

- I. Jesus' security was in God, not man
 - A. John 2:23-25 . . . Now when [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed (that is, many trusted in or put confidence) in His name, [which was most probably encouraged by] observing His signs which He was doing. [24] But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them (that is, He did not put His trust in them or depend on them for His well-being), for He knew all men, [25] and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.
 - B. Though this three verse story is short, it is profound, for it indirectly teaches us a truth about relationships and trust that is life changing for all who receive and live according to this truth.
 - 1. This story hangs on two points –
 - a. First, the many who were believing that Jesus is divine
 - b. Second, the fact that Jesus not entrusting Himself to them.
 - 2. Now before going further, I want to acknowledge that the predominant view of Bible scholars is that those Jesus did not entrust Himself to were people whose faith went far enough to believe Jesus was divine, but not far enough to produce a changed, Christ-like life. In other words, the predominant view among Bible scholars is that the believer's faith was not saving faith.
 - 3. However, today we are going to depart from the predominant view of the Bible scholars and look at these verses as presenting us with the faith-transforming and therefore life-changing truth about who we are to trust or who we should depend on for our well-being.
 - 4. And to do this, we are going to look at Jesus, who He trusted, and how He dealt with those He did not fully trust with His well-being. And as we do this, it is my hope that you will apply these lessons in your life, and especially in relation to trusting and dealing with those nearest and dearest.
 - C. Pray
- II. Jesus and the matter of who He trusted and how He dealt with those He did not fully trust with His well-being.
 - A. I want to begin by clarifying three things about this story.

1. First, this issue of trusting others with our well-being is not a matter of trusting vs not trusting. Rather it is a matter of who we trust, first and foremost – and from that starting point deciding to what degree we will trust anyone else, and how we deal with them based on the amount of trust we have in them. This is especially relevant to trusting and dealing with those nearest and dearest.
 2. Second, these three verses speak of those who believed in Jesus, that is, those who chose to believe He was someone greater than a mere human.
 - a. Therefore, this group of believers –
 - (1) Does not include those who were out to kill Jesus,
 - (2) It does not include those who wanted to discredit Jesus and bring an end to His ministry and influence among the Jews,
 - (3) It does not include those who were jealous of the attention Jesus was getting,
 - (4) This group of believers does not include those who were trying to trap Jesus with questions in order to get Him into trouble with the Jewish and Roman authorities,
 - (5) It does not include those who repeatedly criticized Him, His way of doing things, and His disciples,
 - (6) It does not include those who were wanting to use Jesus for their own ends, such as to make Him king in order to gain freedom from Rome, or have Him miraculously provide daily food so they would no longer have to work for it,
 - (7) And it does not include those who were outright and willful unbelievers.
 - b. The important truth to see here is that there are people, there are groups, organizations, businesses, governments, and even pastors and churches who are not to be trusted because of how they live or how they do business or what their goals are.
 - c. Therefore, there is no wisdom in trusting everyone, or trusting everyone the same, or trusting any human unconditionally, or trusting those who have shown themselves untrustworthy. The reality is, trust must be earned before it is deserved.
 3. Third, since this group of believers was made up of those who were believing in Jesus, we can reasonably assume it includes the disciples and everyone else who was near and dear to Jesus.
- B. Now, since we have concluded that this group of believers includes the disciples, and since we know that the disciples were near and dear to

Jesus, we will use them as examples of why Jesus did not fully trust them, and therefore, was not entrusting His well-being to them.

1. We will begin with John, himself, since this is his gospel. According to John's own account, he distinguished himself five times as the disciple Jesus loved (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20), and yet not long before Christ's crucifixion, John and his brother James asked Jesus – in front of all the other disciples – if they could sit on thrones on either side of Jesus' throne in the coming kingdom (Mark 10:32-37; Matthew 20:20-21).
 - a. Once, when a Samaritan village would not let Jesus stay there, John and his brother James asked Jesus if they should command fire to come down from heaven and consume the villagers (Luke 9:52-54).
 - b. And then, when Jesus went to the Garden to pray the night before He was crucified, He took Peter, James, and John to a more secluded spot and asked them to pray while He prayed. All three fell asleep, to which Jesus said, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation, [for] the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:40-41). However, even after hearing that, they fell asleep two more times while Jesus prayed.
2. All the disciples left Jesus and fled after He was betrayed by Judas and arrested in the Garden (Matthew 26:56).
3. Peter asked Jesus to give him the power to walk on water, yet upon seeing the wind swirling around, he lost his faith and started to go under (Matthew 14:28-31).
 - a. As Jesus finished explaining to the disciples that He must die, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You" (Matthew 16:22).
 - b. When Peter was on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, Moses, Elijah, James and John, he asked Jesus if he should build three small temples – one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah (Matthew 17:4) – as if this was a place where people should come to worship.
 - c. And as you well know, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times on the night before Jesus was crucified.
4. Then there is Thomas who, when told by the other disciples that they had seen Jesus, said, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:24-25).

5. I could go on, but we will stop with these examples of why the disciples were not a very trustworthy group – which is why Jesus was not depending on them to secure His well-being in this world.
- C. However, do their failures mean that Jesus did not trust them at all, or that He did not love them, or that He no longer wanted to associate or fellowship with them? NO!! Though they were not very trustworthy, Jesus remained intimately involved in their lives.
1. As to trusting His disciples,
 - a. We know that Jesus trusted them enough to send them out two by two, and in the power of the Spirit, to preach the gospel, cast out demons, and heal the sick (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:1-16).
 - b. And before ascending to heaven, Jesus trusted them with going into all the world, preaching the gospel, and making disciples from every nation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18).
 - c. While on the cross, Jesus trusted John with the ongoing care of His mother (John 19:26-27).
 - d. Before His ascension, Jesus trusted Peter with the spiritual care and feeding of His followers. And many Christians – down through the ages – believe Jesus trusted Peter with the leadership of the church (John 21:15-17; Matthew 16:18-19).
 - e. In other words, though the disciples were not completely trustworthy, Jesus trusted them where He could, and proved it by giving them power and specific responsibilities.
 2. As to loving His disciples,
 - a. We read in John 13:1 . . . “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”
 - b. And twice Jesus told His disciples to love each other in the same way He loved them (John 13:34, 15:12).
 - c. The point here is that the disciples lack of total trustworthiness did not stop Jesus from loving them.
 3. As to maintaining a meaningful relationship with His disciples,
 - a. John records Jesus as saying, “You are My friends if you do what I command you. [15] No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:14-15).

- b. Now it is true that Jesus did not tell them everything, and we have Jesus own words to confirm this in John 16:12, “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”
 - c. However, we know from what I just read in John 15, that Jesus was very open and honest with them about many things. So even though He limited what He told them to what they could receive, in a mentally and spiritually healthy way, He still did His part to be open and honest with them.
- D. For me, this raises several questions. First, how did Jesus maintain such a high level of relationship with those near and dear when they could not be trusted to secure and protect His well-being? Second, why wasn't Jesus more self-protective in His relationship with them? And third, why did Jesus keep making the effort to build meaningful relationships with them when they were not nearly as committed as He was to such an honest, open, and meaningful relationship?
1. The answer to all three questions is simple: Jesus trusted God, first and foremost, with His well-being regardless of the circumstances or relationships He was in.
 - a. In other words, Jesus' first and foremost security in life, and I mean in every area of His life, was God.
 - b. And because God is always faithful, dependable, loving, sane, realistic, and wise, Jesus knew He was perfectly safe when taking the risks necessary to build and maintain meaningful relationships with those around Him – including those nearest and dearest.
 2. In other words, Jesus took the risk of loving and giving and being open and being honest and caring and trusting– even though those around Him were not so trustworthy – because His security, first and foremost, was God.
 3. For me, this kind of faith in God is wonderfully pictured in the story of David taking on Goliath.
 - a. Goliath was huge compared to David, and far better equipped to do battle than David was.
 - b. Yet David was not afraid to enter into battle with Goliath because he knew his safety, his security, his well-being, was in the hands of someone far larger and more powerful than Goliath. And as you know, David's security was God. It was God who David trusted, first and foremost, to protect and secure his well-being in spite of the giant he was facing.

4. Who is your first and foremost source of security? Who do you trust the most when your well-being is being threatened?
 - a. As David pointed out, Goliath trusted in his size, strength, and ability to wield his sword, spear, and javelin, while David trusted in the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel (1 Samuel 17:45).
 - b. Does this mean David could act foolishly or carelessly and still be safe? NO! It appears David wisely kept his distance from the reach of Goliath, getting only close enough to send a stone from his sling into Goliath's forehead.
 5. So yes, we need to be wise, thoughtful, and careful. But we see from Jesus' example that –
 - a. When God is our first and foremost source of security, it is completely safe to invite the people in our life into a meaningful relationship – and let them decide if they will accept the invitation.
 - b. When God is our first and foremost source of security, it is safe to do whatever is necessary to give a relationship the best opportunity to become meaningful – even though the other party is unwilling to reciprocate.
 - c. When God is our first and foremost source of security, it is safe to remain open and honest, to trust to whatever degree the other party is trustworthy, to love, and to continue doing our part to make it possible for the other party to enter into a meaningful relationship with us.
 - d. Now it is true that a relationship can only be as meaningful as both parties make it. But it is also true that no relationship can be meaningful if neither party will risk doing their part to make it meaningful.
- E. Therefore, when it comes to your relationships, where is your first and foremost source of security?
1. Are you self-protective?
 - a. Do you get angry and hurt, shut-down and withdraw when those nearest and dearest do not treat you the way you want to be treated, or when they act selfishly, or when they complain and criticize?
 - b. Or maybe in your self-protection you show your strength, and take control, and push people back into the place you want them to be so you can feel safe and secure.

2. Do you trust too much or too little?
 - a. Do you tend to trust unconditionally or blindly until you get hurt or taken advantage of or tired of putting up with the other person's bad behavior?
 - b. And when you stop trusting unconditionally, what do you do? Do you begin treating the other person as if you don't trust them at all?
3. Do you prefer to trust in what we can see rather than trust in God whom you cannot see?
 - a. Do you feel more secure taking matters into your own hands as opposed to patiently waiting for God to act?
 - b. Would rather trust in anger and control, withdrawing and distance, another person – such as a lawyer, or money to make you feel safe and secure rather than trust in God?

III. Conclusion

- A. Jesus trusted in God, first and foremost, even when the Jews were pressing Pilate to crucify Him (1 Peter 2:21-23).
- B. In spite of the fact that those who were believing in Jesus could not be trusted with His well-being, Jesus kept loving and caring and trusting and seeking meaningful relationships with them – to whatever degree He could.
- C. May we make God our first and foremost source of security, and from that foundation of security, seek to love and relate to those around us as we ought – confident that our security is not in them, but in God.