

Trusting God

When I was saved, it was due to an incredible realization that I had not trusted God. (Vision? Or ..., I don't know.)

I knew that I was supposed to be the youth pastor at the church that I was at. (The meeting incident.)

The job change that I needed. (What was I doing at a motorcycle shop after crying out in a field?)

My call to pastor. My call to Midland. (All in ways that I can't explain.)

It may not verify anything to anyone else, but it sure has for me!

Paul had vision to come to Macedonia, told that he and all of the shipmates would be alright in a shipwreck, encouraged by God about Corinth, saw Jesus in his salvation experience.

Paul has assurances from God on what he was doing and saying was on the right track. (Despite the hardships, he stayed the course because of assurances from God on his direction.)

2 Corinthians 12:1–4 (ESV)

¹I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.

²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.

³And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—

⁴and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

Where is the third heaven? (**First**- the skies above us, **secondly**- the vastness of space, **third**- where God resides. Paradise. The place in which the converted man on the cross went to!

- Note: he heard things and experienced things that could not be uttered to mankind.
- This incident and the others kept Paul grounded to do the incredible mission in which he was given. (Once again, I think we all can be thankful as recipients of this mission.)
- A lot of things Paul could have shared that would have made him a celebrity rather than a servant of God. (Today they supposedly see something and write a book.) (I'll leave that alone.)

One thing is, we are to understand who we are in Christ and not to be anything else than that. (Look at Romans 12:3)

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Also, it is interesting to note something that John says in Revelation 4:1-2-

Revelation 4:1–2 (ESV)

¹After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

²At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.

- John says that he was “in the Spirit” to be where he was. (A born-again spirit is the only way we can be in God’s presence, whether we would be like John, like the thief on the cross, or approaching the Father in prayer!)

When we share these moments, the idea is to glorify Christ, and to advance the gospel. It is not to glorify us.

We seemed to be very interested in these near-death stories and the afterlife, and I hope that it is something that we are all sure about and not having to “make sure” .

Part 2

We know that we suffer because our bodies don’t hold up.

We have incredible times with family and friends and then we have difficult ones too.

We have moments in our lives that are incredible and then we have times we wouldn’t ever choose to go through. (Everyone here knows this is a fact.)

The book of Job bears out a lot of spiritual truths and it also is difficult to understand about why he went through some of the things he did.

Samson and David, to name a couple, brought on things in their lives that could have been avoided with proper behavior too.

So, we see that we have some things we bring on ourselves, some things happen because we are fallen and will die more daily while we become more alive spiritually! And sometimes we are simply under the trust and guidance of a Heavenly Father.

Romans 5:1–5 (ESV)

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Just like with our own kids, where we allow and disallow things so that they will turn out right. (It seems like some parents may not be as concerned as others!)

Our Heavenly Father is, however!

2 Corinthians 12:7–8 (ESV)

⁷So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

- Now this is a different kind of testimony, huh?
- I have heard a million ideas on what this was, but we don't know.
- I do know that God allowed it, Paul didn't like it, but accepted God's wisdom on it. (Maybe you are sitting here thinking, "I don't like this"!)
- There is something about Paul's incident that could have made him proud.
- God does not want us to fall, and we know that where excessive pride lives, brings forth a downfall.

Did you know that there are some people that are so proud that they will end up in hell because of their pride?

Let's look at Mark 14:32-42 for a moment. (Understand how God sees things) The result was what is important, not the ease. (God has a plan and nothing will change it. Something that Paul kept him going and yet would cause him to be proud.

We really are developing as Christians for this life AND the one to come. What we do here will affect our blessings in heaven. (Paul saw some things outside of time) Think about it.

One thing that we must realize. **God wants our dependence on Him to navigate us through the unknown in this life here on earth.** Pride will always take us in ways against God.

Conclusion

Our life here is a vapor and it is to be lived with the knowledge that **real life is spiritual life.** (Marvel not, we must be born again.)

It is what gets us ready for life that will be with God forever.

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 (ESV)

⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Our Christian life is to be lived by grace. (We live our lives with Jesus as our Lord.)

- He will take care of us. We can trust Him, and we must trust Him. (Pride pulls us away from our walk with Him.) Despite what we sometimes think, it never works as well.
- We want our power to be Christ living in us.
- God will always show us the way, He will always find us, when we desperately need Him to guide us.
- We must never forget that we are not just living life, but we are being transformed for this life and for life everlasting. (In other words, we are going to have to trust a Trustworthy God who is bestowing grace upon us.)

The spiritual is the real person. It has the **real life** with the most **real future**. (Does this bother anyone? We know that our lives are better because of salvation, which was by faith. And it is by faith that we trust God for our lives! Faith.)

God knows where the pitfalls are that our pride will take us to.

God knew that our bodies by our choice are not able to withstand time. (Pride kills and killed.)

One thing for sure is that God will get us through everything and will deliver us from what pride would ultimately deliver.

Romans 6:15–23 (ESV)

¹⁵What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,

¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.