



First Christian Reformed Church of Lynden
From Generation to Generation for the Glory of God

God's precious and exceedingly great promises in hard times

*Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

Scripture

Reflections on not being afraid from the OT:

Exodus 14:13-14

¹³ Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

Psalm 27:1, 3

¹ The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
³ Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

Psalm 46:1-3

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

Psalm 56:3-4

³ When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.
⁴ In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

Isaiah 12:2

² Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid;
for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

Isaiah 41:9-10, 13

⁹ "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off;
¹⁰ fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
¹³ For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the one who helps you.'"

Isaiah 43:1

¹ But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

⁷ Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.
⁸ He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.

Song

Psalm 59:16 But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

He Will Hold Me Fast (Keith Getty)

When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.

Those He saves are His delight, Christ will hold me fast;
Precious in his holy sight, He will hold me fast.
He'll not let my soul be lost; His promises shall last;
Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.

For my life He bled and died, Christ will hold me fast;
Justice has been satisfied; He will hold me fast.
Raised with Him to endless life, He will hold me fast
'Till our faith is turned to sight, When He comes at last!

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.

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Prayer

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Father, this morning we come to you deeply distressed and troubled. Like Jesus, our souls are overwhelmed with sorrow by the difficult circumstances that have come upon us. Circumstances that seem to have no end in sight. We confess that we don't understand. Questions fill our minds: Why did this happen? How could you allow it? Where are you in the midst of it?

Closer to home, we are also filled with sorrow over the relational difficulties that have come into our lives. We think of the challenges of marriage or parenting. The difficulties that have overtaken marriages because of porn addiction, broken trust, rampant insecurities, outbursts of anger. The pain of a wayward children who reject you, despite everything they were raised to believe. The strains of taking care of aging parents as we watch life drain from their bodies. Oh God, these daily difficulties wear on us until we feel too exhausted to go on.

God, we're also exhausted by the physical, mental and emotional trials you have brought upon many of us. We grieve the anxiety that ravages our lives, the darkness of depression that bleeds into every part of our soul, the highs and lows that destroy our relationships, all of it, makes us feel less than human. We hate it, God. And we confess that we often struggle to see you in the midst of these trials.

But, of course, Lord, when it's all said and done, we acknowledge that many of our trials have been brought on us through our own sin. We've gone after the false gods of sex or money or comfort or control or escapism and now we're tasting the bitter consequences of those choices. Like Israel, we spurned you to go after other lovers and now those very lovers have spurned us in our greatest moment of need. Oh God, our sin makes us miserable. We hate it and yet often we keep going back to it. We feel trapped.

All of these things fill our hearts with sorrow and grief. And yet we do not grieve as those who have no hope. On this side of the cross, we know that all of our grief, sorrow, and sin has been borne by another for us. For there, on the cross, Jesus the ultimate grief-bearer, took our sins and sufferings upon himself so that we might not be consumed by your wrath or by the suffering that comes in this broken world. Because of his atoning work on our behalf, we not only experience salvation amidst sorrow, but we also have great confidence that one day all of our sorrow will be wiped away when Jesus returns to right all wrongs and cause us to walk with you in unbroken fellowship on a renewed earth. Oh Lord, we have great hope because of Jesus. And so we continue to submit ourselves to you just like Jesus did, trusting in your goodness and relying on the Holy Spirit to help us when we feel too exhausted to go on.

Strengthen us now in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

(from a prayer offered at Hinson Baptist Church, Portland, OR where a close family friend of the Woodyards pastored for several years)