

The Bible

3-10-2013

Proverbs 3: 5-6

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Last Tuesday morning when I sent Vicki my sermon title, she laughed and asked me if I thought my topic would be broad enough. I had to laugh and explain where it came from.

It's not very often you will hear me stand up here and hawk a TV show especially with the drivel that's on TV now days. However, I'm going to make an exception in this case. A miniseries started last Sunday night on the History Channel called "The Bible". It is on from 8:00 to 10:00 PM and runs every Sunday night from now through Easter Sunday, March 31. The show is the story of the Bible. There will be five hours from the Old Testament and five hours from the New Testament. This past Sunday night the show covered Noah, Abraham, Moses and part of Joshua. Tonight it will cover the rest of the story of Joshua, Samson, Judges, Saul, David, and Solomon. The show is the brainchild of actress Roma Downey and her husband producer Mark Burnett. Downey's most famous role was as Monica the angel in the TV series Touched By An Angel. Burnett is the executive producer of several different reality TV shows. There are two main reasons I am telling you about this show. First, I think you will really enjoy the show and may learn something interesting about the Bible. The second is because of the one aspect of the show that was most prevalent to me. As I watched the show last Sunday night, each of the major characters displayed an unwavering trust in God. God told Noah to build an ark and he did. Can you even begin to imagine the amount of ridicule he faced? Yet with an unwavering dedication, he did build the ark and followed God's commands. Abraham on God's word left the safety of his home and took his family to a new, unknown home in the wilderness. He did that because God told him to. He was ready to sacrifice his son Isaac because God told him to. That was how much trust Abraham had in God. Moses stood up to the Pharaoh who hated him and led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, crossing the Red Sea. He led his people into the wilderness because of his trust in God. I think as we watch the rest of this miniseries on the Bible, we will see the different characters show a complete trust in God. We will see how God has worked through them to help humanity.

Today is the fourth Sunday in Lent and our theme for today is trust. We heard Larry start our call to worship with the words, "God has proven trustworthy throughout history, but at times we question and doubt, and even deny God's presence in our lives." And that is so true; isn't that just like us as humans. Throughout the Bible, we see people who trusted God and see how things turned out for them, yet, we still tend to want to do it ourselves. We want to take control. I went off the lectionary this week and chose this particular scripture because it speaks directly to trusting God. I know this scripture is from the Old Testament and even though it is the Lenten season I felt it was most appropriate. It's very short, let's listen to it again: **⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.** Just two verses, but they say so much. There are four statements in these two verses. Let's look at each of the statements. First: **Trust in the Lord with all your heart.** Let's define trust: assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something; another definition; Firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. When you trust someone or something, it means you have belief in the reliance, ability, strength, truth, or character of something or someone. In order for trust to occur, two things must happen. First, the object must be worthy of one's reliance. Let me explain. You all know I enjoy deer hunting. The stands we hunt from on our hunt club property are made of pressure treated lumber and or steel. I have reliance in the materials the stands are made from. I'm not too sure I would try to climb up in a stand that was made of toothpicks and tongue depressors. I really don't think I would have much reliance in the ability of the tongue depressors or toothpicks to hold up my weight. The second thing that must occur for trust to happen, is a person must be willing to rely on the object

of trust. Each year before the season comes in, myself and the other men in my hunt club go up to the farm and check each of the deer stands to make sure they aren't rotten or too dangerous to climb in. We make any necessary repairs so that we know we can rely on the stands to be safe to climb in. Some of those stands are sixteen feet off the ground. They could be extremely dangerous if they weren't reliable. We trust the stands will hold us up and keep us safe. We have a reliance in the stands and a reliance in the ability of the men who built the stands. I can't personally go to each stand and inspect it. I have trust in my fellow club members and their abilities to perform the construction and necessary repairs on those stands. They have to have that same reliance in me as well. We have trust in each other.

As Christians, we must have that same reliance, that same trust in God. Trusting God is the key principle in every matter of our relationship with God. We must acknowledge that every aspect of our relationship with God is a matter of trust. So, whatever your list of worries looks like, all things are matters that ultimately rely on trust. Our health, our children, our careers, our future, our relationships, all things are a matter of trust. Trusting God is the key principle in every matter of our relationship with God.

And lean not on your own understanding; For some of us, this is a tough one. I like to be in control. I like to know where I'm going and what path I am taking to get there. I know how to do that. How's that turned out for you so far Guerry? You know what I've found out over the years, when I listen to and rely on God, things turn out so much better. We've all been there. How many times have each of us decided to do something and that still small voice told us not to. Then we went ahead and did it anyway. What happened; if you're like me, it didn't turn out very well. I know that the times I have listened to God, the times I leaned on him when I made choices, good things happened. I also know the times I have relied on myself instead of God... well, let's not go there right now. A question that usually brings me back to God, especially when I stray and trust in my own understanding is this: Guerry, what makes you think you are smarter than God? When I ask myself that question, it becomes a rather sobering thought. Me smarter than God, yeah, right. With that in mind it becomes a lot easier for me to rely on God, and not my own understanding. I wonder...if you were to look at it that same way, you know, are you smarter than God, if you may come to the same conclusion. Lean on God.

Verse six: **In all your ways, submit to him.** In this instance, another word for submit is acknowledge. Some versions of the Bible say acknowledge instead of submit. I use the NIV and it uses the word acknowledge. What would happen if you really acknowledged God in all ways? The emphasis in this segment is not so much on acknowledging God, which is pretty much taken for granted, but on the **all your ways** part. In all your ways, acknowledge Him. Running right through the lives of many people in churches today is a dividing line between what they see as their Christian lives and what they see as their non-Christian lives. This is the so-called sacred/secular divide. This divide is the assumption that God cares about what I do on Sunday morning in church but not on Monday morning in the office. It is the assumption that God cares about who I give my money to but not how I earn that money. It is the assumption that God cares which church I go to but not which house I live in. It is the assumption that God cares about my Bible reading but not about my television viewing. We all make these kind of assumptions all of the time. We divide our lives into the secular and the sacred, and we build a wall to keep the two apart. This suits us, doesn't it? There are parts of our lives we just don't want God to interfere with. But here's the rub, God wants to break down that dividing wall and to be the God of our whole lives. God wants us to trust in Him with all our hearts. The call is for us to take every part of our lives, every minute of every day and acknowledge that all of our life is joined in our journey with God. Not one part of the Christian's life should be secular. God is there with us in the office; he is there with us as we drive our cars; he is there with us as we pick the kids up from school; He is there watching television with us; He is at the football game with us. All of our life should be sacred, not just the time we spend in church. Let's acknowledge him in all our ways.

And the last half of verse six reads: **and He will make your paths straight.** Nowhere does it say He will make your paths easy. I started this morning talking about the TV show The Bible and how last week it chronicled the stories of Noah, Abraham, and Moses. We spoke briefly of their trust in God and of some of the things they did because God told them to do so. And He will make your paths straight. Most of us, if not all of us, sitting in here this morning either already know of the stories or we saw the stories of these men last week. We know

of their struggles and hardships. We know how they trusted God and did as He asked. They submitted to God. They relied on God's understanding, not their own. And He made their paths straight. God, will help you get through life. He is there for you. God is not promising a burden-free, worry free, stress-free, get what you want, life. If you are basing your trust of God on that, then you are going to be disappointed. God promises to love us no matter what, forgive us no matter what, stick with us no matter what and lead us into a life filled with meaning and purpose. And God will never let you down.

The God we worship today is the same God that Noah, Abraham, and Moses worshipped. He is the same God who was worshipped in the Old Testament. He has made us the same promises. And, to our benefit, He has gone one step further; God gave us His Son Jesus Christ. As we spend this our fourth week in Lent, we are reminded that God has proven Himself trustworthy throughout history. Is it not time for us to fully trust in Him and turn our lives over to Him?