

# *Who Can You Trust?*

Jeremiah 17:1-10

The news that Ted Haggard and the pastor in North Texas had to resign from their church because of sexual immorality touched all of us very deeply. Whether we know them personally or not, many of us know OF the great work that God has done through them in the past. We pray regularly for them and their families as they continue to endure a crisis that can scarcely be imagined. The impact of such a high profile moral failure is enormous.

Because a minister represents Jesus Christ, a moral failure tarnishes the reputation and power of our Savior. There is a women, who had been exploring Christianity who said, "I don't know what to believe... I know that Christianity doesn't make anyone perfect, and events like this downfall makes me ask whether it's all real or just one more flawed worldview," and I wonder what would Christ do in such a situation.

So who can you trust?

We all remember the days when new allegations of sexual abuse by priests were being reported every day. Hundreds of people came forward to say that someone who supposedly represented the highest degree of integrity, and someone they trusted, had deceived them.

As we look at the Enron debacle which is old news , except for those who have to live without their investments and pensions. What makes people angry is that when the wealthy knew the ship was sinking, they bailed out on well-endowed life rafts and left the common investor to float on the open sea. One lady, a retiree said that her \$700,000 investment ended up as \$20,000. "Who can you trust?" she asked.

We are in trouble as a nation. How do you tell the good guys from the bad guys? How do we know who is trustworthy and who is not? There is no easy answer. Just ask a young woman who has been abused by her father, a respected deacon in his church. Everyone, including his family, believed he was the epitome of integrity and dependability. But in the end, the man proves to be deceitful and very evil, sometimes we can not even trust those who should be most committed to our community and care, our fathers and ours mothers.

Why are people so untrustworthy? Though we like to think we are driven by rational instincts, the truth is that we are too often driven by our selfish desires. And because we want to be well thought of, it is easy for us to pay careful attention to our outward persona, and totally neglect the integrity of our hearts.

In fact, sometimes people not only deceive others, but they actually end up deceiving themselves. When our self-deception is complete, we can become wicked, destroying those around us to protect our sick self. Look at the recent events in El Dorado, Texas. Where older men were marrying really young girls. Their parents were giving up their own children to fulfill their religious selfish desires.

That the sins of the world have become the sins of the church is clear enough to see. And this shows that as Christians we are not only facing a crisis in morality, but also a crisis in basic biblical spirituality--we are content with a shallow relationship with the Lord that allows us to live in two worlds, the public world in which we exude righteousness and the hidden one in which we satisfy our sinful desires.

So who can we trust?

Thankfully, there are many people who have proven many times over that they can be believed: there is a match between what they profess and the way they live. But at the same time the Bible warns, "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on the flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5)

It is here in the text that we see an answer from the Lord about who and what we can trust.

We see that God's people continued to sin even though they had law, the prophets and a history of God's miracles. How could they continue to do that? Why do we continue to cherish sin even though we understand the eternal consequences?

Jeremiah says. "The heart is deceitful. (v. 9), and "Judah sin is engraved on the tables of their hearts." The Hebrews symbolized the various aspects of a person by locating them in certain physical organs. The heart was the organ of reason, intelligence and will. So deep is our tendency to sin that only God's redemption can or could deliver us.

There are two kinds of people here, there who trust in human beings and those who trust in the Lord. The people of Judah were trusting in false gods and military alliances instead of God and they were barren and unfruitful. (Isa.30:1-3)

Who can you trust?

But those who trusted in God flourished like trees planted by water. (psm.1:3) In times of trouble, those who trusted in human beings will be impoverished and spiritually destitute, so they will have no strength to draw upon.

But those who trust in the lord will have abundant strength, not only for their own needs, but even for the needs of others. Are you satisfied with being unfruitful. Or do you like a well watered tree, have strength for the time of crisis and even some to share as you bear fruit for the Lord?

God makes it clear why we sin, it is a matter of the heart. Our hearts have been inclined toward sin from the time that we were born. It is easy to fall into the routine of forgetfulness and forsaking God.

But we can still choose whether or not to continue in sin. We can yield to a specific temptation, or we can ask God to help us to resist temptation when it comes.

One lesson we should remember when people we trusted disappoint us is to turn once again to the Lord and renew the desire to believe him no matter what may come or what may befall us, learn to stay with the Lord GOD .

We must remind those who turn away from the Lord because of the failure of others, that at the end of the day they are still confronted with a Christ who invites us to believe in him regardless of the failures of his followers.

A second lesson is that we should search our own hearts and remember that failure, serious failure, is possible for anyone of us.

A person who stumbles en route to the heavenly city should cause all of us to ask, "Am I next?" We should be motivated to clean up our own lives and have greater desire to pursue personal holiness.

Our greatest temptation is to minimize our sin by ascribing it to our

background, our human nature, and our culture. These explanations might be true enough, but they do not tell the whole story: God promised victory and grace to those who walk in his ways. Leave your past behind and cling to the Lord GOD with all of your might and strenght.

To minimize sin is to minimize grace. Only when we see sin in all of its horror are we able to appreciate the matchless grace that both keeps us from falling and picks us up after we stumble. Remember, we can fall, but we can also get up in Jesus Christ. Who can we trust, but Jesus Christ.