

Depend on God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 February 2009

[0:00] 1 Peter 1, verse 8, the middle verse of the Bible. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

It's better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. Now, in our circle of churches we're often called independent Bible-believing, independent Baptist churches, independent. But really and truly, we are God-dependent. That's what we should be. We are God-dependent. A God-dependent church. Now, of course, we use the term independent because we're not dependent or allied with the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches and all that kind of hierarchical, man-made kind of structure that each church is autonomous, self-governing, independent and accountable to one another as I am accountable to you. We're independent from that hierarchical sense. But we're certainly God-dependent. Or we must be. We should be. That's what we call to be, as God's Word instructs us to be. To be a God-dependent people.

And we believe, as each one of us, we're challenged and directed by God's Word to be dependent upon the Lord. To be trusting upon Him. To be relying upon Him.

[1:20] To trust in the Lord. As this verse tells us, to trust in the Lord is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. And what does it mean? To be God-dependent.

To be dependent upon God. To be dependent upon God. You know, in the Christian bookshops there's been various little slogans that they use and kids wear them on armbands and things. And one of them is D-O-G. It stands for depend on God. And kids wear them as a bit of a conversation starter. And depend on God. That's a good motto for life, isn't it?

And likewise, F-R-O-G. Fully rely on God. Isn't that something that we should do? That we should have that mindset, that mentality. That we fully rely on God.

All the time. We depend on God. All the time. And friends tonight, you can depend on God. You can depend on Him. He is someone you can depend on. You can trust in Him. Far better to trust in Him than to put confidence in man.

[2:23] I know through life we all can have experiences where we've trusted someone. We've believed them. And we've been let down. We've been disappointed. But certainly this one is not going to let you down.

Our God is one who is dependable. And we can depend upon Him to forgive us. We can depend upon Him to help us. We can depend on God's grace. We can depend on God's eternal love. God will take care of you. God is there for you. And He is one we can rely upon. And the question for every one of us is at times, are we relying on our own resources, and our own way of living, and our own thinking, and our own striving, or are we really and truly, as this verse instructs us to, trusting in the Lord?

To trust in Him. To rely upon Him. To depend upon Him. To trust in our own strength, our own resources, or is our strength, is our trust, is our source, God, and His supply, His help, and His leading and guiding of us.

Turn to Proverbs 3, if you can. And another verse that tells us likewise, of trusting in God, trusting in the Lord, for our salvation, for our life, for really our everyday need.

[3:39] As it says, as the Lord instructed us to pray, give us this day our daily bread. Our very sustenance, our daily supply, is something we can rest upon His provision, rest upon His providing for us.

Proverbs 3, 5-6 it says, Trust in the Lord, with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

Be not lies in thine own eyes, fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and strength to thy bones, and marrow to thy bones.

Trust in the Lord. How do we come to that place? I think sometimes we go through life and we half trust Him.

We half rely upon Him, we half depend upon Him, but sometimes we're leaning on our own arm, the arm of flesh, the arm of our own, and our own effort.

[4:49] And sometimes it can be like that even with salvation. You might be a born again Christian, but you're still relying on your own fleshly effort, and your own self-directed efforts to serve God.

And we can all make those mistakes, and make with the best of intentions seeking to serve Him, and yet really we're not depending upon the Lord. And I know I need to, much more, to have that dependence upon Him, and not upon myself or my own way of thinking.

And here's a story that illustrates this about how we can learn to have that dependence. There's a pilot flying his plane during the day is much different and less complicated than flying at night or through big storm clouds.

Flying by sight is totally different than having to fly when he can only see his instruments. There's nothing to look at to get his perspective.

And during the day, a pilot can look out the window and they can maintain the right altitude and get their bearings and see some visual landmarks and guidance.

[6:01] And they can make their own judgments and corrections, they can see the horizon without much reference to the instruments. But night flying, or flying through the clouds, is totally different.

The pilot must depend upon his instruments. And there's an article with the title, 178 seconds to live. 178 seconds to live.

It was a story, an account of how 20 pilots who flew well in good weather, in clear weather, but had never taken instrument training. They would put each of them into a flight simulator where they were given this pretend plane that I sat in.

And it was just a model of what the real thing would be like to actually fly through some clouds, through some darkness, to be able to rely upon their instruments.

And as they were instructed to keep this airplane under control through the thick, dark clouds and stormy weather, the article stated that all 20 pilots crashed. All of them crashed, killing themselves, so to speak, within an average of 178 seconds.

[7:11] It took these seasoned pilots with experience less than three minutes to crash their planes, so to speak, because they didn't have those visual reference points. And pilots in such situations, they can trust their own judgment or they can trust their instruments.

If they ignore or doubt their instruments, they will crash. And we are faced with the same decisions, brother, sister, that we need to not depend upon our own skills, our own experience.

We are going to crash. We must rely upon, we must depend upon the wisdom of God and trust in His leading.

Not to depend upon our own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledge Him. No matter how smart or how capable we might feel that we are, we are always operating with limited knowledge. And it is a picture there of how we as believers, we can sometimes make the mistake of going through something that we think is the right choice, that we are not going through the right choice, but without reference to God's frame of reference.

[8:21] That is when we can get in diabolical straits. And I pray that this church will be a truly God-dependent church. A God-dependent church. Not a pastor-centred church, but a God-centred church.

Not a program-centred church. Not a church that is dependent on man, but dependent on God.

That everything that we might seek to do and be progressing from here forward, that everything is with that frame of reference.

What would God be pleased with? What would God be glorified by? How can we seek His direction for us? And have, as the American coinage says, the motto, in God we trust.

You wonder about America, what God they are trusting in. But we know that as believers, as true Christians, God-fearing, born-again believers here tonight, in God we trust.

In God we trust. He is the one. Our dependency is not on drugs or alcohol, but on God. We depend not on programs or rosters or calendars or plans or committees or structures or positions or titles.

[9:33] But our trust is in God. Our dependence is on God. On His leading, His guiding hand. Upon the empowerment of His Holy Spirit. That must be our ground for resting upon.

Our endeavours of being dependent upon God. And to move away from all other dependencies. To become dependent on the Lord. People tonight, if we have problems or addictions or hang-ups, there is a better way.

There is one that you can depend upon. One that you can depend upon who will help you to go through the tests of life. There is a testimony here.

I found that I could offer to a drug-dependent person a radical, shocking remedy. They have been taught to get rid of all the dependencies in their lives.

But I was able to show them that the answer was in moving from drug dependence to God's dependence. Not replacing drugs with God, but moving to the one dependence for which we were created.

[10:41] We were created to be dependent on God. We were created to have our Father, God, wrap us in His arms and care for us. We were created that we would find that purpose, that meaning, that ultimate fulfillment that only He can give.

That purpose for which He has created us so that He can recreate us. That purpose of being born again into His family and finding that relationship with our Heavenly Father.

This is what makes life make sense. It is finding that God dependence for which we were created. It says, in Him we live and move and have our being.

You know, we were having some time talking to some people recently and giving up some leaflets. And there is another lady there and she said, what is this all about?

And we said, it is about salvation. It is about finding faith in Christ. And she says, oh, He means everything to me. And I said, yes, in Him we live and move and have our being as it says.

[11:44] And she said, yes, Amen. You know, we live, we move, we have our being in Him. You know, without Christ we are lifeless. We are dead. We are dead men walking like it says.

We are dead in trespasses and sins. There is no life in us without Christ as our Saviour. And then his favourite verse was Isaiah 12 too. I will trust and not be afraid.

I will trust and not be afraid. If there is fears, if there is worries, there is anxieties, there is concerns. I will trust and not be afraid. Make that your text to imprint that upon your mind when you are feeling desperate and down and hurting.

I will trust and not be afraid. Isaiah 12 verse 2. Whatever your situation, your answer is in God. He is your answer. He is what you are seeking and searching for ultimately and absolutely.

He is the answer. When you see these ones searching and seeking solace in the bottle. And seeking to drink themselves stupid. To deaden their conscience or their thinking or their guilt.

[12:52] And to try to hide their shame. To try to replace these pressures and frustrations that they might feel. They turn to the bottle. They turn to drugs.

They turn to whatever else. They can try to find satisfaction. But it is like the song goes, I can't get no satisfaction. This is where only Christ can satisfy.

Only he can satisfy that deep and absolute vacuum within. And your answer is the Lord. You can count on God. We are trained sometimes in the world to be government dependent.

A lot of people are government dependent. I know at times we all to some degree are government dependent in lots of ways. Or to be independent. To be an individual.

Or some say be drug dependent. But the one that we are totally dependent upon is the Lord. Everything we need we can find in the Lord.

[13:48] And even atheists are dependent on God. Aren't they? When you think about it. If they didn't have God putting breath into their lungs. Poof! They are gone. You know.

Everybody is dependent on God. And sometimes we just don't acknowledge it. We don't realise it. We don't see it. For the air that we breathe. For the sun. The rain. Our gracious loving God gives us everything.

As it says. Every good gift comes down. From the Father of lights. Everything we have we owe to Him. All to Him I owe. As it says in the song. God.

He is our defender. He is our provider. Our sustainer. Our saviour. Our shelter. Our supply. Our source. He is God. Depend upon Him.

We must trust God with our past. He has hidden it. We must trust God with our present. He is the ever present God. He will never forsake us. And we must trust God with our future.

[14:47] He knows what we need. Before we know. Our past. Our present. Our future. Trust Him. Trust Him. It is really the whole essence of Christianity in a sense.

It is faith isn't it? Trusting Him. And depending upon Him. Faith is not believing that God can. It is knowing that He will. It is knowing that He will. Do we think of what faith really means?

What being dependent upon God really means? It is like a story told of a farmer one day. He was out in his field. And it was a time of war. And there was a young soldier.

He came down out of the sky. And landed in a field. And the farmer helped him free of the fabric and the ropes that carried him to earth. And he said, you must be very brave. Coming down in a 120km gale in a parachute.

The soldier replied, I didn't come down in a parachute. I went up in a tent. He came down and his tent got caught up. And he got brought down into the farmer's field.

[15:49] And sometimes we've like, it's like where God can make your tent into a parachute. Where He wants. And you know, sometimes we've just got to trust Him. Maybe it seems like there's chaos and confusion and disaster.

He will never fail you. As He has promised to help and lead you. As you trust and obey His word. And depending on God can change things.

There's a story about a man talking of his son. He said, my son called. My son called. Through years of drug abuse, Scott had stolen from our family. Manipulated us.

Failed us. It had been a relief not to hear from him for over two years. And Scott told me that he'd been through a rehab program a year and a half ago. And that had provided something no other had offered.

I met Jesus Christ. I've been forgiven for my past. I want to ask you and mum to forgive me. He said he was now helping other addicts get straightened out.

[16:49] The father says, I was torn between hope and cynicism. The well-groomed bright-eyed young man who arrived at the airport looked like a stranger. In the days that followed, Scott told me how in the midst of a drug withdrawal, he had seen a vision of Jesus Christ on the cross and cried out to him for help.

His withdrawal symptoms ended instantly. And the experience led him to a church. He says, I asked the Lord Jesus to be my Lord. And my life hasn't been the same since.

Something happened. When he went from his dependence on drugs to being a dependent upon the Lord. And it says, the change in Scott was too dramatic for my wife and I to ignore.

And Jesus has given the same new life he gave our prodigal son. It's God working in lives, isn't it? Trusting God. How is a diamond formed?

This magnificent stone, it began as a lump of coal, but through constant pressure and heat over long periods of time, it's transformed from that black soot into a beautiful, magnificent treasure.

[17:54] And in the same way, faith can mould us and shape our hearts. Those hearts of stone can be turned and transformed. And as we become beautiful children of God, by God's wonderful working within.

And it's been said, your current miseries may be your future ministries. So, through life we all can have a hardship of various kinds.

And who better to talk to others who have experienced the death of a friend or parent, a drug or alcohol addiction or a disability, than a Christian who's gone through the same trials and found hope and comfort in the word of the Lord.

It helps answer that question, why does God let bad things happen to his people? For example, Genesis 45, the account of Joseph. After 20 years of being deceived by his brothers who sold him into slavery, he reveals himself to his brothers who come to Egypt seeking food.

But he is now no longer a slave, he's the Prime Minister of the most powerful nation on earth. And what was their reaction? They were speechless. They couldn't say a word because they were terrified at his presence.

[19:13] What would this powerful man do to them? Would he seek revenge? Send them to prison? He put them in prison for three days just because he suspected they were spies.

Would he now put them into prison for good? Joseph assures them not to be angry with themselves or upset. How could this Joseph, this victim of this horrible crime 20 years ago, tell them everything was okay?

Joseph says it was God who put him there. God put Joseph in the prison. God put Joseph in the pit. God put Joseph through all the mess of temptation and then the betrayal and the challenges that faced him through life as he went through much suffering and testing until God elevated him to that position.

And Joseph's experience trained him to be a better ruler of Egypt. He put it down to God. God led him. God made it happen even the not so good times, the not so good experiences.

And people tonight, we need to learn that trusting. To trust in the Lord is better than to put confidence in man. To be completely and utterly dependent upon God. We came out of nothing and if we are anything, it is because God is everything.

[20:40] This is a quote from Billy Graham in fact. If he were to withhold his power for one brief instant from us, if he were to hold in check the breath of life for but one moment, our physical existence would shrivel into nothingness and our souls would be whisked away into an endless eternity.

We are dependent upon him. Believers and unbelievers alike. But for us to believe, we know that our trust is really, he is what? He is due. And we need to learn to pray. To be a God dependent Christian.

Prayer shows that we depend upon God. Faith itself means a believing in what God says, a commitment of putting our trust and placing our confidence in our God.

And we think for example, there is a story told of prayer. When Hudson Taylor was on the way to China, this missionary, this godly man, he was on the ship heading across the ocean to China. And the voyage was there in the sailing vessel and the ship was in this channel between the southern Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra.

[21:51] And the missionary heard an urgent knock on his door. He opened it and there stood the captain of the ship. He said, Mr. Taylor, he said, we have no wind.

We are drifting towards an island where the people are heathen and I fear they are cannibals. Okay, they were getting a bit hungry. Apparently, there is another account I read of this, that they were actually, they were visible there.

You know, they were looking quite happy that the ship was heading their way. And what can I do? Asked Taylor. I understand that you believe in God. I want you to pray for wind.

Alright, captain, I will, but you must set the sail. Well, that's ridiculous. There is not even the slightest breeze. Besides, the sailors will think I am crazy.

But finally, because of Taylor's insistence, he agreed. 45 minutes later, the captain returned and found the missionary still on his knees. And I believe there was others with him.

[22:54] You can stop praying now, said the captain. We've got more wind than we know what to do with. So God blessed and intervened miraculously through the provision of wind.

And Taylor and the crew were safe for the rest of their voyage. And writing of this and similar experiences, Hudson Taylor said, Thus God encouraged me, our landing on China's shores, to bring every variety of need to him in prayer.

And to expect that he would honour the name of the Lord Jesus and give the help which each emergency required. Dependency upon God. Learn how to pray.

I know there's been exhortations of late to pray. And how we need to pray to be a God-dependent church. To seek God's will in prayer. And God's provision. We are dependent upon God for our daily blessings, our daily prayer, to supply our every need.

And sometimes we can get full of pride thinking that all of our life is our own doing and making. But really and truly we need to acknowledge that every good thing, every good gift is from his supply. [24:01] And not to have that pride. To have that instead to depend upon God. Now like it says, Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Now having that humility of spirit, that humility of mind, that we can have that attitude of gratitude, of gratefulness for what God has given.

And acknowledge it. And acknowledge it. Day by day. Don't spare that praise, that thanksgiving, that gratitude for what God has given to you. In the past, in the present and in the time to come. To learn to have that utter dependency upon God as a child to his father. To be 100% dependent on God. You might like to turn to one other scripture. Hebrews 13 verse 5.

Have you got that dependence upon God tonight? You know, I suppose sometimes we learn it when the tough times come, don't we? It's when things get hard.

It's like when the atheist is in the lifeboat and there's nothing else to do. They cry out in prayer. You know, but we need to find that time, that moment, that heart attitude to cry out to him.

[25:11] We don't have to wait until we're in a desperate situation. And to trust God, it means that you depend upon him. Trust and faith are many times referring to the same principle. To trust God is to have faith in him.

And I suppose it boils down to who you're relying on, isn't it? It's about salvation really too, isn't it? That in a way you could crystallize it down to who's saving you.

Are you relying on yourself or are you relying upon him? Are you depending upon him, on his finished work at Calvary? Are you depending upon his blood set for you? Depending on his sacrifice on your behalf?

Or are you trying your level best? It's not good enough. Amen. We know that as believers here tonight. I trust that we are all saved here tonight.

But if you're not sure that you're saved, that's just the simple truth of it, isn't it? To go from self-dependence to go to God-dependence. To go from faith in yourself and your own works and efforts and trying and striving and to trust in his work on your behalf.

[26:23] To have faith in what he has done. It's like someone described it in terms of illustrating how you see these guys who have got jobs where they've got to climb a pole.

For example, in some countries where they have to climb a telephone pole that's made of wood. I'm told that the secret of climbing this telephone pole is to lean back.

It's to lean back on the leather girdle or whatever is wrapping you to that pole. To lean back and they've got spikes in their shoes and they climb up the tree.

They climb up the pole, the telephone pole. And the secret of climbing is to lean back. To allow your weight to rest on the broad leather belt that encircles you and the pole.

Allowing the spikes to dig in to the pole at the broad angle. And climbing a pole is easy as long as you lean back, resting in the belt. But if all you do is rest in the belt, you'll stay at the bottom of the pole and not go anywhere.

[27:24] But if you begin to climb, if you begin to climb using your effort, yet the whole time relying on that belt, you'll be alright. Of course, if you fail to lean back and pull yourself towards the pole, then your spikes will not dig in and you'll slip.

So, it's kind of a picture in a sense of how, as a Christian, who do we lean on? Whose strength do we rest on? Whose grace holds us and keeps us and sustains us?

It's as we rest in faith. And yet, of course, faith is active too. So, it's hard to put it into one little illustration. But you can see the sense of that, that as a Christian, we need to learn to rest.

Learn to depend. Learn to lean back and trust in His everlasting arms that are underneath you.

Holding you safe. And Ephemers 13, 5, it says, Let your conversation be without covetousness.

Or, let your conduct, let your conversation, let your way of life, let your behaviour be without covetousness. Don't be greedy, grasping people, he says. Be content in such things as ye have.

[28:31] For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. It's interesting that verse, it's got a double emphasis to it. I will never

leave thee, nor forsake thee.

So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me. He says, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. Isn't that a wonderful assurance? Isn't that a wonderful promise?

And so that I may boldly say, The Lord is my helper. And we are helpless without him. He is your helper. When sometimes we turn in our own strength and effort to a helpline, and well-meaning to another believer or pastor or someone to call upon, some counsel to receive, and it's good to get counsel.

But ultimately and absolutely, the Lord is your helper. He is your helper. As we know of the Holy Spirit. He is our comforter. He is our helper. He is our guide.

And we are helpless without him. Sometimes we fret and struggle, because we haven't sought the Lord's help. And sometimes the pressing things of life are really to make us more dependent upon him.

[29:43] Solely dependent upon him. We are dependent on God for what happens tomorrow. Whether it is good or bad. We are dependent upon him. And we say God willing. It's like in James, he talks about, and that's what I like to say, although you don't mean to make it a ritual thing, but God willing, we are planning a barbecue next Sunday.

We may not see next Sunday. There might be a disaster in the city of Playford, and Fremont Park goes up in flames. Hopefully not with a barbecue. But we don't know what's going to happen about tomorrow.

And we can say, God willing. If God wishes, we are going to do something when we talk of the future. Because really, we need to trust him for that. We need to trust him for our lives.

We are not your own. You are bought with a price. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own.

You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own. You are not your own.

[30:49] You are not your own.