

PROGRAM 38 PAGE 1

WHEN YOU CRY FOR COMFORT (PART 1)

Page 1 Eyes That Never Close

"I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8

Sleep! A welcome word when we're weary. A longing word when worries keep us awake. A healing word that renews our bodies and makes us eager to see another day. Most of us spend about one third of every 24 hours in bed. That's 25 years in a horizontal position during a 75 year life span!

That much time must be important to the God who never sleeps. And it is, as He watches over His children. David could have had 10,000 fears and worries keep him awake forever - especially when running from Saul and, later, from his own son. Yet in spite of his weaknesses, David had a heart that was in love with God. He knew that his life was in His Creator's hand - whether awake or asleep. That trust assured him that the eye that never closed was lovingly watching him when both of his were. When one's heart is filled with God's peace, sleep can follow as God's gift.

As it was for the Psalmist, so it is with you. The Father loves you just as much. And He is eager to give you a heart like David's - a heart that simply longs to love God in return. Look at sleep as one of His precious gifts. Then discipline yourself to make use of it for what it is chiefly for - rejuvenation for the body. Have a quiet time before retiring so you can confess and commit all to Him rather than have it all bombard you when you're in bed. Invite the Holy Spirit to be Lord of your unconscious state - even to granting you His dreams and visions rather than mere human dreaming that usually equals "senseless, stupid, silly and scary." And those times - long or short - when sleep won't come? Rather than twist and turn, let's begin to trust and learn by pouring out our love to Him and our prayers for others.

My prayer: "I trust You, my Father. I will lay down in peace and look to You for sleep. You alone make me dwell in safety."

PROGRAM 38 PAGE 2

WHEN YOU CRY FOR COMFORT (PART 1)

Page 2 When Fiery Trials Come

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you." Isaiah 43:2

Ever since it was dictated by the Holy Spirit to Isaiah, this scripture has carried innumerable saints through every conceivable trial imaginable. In its context, this promise was made - and has been kept - to Israel. No people have been tested for so long as have the Jews. Time and time again it has looked like they were finished, only to have God deliver them out of the fires of genocide and the Holocaust and from the waters of evil dictators of surrounding nations that even today seek to drown them.

The children of Israel knew these words were not merely to be taken as symbolic rhetoric that they would experience only in heaven. They had crossed a literal Red Sea and River Jordan where they saw God's deliverance and their enemies met God's doom. And the three uncompromising Hebrew young men saw literal flames seek to envelope them but emerged unscathed and unsinged.

So shall it be with you and me, dear friend. Notice that our scripture does not say "If" we go through deep and fiery trials but "When" we go through them. Tough times are guaranteed to those who walk the path of God. But unlike the man and woman who say "No" to the Savior and must suffer their own difficult trials alone, we have the constant companionship of the Lord and His guarantee that "I will be with thee."

Look back and see what your Heavenly Father has already brought you through. Then face each of your "todays" knowing that your deepest waters and most intense flames will not be allowed to drown or consume you but only to strengthen, purify and confirm your total reliance on God.

My prayer: "Thank You, Lord, for all the deep and fiery trials You have already brought me through. Teach me to trust Your precious promise that You will be with me each day, all the way, come what may."

PROGRAM 38 PAGE 3

WHEN YOU CRY FOR COMFORT (PART 1)

Page 3 You're Never Alone

"For your Maker is your husband, The Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth."
Isaiah 54:5

What a glorious guarantee God has given in this verse, not only to His people Israel but also to all who love Him. How often Israel has felt like a widow - forsaken and grieved (v 6). How often, also, have godly women felt alone in their grief when their husbands were taken to heaven and they left behind. And how often have you and I felt a sense of "spiritual widowhood", either during times of chastisement from the Lord or times of dryness when He seemed a million miles away and we felt forsaken, forgotten and faithless?

Then in the midst of our pain comes a familiar and soothing voice - the divine Husband appears with His caress and consoling words and all is well. And what a Husband both Israel and the Church have. The very One who made us - who redeemed us - and who declares Himself the God of the whole earth! Even when Israel was playing the harlot, her Almighty Husband yet reached out in love. And how many times have we, as Messiah's bride, wounded Him through our spiritual adulteries with the world (James 4:4) only to find Him willing to take us back into His arms of love?

What a faithful Husband we have in our "marriage made in heaven" before the foundation of the earth. When Norma and I were in Budapest, Hungary, I had to leave her sitting in the car while I went to find a place to stay. It was a long time until I returned and she was afraid I had lost my way, leaving her alone. When I suddenly appeared, she broke down in tears of relief. Your Husband, the Lord, never gets lost nor leaves you alone. So enjoy your heavenly marriage. It shall last forever!

My prayer: "I am overwhelmed at the thought of You taking me as Your bride, Lord Jesus. I long to return the love for You, my divine Husband, by offering my life in purity and purpose to You alone."

PROGRAM 38 PAGE 4

WHEN YOU CRY FOR COMFORT (PART 1)

Page 4 The Only Father Who Will Never Blow It

" For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

How sad it must make God to see how we often measure His love by that which we get from earthly fathers. Those who have terrible childhood memories often cower in fear of God, even though they are born again. But even those with loving fathers err in comparing the God of total and truest love with dads who fall short and make mistakes.

How many times I have been at the end of my tether and said, "God must be fed up with me. He couldn't love me. I'm finished!" You've been there, too. But that's when we find one set of footprints in the sands of our suffering - prints that are obviously too big to be ours! And as He tenderly holds us in His arms of love, He whispers this verse in our ears: "I know the thoughts that I think toward you", (and they are so much higher than we think); "thoughts of peace - not of evil" (and He loves you more than you could ever wish to be loved); "to give you an expected end" (and His expectation is more wonderful than yours could ever be). He's there - now - at your side and within your spirit. Let me try to tell it in a poem I wrote:

"I thought I was alone, But You were standing by;
I thought that no one saw my tears,
Then You wiped them from my eyes:
I thought I couldn't go on,
But Your presence made me dare;
And in my weakness I found strength,
Because Jesus, You were there.
Yes Jesus, You were there,
When I needed One who cared:
I found You so aware,
Yes, Jesus, You were there."

We know our Jesus is a Savior of love. So is our Father, for Jesus says, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9) Just as the context of today's verse

has Israel's final outcome one of blessing, so you can be sure the Father's blessing is also for you.

My prayer: "I thank You that You are the only perfect Father - and that Your love for me is beyond all human comprehension and far deeper than my foolish unbelief"

PROGRAM 38 PAGE 5

WHEN YOU CRY FOR COMFORT (PART 1)

Page 5 What A Jewel You Are!

"They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels: And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."
Malachi 3:17

What a perfect scripture with which to close our six-month treasure hunt through the First Testament - a verse that speaks of jewels. And what love that the Pearl of Great Price, our precious Jesus, would call those who love Him, His very own jewels! Just think of the sacrifices we make to call something "mine": careful courtship of a mate, payments on a home, nurturing of "my" own good reputation, etc. Now stagger at the price Jesus paid to call us His "jewels." Leaving a Holy Father to reach out to filthy man! Leaving the purity of heaven to endure the sinfulness of earth! Laying aside His deity as God's awesome Son to clothe Himself with a body of flesh and become God's acceptable sacrifice! And then, though He did it all and we did nothing, He calls us His jewels?! Just for loving and serving Him who is perfect Love and who even gives us the love with which to love Him?!

A worn-out missionary was returning on the same ship that brought President Theodore Roosevelt back from an African safari. At the dock, a brass band was waiting to greet Roosevelt. No one was there to meet the tired and lonely missionary. He complained to God, "Lord, it's not fair. One man goes to Africa for a short time on safari and comes home to a great welcome. I go for years and give my life to win others to You. Yet I come home and there's no one who cares to meet me." When he grew silent while wiping away his tears, the Lord spoke so clearly and lovingly, "You're not home yet!"

You, my friend, are also one of His precious jewels. Because you accept and love Him, He promises to spare you and call you His own for eternity. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

My prayer: "I would rather have You, my Jesus, than silver or gold. You alone are my Pearl of Great Price and I want only to be one of the Father's own jewels!"

