

The Nearness of God



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) July 19, 2021

He is never closer than in our trials

I want to share with you two verses from Helen Spurrell's translation of the original Hebrew text: "When designing pursuers approached me, who are far from thy law; then thou, O Jehovah, wast near, with all thy faithful commandments" (*Psalms 119:150-151*).

Embedded in this passage is a glorious truth that can change your life, bringing you peace and giving you rest beyond anything you have yet experienced. Once you understand the fact that God loves you and is continually near you, all fear and anxiety must go.

In this text, the Psalmist sees the wicked approaching him, coming ever closer in an attempt to ruin and destroy him. He's saying, "Vile, corrupt, plotting sinners are gaining on me. They're all around me, and their power is mounting. They are bent on my total destruction!"

We all have such an enemy; it is the enemy of our souls, the devil. He always has one purpose in mind: to destroy God's work and seduce and discourage his people. Indeed, Satan uses all of his power and craftiness to cut Christians off from the Lord's favor and presence. That is exactly what he's trying to do right now in your life, attempting to wipe out everyone who follows Jesus. "They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more'" (*Psalms 83:4, NKJV*).

At times, it appears the devil is on the verge of victory.

Satan will not be satisfied until he sees the total ruin and downfall of every godly ministry, church and true lover of Jesus. He never stops. He is always pursuing us with a design out of hell.

Satan stirred up Paul's enemies in Antioch who railed against the apostle, stoning him and dragging him out of the city, thinking he was dead. God said no to the devil's plans in Antioch and delivered Paul.

Before Paul's deliverance, can you imagine the multitudes of demons looking on from the spirit world and laughing gleefully, counting the great preacher's last breaths, waiting to attend his funeral? Can you see Satan himself boasting, "We have cut him down, razed him to the ground, ruined him! Paul and his preaching soon will be just a memory. We have destroyed the gospel. Paul has been brought down"?

How wrong Satan was. "However, when the disciples gathered around (Paul), he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe" (*Acts 14:20*). Paul was raised up immediately, and he marched right back into the city, his head held high. He once testified, "Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead" (*2 Corinthians 1:9*).

If you love Jesus, you are a marked person in hell, and Satan will try to cut you down to the ground. You may

agree, "I can feel those designing pursuers you're talking about closing in on me. Satan has put me in a lion's den." This was David's condition. He testified, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us" (*Psalms 124:2-3*).

Think of the awful temptation and failure of David, a man after God's heart. He was sorely tempted, fell into adultery, lied and murdered an innocent man. I'm sure that when the prophet Nathan exposed him, David might have been tempted to have Nathan executed, worsening his sin. Or Satan might have convinced David he was down for the count, expecting him to throw up his hands and say, "What's the use? I have disgraced God. I've sinned against the light, committing the very sins I've preached against. God can never use me now."

The Psalmist voices the hope of those who repent of horrible sins. "The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death" (*Psalms 118:18*). The Psalmist said in essence, "I was tempted and tried, but God would not turn me over to Satan's power or to the death I deserved. He delivered me!"

The temptations and trials sent upon us from hell are not unusual. Peter writes, "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you" (*1 Peter 4:12*). Paul adds, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (*1 Corinthians 10:13*).

There is nothing strange at all about what is happening to you. You may be discouraged because the enemy has come against you like a flood. The attack could be through lust, covetousness, a financial crisis or health scare, and you think, "Here I am trying to serve the Lord, doing my best to love him and be faithful to him, but things keep getting worse. Is there something wrong with me? Why do my problems keep piling up?"

I urge you to look around at others on your right, on your left, in front of you, behind you; *everyone* is going through something. Behind the smiles of your dear brothers and sisters in Christ are many tears. They are hurting with trials you know nothing about. No, you are not alone in your suffering, and your trial is not some strange, unusual circumstance. What you are going through is common to multitudes.

Now, let me give you some glorious news.

The devil is not as eager to destroy you as God is to deliver you.

God is more prepared to keep his promises to you than the devil is to ruin you. Indeed, the nearer the enemy comes to you, the Lord is all the nearer.

"When designing pursuers approached me, who are far from thy law; then Thou, O Jehovah, wast near, with all thy faithful commandments" (*Psalms 119:150-151, Spurrell*). The Psalmist said, in short, "Lord, if my enemies are approaching to destroy me, you are near to me in my time of need."

God says he is especially near to the downcast and brokenhearted in order to defend them. "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (*Psalms 34:18, NKJV*).

Are you a child of God? Does the Lord Jesus live in you? God says he is near to you in your anguish. Here is his promise to you.

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior... Since you were precious in my sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life. Fear not, for I am with you" (*Isaiah 43:1-5*).

The Psalmist Asaph testified of the Lord, "You hold me by my right hand" (*Psalms 73:23*). He was saying, "God not only is near me but is walking with me, hand in hand, through this whole mess. Let all my enemies come after me. I've got my hand in the Father's." Moreover, Asaph said that God gave him counsel and direction. "You will guide me with your counsel" (*Psalms 73:24*).

Many dear Christians tell me of their incredible hardships, problems that keep piling up, discouragements that continue coming at them. Humanly speaking, these all seem to be impossible situations. My heart goes out to every believer who experiences such trials.

However, every Christian has to be convinced that they are precious and loved, and that God is near. In fact, the nearer the enemy comes, the more faithful God is to reveal his nearness, and the more tightly he holds his precious child's hand.

If you can believe that God is near to you, you must believe he will act for you.

God's honor is at stake when we pray to him, and he won't be mocked for not answering. The Bible says of him, "He will not allow your foot to be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (*Psalms 121:3-4*). Our God is awake to our needs at all times, and he is attentive to every pain and hurt.

Here is what God promises you, if you will practice drawing near to him all day long. "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those also who hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yes, let them rejoice exceedingly. Sing to God, sing praises to his name; extol him who rides on the clouds, by his name Yah, and rejoice before him" (*Psalms 68:1-4*).

Talk to the Lord, look for his nearness, and he will do all these things for you. He will scatter your enemies and drive away all demonic pursuers. You will know the blessed grip of his hand at all times. Hallelujah!

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