

# A Matter of Trust

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you, Sister Demetria. For this morning we are continuing our Psalms of Ascent series.

! And please follow along as I read.

I'm reading from the English Standard Version, Psalm 125. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people. From this time forth and forevermore.

For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong.

[ 1 : 17 ] Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts. But those who turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord will lead away with evildoers.

Peace be upon Israel. Let's pray together. Amen. We thank you, Lord, for your word this morning. Would you impress your word on our hearts? Enable us, O Lord, to hear and obey all that you say to us for the glory of your great name.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. I want to begin this morning by asking you a question. And the question is this.

What single word would you use to describe the days in which we are living? These times that are upon us. What single word, if you had to be confined to a single word, what would that single word be?

[ 2 : 28 ] I thought about this, and for me the word would be uncertain. We live at a time of great uncertainty.

Now, in a sense, times are always uncertain because we have no guarantees about one moment to the next. But it seems like the last few years, events that have taken place have impressed upon us a heightened sense of uncertainty about these days.

For those of us living here in the Bahamas, we think back to the worst hurricane that we've ever experienced, Hurricane Dorian. We think about the worst health crisis that we've ever experienced in the form of COVID-19.

And these events have brought a lot of uncertainty in our lives that we still live with. Life as we know it has been disrupted on many, many fronts.

There's great economic uncertainty. There is health uncertainty. And this uncertainty can lead to a lot of anxiety for most of us.

[ 3 : 45 ] And I think the feeling of temptation and anxiety would cause us really to be perplexed to one degree or another.

We become anxious in varying degrees. And I think we need to consider whatever degree that is, whether it is great uncertainty and anxiety or minimal uncertainty and anxiety or somewhere else in between, why is that?

Why do we find ourselves, wherever we find ourselves this morning, uncertain, anxious, troubled, perplexed? Why do we find ourselves where we find ourselves?

And I think the answer is that the bottom line issue for all of us is it is really a matter of trust.

It is a matter of who or what we have placed our trust in. And the truth is, if we have placed our trust in something that is shaky, we really cannot have true trust.

[ 4 : 57 ] And it may really be the source of our anxiety and the uncertainty that we have. And this is what Psalm 125 is about.

Psalm 125 reminds us of this important truth. Our trust in the Lord is rooted in His care for us. Friends, if there is anyone, any group of people at this time who should, in the midst of all the

uncertainty, in the midst of all of the unsettling things all around us, if there is one group of people who should be trusting in an unshaking kind of way, it is the people of God because their trust is to be in the Lord.

Our trust in the Lord is rooted in something. It is rooted in who He is. It is rooted in His care for us. In our remaining time this morning, I want us to consider three promises that belong to all those who trust in the Lord from Psalm 125.

Three promises that belong to all those who trust in the Lord. The first promise is stability. Those who trust in the Lord have stability.

[ 6 : 33 ] We see this truth in verse 1. Look at verse 1 again. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

Here in verse 1, the psalmist is giving us a picture of what it looks like to trust in the Lord. It's a picture of stability. The psalmist is likening the stability of those who trust in the Lord to Mount Zion, one of the mountains of Jerusalem.

The place where God had commanded His people to come to worship Him. Now, there's also an opposite truth that verse 1 is telling us.

It explicitly tells us something and it implicitly tells us something else. Explicitly, it tells us that those who trust in the Lord have stability like Mount Zion that doesn't move.

Implicitly, it tells us that those who do not trust in the Lord are not like Mount Zion and they can be and indeed are moved. Now, again, I think it's helpful for us to remember the context in which this psalm really has come to us in our Bibles.

[ 8 : 01 ] It comes to us among these psalms of ascents. And these are the psalms we're told that the children of Israel would sing as they made their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

These psalms help us to think about the themes that they thought about, about God and about life. And here we see them picking up this theme about trusting.

And they had to trust. They were leaving lands and property and possessions behind. They were trekking along dangerous paths, going into hostile territory and being exposed to robbers and bandits.

And they were reminding themselves that as they journeyed on their way to Jerusalem and as they journeyed through life that they had to put their trust in the Lord.

And essentially what they were also reminding themselves is that life is made up of two kinds of people. Those who trust in the Lord and those who do not. trust in the Lord. Those are the two categories.

[ 9 : 09 ] You either trust in the Lord or you don't trust in the Lord. Now those who don't trust in the Lord, there are all kinds of different things they're trusting in. Some are trusting in money and in wealth and in power and in people and politicians and in government officials.

But these two groups have different outcomes. Those who trust in the Lord have stability because they have trusted in one who himself is stable.

The one who is everlasting. The one who is all powerful. The one who has no limitations. The one who made heaven and earth. The one who cannot lie and keeps all of his promises.

But those who do not trust in the Lord, whatever they are trusting in, whether man or things, are trusting in the arm of the flesh.

And the arm of the flesh will always fail us because the arm of the flesh makes promises it cannot keep and sometimes makes promises it doesn't intend to keep.

[ 10 : 15 ] And therefore, those who trust in the arm of the flesh will be disappointed. They will be moved when the arm of flesh fills them. And so, as God's people made their journey to Jerusalem, the place of worship, they sang about and meditated about these realities of trusting in the Lord.

I think if you're tracking this morning, if you heard the songs we sang and you read this, I think something should be kind of raising some questions in your mind.

We sang songs about how our faith sometimes fails and how sometimes we're weak and if God doesn't hold on to us, we would not be held and we would fail and we would falter.

And then we come to this psalm, the opening verse in particular, that tells us that those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever.

What does it mean that those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion? Does it mean that once you trust in the Lord that nothing in this life will ever faze you or ever move you?

[ 11 : 40 ] Not at all. The witness of Scripture and the witness of life tells us otherwise. The psalmist's point is not about permanence.

Indeed, not even the mountains that he was referring to is permanent. We know that sometimes mountains are moved by earthquakes. Mountains are affected by erosion.

The weather sometimes can get the better part of the mountains. But what we know about the mountains in general is they are stable.

You wake up, it's there. You go to bed, it's there. And so the point is that those who trust in the Lord in all of life's ups and downs, in all of its sorrows and joys, in all of its uncertainties and surprises, they have stability.

Beneath the tears, beneath the sorrows, beneath the brokenness is a steadfastness that comes from trusting in the Lord. There is this steadiness that is the portion of the people of God.

[ 12 : 55 ] When I think about what it means to trust the Lord in the midst of the brokenness of this world in which we live, the iconic example that comes to my mind that is in Scripture is Job.

Upon getting the news that he had lost his children and all of his wealth, Job got up, he tore his robe, he shaved his head, he fell on the ground, and he worshipped God.

And the Scripture doesn't include this part. But we would not be reading Scripture properly if we think that Job did that dry-eyed. We would be misreading Scripture if we think that Job did that without a heavy heart.

But Scripture tells us that he fell on his knees and he cried out, naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Then after the Lord permitted Satan to attack Job's health and his body was full of sores, Job took out a piece of pottery and he sat on the ashes and he scraped himself and as he was scraping himself, his wife came to him and she said to him, Do you still hold fast to your integrity?

[ 14 : 23 ] Curse God and die. And he said to her, You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God and shall we not receive evil?

And Job continued to trust the Lord despite the unimaginable hardships that had come his way. And so yes, we are affected by the trials and troubles of this life.

But in the midst of them, our trust in the Lord is an anchor for our souls enabling us to remain steadfast, to remain stable and to continue to trust him and to continue to follow him.

And so this morning I ask you in these times of uncertainty and these times when many are anxious and perplexed, where is your trust?

Is it in the Lord or is it in something else or someone else? Brothers and sisters, if our trust is in the Lord, we will know stability in unstable times, in uncertain times.

[ 15 : 38 ] But your trust is not in the Lord. I called you this morning to hear these words of the psalmist. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved but abides forever.

Now why is this true? Why is it true that those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved and abide forever?

Well, the reason that that is true is because of the rest of the psalm. The reason that this is true that those who trust in the Lord have stability which we see in verse 1 is because of what we're going to read in verse 2.

And it's important to remember this because if we read verse 1 in isolation, we will come away believing that the reason we have stability is because of our trust in the Lord when there's something else that feeds into that.

Verse 2 makes this clear and this brings me to my second point and the second promise that belongs to those who trust in the Lord. It's the promise of security.

[ 16 : 56 ] Those who trust in the Lord have security. Again, the first point, those who trust in the Lord have stability and second, those who belong to the Lord have security.

Notice again what verse 2 says. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forevermore.

Notice that while in verse 1 we are told that those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion. In verse 2 we are told that the Lord surrounds His people like the mountains surrounded Jerusalem.

It's very important to see the subject of or the essence of those two verses where the emphasis is in each of those verses.

What is the psalmist saying to us in verse 2? In his book, *Along Obedience in the Same Direction*, deceased pastor Eugene Peterson wrote the following describing the geography of Jerusalem and explaining the point that we find in verse 2.

[18:10] He wrote this. Jerusalem was set in a saucer of hills. It was the safest of cities because of the protective fortress these hills provided.

Just so is the person of faith surrounded by the Lord. So imagine a city instead of having walls around it it has high mountains huge mountains surrounding it.

And the psalmist says that's the picture of how God surrounds His people. It's a picture of security and care. These mountains around it there in the middle of it.

He says that's the picture of God's care and protection of His people. And notice that it's an enduring protection.

He says from this time forth and forevermore. And so what we immediately see between verses 1 and 2 is this contrast between the imperfect trust that we put in the Lord and the perfect care and security that the Lord provides for His people.

[19:27] The Lord surrounds His people and cares for His people and protects His people and that is the basis for us to be able to trust in the Lord. Why? Because He is trustworthy.

He surrounds His people forever and though our human trust may falter and fail at times. The Lord's cares are constant. Those who belong to the Lord have security.

In verse 3 we read these words. For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong.

Now what are those words exactly mean in particular in Psalm 125? A scepter is a staff that political rulers would carry around and it was a symbol of their authority and their power.

It pointed to political power and military power that they possessed. And in verse 3 it is clearly it is clearly referencing the power of wicked leaders, wicked rulers ruling over the people of God.

[20:53] And we know this because the whole idea was that Israel's kings were to be godly kings even though they may have acted wickedly they were not Gentiles, they were not those who had absolutely no knowledge of God.

And so the sense here in verse 3 is that he's talking about the Gentile wicked rulers ruling over the people of God.

Now, based on Israel's history, we know that the psalmist is not saying that the land that God has given to his people will never come under the rule of foreign rulers, rulers, the rule of the wicked. He's not saying that because Israel's history, even up to this point, would have shown otherwise. There were times when they were ruled by the wicked. You can begin with their being ruled over by the Egyptians, and then they were ruled over by the Assyrians, and then they were ruled over by the Babylonians, and then they were ruled over by the Romans.

And so the psalmist is not ignoring that reality. He's not saying something that is not true to their history. Again, some of which had already happened up to the time this psalm would have been written.

[22:16] What the psalmist seems to be doing is he seems to be acknowledging that reality, but saying something else. He seems to be speaking to the Lord's care for his people in the midst of that reality.

In the midst of them even being ruled over by wicked rulers. And I think to see this, we have to see that there's a connection between verses 2 and 3.

Verse 3 begins with 4, connecting it to verse 2. And I think the point that the psalmist is making is that God will always surround his people and always care for his people in such a way that he will not allow the rule of the wicked over them to be such that it oppresses them and forces them into doing what is wrong.

That the circumstances upon them are such that they actually resort to doing that which is wicked and evil, that which is wrong. The point is that the rule of the wicked will not prevail over God's people, will not prevail over his protection of them, his care for them, and cause them to do wrong. Now, not only does Psalm 125 remind us that those who trust in the Lord have stability and those who trust in the Lord have security, but it also, third and finally, reminds us that those who trust in the Lord have integrity.

[24:02] Those who trust in the Lord have integrity. Notice how the psalmist says this in verses 4 and 5. Do good, O Lord, to those who are good and to those who are upright in their hearts.

For those who turn aside to crooked ways, the Lord will lead away with evildoers. Peace be upon Israel. In these two verses, the psalmist recognizes that within the visible community of God, there are two kinds of people.

Notice, in verse 4, he refers to those who are upright in their hearts and who do good. These are those who have integrity. And then in verse 5, he refers to those who lack integrity, those who turn to their crooked ways, but both are in the visible community of God's people.

And for the righteous, those whom the Lord surrounds, in verse 4, the psalmist prays that the Lord will do good to them. But about those who turn aside to crooked ways, in verse 5, he declares that the Lord will lead them away with the evildoers.

In other words, God will reveal and expose them for who they really are. They are evildoers, those who were not truly trusting in the Lord, though in the community of God's people.

[ 25 : 35 ] They were turning aside to crooked ways, or pretending not to do so. They are those who have lived deceitful and crooked lives, showing that they are not God's people, showing that they are not trusting in him.

Now, today, God's people are not centralized the way they were in the time of the psalmist. Today, God's people are scattered among the nations of the earth.

But here's the promise that we have in Psalm 125. The promise that we have is those who trust in the Lord, wherever they may be, whatever they're experiencing, they have stability.

Those who trust in the Lord, because they are his people, they have security. He surrounds, it doesn't say he just surrounded the nation of Israel, he surrounds his people wherever they might be.

Wherever they live in the world. it matters not how wicked the rulers are over them. And I began to think about the people in Afghanistan, those believers who are in Afghanistan, you're reading news stories of what's happening there and how many Christians are being martyred there.

[ 27 : 08 ] One of the realities that really struck me is that this is true. it matters not how severe the circumstances come upon us.

It matters not how wicked and how tyrannical the leaders over us become. it never gets to a point where God's people will not be cared for by him so much that they have to extend their hands to do wickedness.

Now, we may have to resist that to our death. We may have to be willing to die rather than to resort to wickedness and to evil.

our trust in the Lord must be that, but his care for us enables us to do that. And by the grace of God, we have seen over the many centuries God's people being faithful unto death to the very end because as we're told in the Hebrews, they didn't love their lives unto death.

God's love. And so brothers and sisters, this is a very sobering psalm, but it also tells us that those who trust in the Lord, they have integrity.

[ 28 : 34 ] And it's all because the Lord surrounds his people. I think the beauty of Psalm 125 is sandwiched in between our trust in the Lord and the stability that we have and our trust in the Lord and the integrity that we have is God's care for his people.

That enables both of those to happen. Enables us to trust him in the midst of all the uncertainty that's going on, in the midst of all of the wickedness and everything else that's going on that we can maintain integrity because God surrounds his people because God cares for his people.

As I read Psalm 125 as I prepared, I pray this is the effect on you this morning. It honestly prodded my own heart to long more for the day.

Long more for the day when we who are trusting in the Lord that our faith will become sight. That our trust in the Lord will become perfect, not shaky and unstable.

That we wouldn't just be surrounded by the Lord in ways that we are reading in this way that we know by faith, but that we would be surrounded by the Lord in reality.

[ 30 : 08 ] We would be with the Lord. When there will be no more sin and there would be no more rule of the wicked that will all cease and everyone and everything will be under the Lordship and the rule of King Jesus.

Psalm 125 caused me to long for that. And friends, I pray for us this morning, I pray for each of you that it does do some of that for you as well.

Because you are aware that though you trust in the Lord, that it isn't perfect. And that you are aware that we are surrounded by evil.

We're surrounded by the temptations to stretch forth our hands and do wickedness. And this should remind us to long for the day when that would all be passed.

And so I pray that together all of us have this long in our hearts maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus. Let's pray. Thank you for your word this morning, Lord.

[ 31 : 18 ] Thank you for the promises that you have reminded us of and held out to us afresh. That those who trust in the Lord have stability, they have security, and they have integrity.

And our stability and our integrity are premised upon and rooted in the fact that the Lord surrounds his people from this time forth and forevermore.

We give you thanks in Jesus' name. We ask, O Lord, now that as we leave this place for the God who surrounds his people will continue to surround his people.

We pray, O Lord, that you will lift up the light of your countenance upon us and in the midst of a troubled world, you will give us your peace.

We pray and ask these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. The Lord bless you this morning.

Thanks for joining us for the live stream. Have a wonderful afternoon.