

Wednesday, 24th March 2021



THE CANDLESTICK

My help cometh from the Lord (Ps. 121:2)

God will never send you anywhere, or lead you anywhere, He is not prepared to accompany you. Therefore, His promise for His people has always remained, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest (Ex. 33:14).

While the road is often windy, and it might seem as if it has no ending, but along each part of the journey you travel, as a Christian you own the confident knowledge, The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him (Ps. 28:7).

Time and again throughout the Bible this is the testimony of God's people ... such as when the exile Moses was standing before the burning bush, and the young inexperienced David in front of Goliath, and Daniel in the lions' den. ... The age-old truth of God's Word is His promise to be our ... very present help in trouble (Ps. 46:1).

How do you see the future developing when we 'come out' of lockdown? Are you confident, or are you apprehensive? Do you find it unsettling to see the degree of upheaval throughout our society and nation? Are you concerned about your family's security and safety? Are you anxious about the condition of the Church in general, and our fellowship in particular? ... Certainty and expectation seem to be rapidly dwindling concepts!

There is no doubt it takes courage and stamina to contend with the issues abounding around us, but you *can* be sure of this ... it is the Lord's will and plan we should live in these times, otherwise He would not allow them to be

... Also, He will empower us during the instability to stand firm for Him for that is our purpose. That is our reason He has for us being here at this time.

It is easy to worry and to be concerned but surely our faith in God *must* be our great stabilizer for He provides in His Word solid answers to life's queries and questions. He is not merely a 'help' in times of trouble, but He is *especially* a 'very present help in trouble'. ... He is present for He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). *That* is the assurance He gives His people to follow Him confidently and to serve Him fearlessly.

Adversity is a fact of life ... but so also, for the Christian, is the ongoing work of Jesus Christ. God is present in us daily by the Holy Spirit to conform us into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29) so that when we *shall* see Him, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (I Jn. 3:2). ... And it is this glorious hope each child of God cherishes and is working towards.

Like the rest of the population, we have our misgivings about what might be ahead of us in this world, for we are only human ... and life *is* real, with its ups and downs. However, since God promises to be our aid in times of trouble, He knows the difficulties His children face and He will be with us. Paul described our daily experiences as belonging to 'our outward man', - our flesh and bones, - which perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (II Cor. 4:16). ... Our spirit is renewed daily. How do we explain that? We explain it because of the undeserved grace we receive from our Heavenly Father day-by-day.

As Christians, we do not dodge the real-life issues, but as the psalmist illustrates when he was surrounded by his enemies, **Ps. 27:2** When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. ³ Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. ... Lord, we ourselves have *no* power against what we are facing, but Lord, we know *You* have, and all our attention is upon *You*.

God keeps His people. We are precious to Him for His Son died to save us, not only for time, but for eternity. He openly declared, **Jn. 6:37** All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ... and in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed to His Father, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them (Jn. 17:9,10).

In other words, rather than looking around us, we look ... for my help cometh from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not suffer */my/* hand to be moved: He that keepeth */me/* will not slumber (Ps. 121:2,3)

God never says anywhere in His Word His people will avoid the trials of life, in fact, He indicates we shall be confronted by them ... but again He promises, When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee (Is. 43:2). ... We *will* pass through them, and some of you *are*, but we are to remember and rest in the assurance God's presence remains with us all the way.

Days of darkness still come o'er me,
Sorrow's path I often tread,
But His presence still is with me;
By His guiding hand I'm led.

He will keep me till the river
Rolls its waters at my feet;
Then He'll bear me safely over,
Where the loved ones I shall meet.