

**Jeremiah 17:5-8**

5 Thus says the LORD: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the LORD. 6 They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. 7 Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. 8 They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

In the Bible there is a common thematic problem where people turn away from the Lord. In our Scripture today God is talking to the people through the prophet Jeremiah. It is a word of caution. You are cursed if you put your trust in people and turn away from the Lord. Actually, you are cursed if you trust anything other than the Lord. Today we see the problem once again is people turning away from God. This is not a new problem. As I continue to mention this has always been the problem from Genesis throughout the Bible to today. In the Scripture today we see one situation where the problem is addressed in Old Testament prophecy. Human kind has turned away from God. The Scripture encourages the people to stay faithful. If you stay true to God you are blessed. Being blessed is what you want. Blessed is what everyone wants. But not everyone does what the Scripture tells us is necessary to be blessed. In this case blessed are those who trust in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord.

There is an interesting point that is made in the Scripture. Notice the way it is phrased. Those who trust in the Lord and those whose trust is the Lord. Those who trust in the Lord is a believer. You trust that God is real. You trust the Lord is alive. You trust the Lord is there. You trust the Bible stories. You trust God sent Jesus for salvation. You trust Jesus is the Son of God. You trust Jesus is the savior of the world. You are a believer. That is trust in the Lord. Those who trust is the Lord are those who trust God fully. You do not just acknowledge God, who God is, and what God has done, your focus is on God. You look to God first and foremost. You turn to God, stay turned to God, and tuned in to God. The Bible, prayer, worship, and praise are first and foremost in your life.

Think of people that you trust in. You trust they are honest, upfront with you, and won't steal from you. They will tell you what you need to hear; not just what you want to hear. These are people you have confidence in. You trust they are reliable if you need anything, if you need money, or need someone to watch your house. When you need a friend you can trust in them. Now think of people whom your trust is them. This not just someone you can call on. This is someone you need. This is someone that is your everything. This is your spouse, your soul mate, the two of you are one. You are lost without them.

The Scripture is specific. Trust in the Lord and trust is the Lord. The variable is the extent of your trust. The lesson is you have to trust God, trust only God, and trust completely, one hundred percent, to the point where God is everything in your life. Then you are blessed. You are blessed when you trust in the Lord and your trust is the Lord. The Scripture gives an example of a tree planted by water. If you look at a satellite image of a desert that is dry and barren with a river that runs through the desert, you will see that along the edge it is aligned with trees. The trees along the water are green. Even during a drought the trees bear fruit. People who trust in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord have faithful endurance and produce good fruit.

There is an ongoing problem today of societal lack of faith. Many people think that it's OK to be lapsed. However, that is not what the Bible teaches. People think it's OK to be spiritual but not religious. That is not what the Bible teaches. Jesus is the designer of our faith. So, the Christian church and faith were built by Jesus. If you reject the religion of Jesus then you reject Christ and you reject God's grace. Christianity is God reaching out to humanity through the cosmos in a very personal manner and God presenting the very best gift that God has to offer to you. Where is your trust? The answer requires honesty with the self. Do you trust God completely, one hundred percent, to the point where God is everything in your life?

Here is a hypothetical situation of someone who put their trust in God but was not to the point where their trust is God. I was recently engaged in a conversation with an acquaintance. I invited him to come to worship with me. He said "That's OK, I don't go to church." So, I asked him if he believed in Jesus Christ? He said he did. Then I asked "You believe in Jesus but you don't go to church?" His response was "Well yeah, I believe in Jesus but not structured religion." To that I responded "You know, the church is the church that Jesus built." Sensing some resistance I decided to try something totally different. I said "Tell me about your mother." He responded with "What do you want to know?" I asked, "Well, do you visit her?" He said "Of course I do." So, I said "Think about this, our relationship with God is that of a loving parent. If you do not go to worship God in the temple that God built for you to worship God in. Well, that's like not going to visit your mother."

God did so much for you, sacrificed for you, reached out to connect with you. God has given you the very best gift that God possibly has to give. I simply ask you to think about your response. You see, it is all based on relationship. God's response to a fallen humanity is a very significant response. It shows how much God cares. Your response shows how much you care. Take a look. Take an honest look at your response to God's gift of grace. Put your trust in God and make sure your trust is God.