

Misplaced Trust: Choosing the Gift over the Giver



Big Idea

When we trust God's gifts more than God Himself, we lose His power, presence, and direction.

1. Trusting Symbols Instead of God

1 Samuel 4:1-11

- Israel trusted the Ark instead of God
- Symbols cannot replace God's presence
- Relationship > Religion
- Israel was losing battles. Instead of seeking God, repenting, or listening to His voice, they said:
- "Let's bring the ark... so that it may save us."
- They trusted the symbol instead of the God of the symbol.

Spiritual Insight

- The ark was SACRED, but it was never meant to replace the Holy One.
- Religious objects, traditions, or routines can become idols when we trust them more than God
- Do we trust the form of religion but lack the fire of relationship?
- When symbols replace surrenders, we lose spiritual power.

2. Trusting Creation Instead of Creator

Genesis 13

- Abraham gave Lot the first choice. Lot lifted his eyes and saw:
- "The Jordan Valley... like the garden of the Lord."
- Lot chose what looked good, not what God said was good.
- Creation is beautiful, but it is not God.
- Lot chose based on sight, not faith.
- He trusted the land's potential more than the Lord's promise.
- What looks good is not always beneficial.

Reflection

- Are WE choosing by sight instead of by faith?
- Are WE trusting the "green valley" more than the God who owns the valley?
- Lot's choice led him near Sodom.
Good-looking decisions can lead to spiritually dangerous places.

3. Trusting Appearance Instead of God

1 Samuel 16

Samuel saw Eliab and thought:

- "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him."

But God corrected him:

- "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."
- Humans are drawn to charisma;
God is drawn to character.
- We trust what looks impressive—
talent, beauty, status, confidence.
- But God chooses what is often overlooked.
- Are WE trusting what looks strong,
or the One who is strong?
- God's choice is always better than human appearance.

4. Trusting Numbers Instead of God

Examples: David (2 Samuel 24)

- David trusted numbers not in God
- David trusted upon human strength.

Application

- God is not impressed by numbers— He is moved by faith.
- Trust God over money, resume, or network
- God is sufficient
- His presence is enough
- God values faith, not size

Illustration: George Müller

Conclusion

- Israel trusted the ark
- Lot trusted the land
- Samuel trusted appearance
- David trusted numbers
- God redirects us back to Himself despite misplaced trust. Why?
- Because we are His image bearer and his adopted children and saved for his eternal kingdom.
- He wants us to trust Him and experience His mighty hands moving over our lives.

Final Call

- The gifts are good—but the Giver is greater.
- Let us Trust God above everything.

“⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. What does it mean to trust the GIFT rather the GIVER? What is an example?
2. Why is it tempting to trust the GIFT rather that?
3. Where are you tempted to trust the GIFTS that God gives rather than trusting God Himself?
4. Why is it better to trust the Lord rather than His gifts?
5. What steps can we take to put our trust in the Lord rather than His gifts? (A first step to practice this is to thank God, sincerely, for all the gifts He has given.)

Conversation starters

What are good things that you are thankful for?

Who gave you those things?

Have you thanked them?