

September 6, 2020 - Ben Carey

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Preacher: Ben Carey

- [0 : 0 0] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Well, actually, to begin, I just wanted to publicly thank Dave for all the preaching that he's done over the years.
- Because while I was preparing, it's not just, like, I guess it makes it look easy, but I was just surprised at how often I was thinking about this.
- I was driving to the car, Kylie can attest, I didn't get, like, barely any sleep on Friday. Because I was tossing, I was turning, should I say this, should I not say that, will that make any sense, how long is this going to be, is it going to be 15 minutes or 50 minutes.
- So, yeah, just thank you, it's not easy. Okay, let's just open the prayer. Lord, thank you for all that you've done for us.
- Thank you for your word. Thank you for the ability to gather together. Some believers can't do this. Lord, just please speak through me.
- [1 : 1 4] And I pray that I won't say anything incorrect. And if I do say anything incorrect, I pray that it will fall on deaf ears. No one will hear it. And, yeah, I just pray that the believers here will be encouraged and you will be glorified.
- All right. Amen. Okay. So, I wanted to talk about trusting God. And so, it just kind of set the stage.
- I shared the gospel with a friend at work. And it went terribly. And he was my friend, so I felt comfortable and everything.
- And he just got really uncomfortable. And he shut it down. And I kind of got the vibe that, like, you know, I put it out there. He rejected it. And so, months later before, that was months later when we were in office.
- And I was talking with him recently. And I was just checking in on him, seeing how he was doing. And he was really upset and nervous and scared with all the racial division, political tension.
- [2 : 2 4] You know, he was worried about losing his job because they were laying people off out of work. And on top of that, there was a health crisis. And he was just really scared and anxious.
- And I didn't know how to comfort him because the reality is it's not going to get better for him. Yeah, because he's not saved.
- The only darkness awaits him. And I didn't know what else to say to him. But, you know, I left that conversation. And I was just so thankful that we don't have to be scared.
- And we can trust the Lord. And God loves us. And it just made me thankful in that moment. And then, later on, I had an interaction with an older Christian.
- She's, like, a woman in her, like, mid-60s. And I know her family pretty well. And I know she's on Facebook a lot. And then she goes to watch the news and back and forth.

- [3 : 25] And I had one interaction with her one day. And she was just visibly upset. And she was just really stressed. And she was just not having a good day. I think the weight of the world was just coming down on her in that moment.
- And, you know, I was just listening. I was agreeing. Like, yeah, this is wrong. That's wrong. Like, the injustice here. And she said something that kind of, like, shocked me. She said, like, I'm paraphrasing it, but this is the spirit of it.
- She said, part of me hopes that my children never have children, because I wouldn't want grandchildren to grow up in this world. And I thought that that was pretty extreme.
- And I didn't, you know, I just kind of let it slide. But you don't, I don't really, you know, you can't forget about, you know, statements like that, because that's pretty bold. But I was thinking more about it.
- And in a certain sense, I can relate to her in that there are definitely times when I don't trust the Lord. And we all don't trust the Lord, I think.
- [4 : 32] And in that moment, she wasn't trusting the Lord. And I can't fault her for that, because we all do that. But those interactions are what inspired me to talk about this today.
- And, you know, the goal for today is just to give you, like, a couple of encouraging points, like, as believers. Because this world is, like, you try to stay up on the news, the economy, it's just, like, none of it makes sense.
- It can be a really scary place. So the goal is to encourage you. Yeah, trusting God. There's, like, a lot here.
- So I'm trying to keep it to simple points. And we'll see how this goes. Okay, but the first point that I wanted to establish, and I think this needs to be made first, is that we can trust him because he's powerful and capable.
- And I was thinking, like, what's a good analogy for this? And I was actually thinking about, like, fixing an engine or remodeling a bathroom.
- [5 : 47] You can't trust me to do that because I can't do it. I'm not capable of doing those things. It's not that I wouldn't want to or I wouldn't try my best, but it's just it's outside the realm of my abilities to do those things.
- And it is, it's, I thought this was kind of obvious, but it's very important to say that nothing is outside of God's ability.
- And I think that we, like, you know, I grew up in a Christian home, so it's so easy to, like, take it for granted. Like, yeah, God is all powerful. Let's move on. But I just wanted to focus on that.
- Like, God is capable. God is powerful. He is the creator. He is almighty. And so, and I was reading verses, and the verses were comforting, so I'll just read the verses to you now.
- Just a couple. So the first verse is Revelations 1.8. And it says, I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty.
- [6 : 51] And then the other verse I have is Psalm 115.3. It says, our God is in heaven. He does whatever pleases him.
- I like that notion of he does whatever he wants. There's nothing that he can't do. And then Psalm 147.5. Great is our Lord, abundant in power.
- His understanding is beyond measure. And that ties into, like, another important point. He's all-knowing. He's all-understanding. He's abundant in power. He understands. So, yeah, that just needs to be established.
- But then I think the, logically, one would think, okay, so if a person has all this power, what kind of person is that?

You know, what are the characteristics of someone who has all this power? Because if it were you or me, that would be awful. Because we're selfish and we would mess everything up.

[7 : 55] But then I think because he is all-powerful, because he is all-knowing, it is then even more important to try to understand his characteristics.

And that leads us to the second point of my message. Which is, we can trust him because he's good and he loves us.

And so I have a quote from a children's book, actually. And it's one of my favorite children's books. It's Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis.

And in it, I don't know how familiar you are with it, but basically it's pretty good for children because it represents the gospel pretty well. You know, such a good model, I guess, like this lion, Aslan, he's the king and he's supposed to represent Jesus.

And he ends up sacrificing himself and he ends up being killed and then he ends up being resurrected and saves the day and things like that. And it's very easy for children to kind of like model that with the gospel.

[9 : 00] Anyways, so there's a point where one of the characters is learning about this Aslan character and she says, Is he safe?

I feel rather nervous about meeting a lion. Safe, says the other character, said Mr. Beaver. And he said, Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't safe, but he's good.

He's the king, I tell you. And I was thinking, that's one of my favorite quotes. It's a really famous quote, because I think that represents God, one of the characteristics of God really well, because our God is not safe.

He isn't. He is to be feared. And I think that's where a lot of people forget that, yes, God is loving, but, I mean, just read the scriptures.

He is a God of wrath, and he is to be feared, and he is not safe. And if you're not a believer, if you don't believe that Jesus Christ died for you, you're not safe.

[10 : 05] And he, you know, you are enemies of God. And so I feel like that's an important point to make. I was really worried about flying through this.

So, this point that I'm trying to make, like, I'm only on the second point, but it's by far the most important point of the message.

And it's about, like, the Lord is good, and the Bible teaches that God is good. And I feel like in my own walk, the biggest obstacles to my walk with Christ have definitely been questioning whether or not God is good.

And because there are intellectual questions, but those are, you know, that just takes, like, study. And, you know, and I personally believe that, like, God has given you your faith, and so it's like you have it or you don't.

But, you know, whether or not the strength of your Christian walk comes down to do you really think that God is good or do you not? Because the strongest Christians that I know think God is so, so good, and he's so loving.

[11 : 23] And the Christians that I know that walk away from the faith, they, you know, God's, yeah, God is good. That's what they say. For me personally, that has been the point where it's, like, the darkest times of my life.

It's like, oh, man, like, I know God is all-powerful, but does he see me in this moment? Does he understand what I'm going through? You know, he's good, but it doesn't seem like it right now. Yeah, so, and I just wanted to read a verse that goes along with this.

Psalms 107.1. It says, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His steadfast love endures forever. And then another verse I have is Psalm 145, 5 through 7.

This is a beautiful verse. Let me read it for you. It says, I will meditate on the glorious splendor of your majesty and on your wondrous works.

Men shall speak of the might of your awesome acts, and I will declare your greatness. They shall utter the memory of your great goodness and shall sing of your righteousness.

[12 : 37] Let me just read that again, because when I came across that verse, I just loved it. So, it says, Psalm 145, 5 through 7. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of your majesty and on your wondrous works.

Men shall speak of the might of your awesome acts, and I will declare your greatness. They shall utter the memory of your great goodness and shall sing of your righteousness.

Okay. So, talking about God's goodness. Whenever I try to share the gospel with people, the number one thing that they say, the biggest issue that we spend our time talking about, it isn't whether or not the Bible is historically accurate, because a lot of people, frankly, just don't spend their time studying that to come up with great arguments.

Like, there are, like, really intelligent people don't believe the Bible is accurate, and they can create really intelligent arguments. But the fact of the matter is, most people on the street, they don't know what they're talking about.

They just think it's fairy tales, and you can kind of give them good points. What I spend most time talking about with someone who I'm sharing the gospel with is whether or not God's good, because of all the suffering in the world.

[14 : 03] I remember, I don't know what we were doing. We were getting coffee. We were getting coffee on the hill, and there was an old man sitting on the couch, and I was sitting there with my coffee.

He was sitting there with my coffee. I think other people were getting coffee. And I don't know how we started talking about God, but, you know, the gospel got brought up, and he's like, yeah, you know what, like, I don't have time for that.

Listen, like, go down to, you know, near King's Highway. Go down to Big Barns. Look at all those children who have cancer, and you try to tell me that God is good.

And in the moment, I didn't have a good answer because I was kind of taken aback. I just, I don't know. I kind of messed that up in the moment. But it started, it caused me to think about the problem of evil and the issue of suffering because it is a really good question because there are really dark things that happen in this world.

And it's really easy to ask, okay, God can be all good, but he can't be all powerful because if he was all powerful, he would stop this evil. Or God can be all powerful, but he can't be all good because he allows it.

[15 : 17] And it's like, yeah, that's a good point. But it doesn't hold up philosophically. And the reason why is because you're making the assumption that because you can't think of anything good out of the situation, there can't be.

And that's the flaw in the argument. So just because you can't see the good doesn't mean there isn't any coming from it. It just doesn't hold up.

It just really doesn't. And if you, just think about that and meditate on that. It's pretty interesting. It's like, oh, yeah. Yeah, we don't have the authority to say that no good is coming from it, or it's good or bad.

And it got me thinking about Job. Because you can't really talk about suffering without going to Job. And so I was just spending some time in Job.

And, like, fun isn't the word. I guess it was just enjoyable. I was just loving what I was reading. Because I love God's response to Job.

[16 : 27] And it was so good, I felt like I had to throw it in here. So this is Job 38. And, okay, so, you know, I'm operating under the assumption most people here know the story of Job.

But Job was blameless. He walked with God. Satan came to God and said, Job only loves you because you've blessed him. And so God allowed Satan to cause these awful things to happen to Job.

And it's a long book. But eventually Job, at the end, starts to doubt and starts to say, like, God is being cruel to him and whatnot. And so this is Job 38.

And it says, Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. And he said, Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge?

Brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions?

[17 : 32] Surely you know. And the reason, the thing that kind of made me, like, the reason why I enjoyed reading this is because it shows almost God's personality. Because if you look at Job, like, especially in these chapters, all God's doing is asking him questions.

It's just like, what about this? Like, who fathered the dude? And things like that. Like, who caused the mountain to rise? Was it you or was it me? And it just reminds me of the, Job's attitude reminds me of the attitude that I would often have with, like, teachers or with, it honestly reminds me of interactions I've had with my dad.

Because it just reminds me, these questions, because it'll say, my dad's famous for, well, who pays the bills? Who's paying the electric bill? Who fixes your car?

Is it you or is it me? And you're just like, I'm sorry, dad. You're right. You're right. You're right. You're right. Now things are a little different because I pay my bills. But I was just reading that.

I was just like, yeah, you know what? Like, that's, I can relate with Job. Because, you know, and I was going to, I get kind of scared when my dad asks me those questions.

[18 : 47] And I couldn't imagine, like, a storm is coming and God is asking Job these questions. And I don't know. For whatever reason, it was just so enjoyable to me just to remember, like, oh, yeah.

Like, God is not shying away from this. Like, God is not, like, you know, God is, he is willing to say, like, I am the one who did this for you, Job.

You don't, you can't talk to me like that. You can't come to me and say, who am I to do this? Anyways, I have more written down. So down to chapter 4.

It was good. I just put a lot of this in here. In chapter 40, the Lord said to Job, Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?

Let him who accuses God answer him. Let me just stop here. It seems like God is showing almost his sense of humor, I guess. I don't know. Maybe, maybe I'm not interpreting it this right, but I just love the way that God is handling it.

[19 : 53] You know, he's just, yeah. He's just totally establishing his power and his dominion. And then Job answers the Lord, I am unworthy.

How can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer. Twice, but I will say no more. And then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm.

Brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you shall answer me. Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's?

And can your voice thunder like his? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor. Clothe yourself in honor and majesty.

Unleash the fury of your wrath. And look down, and look at all who are proud and bring them low. Again, I just love this, because it's just, the Lord is establishing his dominance.

[20 : 50] And he's just saying, like, you have no idea who you're talking to. You have no, you have, you don't understand the first thing about this. And I think this ties in perfectly with suffering and us saying that the Lord is not good, and we can't trust him because of it.

So what's the end result for Job? 42, Job 42. Then Job replied to the Lord, I know that you can do all things.

No purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge? And this is key. I underlined this.

Surely I spoke of things I did not understand. Things too wonderful for me to know. You said, Listen now, and I will speak.

I will question you, and you shall answer me. My ears have heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

[22 : 02] You know, when he says, Surely I spoke of things I did not understand. Things too wonderful for me to know. This made me think of Romans 8.28.

So Romans 8.28 says, And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. I love Romans 8.28, but the issue is that it's hard, in everyday life, it's hard to see how things are working together for good.

I mean, many of you know this, but my dad was just diagnosed with melanoma. And it's like, you know, in this moment, it's really hard to see how that is going to tie together for good.

But going back to Job, you know, he says, I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. This, we have to admit, or my family, we just have to come to the understanding that we might never understand why this is happening.

And we might never, we might never see the good in it. Well, yeah, we just might never understand why. Because it might, it may just be too wonderful for us to know, for us to understand.

[23 : 24] Yeah. Because thinking about Job, you know, obviously like the Lord blessed Job, and he gave him, everything the Lord took away, the Lord gave back to him, and then some.

But, the Lord never, never, the Lord never told Job that millions of people, thousands of years later, will be encouraged by his story.

Job never knew that. The Lord didn't tell him. I don't know, you know, I don't know if the Lord ever told Job why he went through this.

I would be willing to bet that the Lord didn't. And, I think, it's important to understand that things are going to happen in our lives that will seem bad, and we may never understand the good behind it, but it's very important to not think that the Lord isn't good in that moment, if that makes sense.

Okay. Doing pretty good on time. All right. I'll just leave that there. Yeah, all this is to say that it's not, it's not our place to debate whether or not God is good or not.

[24 : 38] It's, you know, as Christians, the Bible unquestionably teaches that the Lord is good. We are to trust that. Okay, so, coming into my last point, point number three, what should we do now, and how does one go about trusting God?

Because, you know, obviously every sermon should have an application. And, this is my last point, so, if the musicians want to come up, they can.

This was the hardest question for me to answer because I feel like I'm still young in my Christian walk. Whenever I talk with missionaries or even older Christians who are really strong, they definitely trust the Lord when bad things happen to them and it's because when they're, they have been put in so many scenarios where they, they have had to trust the Lord and the Lord has always been faithful to them.

So, that relationship is very strong. My, my friend Nate, he's a missionary, you guys know of him. He, you know, he always says to us, our problems are just stages for God to receive glory.

And, I think that's important to remember during, during this year. Um, and he also says, you'll never need, you'll, like, you'll never see God as the God of comfort if you don't need to be comforted.

[25 : 55] You'll never know that God can provide for you unless you need him to provide for you. And, just, just think about that. Just meditate on that. Yeah. Yeah.

So, the other point that I had is it's really hard to trust someone that you don't know. So, how do we know the Lord? We know the Lord through prayer and reading scripture. And, uh, I thought this was interesting.

I heard somebody, I heard of somebody doing this. They, they write down whenever the Lord has come through for them. And, they kind of, they refer back to it.

I thought that was awesome. Um, I don't do that, but I think, I think, like, people would benefit from that. I think that was a great idea. Um, yeah, and so my last point is just, uh, Psalm 34.

Psalm 34 says, taste and see that the Lord is good. And, I feel like now, like, the world is going to say, like, uh, everything is bad, like, this year is awful and things like that.

[27 : 00] But, I just want to encourage you, like, now is an opportunity that we can taste and see that the Lord is good and that he's going to use, um, all these events that are happening in our lives, uh, for good.

Maybe we'll understand it, maybe we won't, but, um, yeah, I just, I, that's all I have. I hope that was somewhat encouraging. I hope that made a little bit of sense, but, uh, I'll just close in prayer.

Uh, Heavenly Father, thank you for all that you do for us. Thank you for your word. Um, thank you for the ability to speak and, uh, share your message. I pray that, uh, I pray that the, uh, the believers here will be encouraged in that, um, they will walk away, uh, trusting in you and understanding that you love them and understanding that, uh, no matter what happens that, um, they can be comforted to know that all things will work together for good for them.

And, uh, Lord, if anyone here is not a believer, I pray that you convict them and I pray that they will seek you, uh, seek your face and, uh, come to know you. Uh, in all these things we pray.

Amen. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[28 : 15] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.