



LIVE RICH: *TRUST*

Reflection

It is a glorious thing to know that your Father God makes no mistakes in directing or permitting that which crosses the path of your life. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter. It is our glory to trust Him, no matter what. Joni Eareckson Tada

Trust ... a loaded proposition. A foundational truth. Without it, life is not readily liveable. Without trust I cannot have healthy relationships. Without trust I cannot give my life to others. Without trust I cannot fully embrace and receive God's love for me. Without trust I have no hope for the future. Without trust I cannot live richly.

Trust is such a timely issue given the nature of the world we live in. Can I trust God with my family, my health, my employment and my relationships? It is too easy to simply quote scripture and assume that everything will be cherries, flowers and rainbows. Jesus didn't do that. He understood that the realities of our daily lives are more complex than most "Sunday School" answers. When Jesus said, "In this world you will have much trouble". He meant it. He was intimately acquainted with the struggles of the daily grind. He knew hunger, loneliness and anxiety. Yet through it all his trust in his Father remained steadfast. It was this tenacious connection to the Father that allowed him to finish the verse, "In this world you will have much trouble...but take heart, for I have overcome the world."

This past week has shed a spotlight on our willingness as individuals and as a nation to declare our trust in God. Many of us have wrestled with the question, "Can I trust God with my nation?". The following email was sent by one of our members at Foothills Community Church Wednesday morning after the election. Read the letter to your group, then discuss it based on the questions that follow it.

Family & Friends,

For some it's a joyful morning. For others it feels like mourning. Both feelings are genuine. It's all right to shed some tears on either side of that equation. Tears of joy & tears of sorrow. They come from somewhere deep inside of each human being, the way God designed us and intended us. They are not manufactured like some political ad, they're not made up, they're not for show. They are real, they are what makes us uniquely human. They are a gift from God for healing and humility.

Last night I couldn't help but notice all the tears, from both sides. I couldn't help but be brought to tears, not for either candidate but for those that supported them and shed them. In one sense last night, across all the channels, across all the nation, the one thing we did share in common was our tears.

I saw Jesse Jackson's tears, mixed in the crowd like tens of thousands of ordinary others. I wondered what he was thinking. Was he happy, jealous, ashamed for his own words, or just relieved? Through the screen, honestly he looked tired and humbled. Most of all he looked better with tears on his face than the last time I saw him on TV with egg on it.

I saw Oprah's tears. She too was just another citizen in the massive crowd leaning on the shoulder of a white man. They seemed to be just strangers packed together bonded by a common hope, a common dream. She looked radiant. I wondered what she was thinking and what her tears meant; proud, a partner, amazed, grateful. I pray she and many others will be as graceful in victory as McCain was last night in defeat.

I saw McCain supporters weeping at the Biltmore even though John was composed and dignified and did his best to block out the boos. I admired that; I admired him more than ever before. He is to be commended for wasting no time, no excuses, no bull to get us all on the road to national healing. He helped his camp to wipe away the tears of disappointment and roll up their sleeves for the work ahead.

I saw Sarah's misty eyes beneath those designer glasses. She's a true believer and ya gotta love that. She's young and maybe her day in the sun will come. My prayer is that she can take her genuine faith and help other believers to keep from lashing out, to erase their Facebook pages saying "He's not my President". I sincerely hope in those strategy sessions ahead which I'm sure she'll be part of on behalf of the religious right, that she will help them learn to love and forgive and ask for forgiveness. Her sincere faith and humility in defeat could be the shining silver lining for her party.

I reflected back on times we saw other tears over the course of this year. Hillary's tears, and who's to judge, they seemed like they came right from the heart. I think it softened her heart. And who could not be touched by Barack's tears while at a rally on my son Isaac's college campus on Monday when he heard his dear white grandmother passed away before the celebration.

So we all come to this joyous morning and this sorrowful mourning. Can we stop for a moment and feel the other's emotions? Can we open our hearts of congratulations and condolences? Can we really be the *United States* again? Only time and healing will tell.

And finally, I wonder what Jesus felt last night. Well, all I know for sure is that he weeps with those who mourn and rejoices with those who rejoice. He is still the savior of the whole world, "red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world." And face it folks, we are still little children, scraps, scars and all. Paul reminds us in Romans 12:14–21 (NIV):

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Blessings and Peace to all of you.

Questions

- ❖ What issues of trust has this past election raised for you?
- ❖ What does trust mean practically for you?
- ❖ What is the difference between earning trust and giving it away?
- ❖ Can you trust God and disagree with Him?
- ❖ What role does trust play when attempting to “live in harmony” with others?

Reflection

Often I have heard people say, “How good God is! We prayed that it would not rain for our church picnic, and look at the lovely weather!” Yes, God is good when He sends good weather. But God was also good when He allowed my sister, Betsie, to starve to death before my eyes in a German concentration camp. I remember one occasion when I was very discouraged there. Everything around us was dark, and there was darkness in my heart. I remember telling Betsie that I thought God had forgotten us. “No, Corrie,” said Betsie, “He has not forgotten us. Remember His Word: “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.” Corrie concludes, “There is an ocean of God’s love available—there is plenty for everyone. May God grant you never to doubt that victorious love—whatever the circumstances.” Corrie Ten Boom

Study the Scriptures

Matthew 6:25–34 NIV

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” ²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.
³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'
³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

We should not get tangled up worrying about the things of this world, because our life is more than those things. There is a difference between a godly sense of responsibility and an ungodly, **untrusting** worry; however, an ungodly, untrusting sense of worry usually masquerades as “responsibility.” We announce our distrust when we wrest from God’s hands those things we falsely believe we are responsible for.

Questions

- ❖ What are your initial reactions to this passage?
- ❖ How does this passage apply to the family that cannot feed or clothe themselves?
- ❖ What areas of life are difficult to trust God with?

But seek first the kingdom of God: Let this be the acid test when you are in trouble: Am I seeking the Kingdom of God first? Am I trusting that by pursuing God’s purposes, He will meet my needs and the needs of my family? “In particular regard to the context Jesus is speaking to, we must ask ourselves this question: ‘Is physical well-being a worthy object to which I will devote my life?’ If you think it is, then your god is mammon, your life is cursed with worry, and you live life as an animal, concerned mostly with physical needs.” (David Guzik)

Questions

- ❖ How does seeking God’s Kingdom impact our trust in God?
- ❖ What exactly is promised in verse 33?
- ❖ What new aspect of life will you choose to trust God with?

Parting Thought

God will never, never, never let us down if we have faith and put our trust in Him. He will always look after us. So we must cleave to Jesus. Our whole life must simply be woven into Jesus. Mother Teresa