

#57 “Trust God’s Good Heart Always”

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Have you ever been in a place of utter confusion, hopelessness, or despair? Have you ever felt like giving up or giving in to sin? Perhaps discouragement has crashed in, or circumstances have driven your face into the dirt. Perhaps you just can’t keep from hanging your head because you are so down, depressed, and dejected. What do we do if we find ourselves in a pit of despair or a filthy mire of our own making? Where do we go when all seems lost and there seems to be no way out? Does hope remain, or is God distant and a mere giver of empty promises or promises that hold true for somebody else but not us? The declaration to us from God’s Word is that God is faithful always (2 Corinthians 1:18). He is good, and there is no place, time, situation, or circumstance where He will abandon His children. Life can get too hard for us, but nothing is too hard for Him. Even when the trials and tribulations persist and we feel like we have no strength left, still God’s heart toward us is good.

When trouble persists, as Jesus said it would (John 16:33), we must rest in God’s good heart toward us and in His perfect timetable. Lamentations 3:26-27 says, "It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent since He has laid it on him." There is a time to wait and endure trial, and God says this is good. Our natural reflex is to escape trial and to run from pain, but sometimes God’s desire is that we receive the difficulty humbly and with grace, believing that such is for our good and ordained by His hand. Times of struggle, strain, and suffering are used by God to teach us great and mighty things which we didn’t know prior to enduring them (James 1:2-4, Job 42:5-6, Jeremiah 33:3). So we should be calm, humble, and at peace as we wait for the Lord to work and deliver us as He knows best. We need to obey what we know and do what we can, but ultimately we are subject to God’s timetable. So why fight it and therefore become resentful toward God? God knows best, and we must submit to the plans He ordains for us. We can be sure that, when all is said and done, God’s plans are not to harm us but to do us good (Romans 8:28, Jeremiah 29:11), making us more into the image of His Son (Romans 8:29-30).

The Christian life does not mean that God will keep us from all struggles and pain in this life. Indeed, we shouldn’t be surprised when trials come (1 Peter 4:12). In the life to come, we can be assured that He will wipe away all tears, take away all pain, and remove all sorrow (Revelation 21:4). But, for now, there will be difficulty and travail. We must accept this reality, and rather than doubt God’s heart toward us or run away from Him, we should run to Him (James 4:8). We need Him to sustain us in times of trial.

David says in Psalm 40:1-2, "I *waited patiently* for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He

set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm" (emphasis added). Sometimes we have misconceptions in our mind that Biblical characters always were given an immediate path of escape from any and every difficulty. God did do miraculous works, but His servants really suffered and were severely persecuted in many instances. In this particular prayer of David, David acknowledges that He had to patiently wait for God to answer His prayer. Even David, God's anointed King over Israel and man after His own heart, had to wait. Waiting is just a way of life even with an all-loving and all-powerful God. Sometimes we just must accept that God knows better than we do and that His timing is wiser than ours. God did pull David from the mire he was in, and David was able to trust God and be patient for Him to work. We, too, need to trust God even when it seems as if He is not listening or doesn't care to help. God does deliver in His timing and according to what is best for us, but we must be willing to do things His way. Such may call upon us to have patience, which not coincidentally also is translated in the Bible as longsuffering. If we can be long-faithful in times of long-suffering, we will honor our Lord because we will not have doubted His heart toward us, which is always good.

If we feel needs are being unmet or God's promises are coming up null and void, we must trust Him still. He is unchangeable, and His heart toward us is always perfectly good and filled with mercy and love. We need to be humble and teachable, so that even when we are in a deep pit or mire, we can have joy as we trust God. He is able to deliver us, He has a purpose in the trial, and He will work it for our good as He makes us more like Christ. In the end, we will be able to say with David, "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life." Even better is the future, for we, like David, "will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6). Let us remember that heaven is coming, and that in the meantime, we have the presence of Christ with us to comfort us and go through our pain with us (Psalm 23:4). He is good, He loves us, and He always will. Now if only we could be so good, loving, and faithful to Him in return. May God give us grace to grow in our faith in the goodness of the heart of our good God. "O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting" (1 Chronicles 16:34).