

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with Psalm 46. It begins with the promise that God is a very present help in time of trouble. This is the verse I want to emphasize. No matter what trouble you are facing, you can "be still" and know that God is real (Ps. 46:10). He is a very present help! Many think this psalm was composed to celebrate the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib and Assyria during the days of King Hezekiah. This remarkable story is found three times in the Bible (2 Ki. 19; 2 Chron. 32; Is. 37). The Assyrian Taylor Prism (secular history) confirms the incident. It confirms that Sennacherib had Jerusalem surrounded and that Hezekiah was trapped in his palace "like a bird in a cage". Sennacherib, however, did not destroy Jerusalem or capture Hezekiah as he had promised. The reason was that 185,000 of his soldiers died in a single night. Secular historians may consider it the result of a plague, but the Bible attributes their death to an "angel of the Lord" (2 Ki. 19:35; 2 Chron. 32:21; Is. 37:36).

A dear friend, Leon Williams passed away not long ago. His daughter, Lisa, came to me two days ago with a monitoring device he wore around his neck. She wanted to know if I knew anyone who needed it. It contains a GPS locator so that in a time of trouble he could push a button and help would be on the way. God of course, can get there faster. God is a very present help in time of trouble!

Centuries before cell phones and GPS David realized that no matter where he was, God could find him. He wrote: **"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you."** (Ps. 139:7-12).

The presence of God, however, is like a two edged sword. It cuts both ways! If you are doing what is right you want God to be with you. If you are doing what is wrong you prefer that God be far away. Many don't want to see God for the same reason a thief doesn't want to see a policeman.

The people of Jerusalem, however, were in deep trouble. They needed help in a hurry. The Assyrian army was so superior that they taunted Hezekiah by volunteering to give him 2,000 horses if he was able to put riders on them (Is. 36:8). They warned the people of Jerusalem that soon they would be eating their own filth and drinking their own urine (Is. 36:12). The Assyrians had already conquered every city they attacked and specifically warned Hezekiah not to trust in God (Is. 36:18). Sennacherib sent messengers with this message: **"Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.' Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?"** (Is. 37:10-13).

Hezekiah responded to this threat by prayer. He said: **“Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, Lord, are the only God.”** (Is. 37:20).

As we have pointed out, God is a very present help in time of trouble. Hezekiah’s prayers were answered! **“Then the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.”** (Is. 37:36,37).

Job wrote: **“Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble”** (Job 14:1). He said again: **“Man is born to trouble as surely as the sparks fly upward”** (Job. 5:7). This truth applies to everyone. Today may be a peaceful day that is filled with tranquility. At some point, however, you are going to be facing trouble and you know it!

When you do, please remember that God is a very present help in time of trouble!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce