

“Trust in the Lord!”

Proverbs 3:1-6

Intro. – In 1980 the growing season was an unusually good year for the farmers in Eastern Michigan. August raised the hopes of a harvest that would be the best ever. Area agriculturists were already counting their potential profits. Then, just as the harvest was about to start, the rains came. They came and they stayed. Potatoes rotted in the ground, beans molded in the pods and corn was too moist to pick. The rains remained throughout the harvest season; even to the point of threatening the planting of winter wheat. Well, hopes of a record yield quickly faded. One disheartened farmer was quoted to have said, “You ask yourself, ‘Why?’ What have we done wrong?”

This response raises an age-old question. We have all asked “why?” when faced with reversal and hardships. Why does God permit trials to be a part of our lives? Why does God allow challenges to be so common in each of our lives? How does God expect you and me to respond to such events?

Purpose: to better understand our need to trust in the Lord

This text deals with this very matter. The key phrase is *trust in the Lord*. How to trust in the Lord is found in three points of this text. These three points are relevant for all, but especially today they are significant for our graduates and the lives they will be living in the days ahead.

I WE MUST REGARD GOD’S PRECEPTS (v 1)

- Romans 6:23 makes clear that every accountable human being will relate to God in one of two ways:
1) God the Creator... or 2) God the Redeemer...
- the lack of regard for God and His precepts/laws/ways/commands is evident

A. His Will Must Become Ours

1. We must first be acquainted with His precepts – i.e. knowing His will is paramount...
2. We then must learn accept these precepts and abide by them not on the basis of our strength and will power but on the basis of His Spirit abiding in our lives...
3. We must conform to His will rather than ours or the world’s will... i.e. we must be doers of the Word rather than hearers only -- James 1:22-25 *“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.”*

B. Heads and Hearts Must Submit

1. To all restraints/injunctions of God’s divine law, we must give our hearts, as well as, our heads!
2. This will include our will and our emotions... literally we are to give Him our *all!*...

II WE MUST REGARD GOD’S PROMISES (vv 2-4)

A. Concerning Life and Peace

1. Note: this speaks of length of days meaning a useful life here... leading to eternal life yet come...
2. As our understanding of grace increases, contentment and peace will also increase...
 - Illus. – older I am with added responsibilities and experience... more appreciate my folks...

B. Concerning Mercy and Truth

1. Think of the enduring mercy of God and how we ought to respond ... mercy must beget mercy...
2. Truth – the practice of which is not easy... but it certainly is fulfilling...
 - a. Illus. – 1993 Thurman Thomas running back for the Buffalo Bills sat with his head in his hands. His team had just lost its fourth straight Super Bowl. His three fumbles helped seal the awful fate of his Bills. Suddenly, standing before him was the Dallas Cowboy’s star running back, Emmitt Smith. Smith had just been named MVP for Super Bowl XXVII. He was

carrying his small goddaughter. Smith looked down at her and said, “I want you to meet the greatest running back in the NFL, Mr. Thurman Thomas.”

- b. Scripture tells us in Philippians 2:3 *“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.”*
3. By living merciful and truthful lives you and I will understand better the promises of Him who personifies mercy and truth – Christ!

C. Concerning Favor and Good Name

1. Favor with God... referring to God’s approval of one’s decisions, one’s life...
2. With men – a good name, good reputation because of one’s integrity through Christ...
3. Honesty and integrity are two character traits that are fast becoming the exception rather than the rule... “In Christ” you first can be honest which leads to a life of integrity.

Regarding God’s promises enables a fruitful life!

III WE MUST REGARD GOD’S PROVIDENCE (vv 5-6)

- you must own and depend on God’s providence in all matters of your life – by faith and by prayer:

A. By Faith

1. This means we must trust He is able to do what He promises He will do – e.g. forgive... empower... never leave us... come again... reign with Him...
2. Must trust He knows our needs better than we do...
3. Must trust His providential care and not force it...
 - Illus. – history has shown after that which proves the best is what is least of our own doings... Our redemption proves this better than anything...

B. By Prayer

1. How we need to acknowledge His great attributes...
2. How we need to seek His counsel, wisdom and power...
3. To confide in God’s will is the key to all true greatness... Do it through Jesus!
4. Note: the command here is encouraging, as well as, reproofing:
 - a. does God claim to be acknowledged in all our ways?
 - b. can we trouble Him about all matters, great and small?
5. Indeed we can! He will direct us in our paths:
 - a. those who put themselves under divine leading are the ones promised to always have the benefit of being led in your life...
 - b. providentially the Lord will open doors and lead where you need to be led!
 - c. Illus. – Norval Campbell – “Be faithful to the Lord and you will always have opportunities to serve.”

Conclusion: Bernie May of Wycliffe Translators tells of his training in flying airplanes:

“As an airplane pilot, from the first time I sat in the beginner’s seat beside my instructor I was taught to ‘trust’ my instruments. ‘Your instinct will fool you,’ my instructor told me. ‘You must learn that even though you may feel you are flying south, if your compass says you are flying east, you’d better believe it.’

Later, as I took my instrument training, I was taught the danger of trusting my feelings. Often when a plan is surrounded by swirling mist and being buffeted by strong winds, you may feel you are in a dive and be tempted to pull back on the controls. But if your instruments say you are flying level – or even climbing – you’d better believe them. To pull back on the controls might put you into a steep climb, which would cause the plane to stall, drop off in a spin, and leave you out of control.”

Just as any pilot will tell you to trust your instruments, Christians must trust God. Feelings lie. Our field of vision is shortsighted, and our understanding is limited at best. What might appear as a nosedive to us, from God’s perspective might be the exact course we need to take! How reassuring and instructive this passage is.

To keep back any conditions, we lose the promise of all the benefits. Our watchword both now and until He comes again must be and remain to be: *TRUST IN THE LORD!!*