

GOD WITH US BRINGS PEACE

- A. Introduction: Sadly, many sincere Christians are moved from their faith and confidence in God by life's hardships. For many months, we've been working on how to become and remain steadfast and unmovable no matter what comes our way. I Cor 15:58
1. We've made the point that some are moved because they mistakenly think that being a Christian means no more problems or only problems that are easily solved because God is now our Father.
 - a. Therefore, when troubles come they are tormented with thoughts and emotions. What's wrong with me? Why does all this bad stuff happen to me? What's wrong with God? How could He let something like this happen to me? Why doesn't He fix this?
 - b. There's no such thing as a problem free life because we live in a world that has been damaged by sin.
 1. Jesus Himself said: In this world you will have tribulation (trials, distress, and frustration). Moths and rust do corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It's the nature of life in a sin cursed world. John 16:33; Matt 6:19
 2. However, this life is not all there is to life (there's more to come after this life). And God's primary goal right now is to bring men to saving knowledge of Himself through Jesus so that they can have a life after this life (not to end life's present troubles). Matt 16:26; Luke 12:16-21
 2. This doesn't mean that there is no help for us in the trials of life. Some circumstances can be changed through prayer and the power of God. Others, we have to walk through as they are and deal with the best we can by the power of God. The Bible helps us know which is which (lessons for another day).
 - a. But notice that Jesus' promise to those who are His is that we can have peace of mind in the hardships of life. This peace comes to us primarily through God's Word.
 1. John 16:33—And now my words are finished. I have spoken them that, in all the life which you live in communion with me, you may have peace—a constant stay for your hearts amid the tribulation of this world. (Riggs Paraphrase)
 2. This is a tremendous promise for us who live in a sin cursed earth where life is very difficult. We can have peace of mind in the midst of life's trials, peace that passes understanding.
 - b. One of the ways that God's Word gives us peace of mind is by providing us with a record of how God helped people in the midst of this sin cursed earth.
 1. We looked at Joseph, a man who experienced great hardship. Acts 7:9-10 says that Joseph was hit with a huge trial, but God was with him and delivered him.
 - A. When we examine Joseph's story we find that God with Joseph meant that God provided what Joseph needed to survive his ordeal. God got him through until He got Joseph out.
 - B. Because God was with Joseph, what was meant to harm him worked for good, and God caused the circumstances to serve His purposes as He brought maximum glory to Himself and maximum good to multitudes of people.
 2. In this lesson we want to continue to talk about the fact that peace comes from knowing that God is with you, and because He is with you, you have what you need to make it through.
- B. The concept that God is with His people is found throughout the Scripture. The phrase "God with us" is often coupled with the statement "Fear not". We don't have to fear (we can have peace of mind) because nothing can come against us that is bigger than God who is with us.
1. The word "with" means in mutual relationship (*Webster's Dictionary*). Relationship or relation means an aspect or quality that connects two or more things as being or belonging or working together or as being of the same kind (*Webster's Dictionary*).
 - a. God is with everyone in the sense that God is Omnipresent or present everywhere at once. This "with" is more than that. It's relational.

1. Isa 41:10—Fear not; [there is nothing to fear] for I am with you; do not look around you in terror and be dismayed for I am **your** God (Amp); Isa 43:1-2—Have no fear, for I have paid your ransom; I have called you by name and **you are my own**. (NEB)
 2. God says: Because you are mine and I am with you (we are connected through relationship) when you encounter overwhelming troubles (water and fire are metaphors for such events) you won't be burned or swept away (permanently harmed or destroyed) because I am the Lord (the greatest Power) and I am **YOUR** deliverer (it's personal).
- b. God created us for relationship. He knew us before He formed the earth and chose us to become His sons and daughters through faith in Christ (Eph 1:4-5). Through the Cross of and the new birth we become sons of God. He is our Father. We are of God, born of God (I John 5:1; I John 4:4) We are with God and He is with us.
2. Hold that thought and recall something we looked at in the last lesson. In Ps 42:5 David declared that he was going to praise God for the help of His countenance.
 - a. The word translated countenance literally means face. However, most of the time, it is used figuratively to mean the entire person. The primary meaning of the word translated help is to rescue from distress or danger.
 1. Help of His countenance literally means: His presence is salvation. David knew that God was with Him and His presence with David meant help in time of trouble.
 2. The Hebrew word translated countenance in Ps 42:5 is also used in Ex 33:14. It is translated presence. God Almighty assured Moses as they set out on their journey from Egypt to Canaan that He would be or go with them. And He would give them rest.
 - A. The Hebrew word translated rest means to settle down. Note these translations: bring you to your resting place (Knox); will lighten your burden (Torah); put you at ease (Berkeley); settle you safe (Moffatt).
 - B. In other words, God promised: I will be with you and I will get you through until I get you out of the wilderness. When we read their story we see that that is exactly what happened.
 3. Remember, the wilderness was not "God's will for them". Canaan was God's will for them. But, because of the nature of life in a fallen world, there was no easy way for them to get to Canaan other than through the desert wilderness. But God was with them. One translation of Ex 33:14 says: I will lead you (AAT).
 - b. The people of Israel were not literal sons of God, born of God. (No one could be born again or born of God until Jesus paid the price for our sin. Lessons for another day.) But God did refer to Israel as a group as His son (Ex 4:23).
 1. And, His care for them is described as that of a Father caring for His son (Deut 1:31). Their experience pictures how God cares for His sons and daughters (including us).
 2. We've discussed in previous lessons how God cared for them on the journey. He guided and protected them. He gave them water, quail, and manna, and their clothes and shoes didn't wear out. Ex 13:21-22; Ex 16:4; Ex 17:6; Deut 8:4; etc.
 - c. We've also made the point in previous lessons that, despite God's presence and help, this group of people was completely dominated by what they could see and feel and did not have peace of mind during their journey. They didn't live with the awareness that God was with them and His presence with them was all they needed to get them through.
 1. God helped them anyway because they are part of redemptive history. The Redeemer (the Lord Jesus Christ) will come through this people group and they must return to the land where He will be born as God promised. Gen 15:16; Micah 5:2; etc.
 2. Their story is recorded in part to keep up from repeating their mistakes. They are an example to us of what not to do. I Cor 10:6-11

- C. How do we learn to live with the awareness that God is with us and that nothing can come against us that is bigger than God?
1. Ps 46:1 says that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help (always there and ready to help) in times of trouble. This is another way of saying that God is with us (v7, v11) and His presence with us is the help we need because nothing can come against us that is bigger than God.
 - a. The psalmist goes on to exhort people to think about this truth. Selah means to pause and think about this (v3, v11). He further admonishes them to be still and know that God is God. v10—Stop your striving, and recognize that I am God (Harrison); Pause a while and know that I am God (Jerusalem).
 1. Know has a wide variety of meanings and is used in a number of ways. The basic meaning is to ascertain by seeing; to learn, to perceive, to discern, to experience. Ascertain means to find out definitively; learn with certainty or assurance (*Webster's Dictionary*).
 2. We see God in His Word. God reveals Himself through His Word. The Living Word, the Lord Jesus, reveals Himself through the written Word, the Bible. We have to take time to see God in His Word. He is the source of faith and confidence. Rom 10:17; John 5:39
 - b. Knowing the nearness and bigness of God in a way that brings peace of mind is not automatic.
 1. Obviously God is with everyone in the sense that He is present everywhere at once. Paul told idol worshipping pagans that God is not far from anyone because in Him we live, move, and have our being. Acts 17:27-28
 2. Note that God wants us to seek Him. He doesn't force anyone into relationship with Himself. Seeking God (seeking to know and see Him) is a Bible theme. If you don't seek, you won't find. He wants our heart, mind, soul, and body (all of us) inclined toward Him, pursuing Him.
 - c. Ps 119:165 says that those who love God's love (His Word) will have great peace and nothing will cause them to stumble (move them).
 1. Ps 119:97 says that we express our love for God's Word by meditating (thinking about it) on it all day long. This doesn't necessarily mean that we recite verses all day long. It means that we assess everything in terms of what God says, not in terms of what we see and feel in the moment.
 2. This comes out of our view of reality. We have become persuaded that God is with us and that nothing can come against us that is bigger than God. Therefore, we have no reason to fear.
 2. Paul, who is a tremendous example of someone unmoved by life's trials, wrote to a group of people who were experiencing increasing persecution. They were in danger of being moved from their faith in Christ. The entire epistle to the Hebrews is an exhortation to stay faithful no matter what.
 - a. At the conclusion of the letter Paul makes the statement: Be content with what you have because God has said that He will never leave you or forsake you. Heb 13:5
 1. The word content literally means to ward off. When used figuratively it carries this idea: to be sufficient; to be possessed of sufficient strength; to be strong; to be enough for a thing, hence to defend or ward off. It's translated be content, be enough, suffice, be sufficient.
 2. In other words, when God is with you, you have everything you need to make it through whatever you are dealing with because it's not bigger than Him, and He will get you through until He gets you out.
 - b. The rest of the verse makes this point clear. You can be content with what you have because you have God with you and He has said: I will never leave you or forsake you.
 1. v5—He (God) Himself has said: I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless, nor forsake nor let [you] down, [relax My hold on you].—Assuredly not! (Amp)
 2. Paul is quoting from Deut 31:6-8. At the border of Canaan, shortly before Israel entered the land to take control, God, through Moses, told them: Fear not for I am with you. I will not fail or forsake you. God reiterated the promise He made to Moses when the journey began: I

am with you. I will go with you and I will give you rest (bring you into a settled place, settle you safe). Ex 33:14

- c. Paul continues with the statement that God has made a promise to us so that we can boldly say: Heb 13:6—The Lord is my Helper, I will not be seized with alarm—I will not fear or dread or be terrified. What can man do to me? (Amp)
 1. Note: God has said (given us His Word) so that we may say (or keep our hearts from being troubled) and boldly proclaim the way things really are—not just how they look and feel in the moment.
 2. Note that this is not a word for word quote. This is a view of reality that has been changed by the Word of God. The reader has considered the evidence (God’s Word), thought about it, and has come to a settled conclusion that has reshaped his view of reality and affected the way he responds to trouble.
 3. That’s what happened to Joshua and Caleb. That’s why, in the face of overwhelming odds, they were able to say: Fear not. God is with us. He will fight for us. We will take the land. Num 13:33: Num 14:9
3. This isn’t a technique to ward off trouble—just say the right words and your problems will be solved!! It’s about changing your view of reality and then getting hold of your thoughts and emotions in the midst of your troubles.
 - a. It is normal to have emotions and thoughts that are stimulated by your circumstances. But you must recognize that, although feelings are real in the sense that you are really feeling them, they don’t necessarily have all the facts in your situation. Only God has all the facts.
 1. Joshua and Caleb felt fear when they saw walled cities and giants. But they knew that God was with them and that He promised to get them through until He got them out.
 2. Therefore, they refused to make decisions or take actions based simply on how they felt in the moment. They chose to acknowledge God with them and God’s promise to them.
 - b. We have to develop the skill or ability of getting hold of our emotions. You cannot stop yourself from feeling emotions. But you can choose where you’re going to focus your attention.
 1. What time I am afraid I will exercise my will and choose to trust you. I choose to exalt in and boast about your Word. I will fear no evil because you are with me. Ps 56:3-4; Ps 23:4
 2. Ps 42:5—David spoke to his soul (his mind and emotions). Why are you cast down, O my inner self? And why should you moan over me and be disquieted within me. Hope you in God and wait expectantly for Him, for I shall yet praise Him, my help and my God. (Amp)
 3. Ps 116:7—Return unto thy rest (repose, quiet, place of rest) o my soul because God has dealt bountifully. These men both recounted God’s power, His past help, and His present presence.
- c. When we encounter trouble, we tend to fixate on the circumstance and obsess over why this happened and how we’re going to fix it.
 1. Shut the why question down with: This is life in a sin cursed earth. But it didn’t take God by surprise. He sees a way to use it for good and He sees a way to get me through it.
 2. If there’s an action you can take that will fix the problem, then do so. If not, don’t fixate on what you can’t do, put your focus on God and what He can do. Let His supernatural Word and power do its work and impart peace to your soul.
- d. Ps 61:2—From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. (KJV)

D. Conclusion: We have lots more to say next week. Consider one though as we close. No matter what objections your mind, emotions, and circumstances bring up, answer them with: This is not bigger than God. He is with me and He will get me through until He gets me out. Bring peace to your soul.