

I was scrolling through some social media the other day and this

ad popped up and it was two of my favorite comedians, Steve Martin and Martin Short, and they were having this commercial, this discussion.

And Steve Martin was saying that he was experiencing dementia and cloudy thinking.

He didn't know where he was at one certain point and Martin Short was talking to him about, well, what happened, you know?

And Steve Martin said he had discovered

come across this miracle honey product that you drink.

It's honey and two other ingredients and he started taking it and things were getting better and his dementia left and all of that and I'm watching this and I'm going, I didn't know he had dementia.

And it turns out that the whole thing was fake.

But it was really Steve Martin's face, Martin Short's face.

It was really their voices, but it was all AI generated.

And I don't know how companies get away with doing stuff like that, but the whole thing was phony.

It was a lie.

Well, in this message series, we've been talking about these lies we believe about God.

And we've said each Sunday of this series that Satan, according to Jesus, is a counterfeit.

He's a liar.

In fact, he's the father of all lies.

And he, as we know, he specializes in half truths about God and about you and about me.

So in this series, we started it off with the lie that we got to earn God's love, that God somehow loves us more when we're good.

Then when we're bad, the next one was God is an angry judge just waiting to pour out his anger on us.

The next Sunday it was God's love drives away his wrath.

That how can God ever dispense wrath on the world if he's a God of love?

No, certainly his love will drive away his wrath.

But we read all those passages about the wrath of God will come upon the world.

Today we're going to focus on one of the most destructive lies that ruins relationships and it's simply this, that God can't be trusted.

Now you good church folks, you would say, no, I trust God.

I trust God.

But there might be that little seed of, yeah, I trust him in religious things, spiritual things.

I trust him to go to heaven.

I trust, I trust.

But when it comes down to certain things, no, I trust in me.

I'm going to take care of those things.

And so it's this half truth that we can trust God in some things and yet other things we better take care of ourselves.

And so we're going to unpack that this morning.

Many people buy into this lie.

Some can't trust God to be a good, father that we just sang about.

In fact, there's some who don't even like to think of God as a father because of negative and hurtful experiences

with an earthly father.

So we're going to look at some scripture passages.

First and foremost, Luke 22, if you have your copy, open it up, turn it on, whatever.

And let's follow along and we'll put a picture up because I grew up looking at this painting over my grandmother's bed in her bedroom.

And so this just gives me warm fuzzies

It's Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and he's praying.

And yes, he really did have a halo.

But as a little boy just staring at this, and then my grandma would often read scripture to me and everything.

Well, that's where we're going back to.

We're going back to the garden.

And we're seeing how Jesus had a relationship with his heavenly Father that guided his life.

So here's the background.

After the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples, except for Judas, he had already split to go betray Jesus.

They come down from that upper room in that house in the Zion part of Jerusalem and they go down the hill

down the Kidron Valley up to another mount, not Mount Zion or Mount Moriah, but Mount Olives, and they go to an olive grove there.

And if you go to Israel today, as my wife

and I have a couple times, they claim that there's still some 2,000-year-old olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane.

It's a really tiny little place, like as big as this church here.

And that it could be that Jesus was there, those trees were there with him.

But they go to this olive grove, to this manicured Garden of Gethsemane, one of Jesus's favorite place to go.

And he goes off to pray.

He takes these inner three, goes a little bit further, and then he stays about 50 yards.

He goes about 50 yards beyond them.

And so let's read and see what, let's look at his relationship with God as Father.

Verse 39 is where I'm going to jump into Luke 22.

And he came out and went, as was his custom.

That's important.

This was a favorite place to go and pray.

To the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.

And so notice that it was a customary place.

He often went at night.

Just a question.

Do you guys have a customary place?

Did you go to be alone with the Lord?

Do you have a place for your daily quiet time with God, your daily devotion with God?

Is it the same place and same time?

I would encourage you to find a same place, same time just to keep you in the discipline of opening up His Word and saying, speak Lord, your servant is listening.

A same time, same place to talk back to God in prayer, to have that relationship so that it's not random.

And verse 41,

verse 40, and when he came to the place, he said to them, pray that you may not enter into temptation.

You know the Lord's prayer, deliver us from temptation, lead us not to temptation, deliver us from evil.

Verse 41, and he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, the Greek word there is pater, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

And there appeared to him an angel, I love that,

a lot of times we think of Jesus as a solitary figure, and because he's the Son of God, he does it all on his own.

But think about when he was out in the wilderness at the start of his ministry and mission for 40 days, who attended to him?

The angels.

He wasn't just tempted by Satan.

The angels were there to attend to him.

And here an angel, I love this, an angel is by his side in the garden of Gethsemane.

God knew what his son was going through.

Well, strengthening him in verse 44, and being in agony, he prayed more earnestly.

You know, when you're hurting, when you're in agony and you pray, you might expect immediate answers.

Maybe the lesson here is you keep praying.

You pray more earnestly.

The more agony, the more earnest your prayers.

And you keep going back to God.

You're like that widow woman, you know, petitioning.

And his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

There is a medical condition to have blood come from the pores of your forehead.

And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow.

They were worn out.

He told them what was coming and emotionally couldn't handle it.

Verse 46, and he said to them, why are you sleeping?

Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

We're going to cut it off there because I wanted to focus on his conversation with his father.

Now, Mark 14 tells the same story, verse 36, but he adds,

Abba, he said, Abba, which means daddy, father, pater, all things are possible for you.

Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will.

So that word Abba can be translated dear father or daddy, reflects intimacy.

The famous New Testament scholar C.F.D.

Moral writes, the intimate word conveys not a casual sort of familiarity, but the deepest, most trusting reverence.

See, the reason that Jesus was able to endure all this is not just because He's the Son of God and God the Son, not just because of His amazing courage, it was also because of His personal relationship with his father.

It was his trust in his father.

And he knew that his father, God, would be completely loving and trustworthy.

So let me ask you, what are your feelings about God as your father?

Is it easy for you to trust him?

Yes or no?

I remember the story of a lady one time telling me that she just could not think of God as a father because she had been so abused by her earthly father that she could not comprehend.

And so she asked me to stop referring to God as the Heavenly Father.

Some women who have been

have a hatred for males, don't like to think of God even as a male.

And we know that God is neither male nor female.

He is spirit, and yet he has chosen himself in his wisdom to share through his scriptures and through the teachings of Jesus

that he has come to us in a male father form.

And it's a good thing.

God did it on purpose.

God could have come to us and revealed himself as something else, but he chose to reveal himself as a good, good father.

People have warped views about a father or a male, but not using the word father or even male for some people does not correct the problem.

The problem is that we

don't begin with your or my understanding of father.

We got to begin with scriptures teaching, how God has revealed himself as a father.

Karl Barth said this, it's not that there is first of all a human fatherhood and then so-called divine fatherhood, but just the reverse.

True and proper fatherhood resides in God and from his fatherhood, what we know as fatherhood today,

is derived.

So before God created male and female, before God created father, so to speak, he was, he existed as father, son, and spirit.

And the idea of father comes from him, not from Adam or Eve or any of his descendants.

And so I would encourage you, and I don't know if this is preaching to anybody or not, but if anybody has a father wound, just

Understand it.

Admit it.

And understand that it's okay that a lot of people on earth have very severe father wounds.

Maybe a distant father wound that your father was emotionally detached from you.

Right?

An absent father wound.

He was just gone.

Or he deserted the family.

My grandfather deserted his godly wife and five kids.

Just ran off.

an angry or abusive father wound.

Maybe that's your situation, but whatever it is to understand that those bad experiences should not reflect on God our Father.

Well, we can see Jesus's relationship in the garden, but also even in his model prayer that the disciples asked him, how should we pray?

And this was his answer.

So in Matthew 6, verses 7 through 13,

And we'll study this in more detail this fall with the Sermon on the Mount series.

He says, and when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their many words.

Do not be like them for your Father.

Jesus always calls us back to the Father thing.

For your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Pray then like this, our Father in heaven.

Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts as we've forgiven our debtors.

Lead us not to temptation, but deliver us from evil.

And Jesus was trying to teach them something about God as Father there.

And also we put the doxology on, right?

For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.

Amen.

And most scholars would say that was added as a very common blessing at the end.

But what do we see even in this Lord's Supper?

Not Lord's Supper, but the Lord's Prayer about Jesus and His ability to trust God through this.

So it was about, in this prayer, we see it's about God's will, not ours.

There's A dependence here on daily bread and deliverance from evil.

What I'm trying to say is Jesus had this trust relationship with his Heavenly Father that allowed him to navigate all the tough times of his life, the tough times of his three-year ministry, and leading to the cross.

He handled it because of his dependence on God the Father.



He trusted him.

God had proven himself.

So that goes back to the question again.

Is it difficult for you to trust God?

Because one of the lies that you're going to hear in your ear from the evil one is that you really can't trust God.

You can't trust him with your health or your future or your job or that spouse you're looking for or in a rocky marriage or with your kid who's gone wayward.

You can't trust him.

You've got to take action.

He's let you down.

You cannot trust.

in the garden, Jesus asked his father to take the cup from him.

But it was not God's will.

The answer was no.

And so he had to drink this cup of dying on the Christ.

Let me ask you, what is your cup?

What is your cup that you've got to endure where God has just said, I'm going to be with you through this, but I'm not going to remove it?

Is it a bad experience of being betrayed by a spouse or a friend or going through a divorce?

Is it something that a friend did or said to you?

Is it infertility?

Is it unwanted singleness, failure to find a life partner for some, loss of loved one, loss of a spouse, loss of a parent, loss of a job, loss of a dream, loss of health or physical capacity?

I mean, what is it?

God allows us to walk through a lot of dark times and he doesn't always, always just make those go

away, but he promises he will be that God that you can trust through the good times and the bad.

And when it's dark, God is still there and he asks you, his child, his son or daughter, to trust him, to trust him.

And that's exactly what Jesus did in the pattern of his life, short life on earth in his ministry, is trust his Heavenly Father, trust his Heavenly Father.

Talk about his heavenly Father.

You've got a heavenly Father you can talk about.

He's never let you down, even when you think he has.

He's always been there for you.

He's protected you when you didn't even know he was protecting you.

He's built you up in faith when you didn't even know at the time he was doing that.

He's been there for you.

Well, let's have a testimony.

Ask Rod.

Ask Rob to come up and let me interview him just briefly

Because when I first met you, told me you'd just been through this change, right?

No fault of your own anything.

You had just been laid off by your company.

And so I got thinking, some of you been laid off before, whatever, but I mean, how'd that affect you?

How did that create like a crisis, a Henry Blackby thing, a crisis of faith?

Were you asking God, hey, what are you doing?

So talk to us about that.

I was laid off from the company I was working for in January 12th of this year.

And this was the 4th time I've been laid off.

Plus there was one time where a company I worked for closed down.

So I was not a stranger to the situation.

And the interesting thing was when I was driving home, the question, God, what are you doing came to mind.

But it was honestly more like, what are you doing?

It was almost an expectation because every time I had lost a job, something better had come along.

In fact, the first time I got laid off, my wife Paula had prayed that I would get laid off because I was miserable there.

I found out, I was like, what are you doing?

Boy, the prayers of a wife.

So, but like I said, every time I've been laid off, something better has come along.

And one of the things that came along was that Aaron

who was the worship minister here, I mean maybe the day after or maybe the day before, something like that, had said, hey, he needs to step away for family concerns.

And my wife, again, she was like, maybe you should be the worship leader.

And I was like, oh my gosh, I was like, the timing is

incredible.

And I felt like I think God is providing something for me and something for the church.

And so that's part of how that came apart.

Yeah.

So looking back on that experience, how did you learn to trust God through experiences like this as a good, father?

So honestly, part of it was just going through that experience so many times and thinking about the past.

I do remember the day I got laid off that night, I was lying in bed.

I was very anxious.

And just thinking about the future, I've got a son going to college and things like that.

I got up, I think it was like 3 or 4 in the morning, and we had a puzzle out on the table.

I was working on the puzzle, and I was just thinking, I'm going to find a podcast about the Bible.

It was literally just like that.

So I found some podcasts and these guys were talking about the verse in the gospels where Jesus says, be anxious for nothing, for your heavenly Father knows what you need.

And I thought,

that's really true.

He does know what I need.

And so then I went to bed, I felt better.

I went to bed, I got up the next morning and I happened to be reading through the gospels.

And that verse was in the scripture that I was reading for that day.

And so two things came to mind.

One, this idea that like people would say, how are you doing?

I go, we have what we need for today.

We have what we need for today.

And that's what God promises.

And the other thing that, the other phrase that came to mind was that God is ridiculously faithful.

Like it's almost comical.

Yeah, that's really cool.

So last thing, what advice, because there could be some people out here who feel like the carpets just pulled out from underneath and the rug's been pulled out, they're going through something, and I don't know what category of something that is, but

But man, they need a dose of just trusting it.

What advice would you give them?

Well, try to lose your job.

No, on a serious note, though, I think for me, and some of this is huge scripture, but a lot of it's through life experience.

It's, I would say,

trust scripture, trust what to be true in the light, what to be true in the light, trust it even when it's dark.

And how that plays out has played out for me is that I'm believing that God is trustworthy and I'm anticipating his faithfulness.

And instead of going, gosh, I can't believe you answered my prayer.

It's like, there he is.

That's who he is.

He answers prayers and he's faithful.

So I would say, trust what scripture says about the Lord and look forward for him to come through.

Yeah.

That's good, man.

Thank you.

First Peter 2.23, when they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate.

When he suffered, he made no threats.

Instead, he entrusted

himself to him who judges justly.

That's what Peter writes about Christ.

See, belief that God is going to come through in the end will change everything.

God will come through in the end, and if he's not come through, it's not the end.

He's still at work.

He's still at work in your life and in the world.

Let me encourage you to take a couple of action steps.

These won't be long.

A couple action steps, right?

Here's the first one.

Build your life on the truth about who God is.

That's what Rob was just saying.

I mean, who is God?

Is He a trustworthy God or not?

See, what you believe about God is going to determine your feelings and your actions.

Is God omnipotent, all-powerful, or not?

Is He all-knowing or not?

Is He always present or not?

Is He

Omnisapient.

In other words, is He always wise?

And He'll never lead you astray or not.

I mean, who is God?

Go back to who He is.

God is always loving and always good by his nature.

And so if he was otherwise with you, he wasn't quite loving enough or good enough with you, he would not continue to be God because that is who he is.

That is his nature.

So fall back on who God is, not who flaky people are like you and me, but who God is.

James Brian Smith, that I quoted a lot, he wrote the book, The Good and Beautiful God, says this, so when I encounter a world full of tsunamis and child molesters and airplane crashes and meth

addicted moms, I don't try to force myself to say, all is well.

Rather I say, Jesus trusted his Abba and I will also trust in a God I know to be good.

That's who he is.

First Corinthians 1.9, God who has called you into fellowship with his son Jesus Christ our Lord is faithful.

First Corinthians 10, 13.

Some of you could quote this, right?

No temptation has overtaken you, but is common to man.

And God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted beyond which you can endure.

But with every temptation will provide a

a way out, a means of escapes, so you can endure.

He's faithful.

Second Thessalonians 3.3, but the Lord is faithful and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

Hebrews 10.23, let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.

I could go on and on and on.

God is faithful.

You can trust Him in little things and big things, but it's all about your perspective.

I saw this painting coming up next or this drawing.

What do you see?

In your world with your circumstances, the good things and the bad things, the things that are sunny and beautiful and the things that are dark, I mean, in your world, as you look out, what do you see?

It's your choice.

You can see the bars, the bad stuff, or you can see what God is doing even in the midst of that.

And it's all up to you and your perspective.

Are you going to trust God and believe He wants good for you and He's going to take care of you or not?

So build your life on the truth about who God is.

He is a good, God.

And here's the second action step, and that is just count your blessings.

I know that sounds cheesy and old-fashioned, but have you ever listed blessings?

And when you have your daily quiet time with the Lord, are you forgetting the whole Thanksgiving party?

Do you just jump to confession of sin and asking God for stuff?

Or do you really spend a lot of time praising Him for who He is and He is good and what He's done in thanksgiving?

Count your blessings.

In fact, I would encourage you, here's one I just recently did.

You can't see it.

There's 50 blessings right there.

Just 50 quick blessings.

Looking back, Romella, if I kind of did them chronologically, you could go 100.

I could go 100 blessings, 150 when you really start breaking it down.

Count your blessings.

This God in my life has been so, faithful.

He's answered prayer when I didn't even pray.

He's taken care of me in ways I couldn't foresee.

He's given me opportunities that I don't earn or deserve.

He is faithful.

I can trust him.



And as I look back on my life, on the mile markers of my life, he's been faithful.

He's been faithful.

He's good.

He's good.

He protected me.

He encouraged me.

He provided this opportunity.

And I look back, and so I'm assuming, Rob, with some optimism, he's going to keep doing that, yes?

Make a list.

I mean, I'm not being rhetorical here.

Make a list, right?

And just reflect on the ways that God has proven Himself to you over and over and over with His blessings.

Make your thanksgiving list.

Start praising God more and more and more for what He's done for you.

And you're going to start trusting Him more.

if Satan can get you to believe this lie that God is not quite faithful all the time, he's got you.

You're dead.

You're lost.

So this week, demonstrate that you're trusting God.

I mean, tell him over and over that you trust him.

Thank him.

Make your list.

Trust him.

If you have a hard time trusting God for your finances, do something extravagant.

Give some money away.

Help somebody in need.

If you have a hard time believing that God could ever use somebody like you to share your faith, be brave.

Talk to somebody at the grocery store.

Start a spiritual conversation and just see what God does.

You don't have to be a pastor or missionary to do that.

How about breaking off a bad relationship that you know you're not supposed to be in?

Show God that you trust Him, that He can make up for that.

How about getting counseling?

that God works through people.

How about serving, that God can use you in some way, in some capacity to serve?

Trust Him.

Pray in faith.

Trust Him.

So the one question that God wants to know from you today is simply this, do you trust me?

Do you trust me?

And I pray that you will, and that's the gospel, right?

It came down in my life where I decided if I was going to trust in me,

or if I was going to trust in Christ.

If I was going to trust in my godly grandmother and godly parents to take me to heaven, or if I was going to trust in Christ to take me there.

If I was going to trust in these cosmic scales of justice and balance, I was going to be more good than bad and I was going to trust in that cheesiness, or if I was going to say, I'm going to trust in Christ alone for my salvation.

That decision changed my life.

It's trust.

Are you going to trust in Christ or trust in yourself?