

Trust

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[0:00] The Lord will never abandon us. He will never forsake us. He will never let us down. And we have to trust Him. So I'm speaking about trust this morning. Trust.

And I'm going to take you through a little framework to help you with an acronym about trust so that you might remember what trust is. For illustration purposes, we're going to read Matthew chapter 14 verses 22 and 33. And this is going to just illustrate the lesson on trust today. Matthew chapter 14, 22 to 33. Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side while he dismissed the crowd. After he dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. But the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to them walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. It's a ghost, they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them, take courage, it is I. Don't be afraid. Lord, if it's you, Peter replied, tell me to come to you on the water. Come, he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward

Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out, Lord, save me. Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. You of little faith, he said, why did you doubt?

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, truly you are the son of God. When they had crossed over the land, they landed at Gennesaret, and when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the people surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let their sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed. Amen. The Lord will bless to us the reading of his word.

Now, can I see a show of hands? How many of you consider yourself to be good backseat drivers? Show of hands, please. Oh, well done. That was very brave, Bradley.

[2:32] Maria is a good backseat driver. Yeah, yeah. I've got a lovely picture of backseat drivers coming up, I think. Let me see. There you go. Backseat drivers are great, aren't they? When they're sitting in the passenger seat, breaking on your behalf, breathing in with deep, heavy, chaotic sighs of fear, gasping every time a car comes within 30 feet of your car, and telling you what you should have done, well, you feel so much better for the advice. Now, to be fair, I'm a backseat driver sometimes as well, if I'm not driving, and then I have to remind myself I'm not a perfect driver, not by any means.

I make lots of mistakes, and it gets easier to me. You see, I've just come back from, where were we? Cheltenham. Yeah, see? I know. I need the help. Just come back from Cheltenham, and the thing about going south is, apart from the air changes and gets worse, the thing about going south is there's so many more cars on the road. They're crazy, man.

Get on the M5, it's like a Grand Prix. It's awful. And I'm kind of doing this and that and the other, and Lisa's giving me advice, and you know, there we go. We get there in the end. We get home remarkably, and the prayer that was offered up, I tell you, coming back. I notice that when you come north, it gets easier. It's true of life. There's a parable there. Now, why do we need backseat backseat drivers? Why do we, why are we tempted to become backseat drivers? Well, because something within us kind of says that if I gasp or put my foot on that imaginary brake or kind of slow down, then we will bring the car back under control, and things won't, bad things won't happen to us, even though that's an illusion, because news of the backseat driver is that invisible brake does not work, and you can't control the driver. The truth is that control and being in control is an illusion, because there are so many things when you're driving that could happen to you.

You could drive perfectly well and still be hit by a speeding car. You can slow down when the signs warn you to slow down and come to a stop, and somebody could plow into the back of you. So many things are outside of our control. When the unexpected happens, and our natural instincts are to grab the steering wheel, as it were, of life, we imagine that we can somehow change circumstances and be back in control. But the reality is we're not in control. Not really. There are so many things that are outside of our control, but are in the control of Almighty God. Thank God for that.

[5:47] We live in a world obsessed by control. We'll track our steps to get 10,000 in so that we might live longer each 10,000 a day, by the way, not 10,000 over the course of your life, 10,000 a day in order to make ourselves healthier. We alter our diet. We adjust things. We kind of go out and run and keep fit, and we do all of these things in order that we might live a healthier, longer life.

And generally speaking, that's very wise, but it's not guaranteed. Very healthy, fit, careful people suddenly die and leave this world.

Life will deliver us a reality check. We'll get a diagnosis that catches us off guard. We weren't expecting. A relationship that we trusted in will fracture. We'll be betrayed. Financial storms will hit, and suddenly all of those savings will be worthless. And in those moments, the illusion of control is shattered. And where does that leave us? It leaves us anxious and afraid, and as Alan shared with us this morning, dismayed. And so we have this lesson from Matthew chapter 14, 22, 33, when the disciples are going through a real storm in their life, and when Jesus calls upon them to trust in Him. So I want us to learn this lesson of trust, to use the acronym of trust as a framework for living. But first of all, Matthew 14. So the disciples go out on a boat across a lake at night, and the weather doesn't look very good. They're experienced fishermen, so they're used to being in storms, but there's no indication whatsoever of whether they were prepared for this, or whether they were kind of advising Jesus against it. We have no way of knowing, really, or whether it all looked great when they set out. But Jesus sent them out. We've got to remember that.

He sent them out knowing that they were going to go through a storm. That's a bit of a mystery, isn't it? What's the purpose of storms, trials, and difficulties? Well, they're not without purpose or design, because they're the way we grow. It's like when we exercise and build our muscle.

[8:13] We are tested through storms. Our faith is tested through storms. Peter says you're blessed if that happens, because you are being tested, and you will come forth as gold, like gold being refined in the fire.

Jesus sends the disciples out. Then the storm approaches, and the disciples begin to row and use all of their skill and experience and ingenuity to try and get themselves out of the storm, to try and row themselves out of trouble, but they can't, and they're afraid, fearful for their lives. And then Jesus walks on the water, and he comes to the boat, and they see him, thinking he's a ghost, and they want to call him in.

And Jesus says to them, don't be afraid. It's easy for you to say, Jesus, you can walk on water. I can't. Don't be afraid. Trust me. Don't be afraid.

And then Peter says, well, if it is you, Lord, I want to come out. I want to walk on the water, too. And so Jesus, yeah, come on. And so he does. And let's not forget, he's very successful at first when he keeps his eyes on Jesus, but when he takes his eyes off Jesus, he begins to sink.

And then, once rescued, Jesus gets into the boat with them, and everything around them calms down.

[9:46] The boat is a kind of metaphor of our lives, our hearts, that can calm down when Jesus is present with us, with Christ in the vessel. I will smile at the storm. And then, as a result, the disciples worship.

Who is this, they say, that even the winds and the waves obey him? Who is this Jesus that he has such power to take such control over the things of life that he can produce these great miracles? You know, when I was poking those pencils through the bag and the water wasn't running out, it reminded me of that verse in Colossians. He is before all things and in him all things consist. Molecules are the essential building blocks of life. That's why we hold together.

It's a miracle that we are even alive. And Jesus is the performer of those miracles. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. Through him all things are made. And then in him was life. And that life is the light of men. That light shines in the darkness. The darkness is not overcoming. He comes from God, and he bears witness to the light. And then he gives us his light and his life so that we are by a miracle of

grace born again.

[11:14] And he is the one whom we are called to trust in. So what does it mean to trust? First, next slide please. Take the T word, the T letter. Trust. Take him at his word. That is what Alan was saying at the start.

Find the promises of God and stand upon them. And you will not be overwhelmed or desmayed by the waters that trouble our lives, by the storms that come in. Don't trust your feelings. Don't trust in your resources.

These were experienced fishermen. They were of much greater skill at fishing than Jesus, but they couldn't work miracles like Jesus. And so instead of trusting in our resources or our feelings, let us learn to trust in Jesus. When fear comes, let us learn to trust. Think of God's Word like the safety briefing on those airline flights, you know, do you get them? I always watch them. I kind of watch them with slight dismay because I watch these lovely air stewardesses standing in the middle of the aisle telling you, well, if the plane's going to go down, that's really what they're going to say, really. If the plane's going to go down, you've got a life jacket and you've got some oxygen. By the way, what they don't tell you is that you're 35,000 feet up in the air and there's not much chance of survival, but don't worry. Okay. When I'm going up on that plane, I don't praise the air stewardess.

I pray, though. God, please take us safely to our destination. And as the plane is about to land, I pray. Because I once flew into Florida when the wind blew across, when the plane went this way as we were landing, and I thought, wow, there is so much out of our control.

Take Him at His Word. Stand upon the promises of God. Trust that God's Word is the anchor for our souls that will keep us safe during trials. Jesus said, take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid. And every time you read a promise of God, Jesus is saying to us, take heart. Be of good courage. Don't be afraid.

[13:54] And then the next letter is R. R means rest in His presence. Now, I love the line. It always reminds me of Aslan and the Chronicles of Narnia. And I love the fact that C.S. Lewis depicted Jesus as a lion.

Very powerful. King of the jungle, everything else. And, you know, there's a certain irony about this, too. Because if you've ever seen Undumba, that was the word that we use in Luchazi in Zambia for the lion. Even if you heard the word, you kind of were on your guard. If you had Undumba, Undumba, where you were on your guard. Because a lion could tear you apart and eat you up for breakfast and lunch and everything else. It's hard to rest in the presence of a lion. A lion will lie down with the lamb. And when the disciples are going through this storm and going through this trial, Jesus was in effect saying to them, don't be afraid. Learn to rest. Learn to trust in my presence.

My presence will calm the storm in your life. Now, that's intentional. You see, if you go back to the illustration where I got Eve to stand in the tub and I put the water over her head, she had to trust me. I could have soaked her and you would have all laughed. But, I'm her father and I love her and I wouldn't intentionally lie to her. God says, you can trust me.

Rest in my presence. Don't be afraid. And then you. You means understand that the outcome doesn't depend on you. It doesn't depend on you. Jesus sent the disciples across the lake. He told them they were going to be okay. Then he allowed them to go through a storm and they must have thought, what's he doing? Does he know what he's doing? We'll never get across this lake.

We followed his instructions. But Jesus said, you will. You're going to go across the lake. He didn't promise them that it would be storm free. He just promised them that they would get to the other side. And that's life, isn't it? Sometimes we go through life and there are storms, sometimes very difficult storms. Sometimes we suffer pain and trouble and hardship and we worry and think, God, do you know what you're doing? I wouldn't have done it this way. I would have spared me an awful lot of trouble, God. But God is saying, understand that the outcome doesn't depend on you. I have promised you that the end of the journey will be fine. I have not promised you that it will be carefree and trouble-free. I never promised you that. We must go through many hardships, the scripture says, to enter the kingdom of heaven. And so when we go through these hardships, we have our fears, we have our anxieties, we have our questions, and we wonder what God is doing. God is saying, look, understand that the outcome doesn't depend on you. My purposes will stand and I will do all my bidding. Our job is to obey, to get into the bucket, to put on the cap, to trust that God will not allow us to be overwhelmed. His job is to ensure that the outcome is for our good and the trials will be worth it. And then there's S. S is secure in his sovereign will. We are secure in his sovereign

[18:36] I accept his sovereign will. That might mean pain. It might mean difficulty. It might mean hardship. I know. But my heavenly father will never leave me or forsake me. And he will make sure that all things end well.

Jesus could enable me to walk on water if I ask him. That's the value of your testimony. You know what God has done for you. And if he's done it before, then he can do it again. Sure, you'll still be afraid.

[20:47] But a little bit of faith will enable us to walk on water. John Oldberg wrote a great book, didn't he?

It will mean that you will understand the outcome isn't yours. You don't have to be in control. It will mean that you are secure in God's sovereign will.

[illegible]