

Be Strong in the Lord

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and God Himself will perfect you!
Do not be wise in your own eyes, and lean not to your own understanding.*

Fred R. Coulter—November 19, 2022

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services! Look at what's going on in the world, and all the things that are taking place, and how it is upside down backward and twisted inside out in addition to that!

All of that is because for last 100 years plus America has been getting rid of God everywhere they can. When there is a vacuum, where there is not God, who steps in? *Satan the devil!*

As a result of that those of us who are in the Church suffer trials and difficulties because of the things out there. It also affects the Church within!

What do we do when trials and difficulties come? *We're guaranteed that they're going to come!* Some of the last words that Jesus spoke to His apostles was: *'In the world you will have tribulation, but I have overcome the world!'* This tells us that *our strength is in the Lord!*

We're going to spend a lot time in Proverbs and mostly the Psalms, because the Psalms are very instructive on the things that David went through, that he suffered:

- from the enemies without
- from enemies within
- from sickness and problems
- from political upheavals
- from family squabbles
- from rebellion in his own house to take over the throne

David had a lot of difficulties!

Proverbs 24:10: "***If*** you faint in the day of adversity..."

Remember that *the day of adversity never comes when you expect it!* It always comes some other way.

"...*your strength is small*" (v 10)—*or phrased another way: you're not close enough to God!*

Another Proverb tells us that in all of these situations every one of them amount to an affliction, trial or a problem that we're confronted with. God uses every one of these:

- so that we can be corrected
- so that we can learn how to rely on God

What IF everything were absolutely smooth and you never had a trial. You say you believe in God and everything is fine, *but:*

- your faith is never tried?
- your faith is never tested?
- you never have a difficulty to overcome?

*You wouldn't learn a thing, and you wouldn't have any faith, **because these things draw us to God!***

Proverbs 3:11: "My son... [we're told that we're going to be the sons and daughters of God] ...**do not despise the chastening of the LORD**, nor be weary of His correction; **for whom the LORD loves He corrects...**" (vs 11-12).

That's what we need to see with every one of these things. The way it looks now, out there... I mean, look at this society! Who knows that when you go to the store just to buy groceries whether you will be mugged or be left on the parking lot dead!

- we need the protection of God's angels
- we need to have the correction that God gives us

Because God loves us! And, as we will see, **He will provide a way out of the difficulty!**

"...even as a father *corrects* the son *in whom* he delights" (v 12).

Notice what happens right after that. Look at all the trials and difficulties that you've gone through and you look back and see how you went through them, and how these difficulties came about. Here is the result of it:

Verse 13: "**Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding.**"

- How do we know what to do?
- How do we know what is right?

Unless we have the Word of God! Those are all things for us. Let's understand that **our strength comes from God!**

If you just take the time and have a study period of time that you read and think about every Psalm... One way you can get through that is when you pray every day, that you read one of these Psalms as part of your prayer. That will help you.

- Why is this important? *Because it says in Heb. 10:16 that He's going to have His laws and commandments written in our*

heart and mind!

- What is it that brings us back to God always?
 1. the Spirit of God
 2. the Truth of God
 3. the correction of God

So, we go to God and we find out that ***He is the One Who gives us strength!***

Psalm 18:1: “I love You, O LORD, **my strength.**”

Notice the connection between love and strength. ***If*** you love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul—and that actually is true—what do you have? ***You have strength from God!*** How many people in the world are close enough to God that they can experience that?

Look at television and people are all upset in their mind, body and everything else, and there’s an ad that shows a picture of a man or woman—mostly a distressed woman. She’s kind of sad and down and she feels alone and doesn’t know what to do. Then all of a sudden here is the medicine to take. She’s happy as can be, ***but what she really needs is God!*** That’s why there are so many people that have so many problems mentally and physically.

They have left God and the distance between them and God gets greater and greater! It turns out that if they devote themselves to the evil, then those who are God’s seem strange. ‘You believe in the Word of God?’ *Oh yes!* ‘You believe the Bible is true?’ *Oh yes, it’s the Word of God!* ‘Nonsense, it’s full of lies!’

That’s what a lot of people would tell you! But notice what David said:

Verse 2: “The LORD is **my Rock**, and **my Fortress**, and **my Deliverer**...”

Think about that! Whenever you are in trouble, God will provide a way out and deliver you ***IF*** you turn to Him! ***IF*** you ask for God’s solution according to His Word and His Spirit.

“...my God, my Rock in Whom I take refuge; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower” (v 2).

Think about all of that! What’s a high tower for? *Back in more ancient times, a high tower was one of those places that they especially built that no one could come up and get you!* You’re at the top of the high tower, so that’s what it’s referring to. Here’s how you do it:

Verse 3: **“I will call on the LORD...”**

- Does the Lord know everything?
- Does the Lord know your thoughts?

- Does the Lord know the thoughts of others?
- *Yes, He does!*

He’s also called *the heart-knowing God!* He’s the only One Who truly knows the heart!

“...Who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies” (v 3).

At this point I could stop and tell you how many times that God has intervened for us as we have gone down through time with Christian Biblical Church of God, and before that the Biblical Church of God, spanning over a period of now 40 years. Some of them were pretty desperate times!

There will be times that is necessary for conversion that you will have no way ***unless you turn to God!*** You will do like everyone who gets to that point. You will cry out to God and say, *O Lord God, heal my soul!* God will answer and God will hear!

“...so shall I be saved from my enemies” (v 3).

What’s the ultimate salvation of the saints in many cases? *Death!* We know that it’s prophesied that there’s going to be another wave of martyrdom! Everyone who is going to experience that is going to have to have the strength of God within their heart and mind to say, ***‘God will save me!’***

You might have to say that just before the guillotine comes down and your head comes off! That’s not very pleasant, but you look out at the world and see where it’s heading, and guess where it’s going to come.

Verse 6: **“In my distress I called on the LORD...”**

Whenever any trouble comes along, you call upon Him. You don’t have to wait to get someplace to get on your knees; you can do it wherever you are. You have the Spirit of God and you’re directly connected to God.

“...and I cried to my God; **He heard** my voice out of His Temple...” (v 6).

Remember, our prayers go to God and Jesus Christ right up in the Temple of God in heaven.

“...and my cry came before Him into His ears.... [notice what God did of David; none of us have experienced anything like this] ... Then the earth shook and trembled; and the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because He was angry” (vs 6-7). *God reached down and helped him in everything!*

Notice how this helps us to know how to pray. Lots of times you go along you don’t know what to say, you don’t know how to pray. Well you

do, just get out the Psalms, get on your knees and open it up and start out with different Psalms like these and let these words that are inspired by God become an introduction for your prayer to God.

Psalms 25:1: “To You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You... [we’re going to see trust and strength work together] ...do not let me be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me” (vs 1-2).

In a lot of these Psalms are actually prophetic words of what Christ would say during His physical ministry on earth. Think about it! Everyone followed Christ so they could be healed or be fed. But all the ones who should have acknowledged that He was the Christ—that is all the religious leaders, all of those in the priesthood—hated Him.

They were after Him from the very first time that He healed a man’s hand in the synagogue (Mark 3). They were so angry that He healed the man on the Sabbath. They wanted to find out what they could do to kill Him, right then! Stop and think about how many things that Jesus had to go through, and ask yourself the question:

- How about my problems?
- How big are they really?

To God there’s no problem too big, so that’s why we take them to God!

Verse 3: “Yea, let none... [that includes everyone of us] ...who wait on You be ashamed; let them be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths” (vs 3-4).

This is why we go through difficulties! This helps us to get strength in the Lord. That’s what we need. It’s one thing to have bravado, like with a team: Rah! Rah! Rah! It’s another thing that when times are really desperate and everything seems to be coming against you, ***that you trust in God!***

Verse 4: “Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your Truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; **on You do I wait all the day long**” (vs 4-5).

- What happens after that?
- What happens after you prayed and asked God for something?

Lo and behold He answers that prayer! Thank Him for it! Acknowledge that He’s done it! He is the One Who has intervened in your life!

Verse 6: “Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your loving kindness, for they have been of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your loving

kindness remember me for Your goodness sake, O LORD” (vs 6-7). *What a perfect model of prayer for us!*

Verse 8: “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore, He will teach sinners in the way.”

- How does He teach sinners His way?
 - ✓ through His Spirit
 - ✓ through His Word
 - ✓ through the experiences that we go through
 - How do we handle it?
 - Do we learn to love God?
 - Do we learn to trust in Him?
 - Do we pray to Him right away?
- OR**
- Do we try and solve it ourselves?

All of those things come into play!

Verse 9: “The meek He will guide in judgment; and the meek He will teach His way.”

Some of these Psalms, if you want to read a verse, it’s almost strung together so good and so inspired that you must go onto the next verse.

Verse 10: “**All** the paths of the LORD are mercy and Truth... [notice that it’s not that way to people in the world] **...to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.**”

There are times when you have long prayers, and there are times when you have very short prayers. Remember years ago they said that you’ve got to pray one hour a day. So, a lot of brethren would take a clock when they prayed. An hour is a long time.

- What if you have a prayer for an hour and you can hardly wait to get it over so you can go do what you want to do?
- How effective was that prayer? *Probably not too affective!*

But if you pray from the heart, like David is showing us here, like God inspired for it to be written down for us, here’s what we do”

Psalms 28:1: “I will cry to You, O LORD; my Rock, do not be silent to me, lest, if You be silent to me, I become like those who go down into the pit.”

Always expect that God will answer. He will! Sometimes it will be quite a while before you get the answer. As you’re going along one day you see, ‘Oh, God answered that prayer. *Thank you, God, for answering it!*’ Other times it will come real quickly and you’re rather surprised that it happened so quickly; God intervening!

Verse 2: “Hear the voice of my

supplications when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward Your Holy place. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace to their neighbors, yet, evil is in their hearts” (vs 2-3).

If that doesn't describe this society today and the leaders of the world today, I don't know what does! They speak *peace*, but "...evil is in their hearts"!

I've got a lot of material I'm gathering for my message next week, having to do with the 'new 10 commandments.' Did you know that there are *new 10 commandments* coming? *Yes! From the pope and from the leader of Islam!* Remember what covered a while ago about the two horns of the second beast of Rev. 13? *The pope and the leader of Islam!*

How did they get together? *Hateful enemies through centuries!* Now they are 'kissing buddies.' They kiss each other! Have you seen the pictures of them kissing. The only thing you can hope is that they each wash their beards.

They're going down to Mt. Sinai and they're going to bring ten commandments for everyone on earth to support, 'to save the world from climate change'!

I can't think of anything more blasphemous than that! Remember what it says of that second beast that has 'two horns like a lamb but speaks like a dragon'? *That's Satan the devil!*

Verse 4: "**Give them according to their deeds...**"

God will! All you have to do is read the book of Revelation and see!

"...and according to the wickedness of their practices, give them according to the work of their hands; **give them what they deserve**. Because they do not regard the works of the LORD, nor the work of His hands, He shall tear them down and not build them up. Blessed is the LORD because He has heard the voice of my supplications" (vs 4-6).

That's a good example of how to turn from the world, and put them in God's hands. It says to *pray for your enemies!* There are two things you can pray for your enemies that God will respect:

1. **that they may repent**

Who was the worst enemy that God brought to repentance in a very dramatic way? *Saul who became Paul!* It was so astounding that it took a long time for those in the Church to accept Paul. When he went down to Jerusalem he saw Peter for a while, then the Jews found out that Paul was there and brethren took him down and put him on a ship

and said, 'You go home, they're going to kill you!'

So, Paul had to stay in Tarsus for about three years before the Church began to grow with enough Gentiles. Barnabas went to find Paul to help out there in Antioch.

2. **Lord render to them the just punishment that You will bring upon them**

You don't say, 'O God, kill him!' That for David to do. That's not for us. *But say, 'God, they're in Your hand for what You will do for them.'*

Some people think that when you pray for your enemies, how can you do that? What is someone killed your son or daughter. How do you pray for that person? ***You pray that that they may repent to God!*** If they don't repent to God that 'Father they're in your hands for whatever you determine.' *That's how you pray for your enemies!*

Verse 5: "Because they do not regard the works of the LORD, nor the work of His hands, He shall tear them down and not build them up. Blessed is the LORD because He has heard the voice of my supplications **The LORD is my strength...**" (vs 5-7).

Remember the first thing we ask when we pray—after we honor God, honor His name—what do we say (Matt. 6)? *Your will be done in heaven as it's on the earth!* So, on the earth, that means in your life and in the lives of all the saints, because you pray for them every day, as well.

Verse 7: "**The LORD is my strength** and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped. Therefore, my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him. The LORD is their strength, and He is the saving strength of His anointed. Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever" (vs 7-9). *You can carry that on out to the resurrection and how that's going to be!*

Coupled with all of this, as you go through all the Psalms you're going to see *how God intervenes and answers prayer*. This is why we have so many Psalms.

In going through and getting this message ready, I was amazed how many things that David wrote about. He must have had a really difficult life. I mean, really, really difficult.

Here is another way to pray for your enemy; Psalm 70:1: "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD. ¹**Let** them be ashamed and confounded, those who seek after my soul..." (vs 1-2).

It makes you wonder, could that be some of

the words that Jesus prayed when they were trying to hunt Him down? Who knows? *Could be!*

“...^[2]**let** them be turned backward and put to confusion, those who desire my hurt” (v 2).

- Did that happen to the Jewish leadership in 70_{A.D.}? *Yes!*
- Which is a lesson for what? *God answers the prayer in His own time!*

From the ministry of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem was 40 years. But He answered it!

Sidebar: There is supposed to be ‘the messiah’ already in Israel. He has a beard, wears glasses and the black hat, and plays an electric piano. Shouldn’t the Messiah have perfect vision? But the Jews are looking for a physical messiah. I’ve seen some of the clips already on it. It’s all the older Jewish ultra-orthodox with their hats, beards and wrinkled old faces.

Next time I’m on the podcast Mike & Mike I’m going to give a message on *How is Christ Going to Return?* I’ll show them that ***it will be in the greatest power and greatest display of God’s plan that mankind will ever experience!*** Furthermore, if there are any Protestants out there listening, you won’t be in the rapture. Because what you look at as the rapture will only be a few of the physical brethren of Christ who are taken to a place of safety before the martyrdom of the saints happens so that the promise that Jesus gave that the ‘gates of the grave will never prevail against His Church.’

How many does God need to preserve that? *We don’t know!* But I can tell you this, many of those who thought they would be going to a place of safety ***aren’t going!***

Protestants, you’re being preached that you will be saved from the Tribulation by the rapture, and millions will be raptured up into heaven! ***Not going to happen!***

On earth think of all the insurance companies that if that happen:

- all the wrecks with all the cars
- all of the destruction of homes

Because they were ‘raptured off,’ how are they going to take care of fixing all of that?

They like to show movies where cars are crashing and people are being raised to heaven. Listen! The only time they’re going to be people taken up in the air is at the first resurrection, ***and the angels are going to***

take them to a giant Sea of Glass!

So, everything that the Protestants are thinking about what’s going to happen in the Tribulation or before it, isn’t going to happen the way that they think!

End Sidebar

Psalm 70: 3: ^[3]**Let** them be turned back for a reward of their shame, those who say, ‘**Aha, aha!**’”

Where do you find that in the New Testament! *The leaders of the priesthood* standing out there looking at Christ hanging on the tree with the crossbar—and that’s how it was a cross, not like they show it in the movies—what did they say? *Aha, aha! Save yourself and we will believe You!* Even the two thieves said, ‘Yes, save us, too. One of them said, ‘We’re deserving of what we get. Lord, remember me when You get into Your Kingdom.’

Verse 4: ^[4]**Let** all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and ^[5]let those who love Your salvation say without ending, ^[6]**Let** God be magnified.” *So, God will!*

Psalm 71:1: “In You, O LORD, have I taken refuge; ^[7]let me never be put to shame.... [How do we come out of the difficulties we are in?] ...**Deliver me in Your righteousness and cause me to escape...**” (vs 1-2).

Think about David being chased by Saul and his armies. There was really quite a time when Saul could have been killed by David. He was in this cave hiding from Saul. Saul—the king at that time—decided that would be his latrine. So, Saul came into the cave to relieve himself just inches away from where David was hiding. David could have taken his spear and run Saul through, but he didn’t do it. Why? *Because that would have been his (David’s) work instead of God taking care of Saul in His way!*

Verse 3: “Be my strong Rock of refuge to which I may **always** go; You have commanded to save me; for You are my Rock and my Fortress. **Deliver me, O my God...** [there are times when you need deliverance] ...**out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and ruthless man, for You are my hope...**” (vs 2-5). *Notice how all of this ties together:*

- strength
- faith
- hope

“...O Lord GOD, my trust from my youth. By You I have been upheld from the womb... [not only David, but of Christ] ...You are He who took me out of my mother’s belly; my praise always shall be of You.” (5-6).

Verse 12: **“O God, be not far from me; O my God, make haste to help me.”**

You can go through and read more of these Psalms. I tell you, if you're down, discouraged, afflicted, sick or having problems you need to face, God will hear and answer your prayer. Take these Psalms and get on your knees and pray to God and ask Him to help you, ***and He will!***

He will help you! In this day and age when everything is upside down and backward, and twisted altogether, we need ***the wisdom of God and the help of God*** so that we can get through these difficulties, which are going to be multitudeness as we go down the road.

(break 48:59)

Psalm 112:1: “Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments.”

Isn't that something? I did this on a Church at Home about the town called Perfectville:

- no crime
- no police
- no lying
- no adultery
- no stealing

- no slick-handed businessmen
- you have the right God
- no idols
- everybody kept the Sabbath and the Holy Days

Just think about what that would be like to live in that town. Well, after Christ returns that's what it's going to be like to live anywhere in the world!

Think about your calling, how great the calling is that God has given us. We go through all these difficulties today, but think about that experience and being resurrected from the dead as spirit beings, with:

- a spirit mind
- a spirit body
- the ability to think the way that God thinks

Think about how the earth is going to be! It's not going to be Perfectville; ***it's going to be Perfect World!***

Verse 4: “To the upright there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness. It is well with the man who is gracious and lends freely; who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely **he shall not be moved** forever...” (vs 4-6).

Single-minded and single-hearted all

toward God! Remember what James says about the double-minded in James 1; *the one who is double-minded is unstable in all his ways*, because he vacillates back and forth. If your heart is fixed “...**he shall not be moved...**”

“...the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; **his heart is steadfast**... [fixed] ...trusting in the LORD. His heart is established; he shall not be afraid until he sees his desire upon his enemies” (vs 6-8).

Every one of the saints are going to see the desire of God upon all the enemies of the world. ***We'll all be there on the Sea of Glass, and we will see it!*** Think about that! When will God answer that prayer for all the saints? ***Not until after the resurrection!*** Then they're going to see it. What a thing that's going to be.

I think that the Sea of Glass is going to be the greatest thing of God's intervention that's going to turn this world absolutely crazy! They're going to bring all their armies and modern weapons, and they're going to look up at the Sea of Glass and say, ‘This is an invasion from outer space,’ *which it is!* They're going to be shooting all their weapons up there to try and destroy the Sea of Glass; but it's going to be like shooting BBs against a steel wall! ***Nothing will go through!***

That's why we are established and not afraid! Now we are going to see that not only do we have strength in the Lord, ***but we get that because we trust in Him!***

Psalm 115:9: “O Israel, **trust in the LORD**; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. O you who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield” (vs 9-11).

No preferential treatment! Everybody who trusts in the Lord will get the help and shield from God!

Verse 12: “The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.”

This is where we need to come in our conversion and in our attitude toward God in:

- what we do
- how we live it
- how we think it

What is it that we are saved by? ***Grace!***

Psalm 57:1: “**Be gracious** unto me, O God, **be gracious** unto me; **for my soul trusts in You...**”

When you receive the grace of God, ***that's not something just to forgive your sins, and it's there so you can go out and sin*** and always trust in the grace of God for forgiveness.

You trust in God and you keep His commandments. It says in Eph. 2 that we are created in Christ Jesus unto the good works that He has beforehand ordained for us; that's His laws and commandments.

Verse 2: "I will cry to God Most High, to God Who fulfills His purpose for me.:"

Always keep that in mind. For every single one of us God has His purpose for each of us!

Verse 3: "He shall send from heaven and save me; He rebukes him who would swallow me up. **Selah...**"

- stop
- think
- pray about it

so that you can apply these words to yourself and your circumstances!

"...God shall send forth His mercy and His Truth.... [that's what God will do for each one of us] ...Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have dug a pit before me; into the midst of it they have fallen themselves. **Selah**" (vs 4-6).

That's quite a statement about how God turns back their plans against His people, and they fall right into it!

Verse 7: "**My heart is fixed...**"

*That's what we need to do when we get the strength of God; **our heart is fixed and we trust in God.***

"...**O God, my heart is fixed.** I will sing and give praise. Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I myself will awake the dawn. I will praise You, O LORD, among the people; I will sing of You among the nations, for Your steadfast mercy is great *even* unto the heavens and Your Truth to the clouds. Be exalted above the heavens, O God; let Your glory be above all the earth" (vs 7-11).

In this and in these prayers, it shows us that we acknowledge God in everything that there is in the world; how it works in our lives.

Let's see what we are to do. Let's see how this starts; here's what's important: ***You can't trust in God unless you believe God! Believe what He says!*** Notice everything that takes place up to trusting God with all your heart.

Proverbs 3:1: "My son, do not forget My Law... [that's quite a statement] ...but let your heart keep My commandments; for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace, to you" (vs 1-2).

Example: I got a very interesting letter just this last week from a lady back East and she typed up on a typewriter... For those of you who don't know what a typewriter is, this will surprise you.

She typed it and you could tell what we today would say would be an 'old fashioned typewriter.' She typed a very, very nice letter thanking me. Then she said, 'I'm 98-years-old!'

Ninety-eight and could still type! No typos! No erasing! That's amazing, and that is a fulfilling of this promise right here that we're reading.

"...length of days, and long life, and peace, to you."

Verse 3: "Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you... [never get hard-hearted] ...**bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart.**"

Isn't that an interesting saying? The heart is the only other organ in the body that has nero cells like the brain. That gives you motivation in your emotions, but you have to make sure that it's correct.

Notice what happens, and this is what everyone wants:

Verse 4: "And so **you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God** and man."

Because wisdom and understanding comes from God. Comes from His Word through His Spirit. That's why we are to study His Word. Not just read through and glance by. Not just look at it and say, 'I know it.' Because whenever you study and re-study and re-study and restudy, you lean more from what you read. Why? ***Because God's Spirit is there to help you learn more, to give you more conviction so that your heart is fixed!***

IF you don't do that when the good times are here, ***THEN*** you won't be prepared when the bad times come! So, we prepare by staying close to God when the good times are here ***so that we have the strength and the faith to trust God when the bad times arrive!***

Verse 5: "**Trust in the LORD with all your heart...** [you can't have divided loyalties] ...and **lean not to your own understanding.**"

- How do people's lives get in a mess? *They lean to their own understanding!*
- How bad can it get for some people?

I was watching Tucker Carlson the other night, and there was this woman who is a drug addict of the highest abuse of drugs you could possibly have for 17 years. She was finally arrested and in jail. They had a rehab program and she learned—by being isolated from getting any drugs—how to straighten her life out. She came to accept Christ in the way that she knew to do it. She pulled out of it and has been drug free!

So, how much distress can you get into, but God still will rescue you? **Well, God can do it; only God can do it!** All of us have our part:

- we've got to trust in God
- we've got to believe in God
- we've got to have the conviction of what we believe having our heart fixed

Verse 6 goes hand-in-hand; all of these verses build a pattern of how things work out with God.

Verse 6: **"In all your ways acknowledge Him..."**

- Why is that important? *Even in the difficulties and problems that come along* **"In all your ways acknowledge Him..."**
- Why? *Because here's what you will need:*

"...and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes..." (vs 6-7).

Remember the story of King Asa. Azariah the prophet came to him and said, 'If you trust in the Lord you'll win the battle.' He trusted in the Lord and put away the evil things, and he was righteous for a long time, about 14-17 years (2-Chron. 15-16). Then Asa went against what he should do and went into the House of the Lord to offer offerings as a priest.

He forgot what he did at the first, and **he was trusting in his own judgment** and brought the penalty of God upon him immediately.

- when we're in the grace of God
- when He gives us understanding
- when He helps us
- when He leads us

Don't take it to yourself!

Darlene was telling me about the time when the WCG was all in chaos and confusion, she even went to a Japanese Seventh-Day Adventist Church. The thing that surprised her was, all of them said of all their actions, *it's of God! Praise be to God! Thank God!* She thought what a relief that was because of what was happening in the Church of God. They were all fighting, choosing sides, all going off in very

many directions and sins.

This is an eye-opener: ***Anyone who trusts in the Lord and acknowledges Him in all their ways, God will honor*** because He's no respecter of persons.

Verse 8: *It shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones." In other words, that's how you get long life!*

Let's see what not to do. It says, ***'lean not to your own understanding,'*** because when you do you're going to get yourself in trouble.

If anyone knew that this is so, if anyone could understand this verse that Jeremiah wrote, *Jeremiah understood it*, because he was one of the sole prophets as a priest to really give warning to all of the Jews that God was going to destroy the nation and Jerusalem. He could see all the sins of all the people.

God told Jeremiah when He let him know that he was going to be a prophet, ***'I'm going to make your mind like hard rock against all the evil.'***

Jeremiah 10:23: **"O LORD, I know..."**

He learned that by experience; read everything else leading up to that how God inspired him to warn the people there.

"...that the way of man is not in himself..." (v 23).

Isn't that the problem beginning with Adam and Eve? *Yes!* People think that they can do it.

Now, they may have some success in it, but sooner or later if they don't acknowledge God problems come.

"...it is not in man who walks to direct his steps" (v 23).

Here's a prophet of God preaching the Word of God, direct inspiration from God right into his mind the very words that he should speak!

Verse 24: **"O LORD, correct me..."** [that's quite a statement] ...but with judgment; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing."

That's quite a thing! Let's see what else Jeremiah says about the understanding of man. Let's see what happens.

Jer. 17—This is something! We see this today as never before.

Jeremiah 17:5: **"Thus says the LORD, 'Cursed..."**

People don't like to think of themselves as being cursed; this means *penalized for sin!*

"...Cursed is the man who trusts in

man... [look at it today in politics, religion, education; just in living] ...and makes flesh his arm... [relying on physical carnal means] ...and whose heart departs from the LORD' (v 5)."

We will see v 6 happening because of the way it is in almost every nation of Israel today, and in many nations in the world.

Verse 6: "For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes. But he shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land that is not inhabited.... [on the other hand]: ...Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD... [when you trust in Him, notice]: ...and whose hope is the LORD" (vs 6-7).

How will that be? Just think about that woman who was 98-years-old. She's been in the Church for decades and decades; been through all the 'church wars' and everything that everyone has gone through. Yet, faithful! She could type that letter at 98 without a single error on an old fashioned typewriter! That was really quite something.

Look at us today! All of you who have smart phones and 'tech neck'! What is that? *You're looking down all the time!* You have all of that there. Here's what you shall be like:

Verse 8: "For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters; it sends out its roots by the river, and it shall not fear when the heat comes, but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit."

Notice the comparison if you trust in your own heart and your own ways (tie in Prov. 3) '*lean not to your own understanding!*' Do not trust in your own words or your own way. Here's why:

Verse 9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

Who is there to inject into your mind thoughts of 'good' things! If you don't believe that, just look at Christmas coming up. They even had Christmas things out there before Halloween. ***Satan comes along and says:***

This is good! This is for the family. You want to do things for the family, don't you? This is for the children; you give gifts to them!

All the preachers come along and say 'we're going to put Christ back in Christmas.' *Well, they don't have a clue that He never was there!* But then in the middle of a cold winter you bring in fir tree, which is an evergreen. ***So, the fir tree represents the way of man cutoff from God going his own way!*** So, they decorate it and it looks all beautiful and all of this. You have lights on there. Some people light up their whole houses with lights and all kinds of things.

So, on top of the tree is a star. Do you suppose that that tree represents, symbolically, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil with Satan at the top of it? People don't realize that Satan comes along with something 'good' to do. If you're relying on your own ways and not on God, then what's going to happen? ***That's why we need the Word of God!***

Verse 10: "**I the LORD search the heart...**" *That's quite a statement!* Who's the best heart doctor around? *God!*

"...**I try the reins...**" (v 10). What are the reins?

We don't know exactly, but the reins are how God connects directly with our mind and heart! So, He knows what we're thinking.

"...even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings" (v 10).

We need to keep all of that in mind in relationship to being strong in the Lord!

Proverbs 28:25: "He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but **he who puts his trust in the LORD shall be enriched.**"

See how God brings it out. Why does He do it this way? *Because He's made us free moral agents and He wants us to choose!* That's why we need to read and understand the Word of God so we know what to do and what to choose. "...**he who puts his trust in the LORD shall be enriched.**"

Verse 26: "**He who trusts in his own heart is a fool...**"

That sounds like the perfect person to trust and hire in the government! Isn't that what it is? Look at it now! How are you going to get rid of all of this? It's such a maze. Here in California there are so many idiots who vote Democrat that Newsome didn't even have to run a campaign to get re-elected. He and the Democrat legislature have brought in so many abjectly wrong things into law in California, we're a total mess.

So what's happening, people are moving out going to other states. What are they bringing with them? *The same thinking!* How do you untangle all of this? ***Only the return of Christ will do it!***

"...but whoever walks wisely, he shall be delivered" (v 26). *All of these are promises from God!*

Psalms 118:1: "O, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good because **His steadfast love endures forever.** Let Israel now say that **His steadfast love endures forever.** Let the house of Aaron now say that **His steadfast love endures forever.** Let those

who fear the LORD now say that **His steadfast love endures forever**" (vs 1-4).

That's why you're here! God love you and you love God! That's what it has to be, and that's the way that we grown in grace and knowledge. Understanding that in everything we give God the credit.

Verse 5: "I called upon the LORD in distress..."

That's what to do when you have troubles and problems and distress comes along. You call upon the Lord. You admit that you don't know what to do. You don't know how to handle it. 'Help me O God to do so.'

There have been many times when we've had to pray this prayer, ***and God always answers!*** Sometimes right away. Sometimes a little later. Sometimes He answers it and we don't know until somewhere down road and we perceive that He answered that prayer.

"...the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place. The LORD is on my side..." (v 5-6).

Why is the Lord on your side? *Because you are on His side!* You don't have carnal men coming along and saying, 'O God, help is on our side.' God is going to say, 'Who are you?'

If there's repentance with that, God will hear that, because God always honors repentance! Let's hope that when people repent that it is ***true, deep repentance and not just flattery to God!***

Verse 6: "The LORD is on my side I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Remember that Jesus said, 'Don't fear man, but fear God! ***Man can only kill you, but God gives you life.***'

Verse 7: "The LORD is for me as my Helper..."

Think about that! Little ole us down here and we're nothing in the world. No one looks upon us as anything, because we're not. ***But God is there to help each one of us individually!*** He has the ability to do it. He has not only that, but also angels. *Think on that!*

As we covered recently about how Peter learned the lesson of loving the Lord, let's see some more about this. What we're going to see is that what is called the Old Testament agrees with the New, always does. It's a shame that it's called the Old Testament, it should be called *The First Covenant*, and the New Testament should be called *The Second Covenant*. But we have to go by what has been for so long.

1-Peter 5:6: "Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God... [Why does He want that?] ...**so that He may exalt you in due time.**"

In other words, *at the proper time!* We don't get lifted up in pride and try and lift ourselves up and make ourselves something great that people would look to and say, 'O look at him!' ***NO! Especially as elders!*** We're here:

- to serve
- to help
- to teach

So that we all together come to the full knowledge—as much as possible—of the Son of God and eternal life, and knowing the Father! *That's what it's all about!* Peter is reminding them of that.

Verse 7: "Casting all your cares upon Him, because **He cares for you.**"

- He loves you
- He cares for you
- *that's why we have to love Him back*
- *that's why we have to keep His commandments*

There's an adversary out there working to come against us, and in many different ways.

Verse 8: "**Be sober! Be vigilant!** For your **adversary the devil** is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour."

He's got the whole world deceived and the whole world lies in the power of the wicked one! Remember the song **He's Got the Whole World in His Hands?** ***That's a song of Satan the devil!*** The whole world is in his hands, and he wants to come after those who are following God!

Verse 9: "**Whom resist...**"

Don't give into the wrong thoughts! **Trust not in your own understanding! Come to God and do it His way!**

...**steadfast in the faith**... [your heart is fixed] ...knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are in the world*" (v 9).

Notice how Peter ends this, and this will be a perfect ending for us today.

Verse 10: "Now, may the God of all grace... [coming all the time] ...**Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus**... [we keep our mind fixed on the goal] ...after *you* have suffered a little while... [remember that Paul said that he was partaker of the sufferings of Christ] ...**Himself perfect you**..." ***God Himself!*** Think about that!

With His Spirit and His Word He is doing a great and marvelous spiritual work in every single one of us! ***Himself! God Himself!*** That's amazing!

“...**perfect you**...” That's what He wants. What is the perfection?

- loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength
- keeping His commandments
- loving Him

“...**perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you**. To Him *be* the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen.” (vs 10:11).

Be strong in the Lord!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 24:10
- 2) Proverbs 3:11-13
- 3) Psalm 18:1-3, 6-7
- 4) Psalm 25:1-10
- 5) Psalm 28:1-6, 5-9
- 6) Psalm 70:1-4
- 7) Psalm 71:1-6, 12
- 8) Psalm 112:1, 4-8
- 9) Psalm 115:9-12
- 10) Psalm 57:1-11
- 11) Proverbs 3:1-8
- 12) Jeremiah 10:23-24
- 13) Jeremiah 17:5-10
- 14) Proverbs 28:25-26
- 15) Psalm 118:1-7
- 16) 1 Peter 5:6-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 10:16
- Mark 3
- Revelation 13
- Matthew 6
- James 1
- Ephesians 2
- 2 Chronicles 15-16

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 11/23/22

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