

to hold at bedtime. Holding their bread these children could finally sleep at peace. All through the night the bread reminded them “Today I ate and I will eat again tomorrow.”

That is what a family filled with trust can do. It can give us peace in the present moment and it can give us hope in the days to come.

I want to pause and say one of the tragic aspects of a family filled with mistrust is that when that occurs... trusting God is difficult. When we speak of the Heavenly Father and the only father you have known could not be trusted, then it is hard to trust one you have not seen. If you are having a hard time trusting God, then let me remind you for a moment of whom God is as revealed in Jesus' prayer. The prayer we call the model prayer or Lord's Prayer.

In Jesus' prayer to the Father who Jesus knew completely and intimately He prayed:

Father-Hallow Be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom Come on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us our Daily Bread.  
Forgive us of our Sins.  
Lead us not to temptation but deliver us from evil.

Smith reminds us that Jesus is telling us that God can be trusted because:

1. God is near.
2. God is active.
3. God is our provider and He cares.
4. God is loving and forgiving.
5. God will redeem us from any situation.

We can trust God for our past, our present and our future.

In his book, *The Good and Beautiful God*, James Bryan Smith speaks of taking his son to the amusement park. He and his small son climbed aboard a ride that looked innocent enough... but it was not. Once the ride started the screaming began, but it was Smith that was screaming and not his son. His son was laughing as they rode the ride that would sling them back and forth and to the side. When they got off the ride, Smith noticed the name on the side of the car... “The Scrambler”. That was appropriate he thought. His son laughing and Smith thinking never again, the boy said,

“let's ride it again.” Smith said, “let's get something to eat first.” Then Smith asked his son, “Were you not afraid? That was a wild ride. Why would you get on a ride like that?” His son answered, “Because you did, Dad.” Right or wrong, Smith writes, “the little guy trusted me.”

Life is a scrambler. It can make us scream out of fear and it can make us think never again. But when we are riding it with people we love and people we trust we can laugh. We will not be troubled. We will trust God, we will trust Jesus... we will trust each other. Every home needs trust.



## Family Ties

# Trust

John 14:1-6

## TRINITY PULPIT



Who do you trust? If I were to ask you who do you trust, what would be your answer? Many of us might say our spouses, although honestly that sadly may not sometimes be true. We might say our parents or a friend. Or maybe we trust our attorney, doctor or hairdresser. Sad to say there are very few professions we trust. We don't trust our politicians and we don't trust many in the banking industry and we do not trust the clergy or the lawyer or even the schoolteacher, like we did just a few decades ago.

Who do we trust? The answer might be no one. Yet, if we are going to have strong families and relationships within the family... trust must be present. We are continuing our series on family ties what every family needs. Last week, as part of children's day, Karen reminded us of the importance of faith. Faith we discovered begins at home. The mom and dad are still the most important person in the child and teenager's life when it comes to passing on the faith. They are more important than the pastor or an age group minister. The church has its role as an educator, encourager and helper, but the family unit remains the primary place where faith is passed on.

In the same way, trust must be learned and exhibited in the family if we are going to learn to trust others. Trust is not only essential in the life of the family... it is essential in all relationships. Whether it is at work, socially or culturally. The breakdown of trusting others has become prevalent in our culture causing us to retreat and the irony is that the more we retreat, the less we trust because trust is rooted in relationship.

In the book of Ephesians you will find instructions from the Apostle Paul about the relationship in the Christian home. The home described in Ephesians is one of mutual submission between husbands, wives and children. Each has their role in the family

and each one is submitting out of love for the good of the other. The wife is submitting her will out of love and in respect. The husband is submitting his will out of love and what is best for his family. The children are obeying and submitting out of respect of their parents, who have not embittered them but trained them in the instruction of the Lord.

In these relationships, we find this continual ebb and flow of love and submission toward one another. This type of family can only exist in an atmosphere of trust. The wife can only respect a husband she believes she can trust to love her and do what is best for her. A husband can only love a wife he can trust to give herself to their family and relationship. Children can only trust parents who have demonstrated love and care and not embittered them or exasperated them. The word really means to badger them to death. Although not mentioned explicitly by Paul, I would suggest that trust is essential to every family.

In John 14, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his death, resurrection and ascension. Jesus is preparing His disciples for the day they cannot see Him, reach out and embrace Him, or hear His audible voice. What will life be like when Jesus is no longer with them physically? How are they to trust what He says is true? The issue that Jesus is dealing with in John 14 is trust. Are you willing to trust me when things change? Are you willing to trust me and follow me when you cannot see me any longer? Are you willing to trust me when things are uncertain?

When we normally look at this text we focus on the promise of heaven. To be sure, the promise of heaven is essential in our willingness to trust God. However, there might be more to this text if we look at it not only from the view of a promised future, but also from the perspective of trust. Jesus' opening words are no to be troubled by the present situation. Do not let your hearts be troubled or do not be afraid. The phrase



means to not be intimidated by the situation. Life was changing but they need not be intimidated, afraid or troubled. They could trust God. Trust is essential in being confident in changing situations.

What does Jesus teach us about trust in John 14:1-6?

Jesus reminds us that trust is learned and developed. Jesus does not just say trust me. You should trust me. We have people tell us to trust them, but upon what is that trust based? Jesus knows that trust is learned and developed. So, notice Jesus' words. "You trust in God, trust also in me."

You have learned to trust God the father, you can also trust me. Jesus has been teaching them that He and the father are one. He had been teaching them that God had sent Him and that He had come from the father. These Hebrew disciples had been taught their whole lives to fear God, love God and to trust God. Jesus bases the trust He is asking for on their trust of God.

Do you trust God? Trust also in me. We trust today because we have learned to trust.

Psychologist Erik Erikson maintains that the time between birth and 18 months is the most important part of development of trust for a child. In this first stage of development a child learns trust and mistrust. Can a child trust those around him or her to care for their needs? Can a child trust those around them?

Erikson writes:

*When these needs are consistently met, the child will learn that he can trust the people that are caring for him. If, however, these needs are not consistently met, the child will begin to mistrust the people around him.*

*If a child successfully develops trust, he or she will feel safe and secure in the world. Caregivers who are inconsistent, emotionally unavailable or rejecting contribute to feelings of mistrust in the children they care for. Failure to develop trust will result in fear and a belief that the world is inconsistent and unpredictable.*

A child who learns to trust in their family also can more easily trust God. If we want our children to grow up and trust a God they cannot see, they must learn to trust parents and care givers they can see.

Trust is learned and so is mistrust. We know that when our trust is betrayed the ability to trust again is very difficult. Whether it was a deceitful spouse, a

rebellious child or a parent who has disappointed us, families can experience mistrust and just like trust is learned so mistrust is learned.

In these cases... we have to re-learn trust. This is a harder than the initial trusting. When I do pre marriage counseling, I speak about betrayal of commitment. Now most of the time we think of that as sexual, however there are other betrayals. Financial, psychological, and emotional betrayal can occur. I remind the couple that the base of their commitment is so hard to rebuild once it is altered. It is not impossible, but is very difficult.

If you were dealing with mistrust in your family then I would give you these thoughts to ponder:

1. Is the other person worthy of forgiveness? Yes, of course they are in the eyes of God.
2. Were your expectations correct about the one who hurt you?
3. How can you show love toward this person even when your trust is at a low?
4. How can you make sure that even if you do not trust them, you forgive them? Which means you do not seek revenge or harm for them. You may not trust yet, but you can love and forgive even those you don't trust.

Again, trusting and re-trusting is learned.

Jesus also reminds us that trust is found in relationship. Those we trust the most are the ones we are in relationship with. Jesus says to his disciples "Trust in God, trust also in me." When Thomas says, "Lord we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" In other words, we want to trust you but we don't fully understand. Jesus answers "I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except by me." Jesus has said, "Trust God, trust me." Learn to trust me as you have trusted God. Then trust is in our relationship. Your relationship with me, my relationship with the Father our relationship together.

Jesus is reminding us that trust is rooted in relationship. It is odd, is it not, that we trust essentially a stranger if we share something in common? We trust the doctor who we think we know personally. We trust the business partner that we have gotten to know. We trust the car salesman because he makes us feel good when we are with them. Sales people know that in many cases they are selling themselves and relationship as much as product. Why? Trust is rooted in relationship.

In our families there are no substitute for relationship. True relationship. The National Healthy Marriage

Resource Center has this to say about trust and relationship:

Using Trust as an acronym they suggest that our relationship is key to trust. I think this is true for marriages but also for all family relationships. Let me share them with you.

**T** The first key is time. Healthy relationships and healthy marriages require time to learn each other's likes and dislikes, hot button issues, favorite topics, life experiences and expectations. Trust between couples is built by investing time in each other. Individuals relax when time spent together is respectful and honoring, maximized and fulfilling, and rewarding (even when challenging). Consequently, trust matters as a tool to help construct a healthy relationship. Even couples who have been together for a long time must continue to invest time in each other to nurture the trust in the relationship.

**R** The second key is reliability. Reliability is important because of each person's need to have someone they can safely count on. As couples grow together, spouses take on specific roles and responsibilities in the relationship or family. The ability to rely on each other to effectively manage a family or marriage together is essential to sustain trust. Reliability builds an abiding trust that is essential to successful relationships.

**U** Understanding is the third key in deepening a trusting relationship. The greater the understanding, the more likely it is that spouses will develop unconditional love. Many relationships suffer from what appear to be half-hearted attempts at understanding and accepting differences in each other. Part of this is also understanding when relationship expectations are realistic and when they are unrealistic. It is difficult to establish trust without understanding. It is easier to walk away than to walk in someone else's shoes.

**S** The fourth key in developing a trusting relationship is sacrifice. When a person exhibits behaviors in which they sacrifice something for the good of the relationship, trust develops. This can be thought of as the opposite of selfishness in a relationship. It is difficult because many people (unknowingly) expect greater sacrifice from their spouses than they are

willing to make themselves. Sacrifices of both partners must be balanced and must be mutual in order to avoid any resentment of one partner toward the other. A healthy marriage is the product of two individuals, each making sacrifices for each other to better the relationship. Partners should discuss what their expectations are and be open about what sacrifices each partner feels he or she is making for their relationship or family.

**T** The fifth and final key to develop a trusting relationship or marriage is thankfulness. This means recognizing and appreciating a partner's efforts. As spouses or partners grow in relationships, they should never be taken for granted. They should always be shown they are appreciated for their kindness, concern and care. Doing so expresses to them that they are important, and their efforts are rewarded. Trusting one's heart to another demands reciprocity, as it is easier to continue to perform lovingly when your gestures are appreciated. Thankfulness matters, because one will seldom continue to pour love onto an unappreciative person. A lack of thankfulness can doom a relationship.

Jesus reminds us that trust is rooted in relationship.

Lastly, Jesus reminds us in John 14 that learning to trust today can give us a confidence to trust in the future. Jesus said to his disciples "do not be afraid of this changing situation. If you can trust me now as you trust God you can trust the future with God and me." Jesus gives this beautiful promise of heaven that is based on relationship. They could trust that Jesus would not leave them forever, but come to them and take them to be with Him.

The disciples could find peace now and hope in the future because they trusted Jesus.

In the wonderful little book *Sleeping with Bread*, the authors begin by telling a story from World War II. During the bombing raids of WW II, thousands of children were orphaned and left to starve to death. The fortunate ones were rescued and placed in refugee camps where they received food and good care. But many of these children had lost so much they could not sleep at night. They feared waking up to find themselves once again homeless and without food. Nothing seemed to reassure them. Finally, someone hit upon an idea of giving each child a piece of bread

JESUS REMINDS US THAT TRUST IS LEARNED AND DEVELOPED. JESUS DOES NOT JUST SAY TRUST ME OR YOU SHOULD TRUST ME. WE HAVE PEOPLE TELL US TO TRUST THEM, BUT UPON WHAT IS THAT TRUST BASED? JESUS KNOWS THAT TRUST IS LEARNED AND DEVELOPED. SO, NOTICE JESUS' WORDS. "YOU TRUST IN GOD, TRUST ALSO IN ME."