

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY IN LIFE

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

We live in a fallen and imperfect world and that means that challenges and adversity will come, they are part of life.

The words of Jesus were not intended to put fear in our hearts, on the contrary, they are meant to encourage us. I believe that Jesus is encouraging you and me to be at peace and not be afraid in times of adversity.

Proverbs 24:10

If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.

When adversity comes, how do we deal with it?

1. TRUST GOD WHOLEHEARTEDLY

We will trust in God in whatever we may go through and be at peace.

Psalm 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed,

And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

Many Bible scholars believe that the background for Psalm 46 was God's deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians in the time when Hezekiah was King of Judah.

It was the year 701 BC; Sennacherib was king of Assyria, and he wanted to expand his kingdom and he was leading the dreaded Assyrian army into Israel and on south to Judah.

As the leaders of the Assyrian army stood outside the walls of Jerusalem, they began to taunt the people and blaspheme the Almighty God.

2 Kings 18:29-31.

29 Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 30 nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, "The Lord will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' 31 Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern;

King Hezekiah was facing great adversity. Then he also receives a letter.

2 Kings 19:14

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.

Hezekiah prays to the Lord:

2 Kings 19:19

19 Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone."

Hezekiah's situation was very frightening, he must have felt so desperate. Not only his own life was at risk, but a whole nation!

It's interesting to note that at the same time as the threatening letter from King Sennacherib reached the ears of King Hezekiah, he also got a message from God through the prophet Isaiah. This was not a threatening voice; it was a voice of promise and of hope.

2 Kings 19:6-7

6 And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the Lord: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7 Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumour and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

The Assyrian army had surrounded the city of Jerusalem and Hezekiah was under a lot of pressure, but help was on its way!

2 Kings 19:35

35 And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.

Hezekiah had to trust in God wholeheartedly and believe that God was going to deliver him and the whole nation.

In Psalm 46, the song continues in verses 10 and 11:

10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! 11 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

When it seems that all hope is lost, Psalm 46 assures us that God can handle things that seem like total disaster to us and give us **victory over adversity**.

2. RUN TO GOD'S REFUGE.

When Hezekiah was being threatened, he ran into the Lord's house, to be in God's presence. Look at what Psalm 91 says about God's refuge.

a) Our refuge is a shelter.

Psalm 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

b) Our refuge is solid.

Psalm 91:2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

c) Our refuge is secure.

Psalm 91:5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day,

d) Our refuge is safe.

Psalm 91:7 A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.

When adversity comes:

1. trust in God wholeheartedly, 2. run to God's refuge and thirdly:

3. RISE UP IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

You have the power of the Holy Spirit within you to help you face any adversity.

Psalm 46:4-5 says:

4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,

The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;

God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

Does this remind you of something that Jesus said?

John 7:37-39

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

We are the temple of God. That river of living waters, the power of the Holy Spirit is inside of us.

Isaiah 59:19-20

(...) When the enemy comes in like a flood,

The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Psalm 34:19

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

1. Trust in God wholeheartedly
2. Run to God's refuge/His presence
3. Rise up in the Power of the Holy Spirit