

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, September 9, 2020. Thank you so much for tuning in and for taking this time out of your day to focus on God and focus on your faith.

I'd also like to say thank you for the kind and thoughtful comments you all posted on last week's devotion. I'm glad that the Word of God revealed in Psalm 23 provided comfort to you all as we considered our grief in this season.

In the spirit of holding that grief and recognizing the array of feelings that can come up in this season, I want to provide a Word of God's comfort to you all today. I know when things get really bleak for me, when I'm sad or overwhelmed or find myself grieving losses, knowing that God is steadfast, God is truly always with us, brings me great comfort. And God's not about ignoring the difficulties or realities, or insisting on throwing positivity into every situation, God knows what it is to truly suffer. In Jesus, God knows what it is to be human, to experience all of the human emotions and situations at their core. I remember Jesus being so grieved that his friend Lazarus died that he just broke down and wept. That's where the infamous verse "Jesus wept" came from - it's Jesus' overwhelming grief that his beloved friend had died.

God hears us when we cry out to him. God heard the people Israel in their enslavement and brought justice and freedom and led them to the promised land. God spoke to the prophet Moses throughout that whole situation and God was with God's people. Even in all of Job's intense suffering, the death of his family, the loss of his position and wealth, and significant health issues on top of it, he had reason to cry out and lament and God heard him. God was with Job and delivered him from that suffering. God hears the cries of God's people throughout the scriptures and God is with us through it all.

I believe it was Brene Brown who said, "I thought faith would say, I'll take away the pain and discomfort. But what it ended up saying is that I'll sit with you in it." God sits with us in it. God is still working and moving in our world even when it seems like everything is too heavy and too much and just really overall sucks. And what a comfort that we never have to hold the heavy burdens of our pain and discomfort and grief alone. God is bigger and greater than anything that threatens to break us apart. And God will certainly hear you, hold you and your burdens, and love you deeply, no matter what comes your way.

So for today's Psalm reading, I'd love to read for you some words of comfort, a praise psalm from someone who was delivered by God from their suffering. This is Psalm 116:

I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my supplications.
2 Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
3 The snares of death encompassed me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;

I suffered distress and anguish.

4 Then I called on the name of the Lord:

“O Lord, I pray, save my life!”

5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
our God is merciful.

6 The Lord protects the simple;
when I was brought low, he saved me.

7 Return, O my soul, to your rest,
for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

8 For you have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling.

9 I walk before the Lord
in the land of the living.

10 I kept my faith, even when I said,
“I am greatly afflicted”;

11 I said in my consternation,
“Everyone is a liar.”

12 What shall I return to the Lord
for all his bounty to me?

13 I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord,

14 I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

15 Grievous in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his faithful ones.

16 O Lord, I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.
You have loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
and call on the name of the Lord.

18 I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people,

19 in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord!

The Word of the Lord.

And now please join me in a word of prayer:

Lord God, creator of all things, we come to you with heavy hearts, weighed down by grief and struggling and hardheartedness and the challenges of this season of the world. We come to you for comfort, to help ease our burdens and remind us that you are here with us in the midst of all that is hard. Help us to be gracious and kind to ourselves and others as you have first and always been kind and gracious to us. Help us as we face difficult choices, scary situations, and new realities. Remind us of your steadfast love in all times and places. For your promises of love and new life everlasting, we praise you and give you thanks. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Peace be with you all dear friends. Have a beautiful day. Amen.