

Women & More

God is For Us!

Lesson 7: **October 15, 2015**—*trust*

Before we look at how God is **for us**, let us clearly identify the “us” whom He is for: •The ones who trust in Him will be the ones whom God is for! Proverbs 3:5-6 “**Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge (confess) him, and he will make your paths straight.**”

•The ones who are humble, contrite in spirit, and tremble at His Word will be the ones whom God is for! Isaiah 66:2b “*This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.*”

•The ones who fear Him, keep His covenant, and obey His precepts are the ones whom God is for! Psalm 34:7 “*The angel of the Lord encamps around **those who fear him**, and he delivers them.*” Psalm 103:17 “*But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’S love is with **those who fear him**, and his righteousness with their children’s children—¹⁸with **those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.***”

Webster’s *New American Dictionary* defines “for” as it relates to people—4 : as being; 5 : because of; 6 : used to indicate a recipient of; 7 : in support of; 8 : directed at (affecting); 11 : concerning; 12 : considering and 14 : in honor of.

I. God is For = unmerited favor—Psalm 90:17 “*May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.*” Ephesians 1:7-8 “*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace **that he lavished on us**, with all wisdom and understanding.*”

II. God is For = lavish love—1 John 3:1ab “*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*”

III. God is For = ministry of reconciliation—Philippians 4:2-3 “*I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel...whose names are in the book of life.*”

IV. God is For = purpose on earth—Numbers 11:23 “*The LORD answered Moses, ‘Is the LORD’S arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you.’*” Philippians 1:6 “*Being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*”

V. God is For = destination heaven—John 14:1-2 “*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.*”

In looking at our Scripture to memorize—Romans 8:31 “*If God is for me, who can be against me?*” we see that the “If God is for me” is not the question part of the sentence, for God has already said he is **for me**—period! The question is “who can be against me?” And the answer is ultimately no one, no thing, and no how!

That does not mean that no one will oppose us or be against us; what it means is that their opposition will not be successful, because **God is for us!** •So the good news is that God is for us, but the bad news is that though we profess it, we don't always live like we believe it. **We will not always live what we profess, but we will live what we truly believe.**

Doctor: The good news is that you have 24 hours to live.

Patient: If that is the good news, then what's the bad news?

Doctor: **I forgot to tell you yesterday!**

Today, Scripture is committed to telling us how to trust God in our world of problems everywhere: financial chaos, terrorist attacks, wars, out-of-control fires, and big-time bullying in our schools. There are the very, very rich and often miserable, and there are the very, very poor and desperate. There are illegal drugs and aliens, suicides and homicides—including the barbaric murder of babies. There are haters of God and slanderers of men, liars, adulterers and thieves; kidnappers, killers, rapists, sexual deviants—every imaginable “sin”!

Bad news will continue to the end of this world as we know it, because people are bad. Our badness is called “sin” and the whole of nature is responding to our “sin” against its Creator. And while that's not encouraging to think about, we absolutely must recognize that as believers, in the midst of the world's badness, God is for us! 1 Corinthians 1:8 *“He will keep you strong to the end, so that*

you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Verses 26-30: *“Brothers (sisters), think of what you were when you were called. **Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.** 27But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29so that no one may boast before him. 30It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become **for us** wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”*

► In **2 Samuel 20** we learn of a wise woman whom God was for, and used to stop the killings in Israel. A troublemaker named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjamite, had been making big trouble for King David. Sheba may have picked up the baton of rebellion left by David's son Absalom. Verse 2: *“So all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.”*

Time out for some interesting reading: 2 Samuel 20:3 *“When David returned to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and put them in a house under guard. He provided for them, but did not lie with them. They were kept in confinement till the day of their death, **living as widows.**”*

Their incarceration and widowhood was the result of being systematically raped by Absalom (16:21-22) in his rebellion against his father's reign—having his father's concubines. David may have feared Sheba would violate them too.

Back to Sheba and the revolt. David ordered his commander, Amasa, to begin military action and pursue Sheba. **Amasa waited too long to respond**, causing David to suspect he had defected, and he commanded another general, Abishai, to pursue Sheba. The fact that David ignored Joab is significant (19:13). In bloody subterfuge, Joab, who had joined Abishai's army, greeted the late arriving Amasa with a kiss and a dagger to the heart. (Remember in the lesson on *Giving and Getting Forgiveness* that in 1 Kings 2:5 David told Solomon to take out Joab for shedding the blood of his generals, Abner and **Amasa**?)

Then Joab and Abishai continued to pursue Sheba, which led to the violent siege of Abel Beth Maacah at the northernmost end of Israel by the ruthless Joab. ♦Enter the wise woman and her counsel in 2 Samuel 20:15-18 *“All the troops with Joab came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maacah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and it stood against the outer fortifications. While they were battering the wall to bring it down, **16a wise woman called from the city.** ‘Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him.’ 17He went toward her, and she asked, ‘Are you Joab?’*

“‘I am,’ he answered. She said, ‘Listen to what your servant has to say.’

*“‘I’m listening,’ he said. 18 She continued, ‘Long ago they used to say, “Get your answer at Abel, and that settled it.” 19 **We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel.** You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the LORD’S inheritance?’”*

In further conversation between this woman and Joab, he explained his pursuit of Sheba, and she advised him at the end of verse 21: *“His head will be thrown to you from the wall.”* Scripture concludes in verse 22 *“Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bicri and threw it to Joab. So he sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.”* This one woman's counsel from the LORD saved her city from carnage and destruction.

► Moving to 2 Samuel 21, we read about Rizpah. Beginning in verse 1: *“During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the LORD. The LORD said, ‘It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.’”* The sin of Saul caused grave famine in the land; many suffered because of David's predecessor's gross sin. So David consulted the Gibeonites to see how the slaughter of their people by Saul could be paid for so that the famine would be lifted. It was agreed that seven of Saul's male descendents would be given to them to be killed and exposed before the LORD at Gibeah.

2 Samuel 21:7-9 “The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the LORD between David and Johnathan son of Saul. **8**But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, **the two sons of Aiah’s daughter Rizpah**, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab.... **9**He handed them over to the Gibeonites, **who killed and exposed them on a hill before the LORD. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.**”

NOTE: In Ruth 1:22 Scripture records: “So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, **arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.**” The beginning of barley harvest was God’s timing for the wonderful restoration coming to Naomi and Ruth—but not so for Rizpah. The dead and decaying bodies of her two sons were exposed, and she would do something incredible about it: something that would bring relief for her people. How is God’s love **for us** like Rizpah’s love for her children?

2 Samuel 21:10-14 “Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. **From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies**, she did not let the birds of the air touch them by day or the wild animals by night. **11**When David was told what Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, Saul’s concubine, had done, **12**he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead....

13David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.” At the very end of verse 14 Scripture says, “After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.”

By refusing to leave her sons’ bodies to the birds of prey and wild animals—fighting them by day and by night—we can only imagine how that added to her already tremendous grief. Instead of running from her intense sorrow, though, Rizpah’s several-month vigil for her children gave meaning to their tragic deaths and brought the nation’s attention to God’s sovereign dealings with sin.

► Her husband had passed away just before the drought, leaving her with a house from which she could clearly see the Mediterranean—water which would have no value to her drying crops and dying young son—and little else. She awoke every morning to the hope of rain, but the scorching sun continued to ravage the land. That night she would prepare a final supper for herself and her child, and then prepare to die. We remember from the 1 Kings 17:7-24 account that the prophet Elijah called to her for some water and a piece of bread, but would it surprise us to recall that God had sent him to her. Scripture says in verses 7-8 “Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. **8**Then the word of the LORD came to him (Elijah): **9**Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. **I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.**”

We know that God was **for her**, because after she trustingly gave to the prophet what he requested, neither her jar of flour nor her jug of oil ran dry until the Lord sent rain on the land. Charles Spurgeon: “Our Lord favors us with a famine in the land that it may make us seek after Himself the more.” And in Luke 4:24-25 Scripture refers back to this incident: “‘I tell you the truth,’ he (Jesus) continued, **no prophet is accepted in his hometown.** ²⁵I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. ²⁶Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.”

Scripture insinuates that many widows closer to Elijah’s home suffered intently during the famine, but would not have trusted given the chance. God was **for this widow** of Zarephath because she would trust the message and the messenger!

► Isaiah 30:15 “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and **trust** is your strength.” And Isaiah 50:10 “Who among you **fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant?** Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, **trust** in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.” Dr. Pardington: “We are to simply trust God. While we trust, God can work... **for us!**”

♥1 Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares **for** you.” He cares in our place! “Difficulty is the very atmosphere of miracle—it is a miracle in its first stage,” said Charles Spurgeon. “If it is to be a great miracle, the condition is not difficulty, but impossibility.” Trapped for 69 days one-half mile below the earth’s surface, 33 Chilean miners (one of them Bolivian) experienced a day of rescue and relief on Wednesday, October 13, 2010, while the world watched. The families of these seemingly doomed miners sat vigil for more than two months, praying and **trusting** for the impossible—that happened!

God is for us; with us, in favor of us, on our side and in our place: up the street, down the road, around the bend, and over the hill. **But are we for Him?** More often than not, we will not learn “trust” until we are battered and bent, pushed to the edge of belief and almost spent. Spurgeon again: “Knowest thou not that day follows night, that flood comes after ebb, that spring and summer succeed winter? Hope thou then! Hope thou ever! God fails thee not.... **The Lord will make a way for you where no foot has been before.** That which, like a sea, threatens to drown you, shall be a highway for your escape.”

And God, who is **for us**,
will not leave undone what he has begun!