

The Lord is My Strength

We all encounter difficult times. Sometimes we see them coming and other times we are completely surprised. Even strong believers can be tripped and caused to stumble by terrible life circumstances. This has been the experience of God's people since the beginning of time. Great people of faith are not exempt from trouble, even the circumstances or distress it causes. They feel the same pain, guilt, despair, and shame. So what is different for them and people of no faith? It is not that they have special strength themselves but they have access to a power beyond themselves who cares for them even in life's trials. The power is not mysterious – He has made himself known to His people. The writer of Psalm 27 gives a wonderful firsthand account of how God works in the middle of struggles.

Read Psalm 27

- Confidence in times of strength ~ Verses 1-6
- Verses. 1-2: With the Lord there is no fear.
- Verse 3: When I am under attack, I will be confident.
- Verse 4: I ask of the Lord that I may:

1. Dwell: “seek community” – Be numbered among those who fear God.
2. Behold: “seek beauty” – “Whatever is lovely or of good report...”Phil 4:8
3. Inquire – “seek spiritual understanding” – Be led by truth

- Verse 5: God will hide me in His dwelling place; put me upon a safe rock.
- Verse 6: When God has delivered me, I will sing praises

Confidence in times of weakness ~ Verses 7-14

- Verse 7: God have mercy and hear me.
- Verse 8: I will seek the face of the Lord—an audience.
- Verses 9-10: When I feel abandoned by family [support system], I will turn to God
- Verses 11-12: Teach your ways and level my path – keep me thinking correctly.
- There are many who want me harmed and they are using malicious tactics; even I am getting troubled.
- Verses 13-14: Even in these troubling and disturbing times, I have confidence. I will see God’s justice done; I must be patient, take heart, and wait for the Lord.

CS Lewis ~ A Grief Observed*

“No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness, the yawning. I keep on swallowing.

At other times it feels like being mildly drunk, or concussed. There is a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me. I find it hard to take in what anyone says. Or perhaps, hard to want to take it in. It is so uninteresting. Yet I want the others to be about me. I dread the moments when the house is empty. If only they would talk to one another and not to me.

There are moments, most unexpectedly, when something inside me tries to assure me that I don’t really mind so much, not so very much, after all. Love is not the whole of a man’s life.

Meanwhile, where is God? This is one of the most disquieting symptoms.

Not that I am [I think] in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about Him.”

Craig Barnes, Yearning*

“In God’s search to find us, he enters every dark corner of life. Thus, our saving hope is not to be rescued from the dark world, but to live in the darkness by the light of Christ.

We don’t usually think of salvation as having God with us. We would rather think of it as our being with God, as being saved from how it is. We would rather think of “the victorious Christian life.” But in Jesus Christ, God is revealed as the Savior-Immanuel, which means that salvation is not our ascent out of the hard, pain-filled, compromised conditions of this world. Salvation is God’s descent down to the lost world that he loves.

Jesus...does enter every one of those life-threatening situations, that he might find us there. Perhaps that is really the only blessed thing after all.

Our only hope is that, in Christ, God has come looking for us. When he finds us, he won’t settle for anything less than empty and open hands. That is the only way we can embrace him.”

Jesus knew difficulties in the human experience. He experienced them personally. When he offered hope, it was not from an observer but from an up close and personal perspective. He offers help.

Matthew 11:28 Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

Help

1. The presence of the Spirit of God brings a peace we cannot comprehend and will offer prayers on our behalf that we cannot pray.
2. The care of fellow believers who walk with us will let us know that we are not alone.
3. The power of the Word of God that has nurtured the people of faith for thousands of years will be a source of comfort, strength and direction.

First Place 4 Healthis a place of help and healing. There we will find the elements of God’s healing presence for mind,

body, spirit and soul. It is a great place to find a model of God's grace. From your First Place 4 Health experience, you will have a perspective so that in the future...you will know a grace community when you see it. You will know how to be a grace community when others need it.

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