

from the darkness ...



A number of years ago I was walking near a park at night. It was pitch black so it was very difficult to make out the outlines of objects in front of me. All of a sudden I heard a growl coming at pace towards me. I tried desperately to see what it was but couldn't. I was trying to see what I could do to limit the damage and also fighting to keep my emotions under control; I braced myself for the worst. Then out of the darkness came two Doberman dogs running along together, out having a great time, absolutely oblivious to the fact that they had taken several years off my life.

FEAR is one of those emotions that can completely immobilise us in our spiritual journey, perhaps because we are worrying about our future. Going through valley experiences are not pleasant but they are nonetheless an essential part of our spiritual growth and development. Often our response to difficult times is to pray that God will remove the problem, or take us out of the situation that is causing the problem.

However, if you look through the Bible you will notice rarely does God remove people out of difficult times.

A classic example of this is Daniel. He had been sentenced to the lions' den and was looking right down the proverbial gun barrel.

My mind wanders to what he was praying when led to the den.

I am sure the soldiers were thinking this was not going to take too long for Daniel to become a tasty meal for starving lions.

God, however, had other ideas because it was going to be one of the means of getting the gospel to the rest of the world.

We need to see what David brings to our attention in Psalm 23:4, when he states that; **"I will fear no evil; for you are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."** No matter what we are going through we need to realise that we have God with us.

Remember Daniels' friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They were cast

Continued over

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ The way Challenge newspaper is being distributed around the world through prisons, street ministry, churches, door to door, medical teams, mission teams, sport ministry etc
- ★ Recent trip to South Australia for Carl and the opportunities to share about Challenge and speak at various churches
- ★ Recent gifts received towards our project list for Impact Africa mission trip
- ★ Our team of writers. They are an integral part of the team and we couldn't function effectively without them

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into a furnace heated seven times hotter than usual. Have you ever wondered why that was allowed by God? I think the main reason was so there would be no doubt who was responsible for the deliverance of the three young men.

When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace he saw someone who looked like the Son of Man. There was Jesus in the midst of the furnace right alongside three young men who must have been wondering what their future was. God wonderfully delivered them through the furnace and they came out of their trial without even the slightest smell of burning flesh.

It is also very encouraging to know that God is not only there for us, particularly in testing times, but that His rod and staff are being used to comfort us.

A shepherd used a rod to protect his sheep from the enemy such as wolves, lions and bears.

A shepherd used his staff for a number of reasons. One important purpose was to discipline wayward sheep. It is important for us to understand that whatever trials come our way they have first come via the Lord.

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ Orders coming in from the recent trip to South Australia. Pray churches will order the paper to reach out to their communities
- ★ The Impact Africa team (June 27 – July 16). Pray for the physical, mental and spiritual health of the team. Pray for the Lord's protection over the team as some areas of ministry can be risky
- ★ The various ministries we work with in South Africa – Multi Ministries (street), World Hope Prison Ministry (prison), Cheerful Care Givers (children), Cornerstone Community Church (children), Tabita Care Centre (hospital)
- ★ Various editions being distributed this month – Australia, South Africa, Military, Zimbabwe, Malawi, USA and prisons

Whatever the circumstances, God is fully aware of them and indeed has allowed them to come our way so that His divine purposes can be achieved in our lives.

In fact once we see what God is trying to do, in all its importance, it brings real comfort to our hearts and puts us in a place where we can learn from our trials rather than complain about them.

So this is another reason why we don't have to fear evil: God has filtered it through His sovereign providential working. There is nothing more encouraging than that.

We have a wonderful divine shepherd who cares for us in providing for our every need spiritually, emotionally and physically.

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

Ongoing supply of testimonies

If you would like to share your testimony through the printed page please email

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