness. God's love for His people is full of grace and compassion. He provides help in times of trouble. He is faithful to His promises and to His people. The Psalmist is declaring we will trust in Him alone to deliver us and when He does, He alone will get the glory. The Psalmist reminds us of something that we often forget. It's not about us. Our lives should be God centered, God driven, God focused. We were created in the image of God for the purpose of glorifying God and enjoying him forever. Let me state it again, it is not about you. It's not about me. As the psalmist says, "Not unto us O Lord, not unto us but to you be the glory. It dawned on me recently how often my prayer life is filled with desires for my own comfort instead of desires that God would get the glory in my life. If we think you can live our lives independent of God or for our own glory, we are in for a rude awakening. There will be a day where every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Some will confess with great joy and others will confess with great sorrow.

How could the Psalmist trust in God's deliverance during such a difficult situation?

Before I let the text answer that question, let me point out that worshiping an invisible God was incomprehensible to Israel's pagan neighbors. Basically, they thought the Israelites were a little crazy to think an invisible God could help them. Sound at all familiar? Have you ever heard someone say, "I can't believe in a God I can't see"?

The Psalmist proceeds to answer the scoffers' question of "Where is your God?" by saying in verse 3, "Our God is in the heavens". Our God is not bound by the confines of earth. You can't see Him because He is not made by human hands like your gods of gold and silver. Our God, The God of Israel, He is alive. He created the ground you walk on, the birds of the air and the fish of the seas. The mountains, the sunrise and the sunset all done by Him. Our God has said in Isaiah 66:1, "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool....." He is ruling and reigning over all things to His glory. He is the one true living God and there are no other gods.

The truth my friends is that God does what He wants, when He wants, where He wants, how He wants, with whom He wants. He doesn't need, nor seek the advice of anyone. Listen to the words of Isaiah 46:8-13 ⁸ "Don't forget this, O guilty ones. ⁹ And don't forget the many times I clearly told you what was going to happen in the future. For I am God—I only—and there is no other like me ¹⁰ who can tell you what is going to happen. All I say will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish. ¹¹ I will call that swift bird of prey from the east—that man Cyrus from far away. And he will come and do my bidding. I have said I would do it and I will. ¹² Listen to me, you stubborn, evil men! ¹³ For I am offering you my deliverance; not in the distant future, but right now! I am ready to save you, and I will restore Jerusalem and Israel, who is my glory.

It is important to note here that doctrine of the sovereignty of God is not a Presbyterian idea, but a truth that is found right here in Psalm 115. In Verse 3 the writer declares "He (God) does whatever He pleases". It doesn't say God

could do whatever He pleases, or He might do what He pleases, it says, “He does whatever He pleases”.

When we say that God is sovereign, it means God's is in absolute control over everything, always and forever. He is not dependent on anything outside of Himself, never has been, never will be. For some the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God is a stumbling block. I say it should bring the believer great comfort.

Listen to the words of L. Boettner;

“Although the sovereignty of God is universal and absolute, it is not the sovereignty of blind power. It is coupled with infinite wisdom, holiness and love. And this doctrine, when properly understood, is a most comforting and reassuring one. Who would not prefer to have his affairs in the hands of a God of infinite power, wisdom, holiness and love, rather than to have them left to fate, or chance, or irrevocable natural law, or to short-sighted and perverted self? Those who reject God's sovereignty should consider what alternatives they have left.”

Like the Psalmist, Christians should find great hope and comfort in trusting in a God who is both living and sovereignly acting on their behalf. Christian you can respond to the mocking world with great confidence, “Our God is the one true living God and He does as He pleases.”

In verses 4-8 the Psalmist turns his attention from his Concern for God's Glory to his Condemnation of Idolatry. This section of scripture starts a very intense scornful mocking of the idols of pagan nations.

Look with me again at verse 4-8, **reread verses 4-8.**

II. Condemnation of Idolatry (4-8)

It is interesting to notice in verse 4 that the Psalmist recognizes both the monetary value of the pagan idols and the efforts they took to make them. It speaks to the reality that all idols have a cost. It could be time, money, family, friends, emotions, intellect or health. He wasn't saying their idols didn't have value. What he did say was their idols were powerless to act on their behalf. Their idols may have material value he says "they are made of gold and silver" but are powerless to do anything. Their idols don't have the power to create but instead were created. Their idols have no divine power, no divine authority and no divine ability. It is interesting to note that to make their idols look more life like, the builders often carved out such human features as: eyes, ears, mouths, noses, hands and feet. The psalmist then proceeds to mock each of these characteristics. Listen to the Psalmist's taunts, "They have mouths, but they can't speak," Can you see the Psalmist saying to them "Come on isn't your God going to say something?" ([read rest of verses 5b-7](#)) Your so-called gods can't even make a peep, not even a grunt. Their idols were shaped like giant men but had no attributes of intelligent beings. In a very powerful mocking of their idols, he says, listen you unbelieving nations your idols are lifeless, insensitive, lazy, powerless and counterfeit gods. Not only are your idols dead but all those who make and worship them become like them. The truth here is that empty idols make empty people. Those that worship idols, which give no real hope, eventually become hopeless.

But let us not be fooled to think idolatry is just the carving of images out of stone, clay or rock and bowing down to them.

Tim Keller in His book “Counterfeit Gods” gives a great answer to the question, “What is an idol?”. I quote, “It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.” He continues, “A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in you heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotion and financial resources, on it without a second thought.” He goes on to list possible idols; family, children, career, money, achievement, fame, reputation, social standing, relationships, approval from peers, beauty, brains, politics, or success in ministry. Later, in the book he says, “Idolatry happens when we take good things and make them ultimate things.” Family, children, money, or career are all good things, important things, but when we make them the ultimate things, we are guilty of idolatry. If we were honest, all us at one time in our life have made good things, ultimate things.

I want to share an experience from my own life were this was true. (Illustration about Fantasy Football).

17 years ago, I joined my 1st fantasy football league and 3.5 years ago I went cold turkey. Why you may ask? Because it was an idol in my life. What started out with a few friends of mine turned into a 17-year journey that nearly destroyed my marriage. A couple of the guys in the league were super competitive and so was I. I loved the idea of controlling my own team, making the decision who to play on any given weekend. Sounds silly right? I soon found myself researching players, weather and injury reports. I would spend most mornings roughly 8 hours a day studying players, teams, defensive match ups. You name it, I knew everything about every player. I was an expert. I had friends calling me for advice on who to start and who to sit. It fed my need to be important and accepted. I wanted people to see I was great at this and I was. The more time went on my idol got bigger. I often would tell Becky I was too busy to help around the house. My devotion to my idol was destroying my relationship with my wife and my family. I started checking my lineups in church on Sunday. I was leaving as soon as service

was done because I didn't want to miss one bit of action of my team's performance.

One day a friend of mine sat me down and told me I had an addiction to fantasy sports. I told him he had no idea what he was talking, and he was no friend of mine. Little did I know on multiple occasions my wife was at their house in tears because of my behavior. Four years ago, on Father's Day we were driving home from church and Luke started talking. I turned around and said to him "Why don't you shut your mouth so I can listen to the game." God in His grace exposed my sin and my heart that day to me. I went back to my friend who had confronted me and thanked him for caring enough about me to say the right thing.

An Idolater will destroy everything they have to keep their idols intact. Eventually idols make us deaf, blind and dumb.

So far, we have seen the Psalmist Concern for God's Glory, His Condemnation of Idolatry, and finally in verse 9-11 we see the Psalmist Calling to Trust in God Alone.

III. Calling to Trust in God Alone (9-11)

Read verses 9-11.

The psalmist after systematically exposing the foolishness and powerlessness of idolatry offered the only reasonable response possible for Gods people. With a threefold repetition He says, "**Trust in the Lord**". "**Trust in the Lord**". "**Trust in the Lord**." He is your help and your shield. To Trust means to attach oneself to, to confide in, feel safe, be confident in. Trust is confident expectation, **not** a constant anxiety. In most cases if you are controlled by anxiety, then you are not trusting in God to be your help and shield. (**say again**) You are trusting in something other than God and it is the source of your anxiety. Let me illustrate. In Matthew 14:29-

30, We see Peter stepping out of the boat and walking on the water because his eyes were fixed on Jesus. As soon as he took his off Jesus and put them on something else, he began to sink. We must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Spending time daily reminding ourselves of who God is and what He has done for us.

As soon as we take our eyes off Him and look at our circumstance, we will look to something else to say us(idolatry) and we will sink.

We can trust Him because He is alive and Sovereignly ruling over all things.

Christian this morning psalm 115 should give you great hope. Our God is alive, there are no other gods. We can and should trust in Him alone, he is our help and shield. He is not one of many gods in the Heavens, He is the only one. He has **spoken to us through His word. He **sees** all that happens. He **hears** the cries of his people. He **smells** the sweet aroma of our worship. We are secure in the grip of His **hands**. Just as God **walked** with Adam and Eve in the garden, God walks with us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Understanding the folly of idolatry should renew our trust in the true God and compel us to look to Him as our help and shield.**

For those caught in idolatry today. Turn from your hopeless idols before it destroys you and trust in Jesus. Repent of your sins and find your greatest joy in Jesus the Savior. Put your trust in God who can do exceedingly and abundantly above and beyond what you could ever ask or think.

As a kid I used to sing a song in Sunday school that I think fits well here. It is called the wise man. It goes like this

The wise man built his house upon the rock
The wise man built his house upon the rock
The wise man built his house upon the rock
And the rain came tumbling down

Oh, the rain came down
And the floods came up
The rain came down
And the floods came up
The rain came down
And the floods came up
And the wise man's house stood firm.

The foolish man built his house upon the sand
The foolish man built his house upon the sand
The foolish man built his house upon the sand
And the rain came tumbling down

Oh, the rain came down
And the floods came up
The rain came down
And the floods came up
The rain came down
And the floods came up
And the foolish man's house went "splat!" [clap hands once]

So, build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ
Build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ
Build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ
And the blessings will come down