JM Jason Mayfield

SERMON OUTLINE FOR PASTORS

THE GOD WHO WE CAN TRUST

Three Names of God That Prove You Can Trust Him

> What you believe about God shapes how you pray. He is El Sali, God my rock; El Ne'eman, the faithful God; and Elohei Kol Basar, the God of all flesh. So when we pray, God hears, He cares, and He can change things.

MAIN TEXT
Psalm 42:1-11

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SERIES
The Name, Week 3 of 3

BY
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AT A GLANCE

THE MESSAGE

1. What you believe about God changes how you pray. Quoting A.W. Tozer, what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. Many last-moment prayers go unanswered not because they are bad prayers but because they are the only prayer, prayed by people who never sought God and do not know how He responds.
2. El Sali, God my rock (Psalm 42:1-11). In the middle place, with tears day and night and a trouble that sits down in the bones, pour out your soul to God, ask your soul why it is cast down, get into the house of the Lord, and tell your soul to hope in God my rock. Everything is being shaken (Hebrews 12:26-29), and you are not steady, but God is steady and His kingdom cannot be shaken.
3. El Ne'eman, the faithful God (Deuteronomy 7:9, Hebrews 13:8). God does not waver, falter or change, so over time you can learn His patterns. His ways are above ours, but He has ways, and Psalm 111 says His works are studied by all who delight in them.
4. When the answer has not come yet, look for His pattern. If you pray for healing and are not healed immediately, ask what the Lord's normal pattern is and keep seeking, asking and responding, because you never know when it will happen.
5. Elohei Kol Basar, the God of all flesh (Jeremiah 32:27). He is God over all people, so no one who makes a decision concerning you has the final word; you have a higher appeal and can pray your boss, your employees, your kids and your spouse in the right direction.
6. He is also God of the whole person (Matthew 10:30). The God who numbers the hairs on your head cares about your family, career, finances, emotions, hobbies and even things that seem silly, so nothing is too small or trivial to take to Him. When we pray, God hears, He cares and He can change things, whether He answers no, slow, grow or go.

WATCH IT PREACHED

youtu.be/qvtHZ-Xx2ql

READ THE ARTICLE

jasonmayfield.com/messages/the-god-who-we-can-trust

PREACHING NOTES

Before You Preach

This is the last week of a three-week series on “hallowed be thy name” in the Lord’s Prayer. Week 1 prayed the Trinity: the Father who is exalted, the Son who is empathetic and the Spirit who is empowering. Week 2 prayed the four names in the song “Jehovah”: Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha and Jehovah Shalom. This week adds three Hebrew names that are harder to remember but speak to what people care about most: can God be trusted?

Say up front that these three names won’t be as easy to remember as the first seven. The payoff is the close: when we pray, God hears, He cares, and He can change things.

Use the standard spellings people search for: El Sali, El Ne’eman and Elohei Kol Basar. Practice the last one out loud; roll the R a little on Basar.

The section after Hebrews 12 is marked as an aside. It was preached on the Sunday before an election and is tied to that week. Another preacher should leave it out or replace it with his own word for his moment.

Introduction

Open by praying the Lord’s Prayer together, as every week of the series.

> **MATTHEW 6:9-13** ESV
>
> [9] Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. [10] Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread, [12] and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

We’ve been preaching on the names of God, names you can pray when you get into the secret place. When you pray His names, you remind Him who He is, you remind yourself who you are, and you remind yourself who He is to you.

So far the names have been built for your memory:

- **The Trinity.** The Father is exalted. The Son is empathetic. The Holy Spirit is empowering, and “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
- **The song “Jehovah.”** Jehovah Nissi brings victory. Jehovah Jireh is our provider. Jehovah Rapha heals, and “with his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Jehovah Shalom is our peace.

That's seven names. Today we add three more that I've chosen specifically. They may not be as easy to remember, but they address the aspects of God and life we care about most. These are names that deal with the trustworthiness of God. God is trustworthy. You can trust Him.

WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT GOD CHANGES HOW YOU PRAY

What you think about God matters. Whether you believe God answers prayer impacts the way you pray, and it impacts the outcome of the things you pray.

There's a reason the prayer many people scream out in the final moment so often seems to go unanswered. A lot of times it's not that it's a bad prayer. It's that it's the only prayer. We get mad at God like He owes us something, when we've never met with Him, never sought Him, never consulted Him. When you pray like that, you don't know who He is, so you don't know how He's going to respond. If you thought God would answer prayer, you wouldn't have waited until then to cry out, "God, help me." You'd have been praying about it all along, because you trusted Him.

I was confronted with this myself this week. At the end of the year I start reevaluating things, and I asked myself, "Do I pray like I actually believe God will do things?" Not just in the way I pray, but in the amount I pray.

A.W. Tozer said it this way:

> "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

Not what you think about yourself, your family, your job or the people around you. What comes to mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you. And I hope when you think about God, you think about Jesus.

1. El Sali: God My Rock

El Sali means "God my rock." There's an old chorus drawn from the Psalms: "lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:2). When my heart is overwhelmed, I need the Lord to hear me.

PSALM 42:1-11 ESV

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah. [1] As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. [2] My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? [3] My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" [4] These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. [5] Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation [6] and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. [7] Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. [8] By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. [9] I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" [10] As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" [11] Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Soak on one line: "My tears have been my food day and night" (Psalm 42:3). There are moments when it's on you, you can't shake it, you're under pressure, and you're tearing up in the day and tearing up at night. That's where the psalmist was writing from. And when you're under pressure, everything in life wants to challenge you: "Where is your God?"

POUR OUT YOUR SOUL

Notice what he does: "These things I remember, as I pour out my soul" (Psalm 42:4). He remembers the greatness of God as he pours out his soul.

When's the last time you poured out your soul in prayer? If you want to impress God, don't try to impress Him. Tell God some things you wouldn't say to anybody else. As you pour your soul out, the turmoil you feel comes out with it.

And he remembers going to the house of God "with glad shouts and songs of praise" (Psalm 42:4). When you feel that way, get in the house of the Lord. You might not have a song, but somebody beside you has a song.

TALK TO YOUR SOUL

Then he asks his soul a question: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?" (Psalm 42:5). When you get caught between life's pressure and knowing who the Lord is, you have to ask: "Soul, why are you upset? I know what all the conditions say, but you know who your God is." Then tell your soul the answer: "Hope in God" (Psalm 42:5).

Look at verse 9: "I say to God, my rock" (Psalm 42:9), and the very next words are "Why have you forgotten me?" (Psalm 42:9). That would be a terrible song to open church with. But it's a reality. It's a feeling that comes out. He's my rock, and I still ask why.

THE MIDDLE PLACE

This is the middle place. It was going good, and now it's not. When things aren't going good, all you want is for them to go good again, and sometimes you'd settle for half of what you had before. If both my kids are in a bad mood, I'd be fine if just one of them came around.

Illustration: the chicken. I think Jocelyn knew I wasn't feeling good the other day. I was having a moment, reminding myself that God is my rock, and she was telling me how good my chicken is. May the Lord give you children who tell you how good your chicken is. (This is personal. Another preacher should use his own.)

In the middle place you say, "God, my rock, why have You forgotten me? Why am I dangling out here? Why is it not happening yet?"

Verse 10 says, "As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me" (Psalm 42:10). Sometimes what you're dealing with is down in the bones. You can't get a reprieve from it. You wake up in the morning and it's there. You go to bed at night and it's there. You go to work and it's there. Every quiet moment, it's there. If you're not physically engaged with it, you're mentally engaged. If you're not mentally engaged, you're emotionally engaged. It's wearing on you.

That's when you have to remember He's your rock. "This thing is wearing on me, yet I say to my soul: hope in God my rock." Be encouraged, soul. He's steady.

Your life isn't steady, but God is steady. In fact, not only is your life not steady; you aren't steady. We're not steady people. But God is steady.

EVERYTHING IS SHAKING

Everything in life is shaking.

> **HEBREWS 12:26-29 ESV**
>
> [26] At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." [27] This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. [28] Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, [29] for our God is a consuming fire.

"Yet once more" means it's coming again. God is shaking what has been made, "the removal of things that are shaken" (Hebrews 12:27), so that what cannot be shaken remains. And we are receiving "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (Hebrews 12:28). Respond with acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, right where you are.

2. El Ne'eman: The Faithful God

El Ne'eman means "the faithful God."

> **DEUTERONOMY 7:9 ESV**
>
> [9] Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

Pause on the first line: "the LORD your God is God" (Deuteronomy 7:9). That's good news. Most of the people in the world serve a god who is not God, and many of them are sincere. The key component of being deceived is that you're not aware of it. But the God we serve is God, the Almighty God.

HE DOESN'T CHANGE

God is faithful. He doesn't waver, and He doesn't falter. He doesn't shift. James says He is the Father of lights "with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). And "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). He's stable. He's consistent.

YOU CAN LEARN HIS PATTERNS

Because He's consistent, you can be reassured over time, because you can start to pick up on God's patterns. You can see the way God works.

God says, "so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). Nevertheless, He has ways and He has thoughts. Spend enough time with Him, in the Word and in prayer, and you'll see there's a way He does things.

This psalm has become a blessing to me over the last several years. If you have your Bible, mark it.

> **PSALM 111:2-10 ESV**
>
> [2] Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. [3] Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. [4] He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful. [5] He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever. [6] He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations. [7] The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy; [8] they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. [9] He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name! [10] The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

"Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them" (Psalm 111:2). There's something to be said for studying how the Lord works, how He behaves and how He brings things about. "He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered" (Psalm 111:4). Why? So you can study them. When God

does something, He does it in a way you'll be able to remember. And "all his precepts are trustworthy" (Psalm 111:7): if He says it, you can trust it, believe it and build your life on it.

Illustration: the worship transitions. A few weeks ago we had a standout worship service, like a bomb went off in the room. Someone asked me what happened. Because we're short on musicians, our worship runs with tracks on a computer, and during the week I go in and play every transition myself on bass and keyboard. I told him, "When I built those transitions, I know how the Holy Spirit likes to move in a room. I don't have to figure it out in real time." When you stand in enough of those environments, you start to say, "The Lord seems to like this." A worship leader once told me, "Do you want the presence of God to move strong in a service? Sing songs the Lord likes." (Another preacher should use his own example.)

You can study the works of the Lord and get an idea of how He likes to work, and not just in a church service. I heard a pastor say, "Too often we get concerned with the gospel of the church rather than the gospel of the kingdom." I'd rather you see miracle-working power on your job, in your life and in your house.

IN SEASONS OF DISTRESS

This is comforting, and it's helpful in seasons of difficulty. The hymn "Sweet Hour of Prayer" says:

> In seasons of distress and grief,
>
> My soul has often found relief,
>
> And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
>
> By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

When life gets tough, you can go into the secret place and remember that He is the faithful God, and He works a certain way. As you learn Him daily, you can know how the Lord is going to operate in your life.

WHEN THE ANSWER HASN'T COME YET

Last week we talked about His character: who He is and what He's about. When we're anchored in His faithfulness, we can know not only who He is but how He's going to bring it about.

So when you pray, "God, heal me," and you're not healed immediately, stop and ask, "What is the Lord's normal pattern on healing?"

Illustration: the shoulder. At the end of service last week, a man was healed on the spot. He told me he hadn't been able to lift his arms past a certain point for about 20 years. As I prayed, he lifted them, I heard the click, and he had his hands up. That's what the Lord does. It was his first Sunday with us. (This is a testimony from this church. Another preacher should use his own.)

But not everybody in the room was healed. So what do you do? You keep responding. You keep seeking, asking and searching. You keep saying, "Lord, I'll take it right now." And you never know when it'll

happen.

3. Elohei Kol Basar: The God of All Flesh

Elohei Kol Basar means “the God of all flesh.”

> **JEREMIAH 32:27** ESV
>
> 27 “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?

God is God over everything: over all people, the nations, politicians, teachers, bosses and pastors. He is God over all flesh.

YOU HAVE A HIGHER APPEAL

There is no person in your life who makes a decision concerning you that you do not have a higher appeal than. If a doctor told you there’s no hope, you have an appeal. If a teacher said, “You’ll never amount to anything,” you have an appeal. If a boss says, “I’m never going to promote you,” you have an appeal. His name is the Lord.

Sometimes you have to:

- pray your employees straight,
- pray your boss into the right decision,
- pray your kids into the kingdom,
- and pray your spouse out of their own way.

Illustration: “You’re supposed to say that.” There are things Ashleigh needs that I can’t give her. I tell her she’s competent, smart and talented, and she doesn’t believe it because it’s me: “You’re supposed to say that.” So sometimes I have to pray it into her, because I can’t impose it on her myself. (This is personal. Another preacher should use his own.)

It is your God-given right as a believer in Jesus Christ to go to God the Father and conspire against the decision of any person you know. If someone’s decision affects you, go to the Lord: “God, this is what I want us to work on,” and pray it in the direction you want it to go. And if it doesn’t change? Thank God He’s smarter than you are. And when it does change, or when it changes you, the power of God flows.

GOD OF THE WHOLE PERSON

That’s the context of Jeremiah 32: He’s the God over all people. But there’s something more. God is also the God of all flesh in that He is God of the whole person.

Someone in our church seemed off one Sunday, so I checked on him. He told me, “I don’t do well when Alabama loses.” I thought, “That is so silly.” But He’s the God of all flesh.

There are things you care about, things that affect you, that might even seem silly. Jesus said:

> **MATTHEW 10:30** ESV
>
> [30] But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

If He cares about the hairs on your head, He cares about your family and friends, your career, your finances, your emotions, your passions, your hobbies, your dislikes, your sports teams and the foods you like or don't like. You've got feelings and interests, and God cares. Some of you feel bad that deer season pulls you away from church for a weekend. The Lord sees that. He knows your passion. He cares about the whole person.

We're still on the front end of learning to pray, and you need to know there is nothing you take to the Lord that's too small. There is nothing too trivial. He's either going to change it, or He's going to change you, or He's going to teach you some patience through a process.

Conclusion

I heard a man say once that God answers prayer a few different ways:

- **No.** Sometimes you get a no.
- **Slow.** "Yes, we're going to do that, but not today."
- **Grow.** "I'd like to give you a million dollars, but first I need to teach you how to handle the $35,000 you're making every year."
- **Go.** A fast yes.

As we learn to pray and start asking the Lord to do things, remember this: **when we pray, God hears, He cares, and He can change things.**

Be careful: you're praying with live ammo. God can do things in your life.

- He is **El Sali**, God my rock.
- He is **El Ne'eman**, the faithful God.
- He is **Elohei Kol Basar**, the God of all flesh.

Cherish these names. I believe God is going to show Himself strong in prayer in the year ahead. I want good services, but I'd much rather you see miracle-working power flow in your house than at the end of a Sunday morning service.

If you received the Word today, give the Lord a good praise.



ABOUT

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Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, an author, and the creator of POWER 27. He has given more than 20 years to the local church and helps pastors and ministry leaders lead BIG.

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