

*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made,
 their starry host by the breath of his mouth.
 7 He gathers the waters of the sea into jars;
 he puts the deep into storehouses.
 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
 let all the people of the world revere him.
 9 For he spoke, and it came to be;
 he commanded, and it stood firm.
 10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations;
 he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
 11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
 the purposes of his heart through all generations.
 16 No king is saved by the size of his army;
 no warrior escapes by his great strength.
 17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
 despite all its great strength it cannot save.
 18 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,
 on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,
 19 to deliver them from death
 and keep them alive in famine. (Psalm 33:6-11,16-19)*

Why Trust God?

Have you ever noticed that babies go through this phase where they suddenly don't like strangers? When they're newborns, they don't much care who holds them. But when they get a little bigger, they learn who their people are. Then most of them cry when a stranger holds them. That distrust of strangers lasts for quite a while. Here at church, moms are often mortified because their four or five year old won't shake hands with me, even though they come to church almost every week. But I'm convinced that God designed them that way to keep them safe. Little kids are shy and clingy so that they stay with the people who are going to take care of them and protect them. It's like God planted a question in their minds: "Why should I trust you?"

Of course, the person that children trust the most is usually their mother. Mother's Day reminds us of all that moms do to earn that trust. We trust our mothers because they spend their lives working for our good. Few other people in this life ever come close to working so hard to earn our trust. In fact, for most other people, we still ask that question: "Why should I trust you?" But there is one person who works even harder than our mothers. In fact, he gave us our mothers. Yet, sometimes, that question that God built into us to keep us safe as children emerges in our relationship with him. Our society has deep-seated God issues. So it almost seems like God wrote Psalm 33 to answer our question: **why trust God?**

I.

He gives us several reasons in this psalm. But he spends more time on one than on any other: **He made the universe.** Psalm 33 says, "**By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.**" Now, there were no telescopes when this psalm was written. So, King David, if he wrote this psalm, couldn't log onto the internet and see amazing pictures taken by famous observatories or satellites. But he could go out onto the roof of his palace at night and stare up at the stars and marvel at what God had made. How many of us, as children, stared up at the sky on a summer's night and lost ourselves in the stars? That sense of wonder has driven generations of scientists to probe deeper and deeper into the heavens. Last week, the Cassini space probe dived into the space between Saturn's rings and the planet itself. It's scheduled to make twenty more dives before it plunges into the atmosphere of Saturn and burns up. King David didn't even know that Saturn had rings, and we're exploring them! You know what? Every time we build a better telescope or space probe, these words that God gave us three thousand years ago become more

meaningful. God didn't just put some Christmas lights up there in the sky. The universe holds wonders no human being could have guessed at. And it's all there because God spoke.

God said, "**Let there be light.**" And there was light. God said, "**Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky...**" With that simple sentence, God made a universe that the most advanced scientists are still trying to map. When I say something, that doesn't make it happen. Years of parenting and teaching have taught me that. But God's Word has all power. It's the same word that we're studying today. The word that created our faith called our entire world into being.

That creation tells us something about God. What? Obviously, he's powerful. But think about all the stuff that he put out there: about planets orbiting stars and not falling in, the earth being just close enough to the sun that we don't freeze but just far enough away that the oceans don't boil. God thought all that up and made it work. So he's smart and wise. But there's even one more point: he made it for us. He didn't have to do that. But he did so that you and I have the perfect place to live.

That's the God who calls us to trust him. Certainly, his power and his wisdom demand reverence and awe. But without that love, why should we trust him? All that power can make us afraid because it means that he has the power to smack me down because today I disobeyed him again. And all that wisdom means that I will never be able to get away with anything. He's always going to know. Why should I trust him? Because that love means that he's more than just a judge. He doesn't want to punish us for all that sin. But the love he showed in giving us this world doesn't solve that problem. He is a judge, after all. It's his job to punish us when we sin. So he did something even greater: in love he entered his creation. In love, the Son of God took on human flesh. The one who spoke and the stars were there became a baby who had to learn to speak. The judge who condemns evildoers to hell, joined us down here so that he could lead us out of death and hell.

When you pair that love with that power, amazing things happen. The psalm says, "**He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him.**" Imagine God having a shelf someplace with a jar on it labeled "The Pacific Ocean" right next to the one labeled "The Atlantic Ocean." That's the picture for how completely he controls the greatest forces of nature. The Bible says that Jesus sustains all things by his powerful word. He keeps the universe going and he controls all things for the good of the Church.

The psalm goes on to say, "**The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.**" King David knew about plots and evil purposes. He had to run for his life because his king was jealous of him. But he also knew that God's plans always succeed. God had chosen him to be king. When he was on the run, it didn't look like it was ever going to happen. But nothing could stop God's plan. The unbelieving world will never stop trying to break us. But no enemy we face can succeed. Even when it looks like they have, it's only because God is letting them win for a moment so that his plans come true. How do we know those plans are going to work out for our good? Because we are his people. Because Jesus came for us. Because God has given us faith. Jesus promised that he will be with us to very end of the age. That's why we trust him.

II.

For some people, all that might not be enough. They might argue that a God who is in control of the whole universe doesn't really do you much good. He's going to be way too busy to help you. He's not even going to notice you among all the billions of people on this earth, so you're wasting your time trusting him. You need to take care of yourself. But that is never the way God pictures himself. His inbox isn't swamped so that he never get to your email. His voicemail is never so full that he can't record one more message. In fact, he never goes to voicemail. He pays attention to you and to me individually all our lives long. He does the same for every believer. **Why trust God?** The answer is amazing but simple and true: **He keeps watch over you.**

Now, is that a good thing? Having a cop sit in his car watching you might make you nervous – even angry. Or do you like having a babysitter? What would my seventeen year old or my twenty year old or my twenty-two year old say if I told them that Becky and I had gotten them a babysitter because we're going out tonight? What would say if your boss hired someone whose only job was to babysit you at work?

Psalm 33 says, "**But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.**" It's not babysitting. It's protection. It's keeping us from all harm and danger. As much as we'd like to believe that we don't need him

looking over our shoulder all the time, that's just sinful pride. We are helpless in a world that is broken by sin. How many times have you had a near miss on the highway? How many people you know have gotten sick and died? How many crimes do you hear about on the news? How many house fires? What will protect you if the economy collapses? How will you survive all your credit card debt when the time comes to retire? We live in a dangerous world because we live in a sinful world. And it's just sinful pride that thinks that we don't need God.

That sinful pride deserves his punishment in hell. But it gets even worse than that. When we realize that we need help, we turn to everyone we can find, except God. The psalm says, **“No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.”** All this stuff down here is an illusion. No police officer can keep you safe. No government can keep you free. No smoke alarm can protect your family. No doctor can save your life. All the power those people and things seem to have is a dream. Now, God does work through all those things and people to rescue us. But our sinful hearts want to leave God out of the equation and make people and money and insurance and retirement plans the things that will keep us safe. That's just idolatry.

But Jesus came to be perfect in our place. He came to trust in his Father every step of the way for us. So he laid aside his power and glory as God and became an infant. And then his stepfather had to carry him to Egypt to keep Herod from killing him. His parents had to feed him and clothe him and keep him warm. Without ever stopping being God, he made himself helpless and dependent on others because that's what is really true about us. He did what we're supposed to do in that situation: he trusted his Father in heaven to work through all those other people and keep him safe. Then he followed his Father's plan and went to the cross and died there. He trusted his Father to raise him from the dead. When he did that, he paid for all our lack of trust and all our sinful pride. He suffered the hell and the death that we have coming. He rose and declared that all our sin and guilt are gone forever. We are his.

Then he promised that when this world is scary and we are helpless and in danger, his eyes will be on us. His love will protect us. He will hover over us the way a mom hovers over small children at the beach or a pool. She never takes her eyes off those kids because she knows how little time it would take for them go under that water. God knows how little time it would take for us to go under. So his eyes are always on us here. Then he brings us home.

My mom is really into genealogy. She emails second and third cousins around the country and gets pictures and birth certificates and names she still needs to fill in her charts. Last year, one of those cousins sent me an email. I knew her name but the last time I remember seeing her, I was eight. She had baptismal certificate in German from some grandparent and an inscription and she wondered if I could help her translate them. We wrote back and forth a few times and then I didn't hear anything else. Well, a couple of months later, my mom called. She told me that this cousin hadn't been answering her emails and she didn't have a current phone number for her. So she called her church to see if they would give her the number. And they told my mom that she had died very suddenly.

Death is going to happen to us all, unless Jesus comes back first. It may not be that unexpected, but it's coming. But God won't let death win. God will keep us alive on this earth for as long as he has planned for us. Then he we will go home to heaven because Jesus has taken all our sin away. Finally, my friends, Jesus is the reason to trust God. He made the world with his Father and the Holy Spirit. He sustains this world and rules this world for the good of the church. He paid for all our sin and made us holy in God's sight. He is with us to the very end of the age. The message about Jesus is what gives you your faith. It's what keeps your faith alive. Trust him for the things you face today. Trust him to triumph over this life. Trust him to bring you home. Amen.