

“I will not leave you orphaned”

JOHN 14:1-18

Jesus doesn't ask us **if** we trust Him.

He doesn't even ask us **to** please trust Him.

He tells his disciples to trust Him.

“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.”

Sure I trust God...

But actions speak louder than words. Do we ACT and LIVE like we trust God.

Spiritually speaking, most of us that proclaim faith in Jesus live within a thin shell of distrust.

When the Israelites had only recently been delivered from slavery in Egypt and began experiencing God anew, God gave them a test of trust, providing daily manna— but they were only supposed to gather and eat a days worth each day. Not store some for later just in case, but trust that God would provide. This was a test of trust!

Why would we struggle with trust?

Cycles of unmet needs.

Every time a child is held, rocked, fed, and spoken to, brain growth is stimulated by met needs.

Without all this vital input, a child's brain circuitry is impaired. Pathways are altogether unformed. Attachment and trust become hard down the road.

We live in a world that leaves us with unmet needs.

We're born with a need, a hunger, and a desire only God the Father can fill, and everything in the world may scratch the itch, but it never truly meets the needs. So we're stuck in a cycle of unmet need until we step into that relationship with Jesus.

Praise God, Jesus promises in John 14 not to leave us orphaned.

He promises not to leave our needs unmet.

And he tells us to trust.

But trust can be hard. An adopted child doesn't jump into a life of attachment and trust.

We may struggle with our trust of God the Father.

There are two common reasons: **CRUELTY & CLARITY.**

Let me explain what I mean by cruelty...

Sometimes I cling to distrust because God doesn't meet my wishes, my prayers, and my dreams.

And I'm not talking about light matters. I'm talking about infertility. A wife's chronic pain. And brain malformation that needs surgery. Death of loves ones when you're asking for healing.

Those unmet prayers and dreams aren't casual deals.

Sometimes a “no” from God seems downright cruel.

Unmet dreams aren't always unmet needs

“Ruthless Trust” by Brennan Manning.

Ruthless means “without pity.”

Brennan Manning’s point is the trust God calls us to is without *SELF*-pity.

A trust that refuses to regard self-interest as the highest good in life.

When you can get to that point it’s a game changer. Manning calls it a second conversion.

My trust? It often wouldn’t qualify as ruthless.

My trust is tied to my dreams. My trust is tied to my wants.

If those aren’t met, my trust wanes...

What’s at the heart of distrust and anxiety? Literally- the middle of the word. “I”

I’m at the center. *“I don’t know if I can...”* *“what will happen to me if...”*

Self-preservation, self-interest, and alike are at the core of my thoughts.

A ruthless trust in God refuses to regard self-interest as the highest good in life.

Humility- refusing to be absorbed in self-focus- breaks those chains.

There’s another aspect of humility that helps us understand the cruelties of life.

That’s the humility to accept that we’re broken. We avoid that reality. But we’re broken by sin.

We live in a broken world. We’re good at breaking things- like trust- in each other.

Isaiah 55:8&9 :

“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord.

“And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.

For just as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so my ways are higher than your ways

and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

To rob God of his transcendence does dangerous things to our trust.

To project ourselves onto a God who transcends us, to presume based on our projection, and then be disappointed when what happens doesn’t line up... that’s folly.

The notion is if the cruelties of life are pointless to me and you, they must be pointless.

Yet if God is powerful and transcendent enough to call into question for suffering, shouldn’t he also be transcendent enough to have a higher vantage point, perspective and reasoning than we do? We can’t have it both ways.

Some “no”s from God make sense with time.

But make no mistake- this side of the grave, there will be “no”s from God that make no sense to us and that seem downright cruel.

C.S. Lewis – admitted in his writing that he originally rejected God because of the seeming cruelty of life. He lost his mother to cancer when he was young so he disavowed Christianity’s “good God” and became a self-proclaimed atheist.

We know he didn’t stay that way. But later in life he tasted the cruelty of suffering again.

He wrestles with it in his short book *"A Grief Observed"* after the cruel loss of his wife to cancer. He wrestles with the questions we all do: *how can God be good and allow this cruel suffering to happen?* He wrestles chapter after chapter of this journal, representing months of his life as he would write them, but toward the end he says:

"When I lay these questions before God I get no answer. But a rather special sort of no answer. It is not the locked door. It is more like a silent, certainly not uncompassionate, gaze. As though he shook his head not in refusal, but waiving the question. Like, "Peace, child; you don't understand..."

Heaven will solve our problems, but not, I think, by showing us subtle reconciliations between all our apparently contradictory notions. The notions will all be knocked from under our feet. We shall see that there never was any problem."

2nd struggle with trust:

A hunger for clarity.

How many of us remain frozen by the complexities of life because we're waiting for clarity?

John Kavanaugh- the professor and author- recounts in his book America then when he went to work for three months at "the house of the dying" in Calcutta. He was in a search for how he should spend the rest of his life (maybe you can relate). When he had the once in a lifetime opportunity to meet Mother Teresa and she asked him, "what can I do for you?" He quickly asked her to pray for him. "What do you want me to pray for?" She asked. He replied "Pray that I have clarity."

She said firmly - "No, I won't do that."

"Why?" He asked.

"Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of."

He commented it's one thing she always seemed to have.

"I have never had clarity; what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God."

The way of trust is the life of the follower of Christ. Not clarity.

We live by faith, not clear line of sight.

Proverbs 4:18 - *The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.*

Often our path goes through the grey of the early morning. There's not clear black and white.

It takes faith to navigate the complexities of life!

When folks said they would follow Jesus in Luke 9, he didn't give them a clear itinerary.

He said look, "I don't even have a place to sleep lined up... a place to lay my head."

The path of following Jesus is fueled by trust.

That scares me. Why? Pride. I want control.

I ask for clarity; my desire is control.

I can't **control**.

I have a hard enough time controlling my thought life and the worries that come live waves.

I can't always control them. But I can choose whether to give **consent**.

There can be no faith without doubt. Hope without anxiety. Trust without worry.
There's no shame in that. Tell somebody not to worry, they'll end up worrying that they worry too much!

Often worry comes like a rogue wave.

They aren't voluntary emotions. We can't always control them.

But we can withhold **CONSENT** to those faces of fear.

I overcome distrust with faith properly placed.

Worry is faith placed in bad outcomes.

Trust is faith placed in a good God.

Making a fortune cookie couplet out of trust is dangerous.

Trust is a journey.

Jesus had been with his disciples for *years* when he told them to trust Him in John 14.

Jesus didn't ask for trust. He demanded it.

But to the end, Jesus the son also *displayed* the heart of trust in his Father for us.

His last words on the cross recorded in Luke 23:46:

Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!"

Jesus shows us the life of trust.

May we adopt this prayer of trust daily:

"Into your hands I entrust my body, mind and spirit."