When Life Strikes a Minor Chord
Hope for Those in Need
Prayer

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matthew 21:22

...he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

Isaiah 30:19

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

1 John 5:14-15

Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

Jeremiah 29:12

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Isaiah 65:24

Given to you with loving thoughts and prayers...
The Flood and the Flames
Dr. Thomas E. Ward

“...Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 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. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour…”

Isaiah 43:1-3

What a marvelous promise from the Word of God! So often “life strikes a minor chord” and we find ourselves in the midst of the flood and the flames. When trouble comes we often are overcome by fear. Let me say to you that God’s precious Word can conquer the fears that you have and overcome all your anxieties. Isaiah 43:1 says, “...Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.” If you are saved (redeemed) you belong to God. He bought you with the price of His own blood. He knows your name. You belong to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the God Who is the creator and sustainer of the universe. He cares about you very much.

Recently I came across Isaiah 43:1-3 when I was facing “the flood and the flames.” Never had I faced such fear and uncertainty. I was on the verge of tears for several days as I faced kidney surgery. Several times I had to get alone with God, and weeping, beg for His help.

Several weeks before surgery I had been injected with iodine intravenously and went into convulsions and nearly died. Now I was facing kidney surgery to correct the problem, and there was a chance that the problem could be tumors or I could lose the entire kidney. I was afraid, and I needed something special from God to handle this new fear that had gripped my heart with an iron hold.

It was then that I began to search the Scriptures for a promise from God that would give me strength to go through the surgery with courage and assurance that God was in control. I knew that God was not giving me this fear, for 2 Timothy 1:7 says, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” As I begged God for help, Isaiah 43:1-3 seemed to leap off the pages of Scripture and plant itself firmly in the depths of my heart. I found new hope and peace of mind as I rested in this great promise from God.

God does not promise the Christian that he will never have trials. In fact, just the opposite is true. Isaiah 43:2 says, “When thou passest through the waters...when thou walkest through the fire....” Everyone is going to face the “flood and flames” of life. It is true that many things that we must learn can only be learned though trials. However, the Christian can face these experiences of life with assurance that Christ is going to go through the flood and the flames with him to guide and strengthen him. I find three important promises within this wonderful passage of Scripture:

First, God’s Divine Presence will sustain us through the flood and the flames. Isaiah 43:2 says, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee....” We do not face our struggles alone. God is there in every situation. You will never have to face a circumstance, trial, or trouble in which God is not there to bring you through. Every flame and flood has a reason. I admonish you to lean upon Christ. He will always be there waiting to help and strengthen. He has promised “...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5).

Second, God’s Divine Protection will sustain us through the flood and the flames. The trials of life are inescapable. Every person must face them. But how wonderful to know that God is there to protect us with His omnipotent power. Isaiah 43:2 says, “...when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned....” Certainly the three Hebrew children who were cast into the fiery furnace learned that God’s mighty hand was able to protect even in what seemed to be a
hopeless situation. When facing a furnace heated seven times hotter than ever before, God was there to assist. In fact, after being taken from the furnace, Daniel 3:27 says, “...the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.” You can trust the living God for help and protection. He will strengthen you in your time of need.

Finally, God’s Divine Provision will sustain you through the flood and the flames. Many times it is not God’s will that we escape trouble, but rather His will that we learn of His provision through the trouble. I have seen God heal people, including myself, miraculously. But that is not always the will of God. As Christians, one of the most difficult lessons we must learn is how to accept the will of God. God’s will is always the best way for our lives, but not always the easiest way. The Apostle Paul, who had to be the greatest Christian that ever lived, had a thorn in the flesh. It was not God’s will to remove this thorn. However, God did provide Paul with extra grace to sustain him. Pain is a part of living. Even our Lord endured the sufferings of Calvary on our behalf because it was the will of God. God will provide whatever you need to face life’s struggles.

Friend, if the flood and the flames are upon you, turn to the Word of God. Anchor yourself to a promise from the Word of God. God will be with you; He will protect you; and He will provide for you. He is able, He knows your name, He says, “Fear not....”

Though the flood and the flames are upon you, God’s Word and His grace will sustain you. Never fear, He is there, And He knows every care. His love and His power will bring victory.

Fear

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Hebrews 13:6

And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? Mark 4:40

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. Psalm 46:1-3

For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Isaiah 41:13

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe. Proverbs 29:25

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Proverbs 3:24

Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.... Isaiah 49:15-16

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 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. Isaiah 43:1-2
Imprints of Hope

The American author, poet, and philosopher, Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), said, “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation...an unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.”

Do you lead a life of “quiet desperation” or do you have hope? Hope is an emotion that can give us a feeling that the future can be bright and positive. Hope is infused in us as we consume, believe, and obey Scripture. The Bible teaches us that despite all our mistakes and misguided stabs at life, we can still become all God intended us to be; we can have hope for the future because He is in it—because He is the God of hope. You will have peace of heart if you base your life on faith in the promises of God—believing that what God says, He will do.

Your life doesn’t have to be marked with despondency and despair. You can have imprints of hope stamped upon your life.

In Romans 8:28, the Scriptures tell us that “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” In His providence, God orchestrates every event in life. If you are in a time of suffering, which is putting you in despair, God knows and will use it to accomplish both your temporal and eternal benefit. Believe me, I realize that you might not be comforted by that right now, but you have a guarantee that there will be a time of hope in your life. God is “for you” and will “freely give” you “all things” according to Romans 8:31-32.

Think of it—you won’t be separated from God by tribulation (trouble), distress (hardship) persecution, famine, nakedness, peril (danger), or sword (Romans 8:35)! Everyone experiences trouble; it’s universal. I know you’ve experienced the distress referred to in Romans 8:35. It conveys the idea of being strictly confined in a narrow, difficult place or being helplessly hemmed in by your circumstances. You and I have been in that tight, constricted place. Yet none of this will ever separate us from the love of Christ—absolutely nothing! When I read that, I wonder why I worry so much, or why I lose hope.

Perhaps you’ve lost all hope. Maybe you feel separated from your Savior; maybe you think He doesn’t really understand or care. You must have the faith to believe; you must depend on God’s great love. Don’t stay in the gloom of despair, wavering in your faith. If the shadows will not fade away, hold on to the fact that God still loves you.

There are times, says Jesus, when God cannot lift the darkness from you, but trust Him. God will appear like an unkind friend, but He is not; He will appear like an unnatural Father, but He is not; He will appear like an unjust judge, but He is not. Keep the notion of the mind of God behind all things strong and growing. Nothing happens in any particular unless God’s will is behind it, therefore you can rest in perfect confidence in Him.

(Chambers, Oswald. My Utmost for His Highest. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935.)

The “God of hope” will fill you with “all joy and peace in believing” so you can “abound in hope” through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13). You must have the faith to believe that God loves you and He is the God of hope.

What broke your heart?

Unkindness? Desertion? Unfaithfulness on the part of those you trusted? Or did you attempt to do something which was beyond your power, and in the effort, the heartstrings snapped? A bird with a broken wing, an animal with a broken leg, a woman with a broken heart, a man with a broken purpose in his life—these seem to drop out of the main current of life into shadow. They get apart to suffer and droop [in the darkness]. The busy rush of life goes on without them. But God draws nigh. The great Lover of man is always at the best when the lights burn low and dim in the house of life. (Meyer, F. B. Great Verses Through the Bible. Michigan: Zondervan, 1972.)
God’s Silence: A Gift

The silence of God is so difficult to experience, yet so vital to the Christian life. Even the psalmist asked God not to keep silent (Psalm 83:1). Some of you are reading this thinking, I know what His silence is like and I’m not sure I can handle it. I’ve been asking God to help me, to answer my prayer, to show Himself strong on my behalf and it’s just not happening. Why is God not saying anything to me right now?

If you think of this silence as a stifling, unsettling experience—don’t! God has a reason and purpose for it. And He has chosen you to be on the receiving end of His stillness. Oswald Chambers, in his book, My Utmost for His Highest, writes about God’s silence. He refers to the death of Lazarus in John chapter 11, specifically zeroing in on verse 6....

Has God trusted you with a silence—a silence that is big with meaning? God’s silences are His answers. Think of those days of absolute silence in the home at Bethany! Is there anything analogous to those days in your life? Can God trust you like that, or are you still asking for a visible answer? God will give you the blessings you ask if you will not go any further without them; but His silence is the signal that He is bringing you into a marvelous understanding of Himself. Are you mourning before God because you have not had an audible response? You will find that God has trusted you in the most intimate way possible, with an absolute silence, not of despair, but of pleasure, because He saw that you could stand a bigger revelation. If God has given you a silence, praise Him. He is bringing you into the great run of His purposes.

A wonderful thing about God’s silence is that the contagion of His stillness gets into you and you become perfectly confident—“I know God has heard me.” His silence is the proof that He has....If Jesus Christ is bringing you into the understanding that prayer is for the glorifying of His Father, He will give you the first sign of His intimacy—silence. (Chambers, Oswald. My Utmost for His Highest. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., 1935.)

The Ressurection Hands of Christ Can Help You

The resurrection hands of our Lord raised the twelve-year-old girl (Matthew 9:23-25). Jesus merely reached His hand out, and took the hand of the young girl. She got right up; she was a living, breathing testimony of the dynamic power of Jesus Christ. Can you imagine what those who had ridiculed Him thought? The news of this great miracle spread all over the land.

Jesus raised the widow’s only son at Nain (Luke 7:13-15). His heart was broken for the widow, and He told her not to weep. He went over to the open coffin of her son, put His resurrection hands upon it, and immediately those who carried it stood still. Jesus then told the young man to get up, and He delivered him to his mother. What inexplicable joy there was for her that day! His power drove out the presence of death.

In each case, Jesus had a heart full of compassion and love. This is how He feels about you and me. We too will have our resurrection day because Jesus paid the ultimate price for our soul. We have victory over death. John 11:25-26 says: “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” After death, we live! We have genuine hope—for this life and even in our death.

The famous novelist, poet, dramatist, Victor Hugo (1802-1885), was the most important of French Romantic writers. He wrote the following about his belief in a resurrection:

I feel in myself the future life. I am like a forest that has been more than once cut down. The new shoots are stronger and livelier than ever. I am rising, I know, toward the sky. When I go down into the grave I can say, like so many others, that I have finished my day’s work, but I cannot say I have finished my life. My day’s work will begin the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley—it is a thoroughfare. It closes with the twilight to open with the dawn! (Huss, H.C.O., Victor Hugo’s Religion as Drawn from His Writings. 1886.)