

### **A TOTTERING FENCE OR A ROCK-SOLID FORTRESS?**

***“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down— this leaning wall, this tottering fence? They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Selah Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Selah Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them. One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.”***

How accurate are the weather predictions we get on the news? 70% accurate, 80%? I have the perfect weather indicator. It is 100% accurate and best of all, you can make it yourself. It is called the weather rock. All you need are just a few things you can find in the garage or in your field. First you need three posts or sticks. Most are six feet in length but that doesn't matter. You tie them off into a tripod, sort of like a teepee. Next tie a rope to a rock and then tie it to the tripod so the rock hangs there above the ground. This is how the weather rock works. If the rock is dry, you know you have fair weather. If the rock is wet, you know it is raining. If the rock is swaying back and forth, you know it is windy. If there is a shadow under the rock, you know it is sunny. If the rock is white, it is snowing. If the rock is submerged under water, you are having a flood.

Get it? Of course, the rock doesn't predict the weather; it simply is affected by the weather. Christians are like weather rocks. We are affected by what is going on in our lives. If your father or brother dies, you feel sad and cry. If people hate us, we are hurt. If we get old, we ache. Christians get scared, feel pain, feel lonely, get depressed, stress out. We are affected by things going on in our lives.

That is what David experienced in his life. David experienced many terrible things; just read through his psalms. But he also knew he would come out on top because of the Lord. And that is the comfort we have. We will weather it all.

#### *I. We must weather many awful things.*

David was no stranger to trouble. He faced wild bears and lions, traitors, constant war and political plots. We don't know for sure when he wrote Psalm 62. It could have been when he was running for his life from Saul or when faced with the attempted overthrow by his son. But he felt weak and vulnerable.

***“How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down— this leaning wall, this tottering fence? They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse.”*** What an interesting picture of himself. David sees himself like a leaning wall or tottering fence. In the inner city, a broken fence is an invitation for someone to sneak in. His enemies saw him as a leaning wall or tottering fence and they planned to tear him down. Their weapons were especially cruel. They spoke well of him to his face, but at every chance they told lies about him. David felt weak, vulnerable, scared. Who could David trust? Who would be his friend?

Who are your enemies? Who acts kindly in front of you but then stabs you in the back? Is there anyone who would like to see you disgraced? We have enemies. Ever since the days of Cain and Abel, unbelievers have always hated believers. At first this doesn't make sense since believers would make perfect neighbors, friends, soldiers, workers. But then again, that is probably why. Unbelievers don't like to be told what to do or that they are wrong. They may even get jealous over the behavior of believers. So we face verbal, emotional, even physical abuse.

But our enemies don't have to be physical. I read this quote from a book that was published over thirty years ago. Speaking about children it says, “They are not staying young longer, but getting old faster. We unconsciously push them to get smart early, because it's a tough world out there. Have you noticed how many of our young are losing their innocence and childlike understanding of life at an earlier age than we did? Have you noticed how many of them have adult problems while they are still children?” Our children are facing emotional problems. We all are young and old. Stress, depression, loneliness, feelings of inadequacy. What emotions are you struggling with? What makes you feel like vulnerable right now?

We also face spiritual enemies. What temptation is really bothering you? What sin can't you forget? Then there is the devil. The name devil literally means hurler, the accuser. He loves to accuse us of sin. It is like that game where you have this piece of felt and you throw Velcro balls at it. The object is to get the Velcro to stick on the felt. The devil wants our sins to stick to us.

Yes, we must face many terrible things. They have an effect on us. But God promises we will weather them.

#### *II. We will weather them for the Lord is our rock.*

***“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”*** In the middle of his fears and loneliness, David says to himself. “Calm down. Everything will

be fine." ***"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress; I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge."*** Like a parent who smiles and assures a child frightened by a thunderstorm that everything is fine, David is telling himself he has nothing to fear.

David learned a lesson throughout his life. He realized that there is only one thing he can count on, God. ***"Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them. One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done."***

David realized he could never fully count on people to help. Some were good friends, but a point came when even they couldn't help him. Others were friends only when times were good but fled at the first sign of danger. Others lied about him and tried to topple him. He also realized that money, honestly or dishonestly gained, could do no good, or pride or the strength of armies or anything. There was only one thing he could count on, the Lord.

This is a lesson that takes a lifetime to learn. Sometimes God will have to remind us the hard way as he lets us stumble and fall. But like a siren which warns people to seek shelter, the fickleness and trouble of this world is a warning to seek shelter in the Lord because he alone possesses both the ability and the desire to help.

***"One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving."*** God is strong. Nothing is impossible for him. But what good would that strength be if God wasn't moved to use it for us? On the other hand, God is loving, merciful. But what good would that be if wasn't able to do something about it? But God is both strong and loving. And we find these two attributes meeting at the cross. There we see God's love which moved him to sacrifice his one and only son for the sins of the world. There we see his power as he conquered death and opens graves, destroying the devil's grip on us.

And so David was able to still his troubled soul. Sometimes God took away his enemies, and sometimes God allowed them to continue their relentless attacks. But David found refuge in a fortress. He knew that when he would breath his last, God will have kept all his promises and he would spend eternity with him. Oh, he didn't fully understand how, but he knew God would never fail him.

That is the calm assurance God gives us. The devil will try to get our sins to stick to us. Don't let him. Tell him about your Baptism. Tell him what it means. Shove the cross in his face and confidently tell him these sins are forgiven by God. Sometimes our enemies will fall before our very eyes, and other times we will have to wait for Judgment Day. But we know they will not destroy us for God has promised that nothing can separate us from his love. When stress comes, do what the Lord says. Pray about it, meditate on his Word and if you want more advice to manage stress, listen to Jesus when he says not to worry, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. But most of all, trust God. He will never fail you.

Paul wrote, ***"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*** Go to the hospital and tell someone his pain is nothing. Sounds uncaring. But isn't that what God says here? The pain we experience is very real and painful; it may even take us to the brink. Compare it, however, to the glory of heaven that awaits. The shot the six year old got at the doctor hurts, but the banana split mom promised him afterwards seems to make the pain less. That is how the forgiveness of sins is the key to everything. Right now we see and feel the pain. But the glory that awaits is so much bigger that it will make your pain small and insignificant.

So, fellow Christians, we are weather rocks. We must weather many terrible things. But we will weather them in the fortress of the strong and loving Lord. So, calm down, be still, troubled souls. INJ Amen.