



Whom Shall I
fear?

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?" - Psalms 27:1*

Jump Start # 1523

Psalms 27:1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?"

This is a special Jump Start. It's written especially to someone who is very dear to me. Several years ago he went through a very traumatic experience. It was horrifying and no one should ever have to go through what he did. Life moved on. He got married. He has a good job and is a parent. But out of nowhere, he started having fears about that terrible experience. It bothers him at night and keeps him from sleeping.

I've heard of soldiers returning home from combat with what we call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). My dad told me about a neighborhood kid that he grew up with that as a prisoner of war in Germany during WWII. Dad said he was never the same.

Some of the greatest battles & giants that we face are dealing with things that happened in the past. For some, those constant reminders bring guilt & shame. Wrongs & sins & not doing what they should have plagued them. For some, relationships are ruined because of what happened in the past. Seeking mercy from God & forgiving yourself are hard lessons. Even then, regret remains & broken relationships are the consequences.



But for others, they were the victim. There is no sin involved. They did nothing wrong. They went through a mugging, a crime, a horrific car accident, the identifying of a dead family member, or some other terrifying experience. There is no forgiveness to pray for. They did nothing wrong. But those terrifying memories haunt them. It awakens them at night. They can't seem to move past the event. Here are a few thoughts I want to share on this subject.

First, there are a bunch of us who do not understand. I am included. For my friend, my thoughts at first are, what is there to worry about? You've passed through that bad moment, you are alive today & are blessed. You have much to be thankful for. My friend knows that. But why do these scary reminders keep coming back, especially in the middle of the night. It's easy for someone like me to say, "Think about nice things," or, "count your blessings." The truth is, I do not understand. And the more I suggest can only frustrate my friend even more. I guess one reason I am writing this today is because I spent half the night praying about my friend. Offering a compassionate heart, saying 'I'm sorry,' & praying hard to the Lord are some of the best things we can do. Don't try to figure it out, because you can't.

Second, this is not a faith issue. My friend is a strong believer. My friend worships regularly & teaches class. No one outside of his family would ever know about the trauma that he deals with. This isn't something that one talks about. On most days, it doesn't affect him. But it's there. How easy it is for some to simply say, "Trust the Lord." My friend does.

Third, getting good help is important. My friend is talking to some trauma experts. This will help. Finding ways to deal with those internal giants are important. We have shamed folks in the past for getting help by telling them that all they need is faith. It's like telling a homeless guy, "Get a job." That's easy to say when we have a job, a home and are not living on the streets. Some issues are not nice, neat and easy to fix. We are so accustomed to fast checkout lines at the grocery store, TV dramas which are solved in an hour that we think all of life ought to be easy, fixable and simple. It's not. There are some internal giants that can stay with us for a long time. My friend doesn't like to be like this.

He does not purposely sit around and think about the trauma that he experienced. It just comes, like a dream. We can't really control our dreams. We don't have a remote where we can flip through channels in our heads, skipping the nightmares and settling for the nice, pleasant thoughts. Why we dream what we dream, why certain thoughts come to us, is hard for even the experts to figure out. We spend a lot of time trying to figure out the "why's" rather than dealing with where we are.

Fourth, my friend told me about what he was going through. I'm glad. Had he not said this, I would have never known. I'm close to my friend, but I would have never guessed that it still bothered him some. Reaching out to someone who is trustworthy and walks with the Lord is valuable. I said very little when I was told, except that I was sorry. I did spend a long time praying hard last night. I will continue to do this. There is no shame in telling a trustworthy friend. Now, don't announce it to the world. Many won't understand. Many will add to the problem. But that one or two trusted friend, who you go to, and who will pray for you, that's the ticket. God can help. I believe that. God can do things that we can't. God can chase away those dreams and thoughts. God can heal. That's the prayer. That's the hope.

That's where our verse comes in today. God is the defense of my life. The closer I walk with the Lord the more I see that. There are things in this life that no one will ever understand. To a degree that's true of all of us. I have a couple of wonderful doctors that worship where I do. They are both incredible men of God. I don't understand what they face when they have come to an end of all that they can do for a patient. They have reached a wall & they can't get past it. How they deal with that and continue on, I do not understand. There are six wonderful shepherds in the church I am a part of. It's hard for me to understand what they go through when dealing with one who is walking away from the Lord. They have tried everything & the person simply does not care about their soul any more. That's hard to understand what goes through those godly hearts as they experience disappoint & fear for one who gives up on God.

The beautiful thing is I do not have to understand others. God does. God does it wonderfully. When my doctor friends pray, God understands. When my shepherds pray, God knows. God understands. When my friend with trauma prays, God knows and God understands. All of this has made me realize that on a Sunday, we all gather together and we all look so nice and sing so wonderful. But lurking deep within many of us are struggles, issues, fears that no one else knows or would understand. God does. God can do more than all of us combined. God can open closed doors. God can heal hurting hearts. God can put the mind to ease.

For those that understand what I am talking about, please do not add more grief or burden to your soul by thinking you are bad for having these fears or struggles as these thoughts reappear in your mind. Pray to the Lord. Trust Him. The Lord is your defense or refuge. The Lord understands. For the rest of us, let's pull back on our advice and opinions. There is a time to keep silent. Offer a prayer. Give a hug. Buy a gift. Love them. Back off on the blame game. Stop pointing fingers. Quit trying to be the expert that knows why everything happens. You don't. Be a real friend. Be someone who is trusted in prayer.

Someday, all of these problems will end.
Someday, we'll leave this place and all these things will stay here. There will be no fear, tears, or worries in Heaven. Long for that day. We are one day closer. I hope these thoughts have helped you. I hope they help my friend.

-Roger Shouse



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Sunday Bible Study: 5 pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 pm

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