

Occasional Update #26

6 November 2024

Fear – or Faith?

Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God ...

“**Fear**” – afraid, disturbed, anxious, worried, troubled, concerned, ...

Of course, we all go through times of fear. Sometimes it is reasonably minor, but at other times it is extremely difficult to face or overcome. The words “Fear not” occur many times in the Bible – obviously because fear is very common! For example: God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary, and she was afraid, but the angel said to her, “Fear not, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ... You will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name JESUS.” (Luke 1:30-31)

We all go through frightening times, but God’s Word shows us that this is not only common, *but* He is still with us; we don’t necessarily have to understand it – but we do need to trust Him!

Probably the great majority of people today fear what is happening in the world around them – fear of the present, and the future. This is especially true of those whose faith is not in Almighty God. Faith in the Lord casts out fear.

The following three Psalms speak of difficult and fearful things that may happen; but they also speak about our faith in the Lord, and His protection.

As we read through these Psalms, try to read them as if you had never read them before ... and *receive* them as God’s words for us! Think about them, and pray through them, and believe for God’s **Protection, Guidance, Strength** and **Salvation** – spiritually, and in our daily lives, with the situations we face.

Psalm 91: The LORD is my Refuge and my Fortress

1-2 You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, “**My refuge and my fortress**; my God, in whom I trust.”

3-4 For He will deliver you from the snare of the hunter and from the deadly pestilence; He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and defence.

5-6 You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.

7-8 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

9-10 Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

11-12 For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

13-14 You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. Those who love Me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know My name.

15-16 When they call to Me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue them and honour them. With long life I will satisfy them and show them My salvation.

Psalm 27: The LORD is my Light and my Salvation **A PSALM OF DAVID**

1 **The LORD is my light and my salvation; who shall I fear?** The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple.

5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies round about me, therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His Tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice; have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 When You said, "Seek My face", my heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."

9 Do not hide Your face far from me; do not put Your servant away in anger. You have been my help; do not leave me, nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies.

12 Do not deliver me over to the will of my enemies, for false witnesses have risen up against me, and they breathe out cruelty.

13 I would have fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the LORD.

Psalm 46: The LORD is my Refuge and my Strength

1-3 **God is our refuge and strength**, a very present help in times of trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth is removed, and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters of the sea roar and are troubled, though the mountains shake with their swelling.

4-5 There is a river, the streams of which shall make glad the city of God – the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that shall be right early.

6-7 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

8-9 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations He has made in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow, and destroys the spear; He

burns the chariot in the fire.

10-11 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Remember, we all do go through dark and difficult times, but God has said He will never leave us or forsake us. We **do** go through – and God goes through with us!

Fear not! Put your faith in the Lord God, who is with us, and for us ... and we are with Him – forever!

Some ways of helping one another in times of fear

Pray for one another. Encourage one another. Do what we can to support and help one another in practical ways. This should be part of what the church is doing, and what we individually are doing!

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of His Spirit, be with you always!**

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