

Title: **IS IT REALLY SAFE AND WISE
TO TRUST THE LORD?**

Text: Proverbs 3:5-6

Subject: *Faith in Christ— The Secret of Devotion*

Date: Sunday Evening — October 26, 2008

Tape # Z-57a

Readings: *Merle Hart and David Burge*

Introduction:

The wise man, Solomon says...

(Proverbs 3:5-6) “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. {6} In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

But I have a question. Is it really safe and wise to trust the Lord, to trust him in all things and for all things? Is it really prudent to trust in the Lord with all your heart?

I know this.—**Faith in Christ is nothing less than the willing, deliberate, voluntary surrender of my very life to the rule and dominion of the Son of God as my Lord and Savior.**

- It is trusting Christ alone for my salvation, trusting him alone as my sin-atoning Substitute, trusting him alone as all my righteousness before God, trusting him alone to keep me by his grace and bring me at last into the everlasting bliss of heavenly glory.

But Christ is more than a fire escape from hell. Salvation is more than the hope of going to heaven and having eternal life when we die. We often speak of Christ saving our souls; but that is not Bible language. The Son of God did not die at Calvary to save anyone’s soul. He will never save your soul. Christ saves sinners, body, soul and spirit. He will either save you, all of you, or damn you, all of you! Do you understand what I am saying? The Lord Jesus Christ demands all of you. If he is not Lord of all, he is not Lord at all.

¹ College Grove Grace Church, College Grove, TN (SAT AM – 10/25/08)

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- **The Lord Jesus Christ demands that we trust him with the rule and government of our lives, that we commit, consecrate, and devote our lives to him and to him alone** (Mark 8:34-35). The Son of God demands absolute surrender in the city of Mansoul. He will have nothing less.

(Mark 8:34-35) “And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. {35} For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”

Illustration: *Lee’s Surrender at Appomattox Courthouse*

I am calling on you now, this very hour to give up yourself to Christ, to believe on the Son of God, to acknowledge that you are his, lock, stock, and barrel, that you are from this day forward his servant. I am calling upon you to devote your life, your entire life (All your family, all your time, all your talents, all your money, everything!) to the service of his kingdom, his glory, and his cause alone, acknowledging that you have no right to claim anything for yourself, no right to use anything for yourself, no right even to have a thought, or will of your own.

Illustration: *Baptismal Confession*

Perhaps you think, “Pastor, that sounds great. It seems to be that right thing to do. But it’s just not practical and reasonable. Surely, the Lord does not expect me to totally give myself up to him. Surely, he does not expect anyone to trust him absolutely.”

Again, I ask, “Is it really safe and wise to trust the Lord?” I cannot tell you that it is physically, mathematically, economically, or philosophically safe and wise to trust him. That which is demanded of God can never be made to fit any human graph or scale. In fact, I must honestly tell you that in all earthly terms, faith in Christ is anything but reasonable. As **Martin Luther** once said, “The first thing that faith does is to knock the brains of reason out.”

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Listen to our Savior's word (Matt. 6). When he calls us to believe God, to trust him, he says—If the Lord God, your heavenly Father, watches over and feeds the sparrow, don't you know that he will watch over and feed you? He who has numbered the very hairs of your head will meet your every need. If your heavenly Father clothes the worthless lilies of the field in splendor, he will never fail to supply your needs. Trust him.

(Matthew 6:31-34) “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? {32} (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. {33} But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. {34} Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.”

Can we really be expected to put Christ first in everything? Not only is it expected, it is demanded that we trust him for everything. I do not suggest, or imply, think, or imagine that this trust is perfect. Far from it! Our highest faith in our God is so full of unbelief that it would sink us all to the lowest hell, were it not bathed in Immanuel's blood and robed in his righteousness.

Proposition: Faith is never perfect in us; but true faith is that which trusts the Son of God in all things and for all things, absolutely. Such faith compels the believing soul to surrender all things to his dominion.

I know what you are thinking.—”If I so trust Christ that I devote my entire life to him, how can I live in this world? How can I provide for my family? If I allow nothing to keep me from worshipping God and obeying him, what will happen to my business? Is that really safe and wise?” Let's look into the Book of God, and see what he says about these very practical things.

EXODUS 34:24

First, I want us to look at a text in Exodus 34. You will remember that in the Old Testament the Lord God required every male Israelite to leave his land, his herds, his fields, his business, his home, everything three times a year to travel to Jerusalem and spend a week there worshipping him.

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All their pagan neighbors would soon be aware of the fact that these people not only refused to allow anything to interfere with their daily worship and their weekly sabbaths, these Jews are such religious zealots that they leave everything three times a year to go to Jerusalem to worship for a week. We can mark our calendars and take everything they have without resistance when they are away worshipping Jehovah. And the Jews might reasonably fear that their worship of God would make them vulnerable to such people, except for one thing—Exodus 34:24!

(Exodus 34:23-24) “Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. {24} For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year.”

LEVITICUS 25:18-22

We have a similar situation in our text this morning (Lev. 25:18-22). In this passage of the law, the Lord does not require the children of Israel to neglect their livelihoods for a week, but for a year, once every seven years (vv. 1-7). During this sabbath year, they were not allowed to gather crops from the previous year, or sow their fields that year. That meant that they had to trust the Lord whom they worshipped, the God they served, and him alone to miraculously provide them with food for three years! God required them to trust him and obey him because they trusted him. Is that safe? Is that wise? Let’s see.

(Leviticus 25:18-22) “Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. {19} And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. {20} And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: {21} Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. {22} And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat *yet* of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat *of* the old *store*.”

The Lord here gave his people assurance that they would lose nothing by observing these years of rest. In fact, rather than losing by obedience, they

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would gain much. Look at what the Lord promised.

1. He promised them safety. “*You shall dwell in the land in safety*” (vv. 18-19). The word “*safely*” means more than physical safety and security. It means—You shall both be safe and inwardly confident and secure. You shall neither experience evil nor fear it.
2. He promised them plenty. “*You shall eat your fill*” (v. 19). When we are obedient to our Savior, obedient to the revealed will of God, we may cheerfully and confidently trust him to provide for us all that we need (Phil. 4:19).
3. He promised that they would not lack provisions during that year in which they neither sowed nor reaped. “*I will command my blessing in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years*” (v. 21).

This was a standing miracle of providence. At other times one year yielded food for the next. But in the sixth year the fields would yield enough to last for three years. The blessing of God upon our provisions makes a little go a long way. Our Savior still multiplies loaves and fishes for his own. He who gave manna every day of the week, but gave none on the sabbath, gave twice the daily provision on Friday, so that his people could give themselves without concern on the sabbath to worship him.

All of this is intended to be an encouragement from our God to us. Here he teaches you and me to obey him in all things, to put him first in all things, confidently trusting him and casting all our care upon him. He assures us that nothing is ever lost by faith in and obedience to our God. He declares, “*Them that honor me I will honor.*”

I want to show you five things, five very important spiritual lessons from these verses. May God the Holy Spirit drive them home to our hearts.

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

- I. *First*, our text speaks about the obedience of faith and teaches us that **OBEDIENCE ARISES FROM FAITH IN CHRIST** (v. 18).

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(Leviticus 25:18) “Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety.”

There is no keeping of God’s statutes and judgments apart from faith in Christ.

(1 John 3:23) “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”

Throughout this Book of Leviticus, the Lord God calls for obedience to that which is revealed in the Book upon one basis. It is repeated throughout the Book. And it is repeated again in the last verse of this chapter.

(Leviticus 25:55) “For unto me the children of Israel *are* servants; they *are* my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.”

Here the Lord God says, I call for you to **OBEY ME BECAUSE...**

- You are my servants.
- I brought you out of the land of Egypt. I redeemed you and saved you. I bought you and you are mine (1 Cor. 6:9-11, 19-20).
- I am the LORD your God.

The Lord God demands that we constantly acknowledge that he is our God and we belong to him. Nothing we are or have is exempted. All must be consecrated to him. It is his right as our God.

Illustration: *Two Borrowed Jewels*

Obedience to the will of God is always costly. It always causes problems. It always requires that we make choices, choices that are sometimes painful. But God still requires obedience. And as we obey him, he takes care of the problems that arise because of our obedience.

THE DANGER OF WORLDLINESS

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II. Second, our text speaks clearly about the danger of worldliness, and teaches us that **WE MUST NEVER ALLOW THE CARES OF THE WORLD TO KEEP US FROM THE WORSHIP OF AND OBEDIENCE TO OUR GOD.**

When I speak of worldliness, I am not talking about wearing stylish clothes, watching television, or even going to the movies. I am talking about something far more serious. I am talking about the love of the world. Nothing is so dangerous, nothing is more powerful poison to our souls than “*the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches.*”

It is the love of the world, more than anything else that keeps people who profess to love Christ from doing that which they know is the will of God, that which they know is best for their souls, and that which they know most serves the interests of God’s glory.

(1 John 2:15-17) “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. {17} And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

(Ecclesiastes 3:10-11) “I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. {11} He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”

(Matthew 13:22) “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

THE PROMISE OF PROVIDENCE

III. *Third*, I want you to see that the promise here given of God’s special providence teaches us plainly that **THE LORD GOD OUR SAVIOR PLEDGES HIS PROVIDENCE TO PROTECT AND PROVIDE**

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FOR US AS WE SEEK TO WORSHIP, SERVE AND HONOR HIM IN THIS WORLD (vv. 18-19, 21).

(Leviticus 25:18-19) “Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. {19} And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.”

(Leviticus 25:21) “Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.”

Our Lord Jesus clearly refers to this passage in Matthew 6 and Luke 12, where he tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be supplied. In those two passages, our Master tells us that our primary purpose on this earth must be the will and glory and kingdom of God, and assures us that he will take care of us.

The Lord pledges his providence in our behalf;. Surely, this should be enough for every believing heart. Our Savior said, “*Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*” Yet how often we are overcome by the fear of losing money, or friends, or the good opinion of family, or some little toy, if we devote ourselves to his cause! Oh, we little credit the God’s faithfulness! Should we not leave in his hands all our difficulties as to the matter of our provision and his method of providing it?

Has he not promised that he works all things together for our good? “*He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up freely for us all, How shall he not with him also give us all things?*”

Besides, it is God’s blessing, not our industry, or skill, or foresight, that is the source of all our safety and provision. There is nothing to sustain faith, but the assurance here given that the Lord our God is able and willing to do for us all that we need. His heart is full of love for us. His holy arm is full of strength for us. It is most reasonable that we should trust him implicitly and obey him universally.

THE HINDRANCE OF FEAR

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IV. *Fourth*, we see in verse 20 that **IT IS THE HINDRANCE OF FEAR THAT, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, KEEPS US FROM OBEYING OUR GOD WITHOUT HESITATION.**

(Leviticus 25:20) “And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase:”

- If I worship God rather than working today, I may not be able to meet my obligations.
- If I worship God rather than spend the evening in frivolity with my family or friends, what will they think of me?
- If I give my money to support the gospel of Christ, how can I wisely and prudently expect to provide for my family?

Zedekiah, the whining wimpish king of Judah, discovered that he would have been far more safe and far more wise to obey God than to have been kept from obedience by his fear of the Jews and Babylon’s king.

(Jeremiah 38:17-19) “Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon’s princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: {18} But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon’s princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. {19} And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me.”

In the eleventh year of his reign, Bablyon invaded Judah and destroyed Jerusalem.

(Jeremiah 39:7-8) “Moreover he put out Zedekiah’s eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon. {8} And the Chaldeans burned the king’s house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.”

THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE

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- V. *Fifth*, in verse 21, the Lord gave his people the assurance of his grace, and thereby teaches us that **WE WILL NEVER IMPOVERISH OURSELVES, OR SUFFER ANY LOSS BY HONORING HIM.**

(Leviticus 25:21) “Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.”

(Psalms 37:25) “I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

(Luke 22:35) “And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.”

(Galatians 6:7-9) “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. {8} For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. {9} And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Our God has promised us safety in the path of faith and obedience; and he has promised us plenty; and he is as good as his Word! That fact ought to forever element from our minds every doubt, fear, and hesitation!

Illustrations: *Brant Seacrist*
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