

Joke: The police found a large number of dead crows on 96 just north of South Haven last week, and there was concern that they may have died from the Avian Flu.

So they brought in a Pathologist who examined the remains of all the crows, and thankfully they have confirmed the problem was not Avian Flu.

The cause of death apparently was from vehicle impacts.

However, during the analysis it was noted that varying colors of paints appeared on the bird's beaks and claws. And after analyzing the paint residues it was found that 260 of the crows had been hit by motorcycles, while only 20 were by cars.

Confused, the investigators then hired an Ornithologist to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentages of motorbike versus car kills.

The Ornithologist quickly concluded that when crows eat road kill, they always have a look-out crow to warn of danger.

So, what they concluded was that while all the lookout crows could shout "Cah", not a single one could shout "bike"

What is it that keeps you up at night, besides a joke like that one, when you're laying in the bed and your mind won't shut off, what are you thinking about?

Let me ask that a little bit differently. What is it that you're worried about?

You know, when we were kids, our worries were a little bit different. We were more worried about the monsters under our bed, or if kids at school would like us, we worried that the girl wouldn't notice me, or if everyone else would be make fun of us because we were a nerd.

Wouldn't it be awesome if what worried us now was as funny as what worried us as a kid? All it takes is to turn on the news and we see news of war, of political unrest, of economic uncertainty.

Or maybe for you, it's an aging parent or what's the doctor going to say at the next appointment? Or are my kids safe when they leave the house today? Maybe it's can I pay my bills, or this college debt that I've accrued, will I ever get out from underneath it? Am I going be able to get a job when I get out? Am I going lose the job that I have? Am I going be able to afford to retire?

Maybe it's something completely different. Maybe it's, am I ever going be able to make a difference in this world?

And some of you right now might be thinking, "Thanks pastor, I didn't have any worries till you started that list. But now I have some worries."

So what is it that you're worried about?

Here's why I ask, and hear this church, I asked that question because what we worry about the most often reveals where we trust God the least. Let me say that again. . .

What we worry about the most often reveals where we trust God the least.

And Jesus says this to us if we're a follower of Christ in Matthew chapter six. He says,

Matthew 6:25 (NIV): 25 “Therefore I tell you. . . (what does Jesus tell us) do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

Do not worry about your life. Well that about covers everything doesn't it?

And then a couple verses later He says this. . .

Matthew 6:27 (NIV): Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

And in case you don't know the answer to that question, the answer is no you can't. You make subtract a few, but adding a few just won't happen. Yet what do many of us do? We worry.

Corrie ten Boom, who spent time as a child in a concentration camp, said this about worrying. "Worry doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorry, it empties today of its strength."

Yet we've all experienced that feeling haven't we?

And today I want to share a message about living without worry.

And I would love to stand up here and tell you I like Paul have learned to be content in everything, that I have conquered it. But the truth is I sometimes find my self worrying about things as well.

I love what Henry Ford once said. . . he said, "I believe God is managing affairs and that He doesn't need any advice from me. With God in charge, I believe everything will work out for the best in the end. So what is there to worry about."

And with that, we have heard the Scripture that God works all things together for good. Yet so often we find ourselves still with worry.

So, in order to live without worry, we first have to answer one of the most foundational questions. In fact, it was one of the first questions that humanity had to answer. All the way back in the book of Genesis.

Genesis chapter two, God created Adam. He gave him one rule, remember what it was. . .

Genesis 2:16–17 (NIV): And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

So, God creates the animals, Adam and finally Eve. And Eve apparently learned the rule from Adam. She's in the garden one day, and a new character in Genesis chapter three shows up, it's a serpent. The serpent begins to talk to Eve. And here's what the serpent says.

Genesis 3:1 (NIV): He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

And in case you didn't catch it that's not what God said. But the serpent twisted the truth just a bit to get her to question what God actually did say. He never said, you must not eat from any tree, just not one tree. And so when asked the question she began to question what is it God said?

And by the way that's one of things the enemy does. One tactic Satan uses to distort our view of God's truth is to introduce doubt in our minds.

He twists the word to get us to think what God said actually isn't what God actually meant. He will take what was said out of context to get us to question what God actually said.

In essence the serpent allowed the thought to come into her head that asked the question can you trust God?

And then a few verses later Eve's in the garden looking at that tree and in verse 6 it tells us. . .

Genesis 3:6 (NIV): When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

And when she saw it, she had a choice, am I going to trust God, or am I going to trust what I can see and yes, even looks good?

Am I going to trust God, or am I going to trust what I desire?

Am I going to trust God, or am I going to trust what I can control?

Last week we started this series talking about God is merciful. Today I want to share with you that God is trustworthy.

And every one here or watching online has to answer that question. Is God trustworthy? And you may say in your head I know that He is, but I dare say everyone hearing this message has a place where they don't fully put their trust in Him.

And yet in Psalm 62:7 and 8 we read. . .

Psalm 62:7–8 (NIV): 7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. 8 Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Trust in Him when. . .at all times.

Not some of the time, not when you feel like it, not just when it's easy, not just with your eternity, not just with part of the things, he says what? At all times.

And then he says pour out your hearts to him. Pour out your worries, your anxiety, your fears, your finances, your troubles, your you fill I in the blank. . .why.

For God is our refuge.

The psalmist understands this truth, and the truth that the psalmist understands is this, that God is trustworthy.

It's not what He does, it's who He is.

And hear this church He is deserving of our confidence. My God has never failed me. Oh, I may not have received the answer the way I was hoping, but my God has never failed. He may have not pulled me out of the situation, but He has certainly walked with me through it.

So, how do we know that God is trustworthy? Today let me share three reasons why we can know that God is trustworthy. There are more but let me just share three.

So, if your taking notes, the first reason is this, we know that God is trustworthy because God has been faithful before.

There's a theme in the Old Testament, it comes up in Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, in the Psalms, all throughout the Old Testament the theme is repeated time and time again, and that theme is this. . .remember.

Exodus 13, Moses says this to the people of God as they're about to be delivered from the Egyptians.

Exodus 13:3 (NLT): So Moses said to the people, "This is a day to remember forever—the day you left Egypt, the place of your slavery. Today the Lord has brought you out by the power of his mighty hand. (Remember, eat no food containing yeast.)

Moses says to the people of God, remember that God has been faithful before. Remember the fact that when you cried out for mercy, God heard your cries.

Remember that God delivered you from the most powerful ruler on the face of the earth with His 10 miraculous plagues.

Remember the fact that when you arrived at the Red Sea, with the army behind you and sea in front of you. You were not stopped by the water, but God parted the water, you crossed on dry land, and God stopped that powerful military force in their tracks on that day as well.

Remember that when you got to the wilderness, God led you with a cloud by day and fire by night.

Remember that when you were thirsty, God provided water.

Remember when you were hungry, God provided manna for you to eat?

Remember that God has been faithful before. Remember that God has been and still is. . . trustworthy.

And because He's done it before, He can do it again.

It's why the Israelite people had a practice. Anytime God would do something significant, they would pile up stones, they would build a memorial.

When Jacob wrestled with the heavenly figure on the river bank, when Moses went and got the 10 commandments, they piled up stones so that what? So that when they walked by, they would remember what God had done, to be reminded of what He could do. When Joshua crossed the Jordan they made a place of remembrance by laying stones in the middle of the water.

The Psalmist writes this for our encouragement. . .

Psalm 143:5 (NIV): 5 I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

How do we know that God is trustworthy? Because I remember that He's been faithful before.

Let me ask you today what are the piles of stones in your life that remind you of God's faithfulness?

Maybe it's when He radically transformed your life when you entered into a relationship with Him. Maybe it's when you were baptized. May be it was when he healed your body.

For me, one of those piles of stones was when Joy and I were dating she was at Grand Valley, and I wasn't. We were planning on actually getting married before she graduated but her dad asked us to wait, so we did. But there was a problem we didn't have transportation to see each other, she had a ride to church every week, but what about the rest of the time. I used my moms car for awhile a 1996 Lincoln Continental Town car, I took her a dozen roses when she was at school with that car. But after slapping a tree and bending the frame it didn't do very well.

And then someone from church said I could purchase his car. I barely had the money to buy them roses let alone a car but I was able to buy that car with my good looks ya all. Oh come on church don't look so surprised. God is trustworthy.

And so now when that unexpected thing comes up, what do I do?

I try to remember that God has been faithful before. I still if I'm being honest struggle sometimes. I have some areas I need to trust Him more in, but I have seen time and time again that God has been faithful.

How do we know that God is trustworthy? Because God has been faithful before.

The second reason is that God is faithful today.

God led the Israelite people to the edge of the promised land, to the doorstep of the place that they desired to be and God had told them was theirs. Joshua, one of the leaders, stands up before the people and says this to them in Numbers 14.

Numbers 14:9 (NIV): Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

Hear this church, Joshua understood something, and what Joshua understood was this, that our success is not dependent upon what we see, our success is not dependent upon the size of the opposition, but our success is dependent upon the presence of God in our lives.

And here's the good news of Jesus. The very first chapter of Matthew says this. . .

Matthew 1:23 (NIV): 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

The good news of Jesus Christ is that He's with us.

And then again in Matthew chapter 28, Jesus' last words to His disciples were. . .

Matthew 28:19–20 (NIV): Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The good news of Jesus Christ is what? It's that He's with us. It's not that every single time we get in a difficult situation, God pulls us out of the situation. It's that every single time, He enters into the situation with us.

How do we know that our God is faithful? How do we know that our God is trustworthy? He's been faithful before and He's faithful today.

And God's faithfulness today is not dependent on the absence of problems, but on the presence of God in my life.

It's like when you're a kid, you were five, six, maybe seven years old. Your parents would tuck you in at night. They would turn off the light. And 38 seconds later, what would you do? You would show back up in the living room and say something like this, "I can't go to sleep, I need a drink of water." And they would say, "Okay, get a drink of water, then go back to bed." You'd go back to bed, and then 36 seconds later, you'd show back up in the living room and you'd say, "I can't go to sleep, I'm not tired." And

what would mom and dad say, "Go back to bed." And you would and then 30 seconds later, you would show back up and you would say, "I can't go to sleep, I hear noises." And if there was a storm that would make a whole new set of circumstances.

We just had a similar occurrence last weekend Kyle and family stayed the night and Saturday night when it was bed time Lincoln decided he was thirsty, had to to the restroom, several times he would pop out of the room with an excuse to why he needed to be out of the room.

And with my kids on more then one occasion as they were growing up eventually they would wear me down till I got to the point where I would say, "Do you want me to come lay down with you?"

And I would walk back to the room and would get in the bed and tuck the covers in extra tight around them? Lay down on top of the covers next to them. I did that so they could no longer escape. And they would fall asleep pretty quickly after that.

And nothing had changed. Nothing about the situation had changed, except that I joined them in the room. And because of that everything had changed because there was someone they trusted who was with them.

And when we get to the point that we know He is with us, that He never leaves or forsakes us, when we really learn that we can trust Him, that He has never failed, that He has been trustworthy before and He will be trustworthy today.

The situation we find ourselves in might not have changed externally, but internally the atmosphere shifts because we know that He is laying down next to us, comforting and helping us in the midst of the storm.

How do we know that God is trustworthy? We know that God is trustworthy because He's been faithful before. We know that God is trustworthy because He's faithful today. And lastly, we know that God is trustworthy because He will be faithful tomorrow.

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

God led the Israelites to the edge of the promised land. He had been faithful before, He was with them then. Did they trust Him? I would love to tell you they trusted Him at every turn but the truth is they didn't trust Him.

How do we know that they didn't trust Him? Because trust is not something that we have, trust is a verb, it's what we do.

And they didn't step into the promised land. And here's what really gets me about this is that the end of the story was already written. Check this out. . .

Genesis 12:1–7 (NLT): The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5 He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, 6 Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites. 7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your

descendants.” And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

What did verse 7 say. . . “I will give this land to your descendants.”

And right before the spies are sent to scout out the promised land, here's what God says to them.

Numbers 13:1–2 (NIV): The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

Which I’m what? I’m giving to the Israelites.

Here it is, the end of the story was already written. This is the promised land. God said, my people are going to live in it. All they have to do is to step into it.

And they didn’t.

And I don’t know about you but that makes me feel so much better about myself when I read that. Because I think, how dumb can you be? He was faithful before, He's faithful today, He will be faithful in the future, and yet you still didn't trust Him.

The end of the story's already been written. The promise has already been made. How dumb can you be?

But then I think about the times that I have done the same thing.

I remember God's faithfulness in the past. I remember the stones I placed and I know that He's faithful today and that He's with me. And I recall the promises He’s made to me. And God has already written the end of my story.

And if you're a follower of Christ, God has written the end of your story, Revelation chapter 21, the next to last book of the Bible, this is what God says.

Revelation 21:3–5 (NIV): And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” 5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

This is John writing that, He’s saying there’ll be nothing left to worry about.

Then He says this, “And He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new.”

Watch this He said, “Write this down, for these words are” what? They are “trustworthy and true.”

If we're a follower of Christ, the end of our story has already been written.

And some of you are going, "You know what? That's awesome, and I believe that God is trustworthy? I have seen His faithfulness in the past? I know that He's faithful because He's with me today? I know that He will be faithful in the future?

Yes, I know all that, but what about the thing I'm worried about? What about if it happens?"

And honestly, that's a fair question. What about, if the thing I'm worried about happens?

Let me share with you a story. I can remember the first time I went to the climbing gym. I was a leader in our Boy Scout troop and we had set up a trip to climb in Grand Rapids. We had to sign some waivers so in case we fell and got hurt or something worst they were protected.

So we are climbing the wall and when you get to the top you were told to ring the bell.

And on my way up I can remember struggling to reach the top. The holds weren't that close. My body wasn't all that in shape the kids below saying you got this. Encouraging me all the way up.

I don't think I made it all the way up the first time, and no matter if you get 10 feet, 25 feet, or all the way to the bell, do you know how you get down?

You have on the floor someone called a belayer. And they are below to not only help you not fall to far if you miss a hold but to help you get down when your ready to come down.

And all your supposed to do when you are ready to come down is lean back, let go of the rope and push away from the wall and they bring you down.

They are secured below so the weight difference can't pull them up as you go down. That would cause a whole lot more circumstances to worry about.

So, you are lowered to floor with the help of the belay.

And hear this church, God is our belay. He's encouraging us to climb higher at the same time catching us when we misstep. He helps us down when we ring the bell and wants us to trust Him enough to just lean back as he carry's us to the next adventure.

Realize church God's on the other end of your rope and if you struggle in some area where just leaning back is difficult that's ok He will encourage you to grab the rope as well so that you will feel a bit more secure and then He will encourage you to try again.

And honestly, there were some that had a hard time trusting their belay below and wanted that extra bit of rope to hang unto. But when you really learn to trust Him you can just lean back knowing He's trustworthy to help you.

John 14:1 (NIV): "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

Jesus says, I'm trustworthy. I've been faithful before, I'm faithful today I'm with you, and I will be faithful in the future. I will never leave you or forsake you. Lean on me, trust in me. I'm on the other end of the rope. I will see you through. I will help you climb to new heights. I am trustworthy and true.