

Never Alone

"Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you."
Isaiah 46:3-4 (NIV)

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life"

1 John 5:13 (NIV)

He was a much trusted friend when we had a startling conversation. The godly man was greatly used by the Lord and loved by the Lord's people. We were so close that I counted him as a brother. For some years he secretly struggled with the idea that the Lord had abandoned him. He had gone to several counsellors for help but did not get any. I was his last hope for guidance.

I quietly listened until he was done sharing his spiritual struggles. During his time talking to me, I made a silent but fervent prayer to the Lord for wisdom to help this wonderful man find assurance of his salvation.

First I asked him if he had and unconfessed sin in his life. He answered "No." Then I took him to several precious promises such as Isaiah 46:3-4. He said he believed the promises but also said they did not apply to him. Then I turned him to 1 John 5:13 and explained that John was writing to people exactly like him who believed Jesus died for sinners and forgives all who confess their sins but lack assurance their prayers for forgiveness have been answered.

Then I took him through the various characteristics of people who are Christians as described in 1 John and asked him if his life could fit each description of a believer. Finally, his face lit up and he recognized the

work of the Holy Spirit shaping him into the image of Christ.

Reader are you like my friend? Or do you know a believer who lacks assurance of salvation? May the story of my friend encourage you to believe that the promises really apply to you or to your friend. May you see yourself in 1 John and come to "know that you have eternal life."

How firm a foundation,
you saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith
in His excellent Word!
What more can He say
than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge
to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with you,
O be not dismayed,
For I am your God,
and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you,
and cause you to stand,
Upheld by My righteous,
omnipotent hand."

"When through the deep waters
I call you to go,
The rivers of sorrow
shall not overflow;
For I will be with you,
your troubles to bless,
And sanctify to you
your deepest distress."

"When through fiery trial

your pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient,
shall be your supply;
The flame shall not hurt you;
I only design
Your dross to consume,
and your gold to refine."

"E'en down to old age
all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal,
unchangeable love;
And then, when grey hairs
shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still
in My bosom be borne."

"The soul that on Jesus
has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not
desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell
should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never,
no, never forsake!"

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