

Psalms of Trust: Confidence When Life Tumbles In

H.B. Charles Jr. on Trusting God in Valleys, Anxiety, Discouragement, and Prayer

H.B. Charles Jr.

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Program Summary

In this Thursday edition of Mark & Friends, host Donna Leland welcomes Pastor H.B. Charles Jr. for a conversation about his Moody Publishers book *Psalms of Trust*. Pastor Charles explains that the Psalms have met him both in seasons of blessing and in moments of suffering, giving language for joy, weakness, fear, lament, and confidence in God. Moving through Psalms 23, 3, 27, 42, 73, and 91, he shows that biblical trust is not a sunny-weather faith that ignores life's valleys. Instead, trust turns attention from circumstances toward the faithfulness, goodness, wisdom, and providence of God. The conversation also addresses anxiety, discouragement, apparent injustice, God's protection, and believing prayer. Pastor Charles closes with a memorable truth: prayer advertises our dependence upon God.

Key Takeaways

- The Psalms give believers language for both green pastures and dark valleys; mature faith must be able to live in both.
- Biblical lament brings burdens honestly to God without turning sorrow into unbelieving grumbling.
- Psalm 3 shows a crucial movement of faith: turn attention from overwhelming circumstances toward God, who gives strength, help, and peace.
- Psalm 27 teaches that the deepest goal in difficulty is not merely escape from trouble but greater nearness to God.
- The important question is not only the size of my problem, but its location: is it standing between me and God or pushing me closer to Him?
- Psalm 42 models speaking truth to my own discouraged soul and deliberately placing my hope in God.
- Legitimate concerns can become consuming anxiety when they dominate my attention and make me live as though I have no Father who knows my needs.
- Psalm 73 warns against judging God's faithfulness from 'pavement level'; eternal perspective changes how apparent injustice looks.
- Psalm 91 points to God's providential care without promising that faithful believers will never experience illness, suffering, or loss.
- Prayer is one of the clearest ways I express dependence upon God: what I truly entrust to Him, I bring to Him in believing prayer.

Scripture References

Psalms 23, Psalm 3, Psalm 27, Psalm 42, Psalm 73, Psalm 91, 1 Peter 5:7, Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:6-7, Luke 10:38-42, Colossians 3:1-4, Matthew 7:7-11, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Quote of the Day

"Prayer advertises our dependence upon God."

Broadcast Notes

Donna Leland introduces H.B. Charles Jr. and asks what motivated his book *Psalms of Trust*. He explains that selected Psalms have nourished both his personal walk and public teaching ministry, especially when life 'tumbles in.' Psalm 23 becomes a reminder that following the Good Shepherd includes both green pastures and the valley of the shadow of death. From Psalm 3, Pastor Charles describes the movement from focusing on foes and circumstances to looking toward God. Psalm 27 shows that David's deepest desire in trouble was not simply to get out, but to get closer to God. Psalm 42 becomes a model for speaking truth to a discouraged soul: 'Hope in God.' The conversation then turns to anxiety, where Pastor Charles distinguishes legitimate concern from consuming worry and points to prayer as the biblical response. Psalm 73 addresses the troubling sight of wicked people appearing to prosper; entering the sanctuary and remembering eternity changes perspective. Psalm 91 leads to a discussion of providence and God's protective custody even when believers still suffer. Pastor Charles closes by explaining that prayer is commanded, prayer works, and prayer also 'advertises our dependence upon God' - an ongoing confession that we cannot handle life alone.

Practical Applications

- When circumstances dominate my thoughts, deliberately turn my attention toward God's character, promises, and past faithfulness.
- Bring burdens honestly to God, but practice leaving them with Him instead of immediately picking them back up.
- Read Psalm 27 and ask whether my current problem is driving me away from God or pushing me closer to Him.
- When discouragement spirals downward, speak Psalm 42 to my own soul: 'Hope in God.'
- Turn one recurring worry into a specific prayer every time it returns.
- Distinguish what I can responsibly act on from what is outside my control, then entrust what I cannot control to God.
- When another person's apparent prosperity tempts me toward envy or cynicism, read Psalm 73 and recover an eternal perspective.
- Sit at Jesus' feet in Scripture before allowing news, responsibilities, or anxieties to set the direction of my day.
- Practice prayer as dependence rather than as an attempt to order or manipulate God.
- Notice what I rarely pray about; it may reveal an area where I am relying too heavily on myself.

Today's Challenge

For the next seven days, choose one Psalm of trust each morning - Psalm 3, 23, 27, 42, 73, or 91. Read it slowly, identify one burden or fear it speaks to, and turn that burden into a specific prayer of dependence. End by saying, 'Lord, I cannot handle this alone. I trust You with it today.'

Closing Prayer

Father, teach me to trust You when life tumbles in. Thank You for meeting me not only in green pastures but also in dark valleys. When my circumstances consume my attention, turn my eyes back toward Your faithfulness, goodness, wisdom, and care. Help me bring my burdens to You and leave them there. When my soul is discouraged, teach me to speak truth to myself and hope in You. When legitimate concerns begin to become consuming anxiety, remind me that You know what I need and invite me to pray about everything. Keep me from judging Your faithfulness only by what I can see today. Give me an eternal perspective when evil seems to prosper and confidence that my life remains under Your providential care. Make prayer the ongoing posture of my heart - a humble confession that I cannot handle life alone and that I depend upon You. Help me sit at the feet of Jesus, listen to Your Word, and rise with strength to face whatever comes. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

H.B. Charles Jr.

Pastor, Author, and Bible Teacher

H.B. Charles Jr. is a pastor, author, and Bible teacher known for clear, Scripture-centered preaching and a deep commitment to helping believers understand and apply God's Word. The Psalms are a regular part of both his personal devotional life and public teaching ministry. In *Psalms of Trust*, published by Moody Publishers, he draws from selected Psalms that speak directly to fear, suffering, discouragement, anxiety, injustice, and the believer's confidence in the faithfulness and providence of God.

About Today's Host

Donna Leland

Thursday Guest Host of Mark & Friends

Donna Leland is a longtime member of the Great News Media radio family and regularly serves as guest host of the Thursday edition of Mark & Friends. With a warm, conversational interviewing style, Donna welcomes authors, ministry leaders, teachers, and guests whose stories and resources can encourage listeners in their walk with Jesus. Her Thursday conversations are an important part of the Mark & Friends weekly lineup and Great News Media's mission to educate, edify, and evangelize.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Welcome to Mark & Friends. I'm your host Donna Leland. Today we're going to take a great look at the Psalms.

We know that it was the songbook for the Old Testament and we've drawn so much inspiration from it in our current songs as well, but it really has this ability to take our emotions and help us communicate those back to the Lord.

Pastor H.B. Charles is going to help us today to think about some of the Psalms that talk about the theme of trust.

Thank you so much, Pastor, for joining us on Mark & Friends.

Thank you for having me. It's a joy to be with you. So what was your motivation, I always like to ask that, for writing this book about the Psalms and what you're trying to bring to the table? Most summers, wherever I am in my preaching calendar, I do a brief summer psalm series where I teach selected psalms.

So the psalms are a regular part of my public teaching ministry in my local church. And then personally, in all of the various seasons of my life, to times of blessing, when I want to get words to articulate my joy in God, to times of suffering, where I need strength for weak moments, the psalms have met me there. So both in my personal walk with the Lord and in my public teaching ministry, I have been feeding on the psalms and feeding others the psalms.

And it has just been on my heart to share some of these rich, rich psalms with others. And this opportunity gives me the privilege of focusing on psalms of trust that really reflect what it means to live with confidence in God when life tumbles in on you. See, that's the real hard part, isn't it, Pastor? Like trusting in the Lord.

You know, when things are going great, the kids are behaving, and I'm looking good in the mirror, it's easy to trust the Lord at times. But now, in these seasons of being brokenhearted, crushed in spirit, and when we're afraid, that's when we need these book of psalms. And why do you think it is that believers struggle so much to feel the nearness of God in these seasons of pain? I think too many Christians really live in the front half of Psalm 23 and don't keep reading to the second half.

And you can't blame us for that, because in the first half of the psalm, there are still waters and green pastures and paths of righteousness. But you have to keep reading to the valley of the shadow of death, enemies around the table, et cetera. Both of those realities are part of what it means to follow the good shepherd.

But in too many instances, we have what amounts to be a shallow or superficial faith that really is only designed for sunny weather. And that's not a reality of life. It's not the reality of the walk of faith.

But the good news is that the psalms doesn't just meet us in the green pastures. It gives us a God who is there with us to comfort us in life's dark valleys as well. Because we are going to go through it, aren't we, Pastor? He doesn't say, if I go through the valley.

He says, it's going to happen, even though I do walk through the valley. And inevitably, life will have its valley experiences. The 10 psalms that I selected for this book to meditate on are psalms of trust.

But in none of these psalms will you find the psalmist celebrating an easy period or a sunny season in his life. These are psalms where the writers are dealing with various difficulties or dangerous toils and snares. But it is there that they express their confidence in the faithfulness and goodness and wisdom of God.

You know, I always walk that tight line when things are not working out for me. We need to distinguish between biblical lament, which is in there, and then just simply grumbling against God. You know, those sons of Korah kind of set up an example, and I don't want to be swallowed by the earth.

So, you know, we're encouraged, aren't we, to bring our complaints, bring our sorrows. But I think we feel guilty about that, Pastor. Yes, but the Bible tells us in the New Testament, we should cast all our cares upon the Lord because he cares for us.

And that is a blessed assurance we can live with. But, you know, when I was a child, my mother taught the choir to sing an old hymn, take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there. The problem sometimes is we take our burdens to the Lord and then take them right back with us instead of leaving them there with God.

And really, the psalms, one of the first psalms of lament, and I do cover this psalm in the book, is Psalm three. And David is saying he has foes all around him and they are saying there's no help for his soul. And then he turns his attention from his circumstances to God.

And this is the problem. If you get consumed with your circumstances and just focus there, you'll never find hope and strength and joy there. But when you bring your circumstances to God and look to him for strength and help and peace, you'll find that that makes the difference.

No, it will not always automatically change the circumstances, but he will give you strength and strength is needed. I love that. Now you focused on Psalm 27, which encourages us to trust the Lord in every situation.

Help us understand what does practical trust look like when our circumstances are anything but looking trustworthy. So how do we trust in those moments based on Psalm 27? Yeah, Psalm 27 is one of the great psalms. I'll admit to you this book is called Psalms of Trust, and that is the category for each of the psalms here.

But I really could have easily called this my favorite psalms. I cherry picked some of my favorite psalms and Psalm 27 is absolutely one of them. And this psalm says that there is no reason to fear, even though there are all kinds of calamities around the psalmist.

He says there is no reason to fear because the Lord is the stronghold of his life. The Lord is his salvation. And I think verse four really gives a good statement in simple terms of what this life of confidence means.

One thing I have asked for the Lord and that I will seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. No matter how bad things were going in David's life in this psalm and read the psalm, he was having all kinds of issues. His heart's desire was not merely to get out of the difficulty.

His heart's desire was to get closer to God. And I think this is this is, you know, there's a real sense in which it is never the size of your problem that counts. It's the location of your problem.

Either that problem is standing between you and God or it is pushing you closer and closer to God. You know, that really is a wonderful summation of Psalm 27. Now, you also hit on one of my favorite psalms, and that's Psalm 42,

because I have used that many, many a time to fight discouragement, to fight despair.

And, you know, they say you talk to yourself, but I think you should talk to yourself. Sometimes we need to talk ourselves off of the ledge. And I feel like that's what David was doing.

He was like, come on, get a grip. Well, first of all, I grew up with saints in my father's church that had life verses. And Psalm 42 begins with a verse that so many people love.

As the deer pants by the waterbrook, so do my soul thirst after God. And it seems like on the surface, some idyllic scene or picture. It is not.

It is a picture of desperation. And as you read, as you read through the psalm, you'll see the sense of desperation, discouragement. And may I even use the word depression? It's what D. Martin Lloyd-Jones used in this psalm.

But in the refrain, the psalmist grabs his soul by the coat collars and says, shake out of it. Why are you cast down? Oh, my soul. And why are you disquieted within me? Here's one of the great frames of the psalm.

Hope in God. We are living with hope. Inevitably, we put our hope in the wrong things.

We put our hope in ourselves. We put our hope in other people. We put our hope in material possessions.

True, living, sustaining hope is only found in God. And yes, there are times you need to grab your soul by the collar and say, snap out of this. Look to God.

He will be your salvation. I think we are responsible for that, aren't we, Pastor? And this is the take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. We should not sit there and just start the downward spiral into those depressing thoughts, the discouragement.

I say, let's start an upward spiral and spiral upwards. And I think that's what that psalm is trying to help us do. Yes, absolutely.

So it is interesting in the New Testament, the the word for anxiety in the New Testament, it can refer it means care or concern, and it can be used positively for legitimate concern or negatively for sinful anxiety, depending on the context. And the interesting thing is a legitimate concern can become a sinful anxiety if you allow it to consume you. So Jesus says, don't be anxious about what you will eat or drink or wear or what tomorrow is going to bring.

It doesn't literally mean as older translations take no thought and live a carefree life. It is legitimate concerns of life, what you will eat and drink. But you must not be so consumed by those things so that you become like those who have no God.

Jesus says the Gentiles seek after these things and your father knows what you stand in need of. So just put him first and trust him to take care of everything else. And coupled with that is the Philippians passage that literally commands us not to be anxious about anything, but to be prayerful about everything.

We literally pray our worries away. I love that. Absolutely.

Sure. Take care and think about and pray for it. You know, but there are things that are out of our control.

And I know a lot of my listeners, the big one is our kids. You know, they're doing things, making choices. And it's very grievous.

And I know it's anxiety producing. I think that's just where we're at as parents. But I think this is a real good thought to go back to Psalm 42 and do some wrestling and then just trust the Lord and then go on with your day and enjoy your day.

I feel like so many times our anxiety is just destroying this life that I think the Lord would have for us. Absolutely. We are too often like Martha.

And I hear the Lord in those verses in the end of Luke 10 saying, you are anxious and troubled by many things. And one thing is needful. He says that your sister has chosen the good portion, which will never be taken away from her.

And what he's referring to is Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear his word. And really, that's the hope for this book, that these chapters on these selected Psalms will compel us to sit at the feet of Jesus and to listen to his word and to find the strength, the guidance and the help we need from his word, by his spirit, for his glory, so that we can get up and face whatever is happening in our own health and our careers and our families, whatever it may be. We can do so with confidence that God really does have everything under control.

So true. You know, these Psalms have really stood the test of time because we know there is nothing new under the sun. So all of this anxiety and everything is just recycled and it's going to keep being recycled.

And we live on a fallen planet. Now, a lot of people today are looking at the news and they're seeing people who are truly, truly evil and hurting people and doing bad things. But it looks like they're prospering.

It looks like they're getting away with it. It actually looks like they're going on great vacations and driving wonderful cars and living in big houses. And it just, you know, grinds our gears at times when we watch that happen.

And we've got a Psalm for that, don't we? Absolutely. Psalm 73 is tailor made for the believer that struggles with this issue. We often wrestle with the question of why bad things happen to good people.

But in Psalm 73, the psalmist struggles with just the opposite. Why does good things happen to bad people? And it's interesting to read his, if I may, exaggerations. He's like, they never get sick.

They never have any trouble. They enjoy everything. One of the verses in there ministers to me regularly.

He says that I was careful not to speak about this verse 15 because I would have betrayed the generation of your children. I think that's really a big verse for me. He felt this way, but he was careful not to complain, not to grumble because he says it would be a betrayal of the faithfulness of God over the generations.

We can't let what we see from pavement level to be the determining truth about God. God's faithfulness has stood the test of time and he will not change now. And so the psalmist says, when I went to the sanctuary and the implication is there, when I stopped focusing on man and focused on God, it changed my perspective.

I remembered what the end would be and really the end there. And this emphasis on the end is the heart of the economy of Scripture in Scripture, the things that last the longest are worth the most. And so really Psalm 73 also is a rebuke to our own spirits that get preoccupied with the here and now we're to live for things eternal.

We're to, as Colossians says, seek those things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Now I know during that whole COVID situation, Psalm 91 was mentioned time and time again, looking for the protective custody of God. How should Christians understand God's protection even when faithful believers still experience the suffering, the illness and loss? It is just a reminder that God is watching over us.

Our times, our circumstances, all of these matters that concern us are in the hands of God and nothing happens to us by accident or by incident. God's providential orchestration governs everything. And we should live with confidence that we are under the divine custody of God and his eternal surveillance is watching over us every moment.

This has been a Psalm throughout the centuries. You know, I can always tell the spirit behind some of the prayers I'm hearing because it's a telling God what to do kind of a prayer where they're commanding him, they're demanding from him. And it just doesn't work that way in my understanding.

It's a Lord Jesus saying, thy will be done. You know, not my will, but yours be done. And it's just that trust in the Lord.

You call it stubborn trust. How do we develop that? In public teaching, I often refer to prayer as believing prayer. And I really do think prayer is an essential expression of our faith or trust in God.

Over the years, when I am asked, why pray? I have had two fundamental answers. We pray first, of course, because the Word of God commands it. We pray secondly, because praise God, it works.

God hears and answers prayer. But there is a third answer I have been giving much more these days, and that is prayer advertises our dependence upon God and the things we pray about are the things that we truly, sincerely, ultimately trust God with the things we don't pray about, the things that we foolishly think we can handle on our own. Prayer is a way of us advertising our dependence upon God.

We say we trust him. We say we believe him. The most fundamental way we advertise before God's throne, our dependence upon and confidence in him is through prayer, where we are not ordering him, not trying to manipulate his hand.

But in the language of Matthew 7, we are asking and seeking and knocking with confidence that if we being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will the Father give good things to those who ask him? Well said. I'm going to remember that. That is the quote, I think, out of this program for sure, that prayer is advertising our trust in the Lord.

And it is. It's humbling ourselves. It's saying, you know, Lord, you can do this.

I can't. Do it in me. I love it.

Here's another great quote. Courage is just fear that has said its prayers. The Bible calls it faith.

Yeah, we're afraid. Absolutely. It's scary out there.

But courage is I love that is just fear saying its prayers. Absolutely. Again, I do really believe that a fundamental and essential expression of our confidence in God is prayer.

Of course, our prayers are not informing God of anything that he does not know. It is wonderful assurance that there is no breaking news in heaven. But in our prayers, we are affirming.

First of all, we're confessing we cannot handle this alone. And we are acknowledging that God is the one to make the difference. God is honored by our childlike dependence.

I've written a book on prayer and I teach on prayer often, but I can give you the heart of prayer. You know, in one simple statement, you know, prayer is is most effective from a heart of dependence upon God. This is why like when we're in desperate trouble, we don't need anybody to tell us to pray.

Right. But but really, it shouldn't take a crisis to get us to pray. The ongoing posture of our hearts should reflect our dependence upon God expressed through believing prayer.

And that's why that one edict to pray without ceasing makes sense. It's just it's a constant reminder that we are dependent on him. That's prayer.

The moment I come into a situation, I'm just like, Lord, I'm dependent on you. And it's that beautiful prayer he wants from us. Well, thank you so much, pastor, for helping us put into words what we're all experiencing and reminding us to go back into Scripture.

It's all laid out there for us in the book of Psalms. We've been talking with H.B. Charles, Jr., and he's written another wonderful book for Moody Publishers called Psalms of Trust. Thank you so much for joining us on Mark & Friends.

It's been a joy to be with you. Thanks again for having me. And thank you to our listener for being a part of Mark & Friends, a ministry of Great News Media.

Have a great day.