



# GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING

July 28, 2019

The title of today's sermon is called, "God Knows What He is Doing" – Today we will look at a few scriptures that will weave in this central theme and also just scratch the surface of how good our God is and how he knows what good gifts to give us. **He has known all along what he is doing.** Our scripture reading is taken from Psalm 138: 1-8 which reminds us that God cares for us. He is faithful, and that he already has a plan in place even though we may be faced with all kinds of trouble.

SCRIPTURE READING  
PSALM 138: 1-4 (ESV)

1. I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise.
2. I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.
3. On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased.
4. All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth,

SCRIPTURE READING  
PSALM 138: 5 – 8 (ESV)

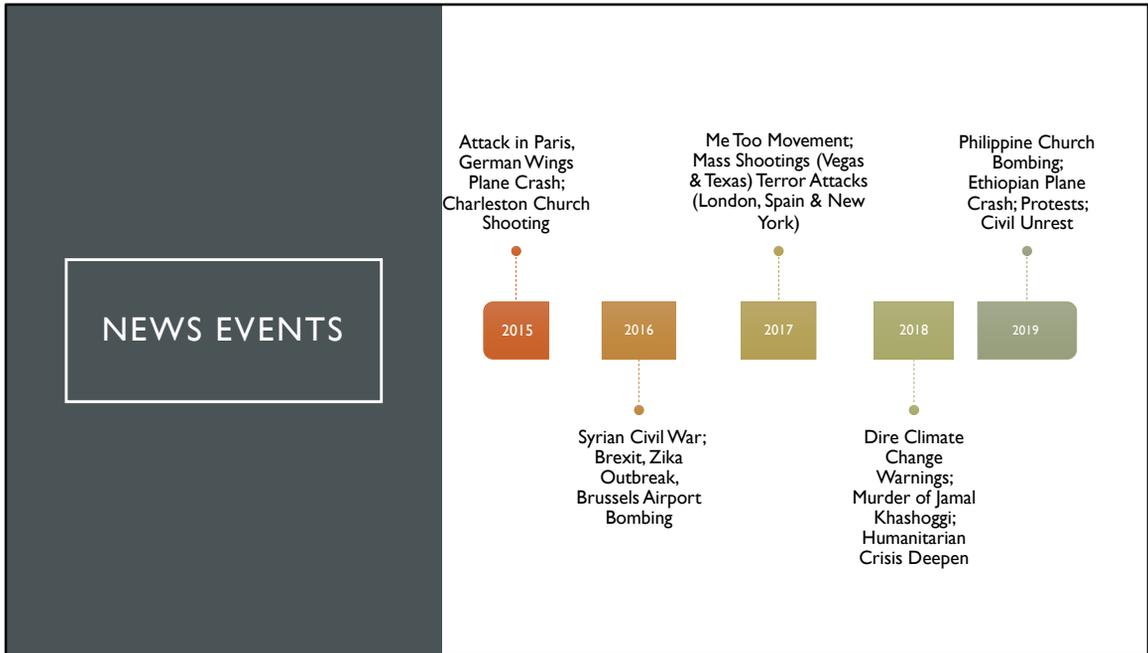
5. and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.
6. For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.
7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.
8. The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

## PRAYER OF THANKS

Thank you Father for your enduring faithfulness and for the inspired words of Scripture.

You know all the troubles we face and your plan is sure – for this we praise you.

Amen.



Throughout history, God’s divine providence is always in play; however, we may not always feel this way. ....When we look at news events we see bad news everywhere. We all see the headlines and some people wonder, what is this world coming to. As you can see just from some of the timeline of events listed from 2015 up to our present year, there is no end of bad news AND I’ve only listed a few! **<Read Slide>...** ..the world is chaotic and can be frightening when one lives with no hope of a coming king and saviour that will restore all things. ....**People tell me all the time they prefer not to watch the news because it’s so depressing.** Evil, pain and suffering exist because of Satan. Although we know that Christ has overcome Satan through victory on the cross, Satan’s influence still remains. As someone once said, “the dragon is slain, but the tail is still wagging” and I might add, ‘wagging fiercely”.

<https://equipper.gci.org/2019/05/sermon-for-july-28-2019>

News events:

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/year-review-13-biggest-news-stories-2015/story?id=35852690>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/16-stories-that-defined-2016/>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/17-stories-that-defined-2017/>

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/ten-most-significant-world-events-2018>  
<https://www.onthisday.com/events/date/2019>  
<https://www.infoplease.com/january-2019-current-events-world-news#Philippine%20Church%20Bombing>

## THE KEY



- God is never surprised by what we face, and he is never unprepared.
- We can trust that he knows what he is doing.
- The answer is Jesus.

<https://equippengci.org/2019/05/sermon-for-july-28-2019>

As Christians, we know we face trials and difficulties in this world. We also know there is an unseen spiritual world that influences what is happening and we are not immune from these spiritual dangers. ....As pointed out in the suggested sermon of the Equipper for this week <<<<<<**READ SLIDE** >>>>>> we have the key to these physical and spiritual dangers. < **Read last bullet point**>.....**The answer to all the evil we see and deal with is Jesus.** ...The scriptures we will focus on today will demonstrate that God does know what he is doing. We can trust him even when all around us things seem to be hopeless.

GENESIS 18: 20 – 23 (ESV) GOD'S PATIENCE



20. Then the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,
21. I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”
22. So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.
23. Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”

Let's turn to the Biblical account of the conversation with Abraham and God regarding the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. Just leading up to this conversation, God had shared great news with Abraham that him and Sarah would have a son, and then God shared with Abraham his plans to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their evil and wicked ways. **<Read Scripture>**

GENESIS 18: 24 – 26 (ESV) GOD'S PATIENCE



24. Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?
25. Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"
26. And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Continuing with verses 24 – 26 <Read Scripture> As I just read, Genesis 18 tells us how Abraham bargained with God because God had warned Abraham of his plan to destroy them. God didn't have to tell Abraham about his plan – he could have just wiped the two cities out – after all – he is God. ....But God in his mercy chose to tell Abraham, and patiently allowed Abraham to bargain with him even though he knew that 50 righteous men could not be found.

GENESIS 18: 32 (ESV)



“Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”

Abraham continued in this fashion and as noted in Genesis 18:32 God permitted Abraham to continue to bargain all the way down to 10. **<Read Scripture>**

These scriptures offer us encouragement. Sometimes we may think God does not hear us when we cry out to him – but this story tells us that God listens intently. He didn’t tell Abraham to get on with it – that he had more important things to do.

## GOD WAS PATIENT

Rather God was patient and heard Abraham's request. Sometimes we may wonder why God doesn't destroy evil immediately. He has the power to do it so why not? But **God understands the bigger picture** and just because we can't see the full picture doesn't mean that God that doesn't care or that his plan isn't the best. Sometimes it can be difficult when we need to wait, but as we know, it helps us to learn to trust God and turn to him in prayer.

## VALUABLE LESSON

- Trust God – he always know best
- God knows what he is doing



And so it was with Abraham and as we reflect on how God allowed Abraham to bargain with him – the valuable lesson Abraham learned and we can learn is to trust God as he always knows what his best. He knows what he is doing – even though circumstances around us may not appear that way.

## UNANSWERED PRAYERS

Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers  
Remember when you're talkin' to the man upstairs  
That just because he doesn't answer doesn't mean he don't care  
Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers



<https://www.bing.com/search?q=garth+brooks+unanswered+prayers+lyrics&form=EDGTC&q=SC&cid=cc46de1f32c40eb8f2abb9852703403&ref=cb5c92a699b44e0b9cc98857560d732a&cc=CA&stang=en-US&rel=AQ93OAhDTI+HzTvIpaQdniOOmRxPgSPx6UKqG8Gu5hSb09TfgocadDvudtomavmSgZ6eBu0u9t3Ah9bKPSsdj9ruNiC65yFUDKbm95bPV&plvar=0&PC=DCT>

Reflecting on this story of Abraham, a country song by Garth Brooks that was released in Oct 1990 came to mind. You may be wondering how this song would get mentioned today. This song is titled, “Unanswered Prayers”, and is about a guy who runs into an old girlfriend at a football game. He had asked God to make her the girl of his dreams but God didn’t answer that prayer. The guy came to the realization as he spoke with this old girlfriend and looking at his wife by his side, that God really knew what he was doing after all.....**the lyrics, go like this...<Read Slide>** .....He was thankful that God had answered his prayer but not in the way he expected. Isn’t that the way, I can think of times in my own personal life when I’ve been thankful that what I asked for didn’t happen. At the time, I thought it was a good idea but **looking back** I now see why prayers that I thought went unanswered were answered but in ways I didn’t expect, and knowing what I know now, God knew what was best.

## GOD'S REQUEST

God call once again upon Abraham to trust him with his only son Isaac

- An unspeakable request from a human perspective

Turning back to Scripture – there is another time that God called again upon Abraham to trust him. This time it was an unspeakable request from a human perspective. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Obviously God had a bigger plan in mind but if we didn't know the story, we would think this is a crazy request.

GENESIS 22: 12 - 14 (ESV)

12. He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”
13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.
14. So Abraham called the name of that place, “**The Lord will provide**” as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”



<https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-photo-of-ram-2538412/>

Abraham was obedient to God and was about to sacrifice his son but God intervened. **<Read Scripture>**..... There is much we can glean from these scriptures; however, today we are talking about trusting God for the outcome of our circumstances even when we might think God doesn't know what he is doing. God cares for us and we can take heart knowing that the Lord does provide.

## TRUSTING GOD TOTALLY

“to have faith in God, to “fear” God as Abraham did, means to trust God totally and to put oneself and all one’s life into God’s hands totally, even when the fulfillment of the promises seems to have receded into impossibility”

- Rutledge, 2017, p. 266

**The Lord will Provide**

Rutledge Fleming in the book, “The Crucifixion”, commented on this section of Scripture....Fleming stated, **<Read Slide>**

For Abraham, it must have felt that way when God asked him to sacrifice the only Son he had but Abraham trusted God for the outcome. We can take comfort knowing that God sees all and already knows the outcome - The Lord will Provide regardless of what we see all around us. Our hope is in Jesus Christ.

## TRUSTING GOD TOTALLY

- Jesus died on the cross and defeated our greatest enemy
- “Not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42 ESV)



[https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/three-crosses-on-sand-dune-next-256531771?irgwc=1&utm\\_medium=affiliate&utm\\_campaign=Pixabay+GmbH&utm\\_source=44814&utm\\_term=https%3A%2F%2Fpixabay.com%2Fillustrations%2Fsearch%2F%2520crosses%2520on%2520hill%2F](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/three-crosses-on-sand-dune-next-256531771?irgwc=1&utm_medium=affiliate&utm_campaign=Pixabay+GmbH&utm_source=44814&utm_term=https%3A%2F%2Fpixabay.com%2Fillustrations%2Fsearch%2F%2520crosses%2520on%2520hill%2F)

We understand the parallel to Jesus and his ultimate sacrifice for all humankind. Jesus Christ died on the cross and defeated our greatest enemy. I'm sure the disciples when seeing Christ hung on the cross didn't understand what was happening – I'm sure they must have felt all was lost – they certainly didn't understand God's great plan of salvation. **They would never have chosen the path God chose.** But as Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, “not my will but yours be done” so we must trust that God has us all safely in the palm of his hands with our eternal destiny secured.

PSALM 138: 7 – 8 (ESV)

7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me
8. The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands

Earlier our Scripture reading took us to Psalm 138. Let's look at verses 7-8 again **<Read Slide>** We all face troubles – sometimes we may feel discouraged – we are human after all especially when troubles never seem to end but we also know God doesn't forget about us, our families, our neighbors or the world. God doesn't forget about anyone.

## INDESCRIBABLE

“Did you know they reckon the Sun is around twenty-seven million degrees Fahrenheit in its unfathomably hot core? And burning up around four million tons of its own mass every second. And it’s so huge that even at that rate it would last another five or six billion years.....

Yet, they say in many ways the Sun is just a very average star. There are billions of others out there, many of them bigger and brighter than our Sun”

- Giglio, Redman, 2001, p. 87



Thinking further on how much God cares for us, let me direct your attention to this description of our Sun from the book, “Indescribable” <Read slide> Isn’t that amazing! If God so fashioned with care this universe for our pleasure and sent his Son to die so we can live – he is certainly not going to forget about us in the midst of our troubles.

**Sun & Earth Illustration – The sun is enormous and is about 109 times the diameter of earth** according to <http://coolcosmos.ipac.caltech.edu/ask/5-How-large-is-the-Sun-compared-to-Earth->. Isn’t that amazing! And just as just as Giglio and Redman pointed out when we look at the cosmos, it helps us to understand even further “how extravagant {God’s} divine love is” - - Giglio, Redman, 2001, p. 88 ..... God who created the Sun is on our side – he is in control – Christ holds it all together just by speaking a word – God is truly indescribable! **This is just one description of the amazing power** of our God and we can echo the same thoughts as the Psalmist did from Psalm 8: 4 - “what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”

## COLOSSIANS 2: 6 - 8 (ESV)

6. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,
7. rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
8. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Now, let's look at another Scripture from Colossians 2: 6 – 8 which tells us that Jesus Christ is our Lord, to remain rooted in him, to walk in him. **<Read Slide>**

These scriptures remind us that we must never let lies and deceit plague us. That is what Paul addressed to the believers in Colossae – they were struggling with their faith.....As mentioned by GCI.org...throughout this chapter of Colossians, Paul warned the followers of Jesus against false heresies, legalism, the worship of angels.

## LIES

- God is not real
- Jesus was not God
- God is not interested in you
- You aren't good enough
- You are not forgiven
- You need to earn salvation

<https://equippergci.org/2019/05/sermon-for-july-28-2019>

Why are these scriptures important in our discussion today? Well, lies can easily take hold of us and make us feel like God doesn't care. Look at some of the lies Satan tries to tell us. **<Read slide>** God is indeed present in our lives and works all things for his good. All these lies are meant to discourage us, to make us take our eyes off our great redeemer. It's meant to deceive us, and cause us to lose faith **We also know that everyone of these lies is defeated by the Word of God.....We must never let lies trap us and cause us to give up.** God is very aware of what is happening in our lives personally and in this world so we can be rest assured we have nothing to fear.

COLOSSIANS 2: 9 - 10 (ESV)

9. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,  
10. and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Never lose sight of the hope of Christ in us

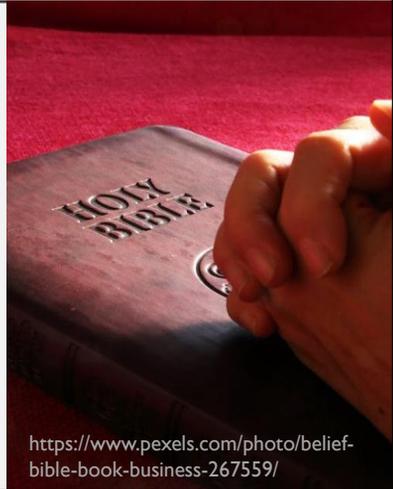
Paul continues in this chapter of Colossians and reminds us about the pure gospel message. **<Read Slide>** Jesus is our King and ruler over everything both physically and spiritually. As GCI.org states, when we view the atrocities going on in our world and suffer our own personal failures, we can be overwhelmed with the here and now, but we must never lose sight of the hope of Christ in us.

<https://equipper.gci.org/2019/05/sermon-for-july-28-2019>

## PRAYER

- The one constant in Jesus' life was prayer

<https://equipper.gci.org/2019/05/sermon-for-july-28-2019>



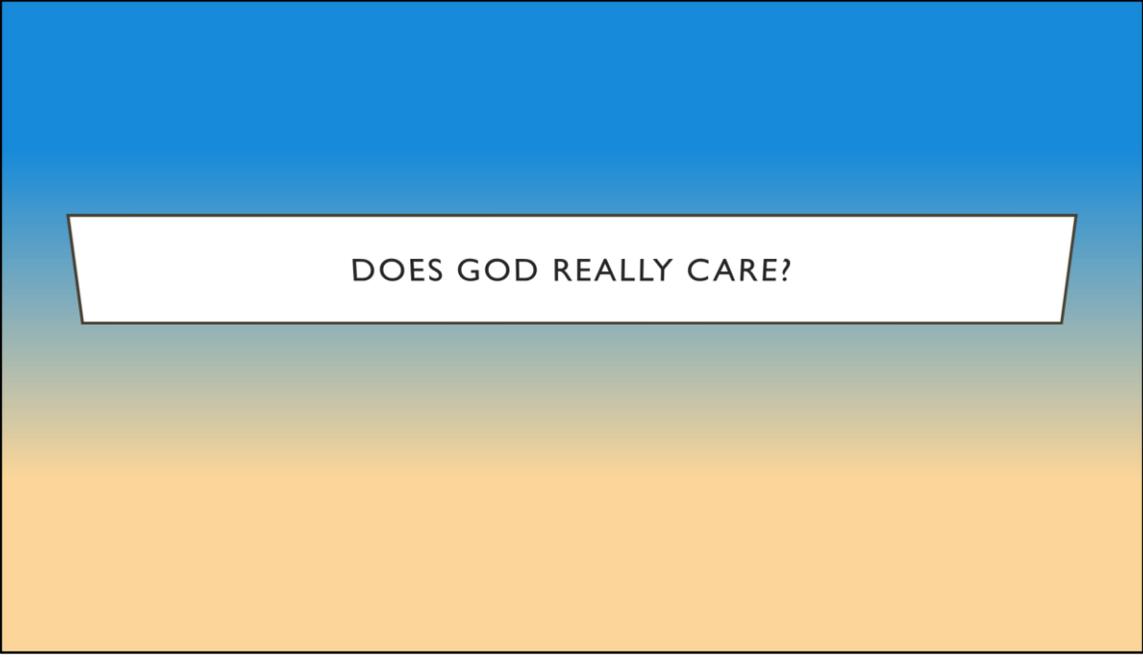
The question we need to ask is how do we remain steadfast and rooted in the love of God, continue in him and remain faithful? **<Read Slide>** Off course we only need to look towards Jesus for the answer. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus gave the example of prayer. Jesus sometimes stepped away from the crowds to pray. He chose quiet time to reflect and talk to the Father

LUKE 11: 1 – 4 (ESV)

1. Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”
2. And he said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.
3. Give us each day our daily bread,
4. and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Luke 11: 1 – 4 captures the example prayer that Jesus gave when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. **<Read Slide>**..... Later in church history another line was added: *“For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.”* as mentioned by GCI.org.....Jesus showed us that God wants us to bring our cares to him while acknowledging that he is the God of all humankind. We need to pray that God’s will be done because it is good.

<https://equipper.gci.org/2019/05/sermon-for-july-28-2019>



## DOES GOD REALLY CARE?

Max Lucado from the Inspirational Bible asked when there are troubled times, does God really hear our prayers? Many times when tragedies strike or trials continue, people also ask where is God – doesn't he care? Lucado shared the story of a 26 year old runner named Derek Redmond from Great Britain who participated in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Halfway through the race Redmond experienced severe pain in his right leg as a result of a torn hamstring..... When Derek reached the stretch a big man plowed through the crowds to get to him. It was Derek's father – Jim.

## OLYMPICS

- Was it his son's strength?
- What about the physical endurance?



Nothing could stop the father from getting to his son, even though the Coaches and others tried to stop him from going on the track. Jim wrapped his arms around his son's shoulder and they crossed the finish line together. Reflecting on this story we can ask a couple of questions, Why did his father leave the stands and rush to his son's side on the race track. **<Read questions from slide>** No – it had nothing to do with that. **<next slide>**

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

“..... Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference”

- Lucado, 1995, p687-688

Rather as Lucado highlighted his son was struggling and in pain and was struggling to finish the race. I point this out because we too can struggle even in our prayers but as Lucado goes onto say....<Read Slide> **We may think our prayers are inadequate but they are not because Christ takes them perfectly to the Father...**and we can take comfort knowing that even if we think our prayers are not good enough, the power of the prayer is in the one who hears them – and what great comfort we can take from that.

HEBREWS 4:16 (ESV)

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Compassionate

We have an intercessor, a mediator who lifts our prayers to the Father . Hebrews 4 talks about our great High Priest who ascended into Heaven and is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. Verse 16 says, **<Read Slide>**. We must never forget how **compassionate** our heavenly Father is – we must not let fear or discouragement stop us from approaching that great throne of grace during good times and when things seem to be falling apart.

LUKE 11: 5 - 8 (ESV)

5. And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves,
6. for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’;
7. and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’
8. I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

Now let’s turn back to Luke 11: 5 – 8 which continues the discussion Jesus had with his disciples about prayer < **Read Slide**>.....These Scriptures remind us once again **God cares about our needs, he wants us to come to him, to talk to him** about what we need, about the things that trouble us – he doesn’t want us to give up or stop trying. And it’s not for his benefit that we talk to him – it’s for our benefit to remind us that God is more than capable of fulfilling our needs. And as we just read from Hebrews, we can talk to God with confidence, or with boldness because we do have a compassionate high priest who understands us fully.

LUKE 11: 9 - 13 (ESV)

9. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
10. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.
11. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;
12. or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?
13. If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

As this scripture continues into Verses 9 – 13 **<Read Scripture>** .....We can take encouragement with knowing that God knows best. He always knows what he is doing, and knows what is best for us. When we look at the circumstances around us, we may not feel that way. ....So Jesus reminded us in these Scriptures that God desires to give us the best gifts – those that make an eternal difference but he also cares about our physical needs. We just need to take it to him in prayer.

## KINGDOM KNOWLEDGE

“For some of us the first tribulation of the day is just getting up. And then there is caring for ourselves. Then the commute. The work and other people. But knowledge of the kingdom puts us in position to welcome all of these....whatever comes will only confirm the goodness and greatness of the God who has welcomed us into his world...

.....We are to see every event as an occasion in which the competence and faithfulness of God will be confirmed to us”

- Willard, 1998, p. 382 - 383

Dallas Willard in his book, *The Divine Conspiracy* talks about the trials and tribulations that people experience. ....He says this, <**Read Slide**> We can take heart because we have a God who hears and listens to us, regardless of what we need to face each day. When tribulations come our way and come our way they will, we can trust God to see us through because of the hope that lies within us.

## WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NAME

You have no rival, You have no equal  
Now and forever, Our God reigns  
Yours is the Kingdom, Yours is the glory  
Yours is the Name, above all names  
What a powerful Name it is  
What a powerful Name it is  
The Name of Jesus Christ my King



- Hillsong Worship

In conclusion, I was struck by the lyrics to the song by Hillsong Worship < **Read Lyrics**> .....You have no rival, you have no equal – we can take comfort when we turn on the news and we hear bad news after bad news. There is no equal – Jesus has defeated Satan! What a beautiful name and powerful indeed is the name of Jesus Christ our King!

**God knows what he is doing – he had the answer all along – which is in Jesus Christ our Lord – the Hope for all humanity. ....Closing Prayer**

<https://www.google.com/search?q=what+a+wonderful+name+is+it+lyrics&oq=what+a+wonderful+name+is+its&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j0l5.15132j1j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>