

Brennan Manning-The Way of Trust John14:1-2 {Pt 1 of 3}

11-11-2025

This is a talk given by Brennan Manning who is with the Lord now.

He began, I'll to speak to what response does God look for from us in return for the gift of His love that knows no boundary, limit or breaking point and I turn your attention to the first two verses of Chapter 14 of John's Gospel. *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in Me".*

In 1982, the movie that won the Oscar in Hollywood as the best film of the year was Chariots of Fire, the true story of two British runners, Eric Leal and Harold Abrahams, who won gold medals in the 1924 Olympics, and they won against the odds to character, discipline, and courage. There was one scene in the movie that really grabbed me, Leal is a truly devout Christian, a Scottish Congregationalist. He's got an authentic call to serve as a missionary in China once the games are over, but his sister, Mary, is afraid that her brother, if he wins the gold, he is going to get so caught up in the hoopla and the praise and attention, and of course all the money that he's going to forget about his call to go to China in the missions. So on the night before the race, she goes to him and she begs him, in fact, she pleads with him to drop out of the race and he looks at her with eyes of great compassion. And in a very gentle voice, he says, but Mary, God made me fast and when I run, I feel his pleasure. Do you understand, Mary, when I run, I feel his pleasure.

The theme of everything I want to say this morning is one sentence, this, the splendor of a human heart that trust it is loved unconditionally, gives God more pleasure than Westminster Cathedral, Sistine Chapel, a symphony, Beethoven's symphony, Van Gogh's sunflowers, the sight of 10,000 butterflies in flight, or the scent of a million orchids in bloom. Trust is our gift back to God, and He finds it so enchanting that Jesus died for love of Him, once again, trust is our gift back to God, and he finds it so enchanting that Jesus died for love of it.

In the 1932 premier, spiritual writer of that decade was a Frenchman who was working as a missionary in India, his name was Paul DeLay and he wrote these words, "Trust is that rare and priceless treasure that cleanses the affection of our heavenly father".

Why is trust such a rare and priceless treasure because it often demands a degree of courage that is brought on the heroic when the shadow of Jesus cross falls across our lives in the form of rejection, abandonment, loneliness, failure, unemployment, loss of income, depression. When the world around us is suddenly a hostile, menacing place, when we are deaf to everything but the shriek of our own heartache. We may cry out in anguish, but how could a loving God permit that to happen, and at that moment, the seed of distrust is sown.

In more than four decades, I was first train hard by Jesus in a little chapel in the Allegheny mountains of western Pennsylvania and literally, the thousands and thousands of hours of prayer, meditation, silence, solitude. Over those years, living in monasteries, living in caves and deserts, places, I am now utterly convinced that childlike surrender and trust is the defining spirit of authentic discipleship. And I would add that the most supreme need in most of our lives is an unshaken, unfailing trust in the love of God. When the brilliant theologian John Kavanaugh, teaching at St. Louis University in Chicago, eight years ago, he was 38 years old, and he was suddenly burnt out by teaching in a state and he was in a state of utter confusion as to what to do with the rest of his life. So he took a three -month sabbatical, he went down to Mother Teresa's house of the dying in Calcutta.

Well, the first morning there, Mother Teresa comes up to him and says,

John, I'm glad you're here, what can I do for you?

And he said, please pray for me.

She said, I'll do that. What shall I pray for?

With all this confusion swirling around in his head, he said, please pray that I have clarity.

And she said very firmly, I will not do that. Clarity is the last thing you're clinging to, and you've got to let go of it.

But he said, Mother Teresa, it seems to me you've had clarity from the very beginning of your vocation.

She said, I've never heard clarity, I've always had is trust. John, I'm going to pray that you trust God. Craving clarity, we seek to avoid the risk of trust and we also might presume that trust is going to dispel the confusion, illuminate the darkness, vanquish the uncertainty and redeem the times. But the cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11 say, this is not so, our trust does not bring final clarity on this earth, it does not steal the chaos, it doesn't dull the pain and it doesn't provide a church. When everything else is unclear, the heart of biblical trust says, Aba, into Your hands, I commend my spirit though we often disregard the essential imperative, the need for trust.

In my last 42 years in ministry, I am convinced that it is the most urgent need in the lives of most of the Christians that I've met. It's the remedy for so much of our fear and our anxiety, our melancholy, our self-hatred, our sickness. The heart converted from mistrust to trust in the irreversible forgiveness of Jesus Christ is redeemed from a corrosive power of fear, the dread that salvation is reserved for the proper and the pious, the nameless fear that I'm predestined to backslide, the brooding pessimism that's the good news of God's wild, passionate love, what Chester called the furious love of God is simply too good to be true. All these things combined to weave a thin membrane of distrust that keep us in a chronic state of anxiety, what I call the second conversion. This is after you've accepted Jesus in your life as saving Lord, the second or decisive conversion from distrust to trust is the moment of sovereign deliverance from the warehouse of worry, so life-changing is this ultimate act of confidence and the acceptance of Jesus Christ that it can properly be called the hour of salvation. So often what I find notoriously missing in evangelical definitions of salvation is, Jesus died on the cross, He saved my sins I am free I'm going to Heaven, what is notoriously missing is self-acceptance.

Paul Tillers said, the best definition of faith is the courage to acceptance; accept the courage to accept ourselves. Acceptance is not pop psychology, it's not the power of positive thinking nor is it a how-to book on how to self-acceptance rather it is a profound act of faith in the acceptance of Jesus accepting me as I am and not as I should be. That self-acceptance bids good riddance to unhealthy guilt, shame, remorse, self-hatred, anything less, and self-rejection in any form is a manifest sign that we have not accepted the total sufficiency of Jesus redeeming work, as He has set you free of fear of the Father and dislike of yourself. Dislike of self is an insult of Jesus because He has sent courage to accept acceptance of me as I am with all my worst and flaws, with all my sins and selfishness, dishonesty, degraded love. Right now with all my feeble prayer life, my shallow faith, my inconsistent discipleship, Jesus loves me and accepts me as I am and not as I should be because I'm never going to be as I should be.

Words from a 15th century, Angelus, who said, "If God stopped thinking of me, he would cease to exist". Those words are thoroughly orthodox, and it is merely paraphrasing what Jesus says in John's gospel or

rather in Luke's gospel five sparrows are sold for only two pennies and yet your heavenly father never forget even more of them. God even numbers the hairs of your head if you have hairs on your head, if so Jesus says, don't be afraid, you're worth more than a flock of sparrows. Now, the merchant of mistrust dismisses these words as hyperbole remains grim, sullen, fearful, the child of God accepts these words with joy and has an attack, maybe even a seizure of happies.