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## **These Times Demand Special Trust**

***By David Wilkerson***

December 17, 2007 Every Christian claims to trust the Lord. Yet in reality, many of God's children aren't ready to face the black storm coming upon the world. Unless we lay hold of a special, unshakable trust in our Lord, we won't be ready for the hard times, now or in the future.

When the full fury of the storm breaks, and uncertainty falls over humankind like a cloud, multitudes of Christians won't be able to handle it. Overcome with fear, they will lose their song of victory. Who are these believers who won't be prepared to endure the storm? They are those who haven't cultivated a life of prayer with the Lord and are not grounded in his Word.

For years godly shepherds have urged Christians to set aside a time each day to meet God in prayer. Thank the Lord, many have learned to pour out their hearts to Jesus. And they are being rewarded with a holy faith and trust. Indeed, their faith grows daily by their reliance on his Word.

You see, communion gives birth to trust. By pouring out to the Lord all our worries, we come away with his rest and assurance: "Trust in him at all times...pour out your heart before him" (Psalm 62:8). According to this Psalm, "trusting" and "pouring out" are inseparable. If we are to trust God at all times, including the darkest times, then we must be pouring out our hearts to him without ceasing.

As the days become more frightful, there will arise a people of God who become bolder and bolder. These are believers who call daily on the name of the Lord, "so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6). Revelation from God's Word will uphold them in the hardest of times.

David learned to call on the Lord in every crisis of his life. Time after time this godly man ran to his secret place, emptying all his fears before the Lord: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.... He delivered me" (2 Samuel 22:7, 18).

Later, when the biggest storm of David's life came upon him, he was ready. He already had a song in his heart that he could sing through darkness and uncertainty:

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (2 Samuel 22:2-4).

David had seen the storm coming in his own day. It was a storm of violence, with floods of ungodly men, "the sorrows of hell compass(ing)... the snares of death" (22:6). Yet none of these things bothered David. His trust in God had been set and anchored because of his daily communion with him. And David delighted his soul in God's Word.

Likewise today, many believers shut themselves in with the Lord, and their growing intimacy is giving birth to great trust. However, dear saint, if you are not faithfully communing with God in prayer, you open yourself to a "double fear" and "double terror" when things become bad.

These times call for more than a general trust in God: they require a special trust for special times. Most Christians have a general trust in the Lord. We all stand on a few promises that apply to the

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whole body of Christ:

- "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).
- "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).
- "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

These well-known promises have brought great comfort and blessing to God's people for many centuries. Yet beyond these general promises, God gives us specific promises for special times, including hard times. And we have to know and believe these promises when we come boldly to his throne of grace.

The Puritans, who were mightily blessed of God, said every promise of the Lord is a holy argument. They believed a Christian shouldn't come before the Lord with just a general faith. When God commands us to come boldly before his throne, to receive mercy and grace in time of need, we can't have only a general idea of why we're there. We can't just say, "Lord, you know my heart. Give me whatever you see fit."

That may sound good and humble on our part. But the truth is, God wants to give us particular, specific promises for specific times in our lives. And he wants us to lay hold of these promises with our hearts, so we may stand strong and assured as we reason with him.

I want to point out three very specific times when special or particular trust is needed, based on God's special promises:

1. We need special trust when an act of obedience casts us into the unknown. God demanded of Abraham an incredible act of obedience: he asked him to step out into an unknown future. Abraham was able to take this step with nothing more tangible than this promise from God: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Genesis 12:1).

The writer of Hebrews says, "Abraham, when he was called to go out...obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). The Lord didn't lay out before Abraham a neat, detailed travel plan. Instead, he said simply, "Gather your family, pack up your belongings, leave your kin, and go to a place I will tell you about."

At seventy-five years old, Abraham was asked to cast himself fully upon God's faithfulness. He was given no explanation, no description, no warning of the possible dangers involved. And so Abraham went out not knowing. All he had to rest upon was this promise: "I will show you. And I will bless you."

His wife, Sarah, probably was no different from any modern-day woman. She may have asked the

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questions any wife would ask: “Are we going south or north? What kind of clothes should I pack? Will we settle down or stay on the move?” All Abraham could answer was, “God said to go, so we’re going. He’ll show us the next step, as soon as we get moving.”

We sometimes think that when God commands us to do something and we obey, everything will be smooth sailing. We think he’ll be grateful for our obedience so he will place us on a four-lane freeway to blessing. Abraham obeyed God’s Word, but the fact is, one act of obedience doesn’t add up to a walk of obedience.

Abraham had a promise from God, but along the way he had to go through the Negev desert, snow-covered mountains, another desert, and the warring people of Canaan. Then he ended up in the midst of a famine in Egypt. I’m glad God didn’t tell Abraham about the path he would be walking!

This particular path was like no other Abraham had walked. Yet, through it all, he was never in any danger. Nobody could touch him. God was his shield and protector every day. And because of his faith, Abraham was becoming a friend to God.

When God asks his servants to step out into the unknown, it is not a one-time event. It is a walk that’s required our entire lifetime. Yet our obedience wins us a great reward: “The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1).

God is making a glorious statement to us here: Those who obey him — who step out not knowing what will happen to them, yet blindly trusting in his Word — will never be outside of his protection. He says, “I will hover over them as a shield. And I will be their reward. I’ll give myself to them.”

A former member of our church, an acclaimed actress, was asked by God to give up show business completely, as an act of obedience to him. She knew in her heart the Lord was telling her to leave it all behind. So she set aside a best supporting actress award and stepped out into the great unknown. She had no job or guarantees of work of any kind; she went out not knowing where she was going.

The very next day her agent called to tell her she had been offered a starring role in a movie with three of the best-known actors in the business. After she hung up, she said, “No, Satan, I know what you’re trying to do. I won’t change my mind.”

Beloved, that’s the way it is going to be for many. Whenever you step out in faithful obedience, the devil will bring some enticement to draw you back to the side of disobedience. Obedience will always cost you something!

That same week, the actress went to court and won a great victory in a child-custody battle. Her shield was working for her! She had won Christ, and her reward had been the Lord himself.

Years ago, God called our ministry to go to New York City and start a church in Times Square. It required a great step of obedience when he asked us to leave our comfortable Texas environment and come to the city. We had no congregation, no building and little money. God said only, “Go, and I will be with you. I will bless you. I’ll be your reward.”

So we did go — and the Lord became a shield to us, giving us himself year after year. Two decades later, we have a growing, maturing, missions-minded congregation in the midst of Times Square that

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stands as a testimony to his miracle.

God's Word abounds with special, specific promises for those who are called to step out in obedience. Here are just a few of those promises to carry with you to the throne of God. You can lay your life on the line by these:

- "If ye will obey my voice indeed [with no halfway commitment], and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (Exodus 19:5).

- "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you that it may be well unto you" (Jeremiah 7:23).

We also have an ironclad promise that the Holy Ghost will be with us through all our steps of obedience and times of testing: "We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

If God is telling you to lay something down, step out and do it. The Bible clearly says that if you obey the Lord, he will give you the Holy Spirit to be your guide and your strength. He will provide you with everything you need to complete the act of obedience.

2. We need a particular, special trust when our very livelihood is threatened. In my lifetime, I have never talked to so many frightened people as I have recently. America is downright scared: builders, realtors, Wall Street professionals, retailers, executives, lawyers, restaurant owners, small-business owners — they're all saying the same thing: "It's worse than most people know. And it's going to get worse. Everything is shaking."

Homes have been repossessed. In New York City, families are doubling up with others in single-family apartments. Nationwide, many people have walked away from mortgage commitments because they owe more than their house is worth. Some just strip the house, move out and leave no forwarding address.

None of us likes to hear these kinds of depressing reports. But the Puritans had a saying: "Our affections bribe our discernments." We all love America and our way of life here. But unless we face the truth that hard times in this nation are upon us, we'll never have the trust and confidence we're going to need. We've got to be able to discern the times, so we can ask God for the specific trust needed to see us through what's ahead.

Make no mistake: none of this is taking Jesus by surprise. He saw it all coming. He who has numbered every person's hair and counted every fallen sparrow knew beforehand what we would face in these last days. He knew where every dollar in the federal budget would go and that our taxes and housing would increase. He knew about every job layoff we would face, all our bills, all our needs, even the number of children we would have. There isn't one thing our blessed Savior didn't know when he told us, in Matthew 6:25-33, "Don't give these things a second thought. Your heavenly Father knows all about your personal needs. He will take care of you."

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Jesus also told us of the perilous times coming: the famines, wars, pestilences, earthquakes, perplexities, calamities, the fear on all sides. Still, he said, “Don’t even give a thought to your needs. Don’t worry about any of it.”

You may wonder, “How can a Christian who’s in need give no thought to his physical condition?” All I know is, we can’t shrink back from Jesus’ promise to us. His words are eternal: “I say unto you...” In fact, you can take those very words to the throne-room of God and say to Jesus, “These are your red-letter words: ‘I say unto you, give no thoughts to your needs. I will take care of you.’”

No matter how the storm rages, our Lord will still be feeding the fowl of the air, dressing the lilies of the field, and supplying an ocean full of fish with all their daily needs. “Your heavenly Father feedeth them” (Matthew 6:26).

Not one creature will suffer without our Lord knowing it. Now, I ask you: what kind of Father would he be if he fed the dogs and birds neglected his children? What kind of God would number the hairs on your head but not your coins? The very thought is blasphemy! Our Father feeds the entire animal kingdom, and no amount of hard times will stop his provision: “Are ye not much better than they?... Shall he not much more clothe you?” (Matthew 6:26, 30).

I believe God has provided us with a very particular promise for the specific hard times that are coming. It was given to Abraham and his seed as an oath: “The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life” (Luke 1:73–75). God has sworn to deliver us from every enemy and fearful thing, so we can serve him all the days of our lives without fear.

Beloved, hunger is an enemy. Nakedness and poverty are enemies. This oath from God must be the foundation of our trust in every crisis, calamity and fearful time. I urge you, memorize it. Let it be your holy argument at the throne of grace.

3. We need special trust in times of calamity that come as a result of divine judgment. Every preacher who loves this country must blow the trumpet and awaken the people in his care. Right now, I believe America is under a “signature judgment” of God. Signature judgments bear a special mark of the Lord, in that the judgment mirrors the sin committed against him. These judgments can be seen throughout the Bible:

- Adoni-bezek was a king who severed the thumbs and great toes of the seventy kings he conquered. When the children of Judah captured Adoni-bezek, they cut off his thumbs and big toes. This king said, “As I have done, so God hath requited me” (Judges 1:7).

- Jezebel caused the death of Naboth, whose blood was licked up by dogs. Again, we see God’s signature judgment: Jezebel was cast out of a window and killed, and her body was entombed in the bellies of dogs.

- In the Book of Esther, Haman erected a gallows intended for godly Mordecai, but he was hanged on it himself instead when his plot was found out.

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- King Asa, who locked up God's prophet in stocks by his feet, died of diseased feet himself.

We call such events irony, but they are God's signature judgments. Obadiah 15 sums this up: "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee...thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

Right now, all of God's judgments on America are mirrored in her sins. Our greatest sin has been a vaunted pride, a "can-do" mentality. We've been confident that our nation could solve any problem, win any battle, find a cure for any disease. We have policed the whole world, confident of our armed might.

And for a long period, God has been with us. We've had presidents and legislators who were able to overcome the nation's problems. Our scientists discovered vaccines for all kinds of diseases: malaria, diphtheria, smallpox, tuberculosis, measles, polio.

Now such cures are coming few and far between. There is no vaccine in sight for AIDS. And we're drowning in "unsolvable" societal problems: the drug plague, homelessness, chaos in schools, rampant crime, overcrowded jails, the health-care crisis, the international sex-slave trade. Not many years ago, America was the number one creditor in the world. In a short time, we have become the number one debtor nation.

Just name the problem, and we can't solve it. One Senator wondered aloud if we may have reached a stage in history when the three branches of federal government don't really work anymore. He says they're in a "gridlock with no accountability."

I deeply love America. It is still the preferred haven of the world's refugees. But God's signature judgment on this once-ultra-competent nation is a humiliating confusion and helplessness. By its own admission, our government isn't functioning. Where is our pride, our "can-do" assurance? For years we were the head, and now we are being called the tail, as prophesied in Deuteronomy 28.

God's most severe signature judgment on America is yet to come. What do you think this severe judgment will be? I think of how America is trampling underfoot all that is moral, holy and godly. Christ's name is routinely trampled in theaters and movie houses, where the sacred is mocked and the profane is exalted. And humble followers of Jesus are coming under intense persecution and mockery.

Tell me, what signature judgment will be cut from this same bolt of cloth? What punishment fits the crime? Here is what I see as God's signature judgment on America, which for years has been the number one superpower, the mightiest nation in the world: "I will bring down their strength to the earth" (Isaiah 63:6). God will humble this nation's military might, bankrupt our theaters and confuse our educational institutions — bringing down all our former strengths.

Today, 30 million babies have been murdered by abortionists. There is awful blood on our nation's hands. Do you think God is going to wink at that? No, he is a just God, and he will make America weep because of all the blood spilled. How? Already I see murderers spilling blood on our streets and in our schools.

Our strength is ebbing fast. Our economic power has weakened, with the Euro, the pound and the

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Japanese yen all surpassing the dollar in strength. Meanwhile, China and the European Union are growing in power. I believe the European nations — the kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire — will rise up as the number one world power, becoming the power base of the Antichrist.

God is exposing our nakedness to the world. He's causing our external appearance to match the state of our soul, and our spiritual bankruptcy is being turned into financial disarray. He is bringing signature judgments on us so clear that no other nation in the world could mistake them.

As these judgments take place before our very eyes, our only answer is to have Jesus as our shield. We are to run to meet him in the secret closet of prayer and let our roots go down deep into him. We have to know that he who has numbered the hairs on our head will keep us in all circumstances.

I urge you, take hold of these special promises, in readiness for any and all calamities we may face:

- "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.... He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid" (Psalm 112:4, 7-8).

- "And he shall judge the world in righteousness.... The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee" (Psalm 9:8-10).

Finally, here is your specific, all-powerful, holy argument for the throne-room of God: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise up against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple; for in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me up upon a rock" (Psalm 27:3-5).

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