

The Lord Is With You!

“And the night following the Lord stood by him...”

Acts 23:11

“For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...”

Acts 18:10

Like Paul we sometimes become apprehensive over our circumstances and what will happen to us. Scripture records that the Lord appeared to Paul three times to comfort him. This does not refer to his presence that is everywhere (omnipresence) but is talking about a close relationship and a special closeness in a time of need. (Psalm 46:1;121:1)

Jesus came to the earth to be with us. His name was to be called, “Emmanuel” which means “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23) Even though He has ascended back into heaven He has returned to us through the Holy Spirit. He said, “I will be with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20) Because you have the baptism of the Holy Spirit you have “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)

As we go forth preaching everywhere the Lord works with us, confirming His Word. (Mark 16:20)

Jesus is there in every situation of our lives. He continues to watch over us, bless, help, and protect us. He stands with us and strengthens us. An African song reveals His nearness to us. “I have a great big God; He’s always by my side; A very big God; By my side, by my side.”

Therefore, Paul was able to tell Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:17-18, “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear...And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.”

To Moses, God said, “...Certainly I will be with thee...” (Exodus 3:12) When Joshua took over the leadership of God’s people God promised, “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee or forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage...” (Joshua 1:5-6) This same promise is given to all of us as we struggle on the road of faith.

God promised the children of Israel and all of us today, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isaiah 41:10)

God loves us and has permitted us to enjoy so many blessings. “.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...Fear not, for I am with thee..." (Isaiah 43:1-3,5)

Where Is God?

- Micah 2:13 God is before His people.
- Ps. 139:5 God is behind His people.
- Deut. 33:12 God is above His people.
- Isa. 40:11 God is beneath His people.
- Ps. 125:2 God is around His people.
- Matt. 1:23 God is with His people.
- Isa. 12:6 God is in the midst of His people.
- 1 Cor. 3:16 God is in His people.

God is not only by our side, but He also carries our burdens while carrying us.

"When a pedestrian with a heavy load is picked up by a motorist, he puts his burden down in the car; he does not keep it on his shoulder. The God that can carry you can carry your load. So cast all your care upon Him for He careth for you." (Vance Havner)

Footprints in the Sand

(A well-known story is told that illustrates how the Lord is always with us.)

One night I had a dream. I was walking along the beach with the Lord and across the skies flashed scenes from my life. In each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand. One was mine and one was the Lord's.

When the last scene of my life appeared before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand, and to my surprise, I noticed that many times along the path of my life, there was only one set of footprints; and I noticed that it was at the lowest and saddest times in my life.

I asked the Lord about it; "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why you left my side when I needed you most.

The Lord said, "My precious child, I never left you during your time of trial. When you see only one set of footprints, I was carrying you."

In Greek mythology the super strong Atlas is depicted as carrying the world (globe) on his shoulder. He is pictured as bowing under the weight of the world, shoulders drooping, and face

contorted from the pressure. However, our God carries the weight of the world on His shoulders but is not affected by the pressure.

At times we become troubled with situations in our lives, and we stoop under the weight of the pressure. We need to remember that God is willing to carry our burdens on His shoulders. "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?..." (Isaiah 40:28) Handling problems was part of Christ's job description: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder..." (Isaiah 9:6)

We need to be like the man that was so troubled by his circumstances that he went into the forest to ponder his plight. As he lamented over his troubles he finally took a piece of paper and wrote, "I resign as the General Manager of the universe" and signed his name. He stated, "And God accepted my resignation!"

The songwriter put it aptly, "If He carries the weight of the world upon His shoulders, I know my brother that He will carry you!"

Study Questions

1. What does "Emmanuel" mean? _____

2. What do we learn from "Footprints in the Sand"? _____

3. Isaiah 41:10 says, "I will _____ thee. Yea, I will _____ thee."

4. Isaiah 43:1-3,5 says: "I have _____ thee." "I have _____ thee by name." "I will be _____ thee."

5. What happens when a motorist picks up a person who is carrying a load? _____

6. What do we learn about God in this? _____

7. In Isaiah 9:6, what part of His job description tells us He carries our problems on His shoulder? _____

