

Security in Adversity



Where to Find Security (Part 15)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'll continue and complete the theme that we've been following for the past three weeks: Where to Find Security.

Over these past three weeks I've been sharing with you on God's provision of total security for His people. I've explained how this relates to specific areas of need: time of trouble (war, famine, etc.). And I illustrated that from my own experience. I spoke about security against financial pressures, emotional pressures, against criticism and misrepresentation. And I've shared with you that the key to this kind of security is unreserved commitment to fulfill God's will for your life.

We've looked at this stated so clearly in 1 John 2:17:

> "And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever." (NIV)

Once again the contrast between the temporary and the eternal. Everything in this world, all its systems, all its plans, all its provisions, all its ambitions, it's all temporary, it's passing away, it's on its way out. But God's will is eternal. And God's will is all-conquering. Ultimately God's will is going to prevail over everything else. And the one who does God's will is as sure, as secure, as irresistible as the will of God itself. So by faith we can unite ourselves with the will of God and become invincible, irresistible.

Yesterday I illustrated this principle from the career of Joshua in the Old Testament. Today I'm going to show you how the same principle worked out in the life of a great servant of God, in the New Testament, the apostle Paul. Paul here, as we're going to look at him, is in adversity. In the natural everything has gone wrong. Things that were very dear and precious to him have been taken from him. Let's face it, sooner or later most of us are going to find ourselves in a situation of adversity. It may not be exactly the same kind of situation that Paul was in, but sooner or later we're going to be confronted with adversity. And we need to be sure that we have the kind of security that doesn't desert us in adversity. That sees us through the hard place, the lonely

place, the difficult place.

So let's look at the picture of Paul which is found in the second epistle to Timothy mainly in the last chapter. We have to emphasize that in the natural at this point, everything was against Paul. He was in a Roman jail, he was awaiting trial by one of the most wicked and corrupt rulers of human history, Nero, was almost certain that he would be condemned to execution, and many, many other things. He was an elderly man, perhaps his strength was failing, it was cold in the jail, he didn't have adequate clothing. Just about everything that could be against a person was against him. I'll just sum it up a little. First of all he was left alone without his co-workers. This is what he says in 2 Timothy 4:9-11, writing to Timothy:

> "Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. [What a terrible bitter disappointment. One of Paul's closest friends, most trusted co-workers, had gone back on his commitment, not only to Paul but to Christ, and gone back into the world. And others had left for other reasons.] Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me... [I've only got one man left with me now, that's Luke, the beloved physician. Then he says a little further on in the 20th verse] Erastus stayed in Corinth, [another co-worker] and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus." (NIV)

That's another bitter disappointment. Even the great apostle Paul apparently didn't get his prayers answered for Trophimus. So he had to leave that trusted fellow-worker behind in Miletus. And then he had been harmed, bitterly harmed by his enemies. Without bitterness, but with very objective reality, he writes this, verses 14-16:

> "Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he had done. [Paul says, 'I'm not going to seek vengeance. But he's in the Lord's hands.'] You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. [Paul had many powerful active enemies. And then he had been deserted by his friends. It's one thing to have your enemies against you, but how much more bitter when you're deserted by your friends. This is what he says in verse 16:] At my first defense, [when I first appeared before the Emperor] no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. [Isn't that a terrible statement?] Everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them." (NIV)

And then he was without adequate clothing and equipment. So in verse 13 of that chapter he writes to Timothy:

> "When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, [And when I read those words, 'bring the cloak' I see Paul in that stone dungeon, winter coming on, no warm clothing. He was human like the rest of us. One of the things that's most difficult for me to endure, I have to admit, is cold. When Paul wrote somewhere else in his writings that he'd endured cold and nakedness, I kind of shudder inside with those words. But there he was without adequate clothing or provision for the cold in that cell as winter came on. Then he says also:] bring my scroll, especially the parchments." (NIV)

Why did he want the scroll, the parchments? Well he wanted to write letters and he didn't have the material to do it. What kind of letters do you think he was going to write? Letters complaining about his situation? I doubt it. I think he was concerned with the Christian churches and the disciples that he knew in various parts of the ancient world, and he wanted to write to them and comfort them and encourage them. His mind was not focused on himself at all. So that's the picture of Paul right at the end of his life in a situation of adversity.

Now let's ask ourselves in that situation what was Paul's attitude. He states it himself in that same fourth chapter of 1 Timothy, verses 6-8:

> "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. [I wonder if you see the picture there. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, with every animal that was offered in sacrifice they also had to offer a drink offering of wine. The sacrifice of the animal was not complete without the drink offering. Paul says, 'I've offered to the Lord the sacrifice of my labors, the disciples I've made, the churches I've founded, but to make that sacrifice complete, my own life is being poured out like that drink offering.' So he said:] I'm being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. [Notice the time has come. Remember I emphasized that nothing could come against us as we walk in the will of God until God's time comes. Then he goes on:] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I

> have kept the faith."

I want to tell you, friend, that if you are going to keep the faith, you're going to have to fight the fight. Faith is a fight. It takes courage. It takes determination. It takes commitment. Paul said, "I've finished the race, I've done all that was allotted me to do. And then he looks forward out of time into eternity. It's like a window opened in that cell and he looked right beyond those grey stone walls out into a different scene.

> "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (NIV)

That always touches me because Paul knew that he was going to stand before an unrighteous judge who would pronounce an unrighteous sentence against him, a death sentence. He said, "That's not the last judgment. There's another one lying ahead. And in eternity I'm going to stand before an absolutely righteous judge and He will give me the due reward for all that I've done in His service. You see, he had such serene confidence. He knew that everything was under God's control. There was no bitterness, no regrets. What was the secret of that attitude? I believe it's beautifully stated a little earlier in that epistle, 2 Timothy 1:12, speaking about all that he'd been through he says:

> "Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." (NIV)

I want to pick out two key phrases there. The secret of all serenity and security in the situation of adversity. First of all, "I know whom I have believed." Note he did not say, "I know what I have believed." It wasn't a doctrine that was his security. It was a person, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not enough, dear friend, to believe in a doctrine. That doctrine has got to take you to a person, to the person of the Savior, to the Lord Jesus. Can you say, "I know whom I have believed?" I'm not asking you if you know what you have believed? Do you know whom you have believed?

And then the second statement there that Paul makes that's so significant is, "I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him." The King James Version says, "...what I have committed to Him." You see that's the secret of true security. It's total commitment to God and to His will. When you've committed your life and all that you are and all that you're ever going to be into the hands of God, you can be absolutely sure that God is able to guard what you've entrusted to Him.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another helpful and inspiring theme from the word of God.

My special offer this week is my book From Jordan to Pentecost. This book explains both the source and the secret of supernatural power for victorious Christian living. In clear and practical terms it shows you the steps that lead to this source of power.

Also, my complete series of talks this week on "Where to Find Security, Part 3" is available in a single, carefully edited cassette.

Stay tuned for details.

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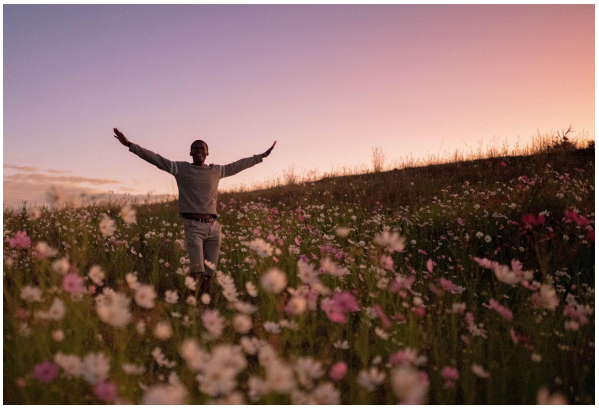

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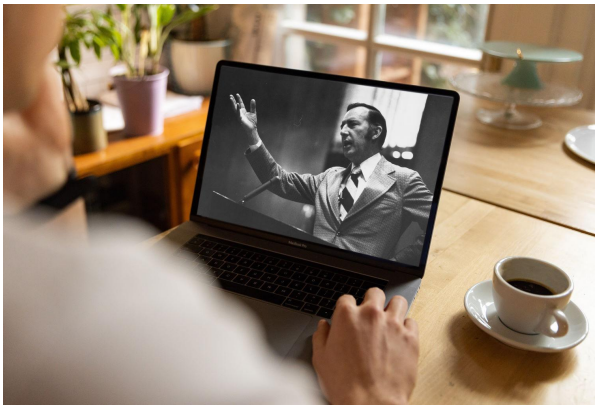

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