



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: SEPTEMBER 2021

by Lee Shipp

JESUS IS NOT ASHAMED OF YOU

Forsaken! The horror of such a feeling. Just ask the abandoned wife, the orphaned child, or the grieving friend. There is no feeling like being forsaken. You feel less than human. You feel diseased. You feel ugly. Infectious. Disgusting.

Why does the forsaken person feel this way? Because you were forsaken. Somebody that was supposed to stay – didn't! Someone who wanted you to trust them – walked out of your life. Why? It's obvious – you were not worth it.

You were counting on them. They were supposed to be there. Nothing was to ever tear you apart. They were needed. The abusive questions bombard the mind: "How will you go on? What will you do? How can you do this alone? How can you ever trust again?" These are fair questions and experience tells you that it is hard to trust anybody.

But is there someone you can count on? Is there a friend that will remain? A friend who knows you better than you know yourself and will still love you? Is there a friend who can see into the future and assure you that they will never leave? Is there a friend that will stick closer than a brother – to you?

I know one! He is true. He is loyal. He knows the future. He knows every way you will fail. He knows every way you will mistreat Him and betray Him, but He will not forsake you. He knows the situations that will come, causing you to be ashamed of Him; however, He will not be ashamed of you! He will not forsake you. Even if your father and mother forsake you, He will take you in (Psalms 27:10). He promised you that He would be with you to the ends of the world. His great apostle Paul declared, "... *nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 8).

The great British preacher, Charles Spurgeon, commented about the steadfastness of Jesus:

He will not be satisfied to sit on His throne until you are there. He owned us and His great joy is to share everything with us. He made no protest on the cross – that He might be joined to us – He will not be satisfied till we are enthralled and joined with Him in glory! He would not sit upon His own throne until He had SECURED a place upon it for all who would believe in Him.

Crown the Head and the whole body shares the honor. Christ's throne, crown, scepter, palace, treasures, robes, heritage, are yours! CHRIST DEEMS HIS HAPPINESS COMPLETED BY HIS PEOPLE SHARING IT: The glory which Thou gavest me have I given them.

The smiles of His Father are all the sweeter to Him, because His people share them. The honors of His Kingdom are more pleasing because His people appear with Him in Glory! More valuable to Him are His conquests, since they have delivered and saved His people. He delights in His throne, because you are there around it! He rejoices in His royal robes, because they spread over you. He delights more in His joy, because you have entered into it!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT HE WILL NOT FORSAKE YOU?

Forsaken means to relinquish responsibility; to fail someone who was trusting them, or to refuse to continue with the commitment previously made. When Jesus tells us that He will not forsake us He is assuring us that He is not like anybody else. All men fail and forsake, even mothers and fathers. But Jesus is assuring us that He is different – He will not abandon us. It is this faith in Jesus that overcomes life. Everything both now and beyond this life depends on the reliability of Jesus. All present and future victories rest upon this surety: from the manger – to the cross – to the heavens – He has not forsaken us!

HE DID NOT FORSAKE YOU ON EARTH

When our father (Adam) fell in the garden, He did not fail us. He came into that rebellion assuring us that He would rescue us. When Israel failed God in the wilderness, murmuring and rebelling against God – He did not fail me. When the Israelites spent the entire day dancing before their golden idol, offending and mocking the very God that just delivered them from servitude and abuse – He did not fail me. The morning after there was manna on the ground (Selah). God's faithfulness to me does not depend on my merit but on His lovingkindness.

When the prophets were rejected and slain – He did not fail me. When the world was in darkness and hope was lost – He did not fail me, a Great Light appeared; the Son of God stepped into our suffering.

He didn't forsake me when I burst into Simon's home to wash His feet. He was not ashamed of me there. He let me touch Him and He identified Himself to me

"GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO ME DOES NOT DEPEND ON MY MERIT BUT ON HIS LOVINGKINDNESS"

[In referring to washing His feet, I am referring to the woman in the gospels.

She is humanity. As He treated her, so he has treated me]. He will not abandon or forsake me means He went to the cross. He did not fail me at the cross, He opened not His mouth so He could give me a victory unshaken and sure.

His payment was so extensive Paul could say, "... *things present, nor things to come can ever separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus.*" "My sin oh this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, praise the Lord oh my soul."

He didn't just pay enough ... He paid excessively! He didn't just pay a portion ... He paid it in full!

He will not forsake me in tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or sword, or peril. Not in death or in life. No power in heaven, hell, or earth – nothing that exists or could exist, no height nor depth – no creature can separate me from His love! He did not and He will not relinquish His responsibility for me. He will not refuse to fulfill His commitment to me. He will not embarrass my trust in Him. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

We deserve to be forsaken. But He is not a forsaker! His faithfulness is who He is – He is Faithful even when we are not! He does not come to save us because we are like Him. He comes to save us that we may be like Him!

When I am overwhelmed and overthrown and overboard – I am not forsaken. When it is dark – I am not forsaken. When it is hard – I am not forsaken. When the storm is raging – I am not forsaken. He didn't forsake me when I was reprobate – for it was while I was a sinner He died for me. And when I have

played the prodigal – He did not forsake me. He always had a place for me at His throne of grace. Oh, what love ... no greater love ... Grace how can it be, that in my sin – yes even then, He shed His blood for me.

He did not forsake you as a sinner, He will not forsake you as a saint! While we were His enemies ... while we were the murderers ... while we were not good or worthy of salvation ... to the full extent of what sinners are that is when Jesus died for us!

While we were sinners: It was then He expressed His love for us. It was then that He offered us hope. It was then that He defeated our death. It was then that He paid for our crimes. It was then that He destroyed our master Satan. It was then that He loved us.

If He loved us then, how much does He love us now! If He loved us in death, how much more does He love us in life? If He would go to the cross for us then, He will go to the Father for us now! If He would not abandon us in that sinful state, He would never abandon us now! If sin could not prevent His love then, can it prevent it now? If our disgusting heart could not turn away His love then, could it now? If, as His very own enemies and murderers, He would desire to buy us to be His own, then consider how much He would want everyone of us now!

If, when we were gross sinners He died for us, then is there a gross SAINT today He would not rescue and save? If, when we hated Him, He loved us, now when we love Him would He hate us? If, when we did not want Him, He laid down His life, now when we need Him would He forsake us? If He loved us as sinners, shall He not love us as children? If he was so good to us as unbelievers, shall He not be much better to us as believers?

HE WILL NOT FORSAKE YOU IN HEAVEN

Has the pressure of religion slammed you into the walls of defeat? Have you struggled to achieve holiness only to have a breakdown, and you feel that now all is lost? Forsaken again, now by the religious system.

Are you more focused on discipline and what God requires, rather than Jesus and the free worship of God? Then I joyfully exhort you, on behalf of God, "Come by a new and living way!" The answer is in hearing and believing. Cease from your restless and worthless doings. Repose in full unquestioning confidence in the one offering of Jesus Christ. Jesus has perfectly satisfied and perfectly glorified God as to the great question of your sin and guilt. It is on this basis that God will never forsake you.

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:12-24).

Jesus prevailed on our behalf. Dare you add to the blood atonement of Christ by some personal work of righteousness? Do you think to earn God's faithfulness? Forget it! He is faithful because you believe in Him. He is not faithful because you are. He is faithful because that is Who He is. Believe what Jesus has done for you.

"We see Jesus, by the grace of God should taste death for every man ... Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 2: 9-11; 6: 17-20).

You can come ... Jesus is able to save to the uttermost! He is the mediator of a better covenant. What magnificent wisdom there is in the redemption of God through His Son Jesus.

There is power in the blood! In the Old Testament, though God is always merciful and benevolent, the Law demanded justice. In the New Testament justice is satisfied in Christ! The Law has been nailed to His cross and for all believers he has perfected obedience! Thank you, Jesus!

Scripture teaches us the believer is accepted in the Beloved – complete in Christ, perfectly forgiven and perfectly justified through the death and resurrection of Christ; that he can never come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life; that he is dead to sin, dead to the world, dead to the law, because Christ has died, and the believer has died in Him.

Christ by his own blood entered once into the holy place ... obtained eternal redemption for us.

"For if blood of bulls sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:11-14).

Jesus is our substituting righteousness before God. Christ is now living and acting at the right hand of God for believers, the children of God who are passing through this sinful world. He died to make them clean, He lives to keep them clean.

No matter what satanic devices or how many demonic forces are arrayed against us, nothing can ever match the awesome power of God. This God responds to our call for help. He will not forsake us. Sin is defeated.

God now searches for those who are battered and hopeless that He might be strong on their behalf. God is willing to draw near to those who ask for His help.

Jesus is your personal High Priest. God the Father obligated Him to this task.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

He who led our captivity captive was Jehovah Jesus. He who redeemed us was none other than God Himself.

Jesus is our hope in heaven. Paul says, "... the hope which is laid up for you in heaven ..." (Colossians 1:5). What is this hope in heaven? It is the assurance that He will "... present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Colossians 1:22). Jesus will stand beside you and exhibit you as a work of His grace before His Father. He will not forsake you there. He will present you holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable before the Father. Jesus does it. There in heaven He owns you and will not forsake you.

There is nobody in heaven talking about how great they are or how worthy they are, but they are all talking about how great and worthy Jesus is. Worthy is the Lamb! He is famous for the sinners He saves, the transgressions He forgives. Charles Spurgeon beautifully expresses this truth:

Will the sinners friend forsake you? No; He will be pleased to own you; He will meet you on the other side of Jordan, and He will say, "Come, my beloved, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and have bought thee, though thou wast a sinner vile, and now I am not ashamed to confess thee before my holy angels; ... come with me, and I will take thee to my Father's face, and will confess thee there."

When the world shall be rolled up like a worn-out vesture, and these arching skies shall have passed away like a forgotten dream; when eternity with its deep sounding waves shall break upon the rocks of time and sweep them away forever, then, on that sea of glass thou shalt stand with Christ, thy Friend still.