

Trust

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[0 : 0 0] Now let's turn our thoughts this evening to Psalm number 9 in the Book of Psalms, and particularly the words we find in verses 9 and 10. Book of Psalms, Psalm number 9, and verses 9 and 10.

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble, and those who know your name put their trust in you. For you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

We're all, I'm sure, familiar with what's now known as the Hatton Gardens robbery, which took place in London and for which the perpetrators were recently found in court and found guilty of that crime.

The depositors, of course, of these strongboxes believed that their precious items were safe. And it's not surprising that they actually felt they were safe.

When you see the thickness of the walls through which these robbers had to drill, and the ingenuity they used in coming down a lift shaft and whatever else they used in order to get to those safe deposit boxes.

[1 : 1 6] I'm sure the assurances that were given by those who owned the premises were such as to assure those who would deposit their valuables there that they were quite safe.

Security system, everything in place, and these massive thick walls, who could possibly get to their precious items, their valuables. But they did. Because every human system, of course, of trying to secure things will be at some point or other weak and will fail.

It seemed impregnable, but it wasn't. Very unlike what God, what David is here saying about God. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed.

A stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name put their trust in you. In other words, when you take the two verses together, it's describing the Lord as a stronghold, which we'll see in a minute is to do with a secure refuge.

And because the Lord is a secure refuge, those who know his name, and again we'll look at what that means in a minute, they come to put their trust. They actually deposit themselves into the keeping, the safe custody of this God.

[2 : 4 0] Trusting in a person or trusting a person is not something you do just by accepting that word. Trusting in a person comes from really knowing them.

That's why David is here saying those who know your name will put their trust in you. People might come to you and give great assurances that you can trust them, that you can trust them with something valuable, that you can trust their word, you can take them at their word.

And it may appear very plausible, but actually it's not enough if you're going to especially trust your life to someone or something very precious to you. It's as you get to know someone that you learn whether or not they're trustworthy.

And as you get to know those who are trustworthy, those you can depend upon, then you put your trust in them. You can commit things or even yourself to them, and you can actually discuss with them things which you wouldn't necessarily discuss with someone else.

And it's the same with regard to God. We don't just simply take a law. Of course, we accept the Bible as the word of God. We don't simply trust in him just because we read something written there.

[4 : 00] It's because we've come to know him that we come to trust him. And the trusting in God is very much connected with and separately connected to actually knowing him.

And the better you know God, and the more you get to know God, the more you appreciate how you can trust him completely. The more he divulges of himself to you, the more you actually learn of him from his word, from holding communion and prayer with him and all the rest of it, it's the more you get to know that, the more you realize that God is actually 100% trustworthy.

And therefore, you put your trust in him. You deposit yourself into his hands for safekeeping. So firstly, we'll see how God demonstrates why we can trust in him.

You see here the verses 9 and also in 10b, you find set in the context of the psalm, you'll find the psalm is all about, as we've read through it, it's about David in relation to his enemies.

David actually saying that his enemies have been overcome by the power and the ability that God himself has. It's the Lord who has done this, and his enemies have been overcome.

[5 : 23] And that's how he has come here to describe the Lord as a stronghold in times of trouble. They've not been able to remove his security from them.

They're still perhaps seeking his life, but so far the Lord has kept him, and he's quite sure the Lord will keep him because that's his promise. And God as a stronghold in verse 9, it's pretty much a picture really of what you have in verse 10 as well.

So the two things really hold together in that way. Now this word stronghold, it literally means a fort or a place that's defended but set on high.

And David, of course, was well used to using natural strongholds. For example, in 1 Samuel 23, you'll find in that chapter that in verse 14, a description of how David, when Saul was after him and seeking his life, that he was in that area where he went into the hill country, into places that were high up.

And he found there, as it says there in verse 14, he remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph.

[6 : 47] And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand. And you can see from that how David, in his own experience, would actually come to see represented in the high hill country, and the literal rocky strongholds that he found there and used and would find easy to defend, and how Saul's attempts were failing, how God would actually impress upon him, this is what I am to you, David.

These are just representations, these high strongholds in these hills. They're just a picture to you. They're just images of what I am to you spiritually. I'm the one who's looking after your person.

I'm the one who's looking after your spiritual life. I'm the one who's looking after your future. It's all in my hands. I am your stronghold. And that's what he's capturing for us here in this great statement, this testimony.

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And that's why you find elsewhere in the Bible, words that we're so used to, for example, Psalm 46.

Many of us will have learned that from our youngest days. God is our refuge and our strength. In straits, he is our present aid.

[8 : 06] Therefore, although the hills we move, we will not be afraid. And it's especially, David's saying, in times of trouble.

We need a firm base to our lives at all times. We need a sure foundation on which to build and on which to proceed with our lives.

But especially so in times of trouble. And David is actually leaving it here very generally. He's not being very specific. We don't know the exact background to this psalm. Whether it was in the time of Saul's searching for him and attempts to kill him or certainly something similar to that.

He just says, my enemies. And the reason he leaves it generally, the way you find that in the Bible is so useful for yourself and for myself. Because you come to passages like that and you say, well, I can fit into that.

It doesn't tell you what kind of trouble it is. So it just means every kind of trouble. The Lord is a stronghold. He is a high fort for us. He's an impregnable fortress to us in times of trouble.

[9 : 14] And when you're in times of trouble, when you have a crisis time in your life, it's then especially that you realize that what you're using as a refuge must be secure.

It must be able to take the weight of your troubles. And it must be able to sustain you through them and keep you safe. And that's who God is.

And that's what God is like, David is saying. That's what he is to his people. He is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

And then he moves on to speak about those who put their name, who know his name, put their trust in him. And let's just look at what he means there by the name of God.

What does it mean to know the name of God? What is the name of God? Now, of course, we have mentioned this a number of times and indeed very recently, that the name of God is in the Bible used for things like the reputation that God brings to himself.

[10 : 20] The way by which he makes a name for himself. And that, more often than not, in the Old Testament especially, is by way of great works, even miracles of salvation, especially for his people Israel.

And indeed, that's what you find at the very beginning of the psalm, isn't it there? I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart. I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

And these words, your wonderful deeds, they're found in the Old Testament. They're found in the book of Psalms. Psalm 106, Psalm 107 has them.

And they're to do with the Lord's great works of redemption. The Lord delivering his people. Which is why you have that repeated emphasis in Psalm 107.

Oh, that men would give praise to the Lord for his goodness and for his works of wonder to the children of men. His wonderful works.

[11 : 25] His display of his power, of his wisdom, of his might, of his grace, of his mercy, of his forgiveness, of his long suffering and patience.

In every single way in which God acts so as to reveal aspects of his being, of his nature, of what he's like, of his attributes. He's making a name for himself.

He's made a name for himself through his wonderful works. And David is taking account of that and he says, those who know your name.

And if you go to the likes of Psalm 71 and verse 17, you'll find that that same description is used there even of things that are just of what you might say an ordinary daily occurrence in the lives of his people.

Psalms 71 and verse 17 there where you find, O God, from my youth you have taught me, I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

[12 : 30] Are we teaching our children, our young people, our grandchildren, what the wonderful deeds of the Lord mean and where they are and why they are important?

Do we really pass on to our young folks and to our children and to our neighbors as well, to adults too, that even the most basic gracious acts of God that we find in our daily lives, they are his wonderful works.

They are wonderful because they are so far beyond what you and I deserve from him. We don't really stop to think about the fact that when we say grace before we take our food, we are acknowledging that but for God and his mercy and his power and his ability, that food would do nothing for us.

Oh, you might say, well, there's plenty of people who take food and it benefits them and they don't pray and they don't believe in God and they don't say grace. Well, so what? Does that mean that God isn't making that food, the very basic things, effective?

Does it mean that it's not God ultimately in his providence who is bringing those things to their table? God is so great and so patient and so gracious that he feeds even his very enemies to keep them alive.

[14 : 00] As the apostle put it, it is in you that we live and move and have our being. If God raises his finger and says, I'm going to remove my support from that person, what happens?

They die. Why do we keep on living from day to day? Because God sustains us. Because by the great power and mercy of God, he upholds us by his power.

His wondrous works from the very, you might say, tiniest, relatively speaking, tiniest, the tiniest works and providing for us our daily bread right through to, you might say, the greatest works compared to those of his great works of redemption.

What is as wonderful a work as the cross of Christ and his resurrection from the dead? And what is God doing in actually bringing these things about?

He's making a name for himself. He's bringing himself such a reputation as will bring and constrain people to put their trust in him.

[15 : 14] To really say, well, the God who does that is worthy of my trust. Now, how different that is to those who dismiss God from their thoughts.

What a tragedy it is for a human being created by God to actually say that God doesn't exist when that God as we know from Scripture as we believe is keeping them alive, is maintaining them from day to day.

But, but, David is saying those who know his name, they put their trust in him. and God's name is also associated with the future.

It's not just the works that he has done or is doing that brings this great reputation to God, this wonderful description of him and his name and making a name for himself.

you notice here in verses, where he speaks here verses 5 to 7 especially, you have rebuked the nations, you have made the wicked perish, you have blotted out their name forever and ever, the enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins, the very memory of them has perished.

[16 : 29] Now that's talking as if the end of the world has come. As if God has actually brought about a final judgment where his enemies and the enemies of the people have been routed and have been judged and have been condemned and overcome, they have been blotted out forever and ever.

And this is one of the things you find in the Old Testament, the Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was born, was written, you find that the grammarians, those who know the language, tell us that this sort of thing is called the prophetic perfect.

And what it means is that in passages like that where things that we know are still in the future are spoken about as if they've already, as if they're already in the past, as if they've happened, what that is demonstrating is the certainty the truthfulness, the certainty of what's said there.

In other words, the overcoming of God's enemies and the enemies of his people, it is so certain that you can speak of it as he does here, as if it was already past.

It's been done. What he's saying is it is absolutely the case that this is how it shall be. You can tell from these words that the future for God's people and for God's enemies is as certain as God himself says.

[18 : 13] And that's what makes a name for himself. And that's what adds to the reasons why we've come to trust in him, why we can put our trust in him.

How he demonstrates that we can trust him? Because he is a stronghold. He is a fort, he is a tower, he is a secure place for us and for our lives.

And his name is such that because of what's entailed in it, what he's demonstrated of his great works, his wonderful works, making a name for himself means there is the proof, there is how God demonstrates that we can trust him and why we can trust him.

He presents himself to us as the trustworthy God and there's no one as trustworthy as he is. And secondly, we come to read of how trusting in God relates to knowing God's name.

They who know your name will put their trust in you. For you, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

[19 : 25] Now, knowing God's name, the word knowing there is far more than just an intellectual knowing. You get to know something, maybe by reading about it, you can actually do a lot of swatting up in textbooks and so on about something and you can say in one respect that now you know that.

And you know it maybe quite thoroughly, maybe even almost perfectly. But this is going beyond that. Because what this is really doing is taking us into relationship.

It's the knowing within a relationship that David is speaking about. They who know your name. They who come to a personal experience of you.

They who have come to know you in that personal intimate relationship relationship where they live in union with you and joined to you, live by depending upon you.

It's all that's in that personal relationship between a believer and his God or her God. That's where you find this very thing used throughout the Bible, this word no, used in terms of a relationship such as a marriage where the word no brings about even the most intimate parts of that relationship.

[20 : 46] Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived and bore a son. That tells us the most intimate relationship, what leads to the production of children, the love, the intimacy, the union of two people.

They know each other. And that's what's used here of David's relationship with God and those who've come to trust in him. Those who know your name.

Knowing God's name means living with God, living with God in your life, taking God with you into all your circumstances, looking for God in all your circumstances, wanting God to make himself known to you more than even now you know him.

Seeking, you see the word seeking is used here as well. You have not forsaken those who seek you. Seeking is not, as we've seen already, it's not to do with something that's still not known or not found.

It's not seeking in the sense of looking for something you don't know what it is and you're just seeking until you find it. It's lost until you found it. That's not the kind of seeking that's meant here.

[22 : 07] This is the seeking again that's within the relationship. The seeking that actually is itself an aspect of the relationship. The seeking in other words that wants to be with the person you love and the person you're in relationship with.

When you're seeking God you're saying Lord I love you and please don't withdraw from me. Come close to me. Keep me close to you. That's seeking the Lord. seeking his intimacy seeking his presence seeking his communion seeking his voice through the scriptures through prayer.

Those who seek you it's part of knowing God and part of knowing God's name. Now you see when you put all of that together how God demonstrates why we can trust in him.

How he is such a strong hold. How he is indeed having made a name for himself presenting himself to us as trustworthy. How very different that is and that feels even to the opinions of those who will presently say to you that God doesn't exist and you're wasting your time.

who think that a Christian life an atheist or a humanist is convinced that a Christian life not only is it wasted but it really just it's really just about following a certain creed something that's set out in the likes of the Bible or in Islam if it's the Quran or whatever but whatever type of creed it is a religious person and of course they don't tend to make any distinction between Christians and Muslims and others as well it's just religion all bundled together into one great heap and over it the atheist just writes it's just a waste of your life and instead of that David is saying knowing God is not just following a certain set of rules a creed that you actually come to believe in and confess as the truth for you knowing God is living with him in your life knowing that he exists not just somewhere out there but right in here knowing that you are inhabited by

[24 : 44] God the Holy Spirit because that's what's made clear in the New Testament that when you come to know God you come to have God living in you God takes up his residence in you the father and the son through the Holy Spirit as is shown in John's gospel as Jesus taught the disciples that those who keep his word those who are obedient to him those who live in communion with Christ and seek to please him they'll be loved of my father God Jesus said and we will come and make our abode with him we'll make our home in that person's soul there's a miracle for you about all the miracles in here tonight people who are lived in by God who live their lives in God who have that amazing interaction of God with them and they with God as they proceed with life they know the name of God they know

God as someone precious to them as real to them as the nearest human being in life is to them they know God as one that they just simply cannot possibly live without or can afford to be without and one of the things that Satan will constantly try and make you do is to put a distance between yourself and God and the more successful he is in doing that the weaker your life will be the less certain you will be the less secure you will feel because that's taking you away from your stronghold from your refuge from your best friend from your companion from your counselor from the one who leads you and directs you and will bring you at last to be home with himself that's knowing

God's name do you know it do you know it more than just out of the written word of God do you know the name of God in your life have you really come to know him as your friend do you live every day in communion with him are you concerned when you don't feel his closeness to you are you concerned to have him back again or doesn't it really matter where is God to us where are we in relation to him and knowing his name is the reputation that God has made for himself are his great attributes as he has demonstrated his name to you are they your refuge is that how you're looking forward to eternity are you getting ready to meet him in the judgment by having him now as your friend that's really all packed into what David is saying here about the Lord's name and knowing his name well he says those who know your name they put their trust in you and trusting in God is something that if you turn to

Proverbs just very briefly Proverbs chapter 3 words which I'm sure we all know very well Proverbs 3 and verse 5 especially trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding now you see as in Proverbs and as Psalms as well sometimes you get verses that are balanced like that so that trusting in the Lord with all your heart is balanced by don't lean on your own understanding in other words it's saying to us when you're trusting in the Lord it's the opposite of leaning on your own understanding when you're leaning on your own understanding you're not trusting in God or you can put it another way when you lean upon the Lord you are trusting in him and trusting in the Lord means leaning upon him leaning with all your weight upon him it's the core of trust to lean upon God to lean upon him with your weight it's difficult to conceive of how we can possibly manage to carry the burden of our sin the weight of our sin the weight of our concerns the weight of our troubles as David is saying here he is a stronghold in times of trouble why is he a stronghold in times of trouble how does he prove himself to be a stronghold in times of trouble in practical terms because when you lean upon him he is able to take your weight he is able to take your weight with all your concerns with all your troubles and there is no one else that you can say that of but you can say it always of him and in

Isaiah you remember Isaiah's great statement as well in chapter 26 of Isaiah where he was there talking about the overthrow of Moab in chapter 25 the Lord overthrowing his enemies there as well and all the gladness that was going to be brought to his people through that and then he says in chapter 26 we have a strong city you see talking about this fortress again this stronghold he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks open the gates that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in same kind of picture of God and his salvation as our stronghold our refuge our safe place and then he comes to say this you keep him in perfect peace whose mind has stayed on you because he trusts in you trust in the Lord forever for the Lord God is an everlasting rock not only is it our stronghold in times of trouble but it's our source of comfort that he is our stronghold that this is where we are safe that the enemy even if they reach us to trouble us they cannot get very far and they certainly cannot overthrow us or take away all that's precious to us in

[31 : 44] Christ and you see the emphasis there in Isaiah is this you keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon you leans upon you because he trusts in you and the emphasis there is on the words in you because it is in you that they trust that's what makes the difference it's not the trust itself it's the one in whom they trust you can trust in many things and that trust will come to nothing because that which you trust in will fail you but what Isaiah is saying you keep them in perfect peace you can have all the comfort you want and you need from knowing that you are safe with God because it is in you they trust and the you makes all the difference friends let's lean more upon God than we do let's turn from our own understanding and leaning upon it to leaning upon our

God that's why he's revealed himself to us as trustworthy so that you and I will come to lean upon him to trust in him to deposit our lives into his hand into the security that's in him John Paton as many of you will know was a missionary who spent some years in Scotland and served in fact in Glasgow City as a Glasgow City missionary and then he went to what was then called New Hebrides which now they're called islands in the South Pacific called Vanuatu used to be called New Hebrides but he went there as a Presbyterian missionary and three months after he arrived his young wife died followed very soon by their five week old son but he stayed on for three years and he labored amongst these very hostile islanders putting up with their threats presenting

Christ to them but he had to escape for fear of his life then he went back and served on another island in New Hebrides and he was working one day in his house and he was translating John's gospel into the language of the people and he was wrestling with this expression in John which is one of John's favorite expression to believe in or to trust in Jesus and he didn't quite know just what words he could use to translate this the islanders you see were cannibals and nobody trusted one another so there was actually no word for trust in the language of these cannibals and one day his servant came in as he was working on John's gospel and Payton was sitting at his desk and he asked his servant what am I doing tell me what am I doing and the man said to him you're sitting at your desk you're reading you're studying you're sitting at your desk and then

Payton leaned back on his chair and he lifted his legs off the floor and he said to his servant what am I doing now and the man used a word which means in the language of the people there to lean your whole weight upon something and Payton said that's it that's how he translated believe in or trust in all the way through the gospel of John to lean all your weight upon now you can use that as an exercise yourself let me just finish with one example these great words in John 1 11 to 13 where it says that Jesus came to his own his own people the Jewish people to Israel and his own received him not but to as many as did receive him to them he gave the right or the authority to become sons of

God even to as many as believe in his name translated even to as many as lean their whole weight upon his name if you haven't done that isn't it time you started doing it if you've been doing it and you've slackened in recent times get back to leaning upon him get back to putting all your weight upon him because there's no other name no other security no other stronghold apart from this one the Lord is our stronghold in every trouble let's pray gracious and eternal God you have made yourself available to us on your own terms and in your own way you offer yourself to us constantly in the gospel you address us as people who are needy of finding a stronghold for our lives and you address us as people who are being told that you are a stronghold for all who come to know your name

[37 : 32] Lord help us we pray to deposit our lives into your care to trust in you with all our heart and lean not to our own understanding go before us now then we pray and all that we offer to you in our worship we pray that you would accept with the pardon of all our sin for Jesus sake amen so to we'll