

How to Trust God When Your Life Is Unraveling

In the last years of her life, Corrie ten Boom, author of *The Hiding Place* and honored for her work in sparing the lives of Jewish people from the Nazis, often began her testimony by holding up before the audience a piece of embroidered cloth.

First, she showed the beauty of the embroidered side with all the threads forming a beautiful picture, which she described as God's plan for our lives. Then she would flip over the cloth to show the tangled and confused underside, illustrating how we so often view our own lives from a human standpoint.

She then quoted the poem "The Weaver" by Benjamin Malacia Franklin.

My life is just a weaving
Between my Lord and me.
I cannot change the color
For He works most steadily.

Oft times He weaves the sorrow
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.

Until the loom is silent
And the shuttle cease to fly,
Will God roll back the canvas
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful
In the skillful Weaver's Hand
As the golden threads of silver
He has patterned in His Plan.

The challenge of the Christian life is to trust God with the upper side when all you see in your own life are the threads of tangled confusion.

With Psalm 138, we begin a series of eight psalms hearing for the last time the prayers of the man David who continued to worship the Lord amid all the underside sorrows and setbacks. How did he survive “walk[ing] in the midst of trouble” (v. 7)? This psalm tells us.

In Psalms 135 and 136, the focus was on community worship. But this psalm reflects the intimate tones of “I” and “me.”

What is your response to the Lord on this particular day of your life? What prayer, if any, do you choose to lift upward to Him? You can begin any day without praise, or choose every day to worship. David’s choice was always clear because it was rooted, not in his feelings, but in his will and from all his heart (v. 1).

But what does he mean when he says, “before the ‘gods’ I will sing your praise?” The gods, with a small “g,” represent your decision to praise the Lord in the face of whatever in your life remains as a strong power against you. You minimize their threats by magnifying His name.

You make a conscious decision to point your life in the direction of His temple (v. 2), to look toward the Lord rather than away from Him. When you turn your face toward Him you find the reality of His love and faithfulness. You walk in the confidence that the Lord’s exaltation of His name and Word above all things means that all His everlasting promises to you personally will come true.

You gain strength in His presence (v. 3), and great desire for all—even chiefs of state—to know and worship the Lord you serve (vv. 4-5).

Never Stop Trusting

There is a fascinating connection between the thought in verses 4 and 5 as compared to the beginning of verse 6. David invites kings of the earth to praise the Lord, and then immediately notes that it's the prayers of the lowly that God "knows," while the proud He only "knows from afar." In other words, God lovingly watches over the poor-in-their-own-eyes rather than the powerful-in-their-own-eyes.

Perhaps, like David, you have "walk[ed] in the midst of trouble" (v. 6), much deeper and longer than you thought you could endure. But your fear and despair ultimately proved weaker than the Lord's protective care. He shelters you even in the harshest winter of your life.

The psalm closes with one of the most comforting and reassuring words a child of God could ever hear: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me" (v. 8, KJV). Why? Because His love endures forever and He does "not abandon the works of [His] hands."

The apostle Paul picks up the same theme in his letter from prison to the Philippians: "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (1:6).

Are you on the underside today? Then, as the gospel song puts it in truth parallel with this psalm, "When you can't see His plan, when you don't understand, trust His heart." He will fulfill His purpose for you.

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