

# **Live a Trusting Life: Four Habits of Radical Trust in God**

*By Bobby Schuller*

I just want to say a word about my teaching style, especially today and last week. As I teach today, I'm going to proclaim and say things over you. And your temptation is going to be to say that's not me; he doesn't know me; he's describing the opposite personality of me. And what I'm doing this morning, what I do every time I preach now, is I say these things over who you are. It's a way of proclaiming that, in fact, it will become true. And for some of you it is true.

This is how Jesus, I think, did a lot of his ministry. Jesus, for example, when they said, "This girl is dead," he would say, "No, she's only sick," and she would rise up. Romans chapter 4 talks about the character of God, that he "quickens the dead and calls things that be not as though they were." See, God just say, "This is," or "This shall become," or "This will," and it does. I'm learning more and more that to minister like Christ means more to speak this over you, proclaim this over you more than it is to just tell you to do this. And I want you to receive it today, not only to learn, but I want you to receive and say, "Yes, this is me."

Today what I say over you is that you trust in God. You put your trust in God. And as you have put your trust in God, God has blessed you and held you together. You are not afraid! You are not scared because you have a trust in God who is faithful and powerful enough to break every chain in your life; who can sustain you. You have always trusted him, and you always will continue to trust him, and he is so proud of you, and he has seen your trust in your faith and he's going to reward you. If you receive that, just say amen. You trust the Lord and that is good. You are not afraid and you have no need to be afraid because God is with you. To trust God means you have put your whole faith in God. You are an amazingly strong person that through all the things you have been through in your life, you've continued to trust God to be faithful to him, even with your doubts, even with your challenges you say, "Lord, I trust your word and I trust what you say. Every step I take in my life, I will trust in you." Every day you are faithful and this has been your creed and your cry, and because of that, God is going to carry you through the storm. Your best days are ahead because you trust in Jesus Christ. And isn't he worth trusting?

In a world in which everyone will let you down, even the best people in this world will let you down from time to time. Everyone from time to time will disappoint you because nobody is perfect. In that world, God will never let you down. He just needs time and his timing is, of

course, annoying. That's what we say here. God's timing is annoying. But it builds us. And so you have faith in God. You are a trusting person, and you've trusted God because he is worth trusting. I am so proud of you and so happy about this.

Today, I'm going to talk about the triumphal entry, which is such an important part of the story of Jesus Christ. And the scripture reading Hannah read today was from Matthew chapter 21. A lot of things have happened to build up to this moment. It's a high holiday, it's Passover, so that means that there are, some historians guess, over a million people in Jerusalem. In the first century, that was a really, really big deal. That's a lot of people today, but back then that kind of gathering almost never happened anywhere. So, close to a million people came to one place. Literally almost all the Jews from around the world that were young, strong, and able to make the journey came to Jerusalem that day for the Passover celebration.

So, there are all these people there. And that means that there's this feeling in the air of excitement. There's probably a lot of trading and money being exchanged. There's a lot of gossip and a lot of talk. And it also means that the Roman garrisons, who are in Jerusalem, are very nervous. Why are they nervous? Because there's almost a million Jewish dudes in Jerusalem who hate Rome. This is a big deal and this is so

important to understand this story, the story of Jesus Christ entering into Jerusalem.

Now remember, the Roman Empire was not particularly loved by the Jewish people. They had illegally occupied their country by military force. They forced the Jews to do whatever they wanted them to do. And, although they held that power loosely, they still are autocrats and you had to do what Rome said. So, bubbling in the Jewish culture was this desire to get rid of these horrible Romans. On top of that was a memory of how this happened a hundred and some odd years earlier. Before these Roman guys came in, there were Greeks and there was another guy named Judas Maccabeus and his brother Simon who came in and they also did the same thing. They freed themselves from this Greek Empire, the Solukids, and established their own theocracy, their own Jewish dynasty, and they wanted that to happen again. And so what they see in Jesus is the coming Messiah. And what they thought the Messiah meant was a military general and a king who would come as a military leader and free them militarily from the Romans.

In Jesus' day, as in today, everybody wanted something from Jesus, even the Pharisees. They wanted Jesus to help them with their reputation. And when he didn't do that, they turned on him. Sick people wanted Jesus to heal them. And the mob in Jerusalem wants Jesus to

lead them, and not lead them for the forgiveness of sins; they want him to lead them to war. And, in fact, Jesus says over and over, “He who lives by the sword dies by the sword.” “Love your enemies.” Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount were about peace, meekness, and loving your enemies. Yet, it’s as if people had mufflers on their ears. They didn’t hear that. They thought that if Jesus would just say rise up and fight, we could be rid of these Romans today!

So, Jesus gets on a donkey, and that’s important. Not a horse. A horse would have been a war animal but a royal donkey is a symbol of peace. And he enters into Jerusalem and everybody is shouting, “Hosanna!” There is this huge mob that’s come before him and everybody is thrilled. They’re saying, “Hosanna! Blessed is he, the son of David! That’s a messianic term. “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” And they think Jesus is going to go to the Roman Antonia fortress where Pilate is, and say, “You Romans get out of here or we’re forcing you out!” And that is not what he does.

Instead, Jesus goes to the temple and he cleans it out. And he says, “My house shall be a house of prayer.” Now, this is important. The question a lot of people ask when they read this is how can these people on Sunday say, “Hosanna, praise him, blessed be his name,” and five days later say, “Crucify him”? How does that happen? How does a whole

people turn from praise him to crucify him. How? And the answer is this: He didn't deliver what they wanted, when they wanted it, the way they wanted it. He didn't do what they wanted him to do. They wanted him to do this, they wanted him to do that, and you know what Jesus wanted? He wanted to transform them to become Jesus kind of people. In fact, of all the people that wanted something from Jesus, the ones that Jesus seems to like the most are the ones that want forgiveness of sins - the sinners, the prostitutes, the tax collectors, the thieves. They seem to be the ones that Jesus liked the most. Why? Because they actually want what Jesus wants to give them first.

Today, we are talking about trust. We're talking about, when we want something from God, how he demands that we trust him - that we trust his timing, that we trust his method, and that we trust his ways. That we trust him. That we're okay with the fact that he comes into the temple of our hearts and cleans house, even if it's violent we're okay with that. That we trust him.

And I just want to say to you that this has been who you have been and that's who you are. You trust Jesus Christ with your soul. And though you're a sinner, and though you make mistakes, and though you mess up from time to time, God is proud of you! He's not disappointed with you. And he sees how you have trusted him, that you've lived in this

weird in-between, this hopeful place of not having what you want but still desiring it, but still trusting him. And even though you doubt, and even though you have your bad days, he has seen how you have trusted him and how you have had faith in him. He's going to reward you. And your breakthrough is coming. Why? Because you haven't been impatient. You've been slow and you've been relaxed and you've trusted him, and I'm so proud of you.

As you continue to trust the Lord, he's going to reward you. And you say, "Not my terms, your terms." That's amazing. And you've said, "Not my timing, your timing." And you've said, "Not my methods, and not my ways, your ways, O God." That is faith. That is trust. And that is a good thing. God loves that and he loves you. He's so proud of you and he's going to bless you because of it.

I'm so glad that you've continued to trust the Lord. It's given you amazing strength. You are not like these people who said crucify him. You are like the one who said, "Hosanna, Lord, I will follow you to the cross and to the outermost parts of the earth. Wherever you go, Lord, I will trust that even if it means that I take a few bumps and bruises along the way, you are faithful." You've said that in your heart. You've held God's covenant and word in your heart and you've trusted him and he's blessed by that. Your faith has been a childlike faith. And that is the

exact kind of faith God wants from you - not childish, but childlike, the way a child smartly trusts his or her parents.

I remember when I was a kid, I always just trusted my mom. I just wasn't worried about it. I remember I was on the Queen Mary here in Long Beach. It's a big boat. It's a famous boat. The elevator was going down and my mom, tongue in cheek, looked at me and she said, "You know, this elevator is going to take us underwater. Make sure you hold your breath when the doors open." My mom is a ham. And I just looked at her like this (curious smile), and it went "ding" and the doors started opening I took a big breath, and what's funny is I wasn't really worried about it because I was with Mom. I was thinking, "All right, this elevator is going to fill up with water and I have to hold my breath. I'm not sure what's going to happen here, but Mom will sort it out." That's childlike faith.

That's how you've been with God and he sees that. He sees that through the difficult times in your life when that elevator door of life opens, you just go okay, breathe in, and trust. That's been the kind of faith you have carried in your heart. That is so good. It's so good that through your life you've continued to trust God in all your ways. And he's blessed you and he'll continue to bless you in ways that are going to

really make a difference in the world and make a big impact on your family.

There was a great blog written by Jennifer Fulwiler and she wrote “The 7 Habits of People Who Place Radical Trust in God.” I made it four, but I just want to give her credit where credit is due. There are four habits of radically trusting people. And radical is the word, by the way, because radical actually means to be rooted. Like radish. Radical doesn’t mean that you’re insane or you’re crazy, it means you’re rooted and you’re so rooted that you’re different than everybody else. You’re radical. And God, of course, sees the radical faith that you have in your life and the habits that you have in your life are similar to the four habits that radically trusting people have in their lives.

One of my favorite characters who Johnnie and I talked about earlier was Brother Andrew who was called by God to smuggle Bibles into the communist parts of the world, and advocate for Christians early on and in places like the Soviet Union, and later on and even now in the Middle East. Jan, who is a friend of mine, said he was with Brother Andrew in Lebanon, and he said every single morning, no matter how bad things were, Brother Andrew would wake up in the morning – he was completely fearless - and he would shave. And it was really important that every day, no matter how bad things were, he shaved. One morning

when they woke up, there was a riot going on somewhere in the Middle East. Bullets are flying overhead, Molotov cocktails and mobs, and here's Brother Andrew in the side mirror of a car shaving. Bullets flying like this "shew, shew." Jan says, "Brother Andrew, we need to be going. We're going to die if we stay out here." And Brother Andrew, as he's shaving, says, "Jan, if we're going to heaven today, we're going to heaven clean shaven." Brother Andrew's an old man now, and healthy. He's been in some of the most dangerous situations and God has preserved him. There's something about people with radical trust and radical faith in God.

And there are four things that people do and this is a lot like you. The first is THEY ACCEPT WHERE THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY HAVE. They accept their present, and that's you. You've accepted where you are. You've accepted the fact that there is suffering in life and it does grieve you, and it causes you even to doubt, but you still accept it. You've accepted death and change and you've accepted the hardship of life. It troubles you and it grieves you, and yet you've accepted it. You haven't asked, at this point, for something silly like clarity. You know God doesn't give us clarity, most of the time. You haven't asked for something silly like sight. In the fog of war, you've said, "Lord, I will hold your hand and trust that wherever you go, I accept my present, but I'm hopeful about my future. I accept my present but I believe that my present won't

necessarily be my future, that my future is great because my future is with you.” And you’ve accepted the fact that life bearing a cross is not always easy. That’s a first habit.

Steven Furtick once said, “The opposite of faith is not doubt.” In fact, it’s completely normal and okay for Christians to have doubt. The opposite is sight. That’s why the scriptures say, “We walk by faith and not by sight.” That’s why Jesus says, “Blessed are you who believe without seeing.”

I saw John Ortberg do this and I never forgot it. I’m definitely reaching in my pocket for something. Let me see here. I got it. Okay. In my hand I hold a \$20 bill that I borrowed from Russ. Who believes me? Who believes me? Who other than Russ believes me? Anybody? Wow, I’m surprised. Dave, all right, Dave. This is Dave Possnack. Do you believe that I have a \$20? Why?

DAVE: Because you’re trustworthy, honest.

BS: Oh you’re so sweet. What else? No, just kidding. And you’re right.

DAVE: And I believe Russ.

BS: Here is Russ' \$20. Good job. Now this is an important thing. By giving Dave my \$20, I have just destroyed his faith. Do you understand? Well because, yes, because he can see it. His faith has become knowledge. Many of us stand before God with a fist and something in there and he's promising that it's there, and somebody says how do you know it's in there? You can't see it. And like Dave said some sweet things about me, we say even better things about God. He's faithful. I trust him. Well you don't see it. I don't need to see it. That's faith. I'll see it someday, but then it won't be faith anymore, it'll be sight. And it's okay to have doubts, it's okay to ask questions, but in the midst of that, someday God will open his hand and give you exactly what you need. Hopefully, it's more than \$20. If you go to the second service at 11:15, you get a free \$20 because I'm going to do it again. Sit in the front. Russ, I need to borrow another \$20. I forgot to ask you..

So, the first habit of radically trusting people is that they accept where they are, and not always with joy. I mean there's a grieving but they accept it.

The second thing of radically trusting people like you is that THEY HAVE DAILY APPOINTMENTS WITH GOD. You understand that having trust in God is not about trying harder. People like you understand that

putting God first every day by having a time, even five minutes or an hour or whatever to be with God is the most important thing you can do in your life to be a world-changing Christian. People like you have made a difference in the world because you've made a difference on your calendar. You've recognized that designating the first Sunday of the week to be here in church, and you've recognized that designating a little bit of your day each week to listen to the Lord and realign your life with the scriptures is the most important thing you can do to be a trusting person. You've put God first every day. You've scheduled regular appointments with him and you've seen how that's changed your life. Keep doing it. Keep doing it. And if you haven't done it, start doing it today. God cannot wait to meet with you.

Remember more is caught than is taught. When you spend time with God, you can't help but become more like him and feel his presence and recognize his voice. So many people who haven't prayed in weeks say I don't know how to hear God's voice because every time they need to hear something, they go into their prayer closet, but they don't do it when they don't need to hear anything. So they don't know what God's voice sounds like. But not you. You've scheduled every day. You've made time in your day to recognize the true presence with God.

And you're a listening person. You recognize that I don't have to say anything when I pray. All I need to do is listen and recognize the real presence of Jesus. And you've limited the distractions in your life. When you've prayed, you put your cell phone away and you've put your worries away. You've made special time just for God and that's made you a radically trusting person. And that means you're going to be tremendously victorious in your life.

The third thing radically trusting people like you do is THEY ASK OTHERS TO AUDIT THEIR DECISIONS. They seek wisdom. When you've heard things in your life and you're thinking I'm pretty sure this is God, and this sounds insane, but I think it's God, you've gone to godly men and women that you trust and you said I think this is what the Lord wants me to do. What do you think? And you've listened to them. As you do that, you don't always have to do what people say. Just the fact that you yield your opinion to someone else to see what they say, even if you don't do or agree with what they say, the fact that you allow people to audit the decisions you're making, some of the big decisions you're making in your life, shows such wisdom. You're so wise to do that. And you're setting a model for people who look to you as an example and this has created radical trust and victory in your life.

Finally, the fourth thing that people like you do to become radically trusting people is THEY OBEY GOD COMPLETELY. Obeying God completely is not easy. It requires tremendous character and conviction and courage, and that's what you have. God sees the deep character in your life. I know you've made mistakes. I know you've messed up. It's okay. That's a part of being human. He still sees the good in your heart, that you want good and that you hate evil. He's going to continue to form your character into the person he's called you to be. He's seeing your courage, he's seeing the things that you've had to do, that you're afraid to do, but you did them anyway and you've blessed his heart with that.

If you want to know how to obey God, read the Bible. In fact, read the Sermon on the Mount. When the Bible is read, God's voice is heard. When the Bible is read aloud, God's voice is heard audibly. Read the scriptures. Saturate your life with the promises of God and allow it to form the way you think. Most of you, you already do that. You do that. You love God's word. And because of it, you've become an incredibly strong person. You've trusted your life to him and you've learned that in all the messy, scary in-betweens in life, you said, "Lord, I trust you and you are worth trusting." And he has been worth it, am I right? God has been worth trusting, he has been faithful, and he's been good to us.

The scriptures say even when we are faithless God remains faithful because he can't deny himself. Isn't that good news? For broken people like you and me who mess up, who fall, who make mistakes, who hurt people, we feel bad, but God says, "Don't be ashamed, don't be afraid, I love you. Your greatest days are ahead of you. I'm proud of you. I'm not disappointed in you. You've trusted me. Continue to trust me. Your day is coming."

And so you do and you've done that and I'm so proud of you. I'm so proud that every day of your life in the violence and the erratic nature of this world, you've continued to trust God. That pleases his heart and warms his heart and I just want to encourage you. Continue to trust the Lord. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. In all your ways acknowledge him. He will make your path straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Let's pray: Lord, we love you. We thank you, Father, that you're here and we trust you. We accept where we are as we always have. We set aside this time to be with you. Let us leave here with you. We have faith in you, God, and we pray, Father, that you continue to transform our hearts to have the radical kind of faith that Jesus had. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.