

TRUSTING GOD KEEPS US SECURE

Psalm 125: 1-5 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Did you know why many of us are insecure about making decisions, and why we back away from making decisions God prompts us to do? One major reason for our reluctance to make such decisions is that we are afraid of the consequences. When God speaks to us and tells us something to do, we don't feel secure because we refuse to trust God because of the potential discomfort that obeying Him will bring to us. Many of you have doubtless, like me seen the 1981 movie "Chariots Of Fire." The movie focuses on important decisions and their consequences. The main character, Eric Liddell was a Scottish Presbyterian minister who believed that Sunday was the Lord's Day and should be kept sacred. Eric Liddell was also a brilliant athlete, and he qualified to compete in the 1924 Olympics. For years, he had his heart set on running in the games, He knew he had a chance to win a coveted gold medal for England. But Eric was in for a surprise when he got off the ship which finally docked at the harbor on the Seine River in Paris, France. For the first time in history, some Olympic events, some qualifying heats were scheduled on Sunday--including the contest in which Eric Liddell was to compete. Forced to choose between a potential medal and his principle, Eric decided to come down on the side of faith in God and His Word. In one of the movie's decisive scenes, Harold Abrahams, a Jewish athlete friend, asked Eric Liddell, "Do you have any regrets?" Eric Liddell responded, "Regrets, yes. Doubts, no!" Eric who later died on the mission field in China, was secure, trusting the Lord. Did you grow up learning to trust and feel safe in Jesus?

Growing up in a Swedish family, where Dad and Mom talked Swedish to each other at times, and Dad preached in Swedish is a precious memory. I wish I had learned to be bi-lingual. I wasn't forced to learn Swedish, but I wish I had. I did learn a good number of Swedish song as well as Swedish Bible verses. My favorite of all the Swedish songs is hymn # 327 in our hymnal called "Children Of The Heavenly Father." We all called it "More Secure Is No One Ever Than The Loved Ones Of The Savior." The English words translated from the Swedish are "Children of the heavenly Father safely in His bosom gather. Nestling bird nor star in Heaven Such a refuge e'er was given. God His own doth tend and nourish; In His holy courts they flourish. From all evil things He spares them; In His mighty arms He bears them. Neither life nor death shall ever From the Lord His children sever; Unto them His grace He showeth and their sorrows all He knoweth. Though He giveth or He taketh; God His children ne'r forsaketh; His the loving purpose solely To preserve them pure and holy. Praise the Lord in joyful numbers, Your Protector never slumbers. At the will of your Defender Ev'ry foeman must surrender. All seven of us children learned the first and last verses in Swedish.

“Tryggare kan ingen vara, An Guds lilla barnaskara, Stjarnan ej på himlafastet, Fageln ej i kanda nastet. Vad Han tar och vad Han giver, Samme Fader Han forbliver, Och Hans mal ar blott det ena, Barnets sanna val allena.”

The psalmist, King Hezekiah of Judah, most likely wrote this sixth psalm of ascent. The psalm talks about three kinds of people—those trusting in the Lord (1) v. 1-2, 4, who are also called righteous and good. (2) those who compromise with the enemy, v. 3 and (3) those who deliberately go down the wrong path-v. 5. Thank God for those secure folk in Christ who are people of faith who trust Him and obey His Word. This psalm specifically names four rewards of faith and faithfulness that spell out why we as believers are more secure than all other people in the world. What are these four rewards of trusting God that keep us secure?

GOD SURROUNDS HIS OWN PEOPLE WHO TRUST HIM AND KEEPS US STANDING FOR HIM. (I.) Notice verses 1-2, “Those who trust in the LORD

are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore.” Beloved, spiritual maturity and security and stability belong to those who are willing to trust the Lord and walk by faith. Now the piece of this puzzle that is so important in this psalm is that God wants us to see ourselves like Mount Zion, firmly established and not able to be shaken. Zion was built on the highest hill in that region of Judah. Jerusalem was built on a solid spiritual foundation as well as physical foundation—a foundation of rock that was embedded deep into the heart of the top of Mt. Zion. As believers, our faith is built on the Rock, Christ Jesus. But surrounding this walled city of Jerusalem were a number of hills. As worshipping pilgrims in that day sang the songs of ascent going up to Jerusalem, Zion was shrouded by high foothills that appeared to rise higher than Zion. Then as they topped those high hills, there in the distance surrounded by these hills was Zion, even higher and surrounded at the time by not just one, but probably two sets of walls, as historians report. There in the center of the city of David on Mt. Zion was the holy temple of Yahweh, Jehovah, the Great I Am. There was the throne of David. God not only surrounded His own people who trusted Him with hills and walls as a shield, but God’s glory and God’s total authority dwelt there in the midst of His people. The psalmist doesn’t say that God’s trusting people should be or could be or will be, but are like Mount Zion.

God’s people as well are built upon the solid Rock, Christ Jesus. God dwells within us. He surrounds us with His mighty angels of protection and with His throne of mercy. As people of faith who trust in the Lord, we need to stand tall for God—we will not be moved. As Paul, we can say as he did, in Acts 20: 24, “None of these things moves me.” We have a marvelous standing in Christ and we stand

in faith, Romans 5: 2 and Galatians 5: 1. We stand tall on the Word of God, II Thessalonians 3: 15. We stand firm in the will of God—Colossians 4: 12. It is God who enables us to stand—II Corinthians 1: 21, 24. All these scripture references speak of standing in faith and full trust. As we stand in God’s will, He enables us to accomplish the work He has called for us to do. (I Corinthians 15: 58.) Beloved, when we begin to trust in ourselves and our own judgment, leaning on our own understanding, or others we trust over God, then we begin to stagger and waver and stumble and fall.

During the great revival of 1859, Dudley A. Tyng was the leader of a remarkable Gospel Mission in Philadelphia. The Sunday before his death was outstanding in that at least 1000 people were converted. A few days later, while watching a mule at work threshing corn on an old H.P. machine, as he patted the animal on the neck, the sleeve of his coat became entangled in the machinery and his arm was torn off. The loss of blood was so great that soon Dudley Tyng died. From his deathbed he sent a message to the meeting being held in the Y.M.C.A. in Philadelphia: “Tell them to stand up for Jesus.” George Duffield, who preached Dudley Tyng’s funeral sermon, wrote the words of the well-known hymn, “Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus.” Beloved, by God’s Holy Spirit, God surrounds His own people who trust Him and keeps them standing even when He takes them Home to His arms. Secondly,

GOD DISCIPLINES HIS OWN PEOPLE WHO TRUST HIM AND KEEPS US OBEYING HIM. (II.) Notice verse 3. “For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong.” This is not a popular teaching of the Word, but we must declare all the Word. This verse tells us that there are those living about us as in the days of King Hezekiah who live wickedly and who desire to have their scepter of authority hanging over our homes and our church. They do this by inveigling us to compromise with the enemy, to compromise with evil. Over the years, as in America, no matter how godly any of our forefathers were, and they weren’t all godly, for sure,—during this saga of years, something happened. In Israel, the people were not to sell their inheritance of land to sinners, to unbelievers, or to those outside of Israel. The land of Israel was assigned by lot (Joshua 14-19) to all twelve tribes and was never to be sold. But God’s people sold off their inheritance and worshipped idols until God sent Babylon to give the land rest from idolatry and to cleanse the land. After the exile, you remember that Samaritans and foreigners occupied the land—Gentiles from other nations. Whether in Hezekiah’s day or in Nehemiah’s day, as today, believers get the idea, “If we can’t beat them, let’s join them.” God refuses to allow the scepter of wickedness to always rest over God’s people. As sin spreads, it becomes more pervasive and it becomes easier and

easier for everyone to sin. God will not leave the sins of believers undisciplined, whether it is discipline at home we need or even discipline through others as adults as the Babylonians became the rod of discipline to Judah. Beloved, the people who trust God will by God's correction and discipline learn to obey the Lord and they will quit justifying sin. God's discipline and His kindness leads us to repentance so we will learn not to sin, but rather to obey.

How we admire it when we see the obedience a dog shows to its master! Archibald Rutledge wrote that one day he met a man whose dog had just been killed in a forest fire. Heartbroken, the man explained to Archie how it happened. Because he worked out-of-doors, the man often took his dog with him. That morning, he left the animal in a clearing and gave him a command to stay and watch his lunch bucket while he went into the forest. His faithful friend understood, for that's exactly what he did. A fire started in the woods. Soon the blaze spread to the spot where the dog was standing. The dog didn't move. He stayed right where he was told to stay, in perfect obedience to his master's word. With tearful eyes, the dog owner said, "I always had to be careful what I told him to do, because I knew he would do it." The story made me afresh pray—"God, never let me shy away from standing for you, obeying you, no matter what the cost." Thirdly,

GOD TRAINS AND TEACHES HIS OWN PEOPLE WHO TRUST HIM AND KEEPS US PRAYING TO HIM. (III.)

Notice verse 4. "Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts!" Notice this part of the psalm is addressed as a prayer to the Lord. Perseverance in prayer is hard to come by for us all as believers. We need afresh to learn the story of Jesus in Luke 18: 1-8 about the persistent widow who kept going back to the unjust judge. Be certain that times may get bad as the world threatens to remove and take away our inheritance. But though times may be dark and bad, there is always a remnant for Jesus—good people who stand up for Him and obey Him in hard times and who keep praying to Him. Regardless of the times, no matter how depressing and how stormy the times get, good people of faith who trust God keep on praying to Him. And as Jesus promised, we need never fear God will take His Holy Spirit away from us who only trust Him. Read Psalm 51 and Luke 11: 9-13. When Jesus teaches and trains us to trust Him and keep our eyes on Him and rest on His promises, then we do what is right and obey Him and we learn always to pray and not to faint. When we humbly accept God's training and discipline and let Him teach us to trust Him, we learn to pray no matter what others say about it not doing any good. We learn to live by trusting without trying to manipulate people and without shrewdly scheming our way into trying to help God out. Did you know that learning to trust and obey and pray means even taking no for an answer from God? Amy Carmichael once wrote about her learning of this at home as a child in

a Christian home. She wrote, "Just a tiny little child Three years old, And a mother with a heart All of gold. Often did that mother say, Jesus hears us when we pray, For He's never far away And He always answers. Now, that tiny little child Had brown eyes, And she wanted blue instead Like blue skies. For her mother's eyes were blue Like forget-me-nots. She knew All her mother said was true, Jesus always answered. So she prayed for two blue eyes, Said "Good night," Went to sleep in deep content And delight. Woke up early, climbed a chair By a mirror. Where, O where Could the blue eyes be? Not there; Jesus hadn't answered. Hadn't answered her at all; Never more Could she pray; her eyes were brown As before. Did a little soft wind blow? Came a whisper soft and low," Jesus answered. He said, "No; Isn't No an answer?" When we learn to trust Jesus, He surrounds us and keeps us standing, He disciplines us and keeps us obeying, and He trains and teaches us and keeps us praying. Fourthly and lastly,

GOD PROVES HIMSELF TO BE TRUE TO HIS WORD WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE WHO TRUST HIM AND HE KEEPS US HOPING IN HIM. (IV.)

Notice verse 5—"But those who turn aside to their crooked way the LORD will lead away with evildoers! Peace be upon Israel!" People of faith who trust the Lord know that God keeps His Word. He will vindicate the righteous—Peace be upon Israel, but those who turn away from God will be cast into the lake of fire that burns forever and ever—hear this in v. 5—"Those who turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord will lead away with evildoers." God one day soon will judge the disobedient, no matter how much it seems like now they are getting by with disobedience and resisting Him. No matter how much abusing of the righteous—God will say--:Enough!" Don't worry about your hopes for the future. As Warren Wiersbe says it well, "The future is your friend when Jesus is your Lord." The narrow road still leads to life, the broad road still leads to destruction and death. (Matthew 7: 13-27) The future hope of the man of God is peace. David says in Psalm 37: 37-38, "Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace. But all sinners will be destroyed; there will be no future for the wicked." The meaning is clear—"there will be no future hope for the wicked." The trusting heart to Jesus clings. Though the narrow road is not always easy, the way of the transgressor is hard—much harder—both here in life, and forever in torment in the life to come. Trust in the Lord. He will surround you and keep you standing. He will discipline you and keep you obeying. He will train and teach you and keep you praying. He will prove Himself to be true to His Word with His own people and keep us hoping in Him. Rest secure in His arms, beloved. Amen.