

Things We Can Count On: God's Love

INTRODUCTION:

1. There are times when the world seems crazy, out of control, which make us wonder about life and the future, especially for those we love, and why God is allowing things to happen as they are.
 - A. We may feel very much like Habakkuk (Hab. 1:1-4 – “The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw. ² How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear? I cry out to You, “Violence!” Yet You do not save. ³ Why do You make me see iniquity, and cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; strife exists and contention arises. ⁴ Therefore the law is ignored and justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore justice comes out perverted.”).
 - B. Habakkuk, however, learns that His view of things is lacking wisdom and understanding of God and His ways, which are so very often beyond our knowledge and appreciation, which is a good lesson for us to learn as well.
 - i. For, we also see a world around us that is filled with sin, perversion, violence, strife, and contention.
 - ii. So like Habakkuk learned, we must also learn that the existence of evil and our perception of how things should be do not mean that God is unaware and inactive—that He has somehow fallen down on the job.
2. With this in mind I want to begin addressing some things about God that have to do with what He has **done** and is **doing** that we **can count on** in this life.
 - A. For, that **we can count on God for these things** means that despite the chaos and disintegration we may be witnessing, we can take courage in God and find refuge, peace, and stability.
 - B. To begin, I want to focus our attention on how **we can count on God's love**, which is most important to all who have put their hope of salvation in Him.
 - C. For, despite how things may seem **you can know** that every minute of every day **you are loved by God!**
3. To address this, I want to look and how God has expressed His love for us in various ways and the assurance these give us.
4. Hopefully in doing so I can encourage you and help you see the wonder and value of serving God and remaining faithful to Him.

BODY:

I. God's love and Creation

- A. Creation expresses God's love because we are created...
 1. To be like God (Gen. 1:26-27 – “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”).
 - a. That God created us this way means that we have a very special place in creation.
 - b. For, all other created things are ours to rule and use in a way nothing else created can. But as we shall see, that is not the end of this matter.
 2. To know God and enjoy a relationship with Him.
 - a. For, Paul at Athens showed that contrary to idolatrous notions, God did not create us because He needed our service (Acts 17:24-25 – “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ **nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything**, since He Himself **gives to all people life and breath and all things**”).
 - i. Instead, creation meant that God would have to continually **serve us**, seeing we completely depend on Him for life, breath, and all things (17:25).
 - ii. And yet He still chose to create us. But why?

- b. Well, Paul did not end there, but shows that God also created that we might know Him (Acts 17:26-28 – “and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,²⁷ **that they would seek God**, if **perhaps** they might grope for Him **and find Him**, though He is not far from each one of us;²⁸ **for in Him we live and move and exist**, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are **His children**.’”).
 - i. That is what it is all about—that we seek and find God, seeing He is the One in which we live, move, and exist!
 - ii. God wants us to know Him and live as His children.
- B. What God created *for us* shows His love because...
1. He has *given* us what is *needed* and made it *good* (Gen. 1:29-31 – “Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;³⁰ and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so.³¹ God saw all that He had made, and behold, **it was very good**. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”).
 - a. So, when get down and wonder about life and God’s love, we are making the mistake of Habakkuk and focusing on what man has done with creation.
 - b. Instead, we would should step back and look at creation and the power, wisdom, and goodness of God it shows.
 2. He is concerned about the quality of our lives (Gen. 2:15,18, 21-22 – “Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it...¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him...²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.²² The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.”).
 - a. Note that God’s concern and interaction did not end with placing man in this world.
 - b. From the beginning God has shown He is concerned about the quality of our lives. He wants our lives to be “good.”
 3. So, Creation shows us that God truly loves us and that we can count on that love!

II. God’s continual care shows His love.

- A. We exist in this world because of God’s loving care.
1. For, Jesus holds the universe together (Col. 1:16-17 – “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.¹⁷ He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together**.”).
 - a. Note how all things were created by Jesus and for Jesus (1:16b), meaning everything finds its true meaning and purpose in glorifying Jesus.
 - b. Yet, this does not mean that God now sits back and enjoys all that creation brings to Him.
 - c. Instead, God created the universe with the knowledge that it would be preserved by His working, but the intentional application of His power.
 - d. This universe continues in orderly fashion because God cares enough that He holds it together every moment of every day, causing it to continue in its orderly fashion!
 2. Therefore, every person that awakes to a new day does so because of God’s loving providential care, whether they are good or evil (Matt. 5:44-45 – “But I say to you, **love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**⁴⁵ **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**”).
- B. God’s care seeks our happiness and wellbeing.
1. God’s love is shown by providing more than “existence” (Acts 14:16-17 – “In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;¹⁷ and yet He did not

leave Himself without witness, in that He **did good** and **gave you rains** from heaven and **fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.**”).

- a. God could have given us life and just let us live.
 - b. But He loves us. So He works continually to make our loves good, satisfying, and joyful.
 - c. And that is what you do when they love someone.
2. Those who will seek God are assured of His loving care.
- a. The Psalmist spoke of His enduring care (Psalms 37:25-28 – “I have been young and now I am old, yet I **have not seen the righteous forsaken** or his descendants begging bread. ²⁶ All day long he is gracious and lends, and his descendants are a blessing. ²⁷ Depart from evil and do good, so you will abide forever. ²⁸ For the LORD loves justice and **does not forsake His godly ones; they are preserved forever**, but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off.”).
 - b. Jesus spoke of God’s peaceful assurance of care offered to the faithful (Matt. 6:31-33 – “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’” ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ **But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**”).
 - c. And, Jesus showed that those who will trust God will continue to know His loving care (Matt. 7:7-11 – “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For **everyone** who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!**”).
3. So, if God is willing to work continually to assure that all are blessed by creation with rain and fruitful seasons, surely you can count on God’s love for you and that he will care for you as his child!

III. Jesus and God’s love.

A. Jesus shows us God amazing love because...

1. God knew **that our creation** would require redemption through the *sacrificial blood of Jesus* (1 Pet. 1:18-21 – “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with **precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, **the blood of Christ.** ²⁰ **For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times **for the sake of you** ²¹ **who through Him are believers in God**, who **raised Him** from the dead and **gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**”).
 - a. God created us to have a relationship of faith and hope in Him.
 - b. But God knew that meant He would have to make the greatest sacrifice ever known—that of His own Son!
2. God knew **before Jesus was sent** that a loving relationship with man meant pain and suffering being laid upon His Son (Isa. 53:1-6 – “Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. ³ He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we

are healed. ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”).

B. Yet, God **still created us** and **sent Jesus!**

1. That expression of such great love means our salvation from sin’s condemnation is real (John 3:16-17 – “**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him **shall not perish, but have eternal life.**” ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the **world might be saved through Him.**”).
2. This love is the resounding theme of the N.T.
 - a. 1 John 4:9-10 – “In this the **love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**”
 - b. Rom 5:5-8 – “Now hope does not disappoint, because the **love of God has been poured out** in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly.** For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But **God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”
3. So, if you ever wonder about the tenacity of God’s love, especially when you see the pain and the suffering of this world, just remember that God sent Jesus, and the rejection, suffering, and pain God was willing to face because of our sin.

CONCLUSION:

1. So, as we struggle with the world and its wickedness and pain, one thing that we can count on is that **God loves us more than He loves Himself!**
2. And, His undying love brings up a pertinent question asked by Paul (Rom 2:4 – “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”).
 - A. If you are a Christian and you have been living in a way that has not been in accordance with the loving kindness of God, will you repent of your sins and return to Him today, confessing your sins?
 - B. Or, if you are not yet a Christian, having not yet put your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, will you respond in love to Christ today, trusting in Him and R-C-Bp?
3. Will you come to the God who so dearly loves you today?