

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)*

#04-1036

Blessed...Whose Trust is the Lord

April 6, 2010

Most of what follows first appeared in issue #02-08123, September 30, 2008, *Blessed is the Man Whose Trust is the Lord*. Without doubt, this is the most popular issue I have posted, so I decided to update it and repost it in both PDF and HTML format.

(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)

Many years ago, when I had a very good secular job, I found myself in a situation that was so severe for me personally that, depending on how it was resolved, I could have lost my job and my career have been ruined. 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, 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 out loud. Even when things seemed to be going better and one man, in particular, was on my side, I would continue to declare it, for I did not want to give my heart over to trusting man in good or bad times. The good news is that 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. I had learned a vital lesson: **The Lord Jesus is my trust in all things, both good and bad.**

However, part two of the verse continues to mean 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. **Jesus is Trust, just as much as He is the Way, the Truth, the Life, and the Resurrection, and everything from Alpha to Omega.**

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 trust.

Those who know Christ as 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 first prompted me to consider this word from Jeremiah was the global financial crisis that was unfolding from 2007-2008. At the time, I was not sure how events would unfold, but it was clear that many people were looking for the leaders of world governments and financial systems to resolve the crisis. Simply, the world was looking to men to bring the world economy back from the brink of collapse. During this period, as I have listened to news coverage of all that has transpired, it is clear that many continue to put their trust in mankind, the leaders of flesh. Many continue to look to men that they call “bright, smart, and intelligent,” and, by the way, these men are not shy about agreeing with this assessment of their ability. It is as if the many are saying “government will bail me out,” “government will give me entitlements to make my life better,” and “government will take from the rich to share the wealth with me.” Simply, “the government will take care of me; it is my savior.”

Today, the financial picture is looking a bit better. A total collapse has not happened (YET!), and there are some signs that things are improving, at least according to some experts with a vested interest in the matter. I caution you not to believe most of what you see or hear coming from the realm of the global economy. It is still a house of cards built on sand, and, at the Father’s appointed time, the ground will move and it will fall in one hour. As if to remind us, even as I write this, there are reports of a 7.2 quake in Mexico. Haiti! Chile! Mexico! I continue to hold to what I wrote in issue #02-08146, November 13, 2008, *The Coming Irreversible Collapse*. Trillions of dollars of debt are unsustainable! But if things get better, even if for only a season, does this mean that we as Christians are to change our attitude and turn from the Lord as our Trust? May it not be coming to that!

Where are the world leaders that are declaring it is time to turn to the Almighty God, the one true God for His guidance? Who is declaring that there is only one rightful King over the nations, and His name is Yeshua, the One who saves? What leader is calling for national repentance? The silence is deafening; even among many church leaders. Don’t look to these leaders as if they are your savior. There is only one Savior and one King! It is time to lay hold of our trust, to make Jesus our refuge before it is too late. Oh, people of God, **blessed is the man whose trust is the Lord!**