

Sleeping with Lions

Hope during Hopeless Times

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Oh, how I wish that God would instantly resolve the crises I often encounter in my life. I wish that my suffering would end quickly. I wish that everything would become better, or at least, go back to the way things were.

Unfortunately, that doesn't always happen. Sometimes, God pulls us out of situations and sometimes He is with us amidst them.

The Old Testament prophet Daniel spent a night with lions in Daniel 6. Imagine that, a righteous and holy man is cast into a pit with savage and starving beasts. He was thrown in there by King Darius, who ruled Babylon, all because Daniel was praying to his God instead of him. I'm sure Daniel was terrified as he was cast into the lions' den. However, a while later, he was able to rest because God shut the lions' mouth.

Notice that God didn't intervene and prevent the King from casting Daniel into the den. I'm sure Daniel would have preferred that scenario. He would have preferred to avoid the utter terror that he would experience at the hands of Darius' men. He would have preferred the peaceful life he had before all this mess.

But that's not what happened.

Sometimes God pulls us out of the lions' den and sometimes He calms us in it. Jehovah Shalom (God our peace) quieted Daniel's heart while he was in the lion's den. Daniel didn't get rescued, he got reassurance. This was reassurance, that in the midst of the terror-filled experience, the God of the universe was with him.

Sometimes God calms the violent storm and sometimes His calming presence is with us as we go through it. Isaiah 43:1-2 says, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you". Notice that it says "through the waters" not out of the waters.

Sometimes God parts the sea (Exodus 14:21) and sometimes He helps us swim all the way to the other side.

Sometimes God opens prison doors as He did for Peter (Acts 12:3–19). And, sometimes He is with us, while in prison, just as he was with the apostle Paul as he sat in jail for more than two years (Acts 24:27).

Sometimes God pulls us out of the fire and sometimes He is in the fire with us, just as He was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3.

Maybe God will resolve our current situation and restore all things. Or, maybe He will be with us as we go through it and help us cope with the ramifications.

I wish God would remove all my problems, but sometimes He chooses to be with me as I walk through them. Psalm 23 says “when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death” He is with me. He guides me, gives me strength and comforts me, “I will fear no evil for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”

Job 11:18-19 says, “You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety.” You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid, and many will court your favor.” We can have hope knowing that we are not alone.

The old hymn says, “His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.” We don’t have to rely on your own strength, talent or resources. We can have hope knowing that Jesus, the “prince of peace” will comfort us. We are not alone, there is peace amidst our trials, and there is rest while we wait for the circumstances to blow over.

Psalm 3:2-6 says, “Many are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him.’ But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and He answers me from his holy mountain. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.

God will never leave us nor will He ever forsake us. He is near the broken hearted and will not abandon those in need.

It is when we are in hopeless situations and when we have nothing left, it’s when we are at the end of our rope and our backs are against the wall, when God’s power, love, mercy and grace comfort and strengthen us.

Zephaniah 3:17 says, “The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save... He will quiet you by his love”. And Isaiah 54:10 says, “For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,” Says the Lord who has compassion on you.”

At times I feel like a lamb who is being attacked by a wolf. Then Jesus, the good shepherd, comes and scoops me up into His arms and holds me tight while he fights off my adversary. However, I will often try to get my little paw out there and fight myself. That’s when I get anxious and stressed. Not to mention, scratched and bitten! If I

would just rest in the safety of the “Good Shepherd’s” arms, then things would go a whole lot better.

I can rest knowing that my tomorrow is already taken care of by God alone.

“His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.”
