



HAVE YOU EVER FELT FORSAKEN? By: David W. Lankford

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We want to take our scripture text today from **2nd Timothy 4:16-17**, **"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthen me that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion"**. As sad as it may sound, Paul, the apostle, tells us of a particular time in which all men had forsaken him. As mighty and powerful as a man of God that he was, it is hard to fathom that this apostle, a true servant of the Lord God of Abraham, could be left alone when he needed companionship the most. No doubt there have been times within your own personal life when you too felt ostracized and alienated from people. We know that Paul did not choose to be alone; because he said, all men had forsaken him. For that reason, Paul prayed for his friends and co-laborers so that this selfish act would not be laid to their charge. In the end, Paul was abandoned just like Jesus was, but like Christ, he neither was alone for the Father was with him and so was Christ with Paul. Whether through ill will, fear, or just mere desertion, Paul prayed to the Lord that he would not charge his fellow laborers with guilt. As difficult as his life had been and as difficult as it had become, Paul made two very powerful statements when he said: notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and secondly the Lord also strengthened me. What a

powerful testimony prior to Paul's execution in that the Lord stood with him. This demonstrates to each of us the degree of God's power and presence manifested in Paul's life when all men had forsaken him. Throughout the scriptures we see the Lord's presence in other people's lives as well. For that reason, I want to encourage you today that no matter where you may find yourself the Lord God of Abraham is forever with you. Satan is a master at convincing us throughout our pilgrimage that God has abandoned us for some unknown reason and that He has left us all alone. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jehovah spoke these words to Moses in **Exodus 33:14**, **"And he said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest"**. Not only does the presence of God go with His people but He gives His people perpetual rest. Jesus gave us the greatest invitation ever given to mortal man found in **Matthew 11:28-30**, **"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"**. That invitation is still valid to this day. If you are struggling, grappling, and feeling as though you have no hope, then Christ invites you to come and cast your every care upon Him. The psalmist David knew that if he could only get into the presence of God his joy would be made full. We read in **Psalm 16:11**, **"Thou**

wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore". In David's great prayer of confession he said here in **Psalm 51:11**, **"Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me"**. I want you to know, there is absolute peace and placidity in His most holy presence. Where ever the presence of the Lord is made manifest something divine will happen in not only your life but in the lives of others. We read in **Luke 5:17**, **"And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them"**. Where ever you find the presence of God you will find miracles and joy that will sustain and keep you. The second thing that Paul declared was that the Lord God of Abraham strengthened him. If there has ever been a time when the people of God needed strength, it would be today. Regretfully, the cares of this life are pulling the people of God down and many feel as though they're living in a pit. What I need for you to understand is that God is omnipresent and everywhere all the time. If you do find yourself in a pit just as he was with Joseph, He will be with you. I find that many people feel tired, weak and exposed to the enemy in this present hour. You need to know that God will give you the strength in spite of your opposition. Moses declared emphatically in **Exodus 15:2**, **"The**

Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him". The Lord is the strength in your soul, and He is your deliverance no matter where you find yourself. When Moses said he would prepare him a habitation, he was not only speaking of the Old Testament tabernacle, but a place where in the presence of God might reside within him personally, thus strengthening him. When God takes up residence within your earthen vessel, you carry His presence with you continually. We read in **1st John 4:4**, "**Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world**". I trust today you will be a holy habitation for the presence of God Almighty. As I said previously, all of us have felt abandoned and forsaken at times, but according to the Word of God, we see that our Lord has always been with His people in spite of their opposition. The psalmist declared in **Psalm 27:1**, "**The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid**". Too many people today live in fear and do not trust God and His solemn Word. The psalmist declared in **Psalm 29:11**, "**The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace**". Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost will give you the strength to fight the battles that you are facing and help you to overcome all of your opposition. The psalmist said while reflecting: *I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread*. We do not have to beg; we must simply believe and trust! Paul demonstrated his trust, for he said, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. He knew that God, and God's presence was with him. One of my favorite scriptures

that blesses me every time I read and quote it is found in **Psalm 41:11**, "**By this I know that thou favorest me, because my enemy doth not triumph over me**". The very fact that you are standing today is a divine demonstration that God has favored you, because the enemy, Satan, has not triumphed over you. If Satan had triumphed over your life you would not have a testimony today. Each and ever one of us needs to remember no matter how great the tempest and no matter how great the storm, God is our refuge. The psalmist declared in **Psalm 46:1**, "**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble**". The reason this verse is so powerful is because God is already present in your life and does not have to come to the scene to witness the circumstances prevailing within your life, He is already there. If He is abiding in you, thus wherever you go and wherever you may find yourself, He is with you. One of the greatest passages of scripture that has ever been penned and written by the unction of the Holy Ghost is found in **2nd Corinthians 4:7-10**, "**But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body**". What a powerful word in describing the manifest power and presence of God abiding in our earthen vessels or better yet, these clay jars. What joy and peace the child of God can have once they learn to rest in the Lord and cast every care and every burden upon him. To many times we listen to the voice of Satan and he tells us that we are alone and the reason we are alone is because somewhere along

the way we have failed our Lord and He has abandoned us. I want to remind you that Satan is a liar and there is no truth in him whatsoever, those are the words of Christ our Lord. We are admonished in **Hebrews 13:5-6**, "**Let your conversation being without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me**". The word conversation in the Greek always means *one's lifestyle*: so Paul is saying, don't allow your life style to be filled with covetousness because the Lord has promised He would never leave you nor forsake you. This means He will always provide for you and protect you because your lifestyle is pleasing to Him. I also want to emphasize that the Lord God of Abraham is your helper, manifested by the presence of the Holy Ghost. Even though all men had forsaken Paul, he was not alone because the Lord stood with him and strengthened him. May the Lord God of Abraham forever order your steps and keep you in the coming days. As always, my wife and I thank you for your prayers and financial support. This morning while I was in prayer I did my best to bring each one of you to the throne of grace before I ever wrote this newsletter. Truly the Lord is mindful of each of us every day.

Serving With You All,

Pastor David W. Lankford

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