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## **God Will Never Forsake His People**

**By David Wilkerson**

January 11, 2010 Dearly Beloved:

“GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH, A VERY PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE” (Psalm 46:1).

The Lord has promised us, “In your time of trouble — when you face a persistent, ever present evil — I will be your ever present help.”

The phrase “ever present” here means “always here, always available, with unlimited access.” In short, the abiding presence of the Lord is always in us. And if he is ever present in us, then he wants continual conversation with us. He wants us to talk with him no matter where we are: on the job, with family, with friends, even with nonbelievers.

I refuse to accept the lie that Satan has thrust upon so many of God’s people today: that the Lord has stopped speaking to his people. The enemy wants us to think that God has allowed Satan to grow in power and influence, but that he hasn’t equipped his own people with greater authority. No, never! Scripture says, “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19). It doesn’t matter what the devil brings against us. God’s power in his people will always be greater than Satan’s assaults.

This verse from Isaiah actually refers to the flag-bearer who rode ahead of Israel’s army. The Lord always led his people into battle behind his own mighty standard. Likewise today, God has a glorious army of heavenly hosts who ride forth under his banner, ready to execute his battle plans on our behalf.

You may ask, “So how does God bring us help in our troubles?” His help comes in the gift of his Holy Spirit, who dwells in us and works the Father’s will in our lives. Paul tells us again and again that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. We are the Lord’s dwelling place on earth.

Of course, we repeat this truth often in our worship and testimonies. Yet many of us still don’t take it seriously. We simply don’t understand the power that resides in this truth. If we did grasp it and trust in it, we would never again be afraid or dismayed.

I certainly haven’t laid hold of this lesson fully. Even after all my years as a minister, I am still tempted to think I have to work up some emotion in order to hear from God. But the Lord is saying, “You don’t have to spend hours waiting for me. I abide in you. I am present for you, night and day.”

Listen to David’s testimony: “I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved” (Psalm 16:7–8). David is declaring, “God is always present before me. And I am determined to keep him in my thoughts. He faithfully guides me day and night. I don’t ever have to be confused.”

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In Christ,  
DAVID WILKERSON

DW:bbm 1.11.10

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## **Newsletter: God Will Never Forsake His People**

January 11, 2010 For the Lord loves justice, and does not forsake his godly ones; they are preserved forever; but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off" (Psalm 37:28).

In Luke 22, Jesus delivered a serious warning to perhaps his most devoted follower. Christ called the apostle Peter aside and told him the following in no uncertain terms: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:31–32).

Very few Christians would be surprised that Satan wanted to test Peter. After all, Scripture presents Peter as a leader among the disciples. To most Bible readers, it is no wonder the devil sought God's permission to come against this bold disciple. Scripture makes clear that Satan's main objective is to destroy the faith of those who serve Jesus. And among Jesus' inner circle of twelve, Peter stands out as a man eager to act on his belief in Christ.

However, there is something about this passage that many Christians find astonishing. It is this: *The Lord granted Satan access to Peter in order to test him!* Yes, our heavenly Father allowed his precious servant to become vulnerable to the devil's wiles.

Think of it: Jesus had already said Peter's declaration of faith was the foundation upon which he would build his church. Yet now Christ was putting his own words at risk by subjecting Peter to Satan's fiery darts. And despite Peter's bold belief, we know he was a deeply flawed man.

What if Peter failed the test? How could Christ build his church on the words of someone so vulnerable to Satan's attack? Moreover, how could a loving God subject his beloved one to such a severe onslaught? This is what many Christians find troubling.

For some believers, this fact about our heavenly Father simply doesn't compute. For many in the church, this is simply a difficult thought to accept about a loving God. Yet Scripture shows us again and again that what happened with Peter has happened as well to many faithful ones beloved of the Lord.

For example, this is exactly what happened to Job. Think about what that righteous man went through: losing all his possessions, his home, even his precious children. It's no wonder that when Job faced these anguished losses, his godly friends were baffled. They simply couldn't accept the idea that God would allow Satan to test one of his faithful servants so severely. In their minds, Job surely had done something to bring on all these horrible losses himself.

Yet nothing could be further from the truth. In the opening chapter of the book of Job, Satan enters heaven to seek God's permission to test Job. And God grants it! He gives the devil permission to put an upright man through excruciating trials that would take him to the very limits of his faith.

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Beloved, in every case the Bible make it abundantly clear: The only way the devil is ever allowed to test the faith of any servant of God — including righteous Job and zealous Peter — is through the express permission of the heavenly Father. We know that God never changes, that his Word is the same yesterday, today and forever (see Hebrews 13:8). Therefore, we can be sure that just as it happened with those beloved servants, it will happen as well with everyone who professes to follow Jesus.

Yet, conversely, consider this truth: Satan *cannot* shake or test the faith of any child of God without the Lord's permission. What does this tell us? Simply this: *God has a purpose and plan behind every trial that Satan brings to our lives.*

Indeed, when Jesus delivered his warning to Peter, he then encouraged the disciple with these incredible words: "But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32). Clearly, Christ knew Peter would come out of his trial with his faith intact. This suggests that Jesus had a specific plan for Peter's life *through the severe trials he was about to face.*

The same holds true for us today. Jesus' promise to pray for his disciple was made not just to Peter but to all who would follow Christ in succeeding generations. Our Lord has a plan to use every one of our trials.

Consider the many ways Scripture echoes Christ's warning in this passage. Revelation tells us that Satan has come down to the earth in these last days, enraged that he has but a short time left. And right now he is waging an all-out attack against the saints: "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (Revelation 12:12).

We are told also that our enemy Satan goes about as a roaring lion, seeking to devour: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). In short, the devil's aim is to consume and swallow the faith of God's elect.

Likewise, we are told that Satan comes as a thief against all who believe: "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy" (John 10:10). Such a thief doesn't just steal from his victims but seeks to obliterate their faith completely.

Finally, we are told that Satan brings a flood against God's people, attempting to sweep away our faith with awful fear and overwhelming attacks: "The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman [the church], so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood" (Revelation 12:15).

This is all sobering to consider. Clearly, Peter needed Christ's prayer for his faith to come through intact. But Peter seemed to turn a deaf ear to it all.

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In his audacity, Peter was convinced his faith could endure any and all attacks from Satan. Most Christians remember Peter's boast about his own faith: "Lord, I am ready to go with you, both to prison, and to death" (Luke 22:33). What Peter says here so brashly may come across as spiritual boldness. Yet, in truth, it represents a kind of fleshly audacity that prompted a warning from Paul to the church: "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

According to Paul, we are always to have a posture of humility when it comes to our spiritual battles. Jude reflects this when he writes: "But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you'" (Jude 9). God's Word makes clear the need for such humility.

Yet, despite this, many Christians still miss it. Often I have heard believers say, "I am prepared to be a martyr. It doesn't matter what I may face. I'm ready to die for the Lord." Peter made precisely the same boast. Yet when his hour came, he wasn't prepared for it. As Peter faced the very real prospect of dying for Jesus, he did something he never could have imagined doing. *He denied the Lord.*

In the midst of his crisis, when Peter might have declared his faith in Jesus, he cursed. In a dark moment of fear and panic, the disciple shouted to all around him, "I never knew the man!" What a devastating moment that must have been for Peter. The boldest of all believers was reduced to utter cowardice, fearing for his life.

I'm convinced that most Christians believe they would never commit the sin that Peter did here. They tell themselves they are above such a grievous sin. When their moment comes, they imagine themselves following Jesus to the death. I have something to say to every such believer: There is not a single follower of Christ today who is above Job's or Peter's failures. When troubling sorrows and trials come to us from the wicked one as they did to these men, we all become vulnerable to a great crisis of faith.

I don't mean to scare anyone by this statement about our capacity for failure. I simply make this statement because it is a very serious matter. The Bible makes this clear. And I see many believers on the brink of such failure all around me.

Right now, I personally know of precious servants whose faith has been shaken. I'm talking about men and women of great faith, some who are preachers of healing and miracles. These are saints I never imagined would doubt God's faithfulness or waver in any way. I was convinced, "If anybody can make it through any storm, here is the servant of God who can."

But now some believers doubt that God even answers prayer. At one time their trust in him was so strong it ignited faith in others. But now, like Job and Peter, difficulties they never imagined have come upon them. And they find themselves overwhelmed by the severity of their trials, causing them to waver.

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While Peter was enduring this very kind of attack, Jesus was praying for him. To me, this is one of the most encouraging verses in all of Scripture: “But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail” (Luke 22:32). Consider what Jesus was telling Peter here. He assured him that no matter what he may face — no matter what he would go through, including his denial of Christ — *his faith would not fail*.

In reality, Peter was not forsaken by God — not for a minute. He wasn’t forsaken even after he denied Jesus and ran from the scene. This once-fearless disciple, now broken and anguishing over his failure, was never for a moment on his own. And, beloved, neither are we.

It doesn’t matter what your trial may be — what pain you’re enduring, what test you’re facing, what failure you now anguish over. At this very moment — in the midst of your storms, your pains, your sorrows — Jesus is interceding for you. He is pleading your cause. And he has never let go of you.

Consider the exhortation Jesus gave to Peter, along with his warning: “And you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (22:32). This comes on the very heels of Jesus’ warning to Peter that he would be sifted. In fact, it is all in the same verse!

Beloved, here is assurance and encouragement for us all. *The Lord of creation holds us in his very hands*. He tells us, as he did Peter, “Get up, go now. Do not focus on your failure. Rather, feed my sheep. Warn my precious ones about the enemy’s devices at work against them. And tell them I hold them in my hands, through every trial.”

In short, Peter had important work to do. And he’d been equipped with firsthand experience to preach the message he was called to deliver. You see, Jesus has told his church we cannot afford to be ignorant of Satan’s devices. Peter was able to speak to God’s precious ones not only about the trials they would face, but about the faithful God who would see them through the worst of times.

We must be fully aware of the enemy’s schemes and methods. And the most powerful weapon in Satan’s arsenal is a lie — a vicious lie against us, from lips of the master liar! What is his biggest lie? *That God is not faithful to his people*.

Just as he has done throughout history, Satan demands God’s permission to sift us today. He wants to attack our homes, our marriages, our children, our health, our jobs and careers, our very belief in the Lord. This is the flood that Revelation speaks of: a flood of anguished trials upon the faithful.

You may wonder: “Exactly how bad can it get for a believer? What does God allow when he gives permission for us to be sifted?” I direct you to Hebrews 11, where we read of the multitude of trials endured by heroes and martyrs of the faith. Scripture says of them, “All these, having gained approval through their faith” (Hebrews 11:39).

The same kind of deep suffering and hardship that those martyrs suffered is happening to believers throughout the world today. I think of multitudes of Iraqi Christians who are under grave threat for

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their faith in the midst of a war zone. Many of these dear saints have had to run for their lives, fleeing their homes, jobs and churches. To survive they have to escape to Syria, Jordan and other surrounding nations that are hostile to Christianity. These Iraqi believers have no jobs or homes, no haven to run to. They have to pray daily for food. And many have been killed. Yet still they minister the gospel in alien nations where they have been banished by war.

I have received reports from some of these Iraqi believers. They write, “Brother David, hard times are not coming. For us, hard times have been here for years.” Because they have known hardships for generations, they have learned to cling to faith. Like Peter, they are equipped to preach with power Christ’s warning to his church.

I truly believe the majority of godly people in the world today are under attack from hell, enduring devilish, seemingly hopeless situations. What about you? If you are not facing a test of faith, I urge you: Be very thankful. Yet be humbled, never daring to boast of your own strength or faith.

Satan waits until the tested one is weary, drained of all strength and endurance. He waits until all prayers seem to go unanswered — until everything seems hopeless and we come to our wit’s end. That is what happened to Peter, when he watched his Master being humiliated before the Sanhedrin. It is what happened to Job, who was forced to ponder the loss of everything dear to him.

When questions begin rising in the mind of the tested soul — “God, where are you? Why are my prayers not being answered?” — that is the moment when Satan chooses to implant his awful lie: “God has forsaken you. He has abandoned you. *He does not hear you.*”

Yet God has not forsaken you — and he never will. Indeed, right now he is telling you: “I have assured you I will never leave you. Now, go, get up, feed my sheep. Beware of Satan’s devices against you. And lo, I am with you, even to the end of the world.” Amen!

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