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TRUST

Richard: This is Messages of Hope and I'm Richard Fox.

As we move closer towards minimal restrictions with the Coronavirus, there is still a lot of uncertainty. Will the disease take off again? Will it get out of control? How will the rollback of Government support affect me? What will end up happening when things like Jobkeeper and Jobseeker end? How much of life will really get back to 'normal?' It can leave you wondering "where should I place my trust?"

Trevor: I was a bit of a worrier so I lost a lot of sleep and worry about the, what ifs. A lot of them never ever happened but you'd feel pretty rotten. I'm not sure how we'd have gotten through some of these things if God hadn't been a part of our lives.

Richard: Today, I'm talking to Trevor Keller about trusting God in uncertain times. Trevor grew up in rural South Australia and ran his own mixed farm. He knows the heartache of losing a healthy crop at the last minute due to unpredictable weather. How worry and anxiety can play on your mind and add even more stress to challenging situations. At the age of 39 he had a major life change, leaving the farm and becoming a pastor. Learning a whole new set of skills and moving from one community to another, supporting people in all kinds of difficult situations. Plenty of uncertainty there! Trevor is retired now, and I was interested to find out the part God played in the ups and downs of his life, and why he felt he could trust God to get him through.
Trevor, tell us how you first encountered God in your life.

Trevor: I guess that was on the farm that I came to. Well, I probably never questioned that God was around the place because the changing of the seasons and all that, it just happened and thought he was in control sort of thing. And, I guess going back over the years, the first thing I can remember about Jesus was as probably about a three year old being with my mum in the cow shed.

And there was this thunderstorm and her singing, Jesus loves me. That's the first thing I remember about Jesus. I've come to believe that farmers are eternal optimists who also have incredible faith. And I guess that you're relying on, yeah, I would say on God's hand, you're relying on the seasons a lot in farming and I think you rely and trust much more when things are tough. Went through a few tough times on the farm. We had a mortgage and land prices went down a bit and we had a couple of really tough seasons. And I think that's where we learned what trust was about. There's a couple of seasons, through dry seasons, that were a bit tough, but there was also a season where we had really good crops looking as good as I'd had. And then within weeks we'd virtually lost them through rust. And that was really tough. Pretty rotten. You know, that it's almost like the bottom of the pit of your stomach, you know, kind of, I was a bit of worrier, so I lost a lot of sleep and worry about the, what ifs. A lot of them never ever happened, but the what ifs. And so you'd feel pretty rotten, but we discovered that it was probably through the tough times, you know, we got through better, than some of the good seasons and it was just incredible.

Richard: So how do you explain that?

Deleted: A thunderstorm and a cow shed. Healthy crops destroyed by rust. Cancer at 31. Dementia in a nursing home. Today on face to face, I'll be talking with Trevor Keller, a regular presenter on this program about some of the difficult times he's faced in his life. How was he able to get through and where did he place his trust? .

Deleted: t that point, he felt called to be a pastor and is currently serving in the community at Seaford South of Adelaide.

Trevor: I don't know. I can't explain it. I think sometimes when there was a good season, you'd tend to think, Oh, I've got a bit of money to spend, so I'll buy this and that. So we were a bit more careful. And I think that when things were tough, we knew that it was out of a hands. And so we, you know, you'd pray. Yeah, I think you just relied on God more to get you through. I'm not sure how we'd have gotten through some of these things if God hadn't been a part of our lives.

Richard: Another time you had to rely heavily on God was when your younger sister, Kay lost her life to cancer at the age of 31.

Trevor: That was a pretty tough time, in a time where I really felt him near because my sister Kay, had asked whether I'd take the funeral address. She said, Oh, I want my friends to know what I believed in, who I believed in. I want it, I want it to be a gutsy thing. And foolishly, I think at the time I said yes, that I'd do it. And I'd written the address the day before and that night I woke up about one o'clock and I just couldn't sleep. And I had this thing going through my head. I can't do this. I'll make an absolute fool of myself or others too. And I was focusing on John 14. That's what she'd chosen. Trust in God. Trust also in me, Jesus had said, and I said to God, look, I want to trust you, but I'm really struggling at this time. I don't think I can manage this. And these words kept coming into my head. Just wasn't in a loud voice. Just trust me, trust me. And I said, I want to trust you, but I'm really struggling to, cause I don't think I can. And the words went on, trust me, trust me. Then they got a bit louder and said, you trust me, I've written this message and I'm going to deliver it. So you trust me. And I said, well, God, I don't know whether that's you or where, who it is. But if it's you, I've never asked for anything like this, but I haven't slept for about three hours now. If that's you let me go to sleep. And I can't remember a single thing after that moment. It seems to me, I went instantly to sleep. And I felt really, really at peace about the whole thing and the next day the address was delivered. And so I believe He was there. He was the one that made that possible.

Richard: Today I'm talking with Trevor Keller about trusting God. Trevor, it seems that talking with God, has been an important part of learning to trust him. Can you describe for us what's actually happening in those conversations that are commonly described as praying.

Trevor: There are a lot of mysteries about prayer. There's a lot of unanswered questions about prayer, I know prayer is a very important part of our relationship with God, with Jesus. And I don't know, I mean, there's an answered prayer and I think God always answers, it's yes, no, wait a while. And it seems to me that wait awhile seems to be the most common thing, but, you know He's invited you to ask and seek and knock. And even though there's mysteries, I believe that we should take Him at His word and keep asking Him and sharing with Him. You know, I know as a kid, I never had any problems going and asking my dad for things. When I was a teenager, I used to go and ask him whether I could use the car and he'd say yes or no and I never really worried about whether it was right to ask him or whether it's not. So I think we can take everything to God in prayer, but I think it's as much for our benefit as it is for God. He wants us to grow in that relationship and prayer is part of that relationship. And sometimes I think, we think it's about asking, but I discovered in the latter years, or even during this last year, that it's not so much about our asking, than the company we keep. It's about keeping company with Him, spending time with Him and perhaps not even talking to Him, but listening to Him, that's important. And I think it's through those times that we might not necessarily get the answer that we might like. But we get an answer that brings us some peace or whatever.

Richard: You mentioned listening for God's voice in prayer. That can seem a bit vague for many people. What does it mean in practical concrete terms?

Trevor: I think sometimes that as we spend time just quietly trying to block out those other things that are going on in our mind that I believe He speaks to us through His words. Sometimes we might've read something and something would just pop out. And I don't think that's an accident. I think He's speaking to us.

I don't think I've ever heard God's voice booming. You know, there's a still small voice sometimes. I had a time recently where I was just quietly sitting praying with God and something inside of me said, look, go out into the garden and I think I'd been asking God at that time where he was, it was a bit of a tough moment. And I was just asking Him where He was. I was just sitting quietly and something sort of said, go out and sit in the garden. So I went out and sat on the seat in the garden and something inside said, look up, look up at the life. And I looked up and I said, well, I can't see any life. All I can see was some gum trees and a beautiful sunny day and something inside said, well, look at the birds.

I couldn't see any birds and within moments, there would've been 20 or 30 birds I just saw above me. Some people might say, Oh, you're mad, but I think it was God was saying, I'm here. You know, there's life all around you. So get up and live your life. Don't be weighed down by things that might be on your mind. I think I'm learning to listen to that still small voice that speaks to my conscience and heart, much more than I have.

Still a bit hard to trust sometimes, but trust is taking that step forward, I suppose. And believing that God's there.

Richard: Earlier in the program, you talked about an early memory being with your mum and the cow shed. Now there's an interesting twist to that story. Would you share that with us?

Trevor: It is. I guess that that's my first recollection of Jesus, my mum singing Jesus loves me. And now my mum is in a home. She has dementia and we struggled to get some recognition from her. But the thing was she sang Jesus loves me to me as a child. I sing Jesus loves me to her now as my mum. And it's as we sing this song that you get some recognition and some response from her too.

So Jesus loves me has turned a full circle. A really special thing is that it's those things that she learned when she was younger, like, Jesus loves me, like the Lord's Prayer. We can say the creed with her and pray with her and she wants you to do that. So that's really special. And as I think of Jesus loves me, I'll always remember it was in the time of a thunderstorm and that's one thing that I often think of, you know, in the storms of life, Jesus loves me, I know because the Bible tells me so.

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