

# Never Alone

... because God has said,  
    *"Never will I leave you;  
        never will I forsake you."*  
As we say with confidence,  
    *The lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.  
        What can man do to me? - Hebrews 13:5*

We stand the firmest when, following the lead of the writer, we stand upon the promises of God. Man's original thoughts and various pearls of wisdom are useful in the proper time and place, but they are of little worth in sustaining us through life's fiercest storms compared to the great and precious promise of God that He is with us always.

World opinion is a fickle thing. It is found to be wrong more often than it is found to be right. The polls that swamp television news channels border on the absurd. If 78 percent of every crackpot with a phone or an email account believe that the suspect is guilty, he is still either guilty or not guilty based on whether or not he did the crime. Such polls are just an invitation to pop-off.

If we want good information that keeps us firmly rooted, we must trust what God has made known to us. Because of the work of Jesus that destroyed the grip of sin and death, we can know that our eternal safety has been won. We can trust God's promise: *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."* And, because we can rest in that promise, we can live courageously and contentedly in God.

God's presence with us is not a fleeting friendship. Others may leave us. God never will. People forge friendships based on common interests and mutual needs, only to abandon those relationships once the common bond is severed. A third party enters. A new responsibility or a new job appears. A move across town occurs. The financial means or the disposable time to participate in a shared activity vanishes. In the cruelest of circumstances, one party may fall into great need, and his friends lack the stomach or the compassion to be there. Suddenly, a relationship that looked as though it should last forever simply dissolves.

These changes in our friendships do not necessarily occur with hard feelings. We just accept the fact that people we once cherished step in and out of our lives. We are content to think of this as the natural evolution of relationships. If it weren't for our Christmas Card mailing lists, we might never think of old friends again. But, a relationship with God never evolves out of existence or even into a state of nostalgia. He will never leave us because of any change in our circumstances. The relationship will never become distant because of any inattentiveness, boredom, time restraints or disloyalty on His part.

Peter once made this boast to Jesus: *"Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you"* (*Matthew 26:35*). Of course, only a few hours passed before Peter had disowned Jesus three times. Peter was not equal to such a claim of loyalty. God is. His promise to never forsake us is truly remarkable given how quickly we are prone to forsake Him. Sometimes, I find myself imagining some great crisis, some great temptation or some great persecution so that I can be a witness to others of the power of faith in God. Then, in the course of a few moments, I find myself failing Him with only the slightest provocation. My failings render me grateful that God's sworn loyalty to me is not contingent upon my demonstrated loyalty to Him.

We are fickle. God is firm. His faithfulness is never shaken. His promise is independent of what is right and fair. We might judge that God is entitled to forsake certain people. What difference does our judgment make if God has declared His faithfulness to His child, even a prodigal child? I am not talking about the question of whether free-will beings have the prerogative of walking away from their salvation. I am trying to address the normal relationship that most of us share with God, relationships marked by our failings and a chronic need to be forgiven. God would be justified to cast us away, but His faithfulness is not contingent upon our performance. He is faithful to us based on His promise to us.

And, because of His faithfulness, we find peace and rest.

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