

## **Growing in Trust in the Lord** **Kitty Cleveland**

Hi friends, I'm Kitty Cleveland and welcome back to our Pray More Novena's Healing Retreat. Let's start with a prayer.

### **Opening Prayer**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Lord Jesus, we need you. We need more and more of you in our lives. Lord, we want to trust you, we ask you to increase our trust. Lord, give us that grace to let go and to let God, to know that you are in control, we are not and that you alone are trustworthy. We love you, Lord. Increase our love, increase our faith, increase our trust in you. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

### **Lean on Him**

So, friends, I'm so glad to be with you. The last talk, we talked about how to put God at the center of your life. And I shared with you my little bitty card. You might want to get on. Make one for yourself. Put God in the center and everything will come together. And so today we're going to talk about trust and "Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence." Maybe you're familiar with that little book. It is a classic. I recommend everyone get it. It's the kind of book you want to memorize every single page. So "Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence." Also, "Abandonment to Divine Providence."

Many years ago, my husband and I were on a retreat. We've been married almost 30 years now. And there was something called a trust walk. Maybe you've done something like this. We had never done this before. And we had to climb up this tall ladder to a ropes course. And then each of us were walking on our own rope with a tether holding us on by a chain in case we fell. And then the whole idea was we had to lean against each other as we ascended this rope towards a platform. Now, this was not something my husband, who is a little bit something of a control freak, was excited about, okay? And maybe his wife is a little bit of a control freak as well. But I was willing to play along. And so, we were pressing against each other's hands and we were getting closer and closer but as we go closer to the platform, the ropes became farther and farther apart. So, we had to lean in more and more and more and more uncomfortable angle to the point that if the other person let go, we were going to fall.

And so we got to that point and my husband was starting to panic. And I was talking to him like, "Honey, look at me, look at me, lean on me, lean on me, trust me." And he's like, "I can't, I can't." And he let go and grabbed onto the rope and then I fell. Fortunately caught by the chain. And I was like okay, we've got some work to do. I'm happy to say we've come a long way.

But this can be like our relationship with God as well, isn't it? That as we progress in the spiritual life, He asks us more and more to lean on Him, to lean into Him, to trust Him, to provide all we

need. I wrote a song about this called, "God Will Provide" based upon my high school alma mater motto, which was Deus providebit. God will provide. It's a basic fear that humans have had since the beginning of time about what we are to eat, what we are to drink, what we are to wear. But what did Jesus say in Matthew chapter six? Don't worry about all of these things. Your Father clothes the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, He cares for them. How much more will He care for you? O ye of little faith. *Seek first His kingdom and then all of these things will be given to you besides.* I'll put that scripture quote, that reference down below in the notes so that you can go back and meditate on that.

It's something that we all struggle with. Jesus spoke about it for a reason. But our God is good. He is faithful and He continues to give us opportunities to lean more and more upon Him and not on our own understanding or our own resources. It's a tremendous gift when we get to that point in our lives when our own resources aren't enough.

## **A Calling to Work for God**

A lot of times we hear about people hitting rock bottom. Yep, people who have struggled with addiction or have been workaholics and then the market crashes and they lose all of their savings, and they're on their knees because they're at the end of their own rope so to speak. And God is all they have left. And I imagine there's a big smile that comes from the heart of the Father at that moment. "Now, my child, you are learning that I am good, and I am God and you are not. Trust me."

One of the first opportunities I had to really take a leap of faith was when I was making my first CD of Christian music. At the time, I had been practicing law with my father not very well. I don't think like a lawyer. I just kept thinking can't we all get along? And I was working on my first CD and I didn't have the money to do it. All I had was debt from all these misguided postgraduate degrees that I had embarked upon. And I really was kind of afraid of letting people know that this was the dream in my heart. It had been the dream in my heart for probably 15 or 20 years at that point. I was now well into my 30s. I had heard the call in high school to sing for the Lord. And I had many detours. But finally, I knew the Lord was calling me to do work that was healing, that was life giving, to call me out of law.

And I mentioned this last year when I did the videos that the day that I decided to leave my father's law practice, and to embark on a Christian music career, to sing for Him in the church and wherever He led me, that very day, the FBI showed up at our law firm. And they announced to the public and to all of us that one of our clients was being accused of bribing state politicians to vote for legislation favorable to his business. And they cast a very wide drag net to try to indict some politicians that they were really after. And my father, and I got caught up in that net. It was a terrifying time.

But boy was that a lesson for me because I had heard the Lord very clearly calling me to leave the practice of law and to do work for Him that was healing and life giving. And so, the day that I left was the day that world ended.

## **Challenging Times Challenge our Trust**

My dad had many opportunities, of course, to lean on the Lord, to learn to trust Him because he was completely at the end of his resources, especially when he was sent to prison for 10 years for a crime he didn't commit. Miraculously I was spared indictment, but my heart was broken and I had to keep pressing in. I started going to adoration for an hour a day, daily mass, asking the Lord to help me understand how a loving God could let this happen. Those are the times that really challenge our trust in Him. But while they were reading the guilty verdicts against my dad in the courtroom, I closed my eyes, I was sobbing, and was given a very special grace in that moment because I saw the Divine Mercy Image of Jesus. It was like someone was holding it right in front of my face. And I just kept repeating over and over again, Jesus, I trust in you. Jesus, I trust in you.

Maybe you're at a place like that right now. A lot of us are. We don't know how we're going to get through this. And so the Lord says, "Trust me. I love you. I know you. I know what you're going through. Trust me and I will provide for all that you need." These are the moments when we grow light-years in spiritual maturity, when we learn to really let go and trust in the Lord.

## **His Grace is Sufficient**

When my father lost the appeal, we were shocked, we were sure he was coming home. But we lost the appeal. And I ended up going to adoration and writing a song for my dad called "Surrender." And I think I included this last year; I'll include it again in the links below in the show notes the song I wrote for my dad because the scripture passage that was sent to him became profoundly meaningful to him and to all of us and my family. But it was sent to him, well, first of all, it was shared by our friend Patty Mansfield. This was before the trial even began. It was 2 Corinthians 12 and so we opened it up and it's the passage where St. Paul begs God to remove the thorn in the flesh. Maybe there's something you're going through right now and you've been begging God to take it from you. And He doesn't seem to be hearing your prayer.

St. Paul said he begged God three times to remove this thorn in the flesh. We don't know what it is. Something that was tormenting him. And the reply of God is, "*My grace is sufficient for you. My grace is enough for you for in weakness, my power is perfected.*" Meaning when we are weak, then we need God. We recognize our need for God and He can show up for us and show off for us. And we can just start thanking Him now for what He is going to do. Can you do that with me right now?

Let's just thank Him. Lord God, Father God, you are good. You are so good. You are love. You love me. You know me. You're for me. I delight your heart, not because of what I do but because of who you are in me, of who you made me to be. And I just thank you and praise you right now, Father for all of the good that you're doing, even when it looks like it is just darkness outside and I don't know what to do. You are going to make it all work for the good. Romans 8:28. Because we love you and you promised that you will make work for the good all things for those who

love you and are called according to your purpose. That's you, that's me. He makes it all work for the good.

So, take heart, my friends. Jesus is trustworthy. If you don't have the Divine Mercy image in your home, I want to encourage you to get it. Keep it close to you, put it on your bathroom mirror, put it on your kitchen sink. Put it on the dashboard of your car. And whenever the anxiety starts welling up, take those thoughts captive to Christ because remember, we have an enemy and he wants to steal our peace. So, take those thoughts captive. We are not our thoughts. Take an observer's perspective on those thoughts that are causing you anxiety, causing you not to trust and just put a stop to them and just block it. You know how you block it? Jesus, I trust in you. I choose to trust you. You are good. Just say what is true. Remind yourself of what is true. Remind yourself of the words of God. When we are weak, then we are strong. God's power is perfected in us. So be not afraid. I've got so many songs to share with you on this one. We have "Be Not Afraid," we have the song I wrote for my dad while he was in prison called "Surrender." We have "God Will Provide." I'll hook you up.

## **Leap in the Arms of the Lord**

The Lord knows you. He loves you. He's with you at the soul of your soul. He has plans in line for you, plans for your welfare, not for woe. Trust Him. Trust Him. He knows where you're going. It's a trust walk. Lean into Him. And He will catch you.

I'm going to close with one last thing. I shared last time; my mom sent me this. My mom, God bless her. Joey Cleveland, Caruso now. She sent me another card that had the picture of a man looking at him from behind and he was standing on a cliff about to take a high dive, well, actually, he was in mid-dive. And you just see air around him, you don't see where he's going to land. And it said beneath that, "Leap and the net will appear."

The Lord invites you to leap into His arms, to trust Him. He is trustworthy. And if you feel like you don't know Him well enough, well, it's time to get to know Him. Spending that time in prayer, putting Him first, taking Him seriously, taking your prayer life seriously. And not just in the bad times but in the good times too to make it part of your routine, part of your life. Walking hand in hand with the God who made you and who made you for Himself and who will one day welcome you home with arms open wide.

## **Closing Prayer**

Let's pray. *In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Jesus, I trust in you. Jesus, I trust in you. Jesus, I trust in you. Lord, you make all things work for the good. I can leap into your arms, and you will catch me. And if we fall, I'm thinking of St. Teresa of Avila right now falling in the mud puddle and looking up and seeing you, laughing at her. And she said, "If this is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few." Lord, we love you, we praise you, we adore you, we trust you no matter what. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

Until next time, friends, this is Kitty Cleveland signing off. God bless you.