

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE TRUST IS THE LORD

(5) Thus says the LORD, “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD. (6) “For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant. (7) “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD. (8) “For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit. (9) “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? (10) “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds. (Jeremiah 17.5-10 NASB)

Over 14 years ago, I found myself in a situation that was so severe for me personally that, depending on how it was resolved, my career could have been ruined, and I could have lost my job. It was a crisis for me and others. Several lawyers were involved, as well as some of the highest-ranking executives in the company. One hired lawyer, in particular, who was brought in from outside the company, seemed to understand my plight, and he was a calming influence over an investigation that proceeded for several months. I was tempted to put my trust in him until, one day, the Lord spoke to my heart in the way that only He can; it was like a bright light shining in a dark place. He spoke verse 7 from the above verses from Jeremiah: “**Blessed is the man who trusts [*batach*] in the LORD and whose trust [*mibtach*] is the LORD.**” Over the ensuing months, I prayed this verse numerous times. When my heart would begin to sink, I would declare it to my heart. When things seemed to be going better and one man, in particular, seemed to be on my side, I would declare it to my heart. But it was always part two of the verse that meant the most to me. It is one thing to trust in the Lord, knowing that He is more than capable of bringing us through our trial, but it is a much greater lesson when we see that our trust is the Lord Himself.

In verse 7, the first *trust* comes from the Hebrew word *batach*, which means “properly to *hie* for refuge; figuratively to *trust*, be *confident* or *sure*: - be bold (confident, secure, sure), careless, put confidence, (make to) hope, (put, make to) trust.” The second *trust* comes from the Hebrew word *mibtach*, which means “properly a *refuge*, that is, (objectively) *security*, or (subjectively) *assurance*: - confidence, hope, sure, trust.” (Source: *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*)

So, the first use of the word *trust* means that we are to have confidence in the Lord, and the second use of the word *trust* means that the Lord is our very refuge. Some translations use the word *hope* in the first incidence and the word *confidence* in the second. Interestingly, I have not found one translation that uses the word *refuge*. *Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible* states: **Blessed is the man who trusteth in Yahweh, to whom Yahweh is his ground of confidence.** The *Concordant Version* states: **Blessed is the master who trusts in Yahweh so that Yahweh comes to be his trust.**

I rather like the way the last translation puts it, for it implies a process. As we put our trust in the Lord, we come to realize that the whole matter of trust is not some esoteric concept but actually a person. For us who believe in this day, our trust is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our refuge, and He is our trust. In other words, it is more than trusting in His ability; He alone is our trust.

Those who know Christ as their trust are blessed, which means that they are benefited. **“For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.”**

Jeremiah lived during tumultuous times for Judah and Jerusalem. It was not easy, especially for the young prophet who was often reviled for what the Lord called him to speak forth. Using the metaphor of a planted tree and yielding fruit even in times of a drought, Jeremiah declares to us even today that one whose trust is the Lord will not only survive the rough times but will flourish. Such a one will not be anxious but instead will be strong and bear fruit. This should remind us of Paul’s words: **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God** (Philippians 4.6 NASB). **I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me** (Philippians 4.12-13 NASB). Paul was a lot like Jeremiah in the suffering that he experienced for the sake of the ecclesia. Paul knew where his trust and confidence were: **Christ Jesus our hope** (1 Timothy 1.1).

Now, take note of what happens to one who does not make the Lord his trust: **“Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD. For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant.”** If we place our trust in others (mankind), who, by the way, are just like us, making the flesh of man our hope or confidence and, in so doing, turn our hearts away from the Lord, then we will not flourish but instead be like a dried-up bush in the desert.

What prompted me to consider this word from Jeremiah is the financial crisis that the US finds itself in this day. As this goes to print, I am not sure where things will stand, but one thing is for sure: many people are looking for the leaders of the country to solve the problem. It is as if all eyes are on Washington and, at times, on the two candidates that are trying to convince the nation that they should be the next President of the United States. As I listen to news coverage of all that is transpiring, it is clear that many are putting their trust in mankind, the leaders of flesh. It is striking how many times it is said that the US is a strong and mighty nation that has been through rough times before and is capable of solving its problems. I even had one person tell me that he was not concerned because “there are many bright men” (presumably in Washington and the financial sector) “that will solve this problem.” Today, all eyes are on the politicians as if they are the saviors who, with some magical piece of legislation, will solve the crisis so that the stock market, the beast, will have more money to satisfy its unquenchable hunger. See issues #02-08120—122. The hearts of those who look to the beast as the way to prosperity see good times right around the corner if some new law is enacted that feeds the beast. Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind!

What should concern all who believe on the Lord Jesus is the absence of a call upon the Lord by our national leaders in a time of crisis. Who is standing before the cameras and declaring that it is time to turn to the Almighty God, the one true God, for His guidance? What leader is calling for national repentance in a time of crisis? Who is calling upon the Lord Jesus? Who is declaring that there is only one rightful King over the nations, and His name is Yahshua, the One who saves? The silence is deafening! Even some church leaders are cheering Washington on so that they can either maintain their prosperity or become more prosperous.

By the way, the rest of my story is this: I did not lose my job, but instead was promoted to a position that, for many years prior, I had longed to achieve, and I was given a large pay raise.

Oh, people of God, **blessed is the man whose trust is the Lord!**