

A Promise Learned as a Child, a Hope Remembered as an Adult

I remember the scene like it was yesterday. There I was, sitting in first grade Sunday School class, the very class where my mom taught. Each Sunday after the roll was taken, she would leave briefly to take the class records upstairs. She would promptly return, but for some reason, those few minutes seemed like days. I remember trying hard to not be frightened, thinking to myself, "I'm in church. I am safe. There is no reason to be scared." Those realities did not change my struggle and I was still afraid.

Sadly enough, that scene would be played out in my life as a young child over and over again. I would sit in school as a first grader and try with all my little might to not be upset, to not be afraid, but to no avail. My fear may have been completely unwarranted, and quite embarrassing, but it was real...it was very real.

My parents taught me a verse to help me deal with my fear (and probably, to try to make sure I could actually live to see the second grade). The verse is Psalm 56:3 and I learned it this way, "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee*". My parents taught me to think about that verse whenever I was frightened. And so, countless times as a child, I found myself repeating that verse over and over and over again. I can't say that it always made my fear subside instantaneously, but it did help to build my faith in God even during difficult circumstances and eventually, I learned to trust in the Lord regardless of my situation.

I have found myself repeating that verse even as an adult. On May 3, 1999, when the most powerful tornado of my lifetime came within one mile of my house (which I was in), I prayed Psalm 56:3 a thousand times. When my firstborn son, Cael, was having difficulty breathing immediately after his birth, I said that verse repeatedly. Was I scared that I might die on May 3? I sure thought that it was possible. Did the thought go through my mind of what would I do if I lost my son? More than I care to remember. And yet, even in the face of a tornado and even in the operating room with my wife and son, I found myself, instinctively, turning to Scripture.

I have learned some valuable lessons in my lifetime. *Tornadoes are stronger than me* and *I don't have the power to sustain life* are just two of them. I will tell you another one I have learned. When you have nothing else to cling, the Word of God is more than enough. When you have no strength within yourself, His grace is sufficient.

A question for you

What are your fears? Yours may be as innocent as a young child who is afraid to be away from his mom for the first time or yours may be more serious. Maybe your fear involves your child who is overseas fighting in war. Perhaps your situation includes a frightening medical diagnosis. Your fear may be in the form of a threatened divorce, or rebellious children or a loved one living their final days.

I cannot be certain of what fears exist within your heart, but I do know that they are there. Every single one of us has to deal with anxiety, hurt, fear and trepidation. Here is my question to you: *what are you trusting in?* Or, better said, *who are you trusting in?* Many trust in government, or the military or savings accounts or medicine. All of these things are good, but they are not adequate. As the Psalmist wrote many years ago, "Some trust in chariots, some trust in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."

My prayer for you is that whatever you are facing today, you will trust in the Lord. Maybe you, like me, will experience the blessing of turning to Scripture to help get you through whatever struggles come your way. In your day of trouble, just remember the simple promise I learned as a child and the hope that I cling to even today, "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee*".

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P.S. Thank you mom and dad for teaching me the Word of God!