

Fear . . . Deliverance . . . Hope

As I sit gazing out of my window, I am fascinated by the glistening snow that is falling. Each snowflake is covering the deadness of nature bringing a sparkling beauty that radiates in the moonlight. It gives a sense of purity where there was once ugliness and dirtiness. The brisk, cold wind thrashes the snow in all directions exhibiting its mighty power keeping the snowy covering intact. Yet just one warm, sunny day diminishes the covering and reveals the deadness of the life that once was.

When the harsh, chilling wind of life encompasses us, we long for the blanket of snow to cover the ugly wounds we carry inside. We present a sense of purity on the outside, but our heart reveals another truth, a deadness within. Doubts lurk; doubts about God and doubts about ourselves. Engulfing these doubts are anxiety and fear. Panic is around the corner.

Racing thoughts burst forth from the pit in which we dwell.

How can God love me when I have failed so many times?

Will God really protect and provide for my children and me when the world doesn't seem to care and the church has turned its back?

What if people truly see the real me?

Can I really trust God, His word, and promises?

The shattered pieces of life are held together with our makeshift glue. We delude ourselves into thinking that no one can see the cracks from the outside. We long to have a covering like snow to project an image that everything is fine and under control. Yet our mounting fears and anxiety begin to ooze from between the cracks.

The Israelites fleeing Egypt also had many fears. Their lives had been shattered by slavery and captivity. The dominance and unrealistic expectations of the Egyptians had so demoralized and abused the Israelite nation.

Many thoughts must have been rushing through their mind as they fled for their very lives not knowing where they were headed.

- What would the Egyptians do to them if they captured them?
- Would God provide for their needs?
- Would God truly make a way of escape when all they could see was the Red Sea before them and the Egyptians behind?
- Why did we leave the familiar and go to the unknown?

Reassurance of God's presence was given them in Exodus 14:15 (NIV).

*“Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. **The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.**’”*

As we face our difficult circumstances, inner fears can begin to surface.

- Are we willing to give up control to God and be still in His presence alert to His answers?
- Do we trust that God is working things out for our best in His time frame?
- Do we allow our thoughts to become negative filled with anxiety?
- Do we believe that God is for us not against us?

To fight these fears, we only need to turn to Scripture where God's character is evident. In Exodus 14:19-20 (NIV), God was leading the Israelites out of Egypt protecting them with the angel of the Lord. He guided them by a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. When the Egyptians were close behind, the Lord proved once again His faithfulness.

“Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.”

God not only provided protection in front, but He had their back. When daylight came, the Israelites experienced further miraculous signs that God was with them.

- Can you imagine their faces when the Red Sea parted?
- Can you envision their thoughts while crossing on dry land with the Egyptians in pursuit?
- Can you hear the Israelites gasp when the waters poured over the Egyptians killing them?
- Can you visualize the relief they felt when they knew they were safe?

God covered the Israelites' doubts, anxiety, and fears not with snow that melts but with His very presence. He was their shield, shelter, and refuge.

In Psalm 91, we find these reassuring words. *“He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”*

Feathers are soft, gentle, and comforting. They provide warmth for the soul, protection from the cold, dark times of life, rest for the weary and peace for the troubled heart.

This is the covering that we have access to as believers in Jesus Christ. The covering is not to mask our sin but to protect us from Satan's attacks and temptations.

Whatever crisis we are facing, relational difficulties, financial losses, or uncertainty, God is there. We need to position ourselves under His covering acknowledging that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. Protection, guidance, peace, and joy will follow. Healing is at hand.

Where is your focus? Is it on fixing the problem so life works and fears disappear or is it trusting the One who fights for you?

**Stand firm
for your deliverance
is coming.
Be still before the Lord.**

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