



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: MARCH 2021

by Lee Shipp

WHEN WILL YOU LET ME FIGHT FOR YOU?

David was amazing. His triumphs. His battles. His passion. His worship. Even in failure he was amazing. Even there, submerged in sin and corruption he was amazing. Imagine a small untrained boy going up against a giant of a warrior with nothing but a sling, rocks, and the name of God. There was no fear – amazing! What was the secret of this life? How can a man so corrupt, so passionate, sometimes so wrong have such blessing upon his life?

A simple look at David's heart will reveal the secret. David wasn't about thrones, fame, attention, or position. He passionately pursued one thing – intimacy with God. God was the one thing in David's heart. David had this awareness that God truly loved him, even liked him. David believed he was raised by God and knowing God so well he believed nothing could ever come between them. Not even sin was strong enough to separate David from God's everlasting love and favor. Of course, it is sin that separates us from God, but sin does not have the power to separate those who repent and believe on God, for they know that He is the God who forgives.

David lived by the grace of God and repented often for his frequent and tragic behavior. David knew he was never forsaken. He knew that God would take him up and fight his battles. He knew that any who would rise up against him were also rising up against God; therefore, David relied upon God to fight his battles. Even when the sling was in David's hand, he relied upon God to guide the stone. Even when joined by the greatest fighting force of his day, David relied upon the Lord to give him the victory. God fought for David and David let Him!

It is never uncommon to hear David cry out his reliance upon God. David would say things like, *"Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation"* (Psalms 35:3). What about you? Do you have this confidence in God? Do you live in fear? Do you watch your enemies mount up against you, causing you to fear that you will never be safe? What will it take for you to rest in the love of God? Do you think God only loved David like this? Do you not know that He loves you as He loved His beloved Son Jesus? When will you let God fight for you?

Even Moses relied upon the faithfulness of God to fight for him. He saw in every victory the hand of God. Moses was confident that no weapon formed against him would prosper and he didn't even have that scripture to quote. Moses said, *"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them"* (Deuteronomy 33:26-27).

In his Psalm, Moses writes what can almost seem to be a marriage covenant. It is beautiful. Just notice the "I will's" of Moses and then the "I will's" of God as He responds to Moses. It is found in Psalm 91. The groundwork of these "I will's" occur among those who have already learned to dwell in the secret place of the Most High. It is not automatic. It is not magical words. It is the reality of those who by faith have learned to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

First Moses:

• I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and fortress: my God, in Him will I trust.

There it is. That is Moses' "I will." What else can he add? Moses declares Him to be his Lord. Moses takes refuge in Him. Moses will trust in Him. That is all a man can do!

This man who can live in this faith is assured to be delivered from traps and pestilence. He will not be afraid of night terrors. In the day, he will not fear the aggression of war. Pestilence and destruction will not disturb his peace. Even when multitudes are being shaken all around, it will not affect this man.

Now we will notice the "I will's" of God. The Lord responds to Moses' confession and says, *"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him ..."* (Psalms 91:14).

Now God's "I will's":

- I will deliver him.
- I will set him on high.
- I will answer him.
- I will be with him in trouble.
- I will deliver him and honor him.
- I will satisfy his life.
- I will show him my salvation.

It has given me great joy to know the Lord this way. The grace of God overwhelms me. God's grace is more than amazing! I rejoice in the manifest ways God's hand has been upon my life. God has led me in the most profound ways. I am a diligent note taker about everything in my life ... journals everywhere. My heart rejoices in God my Savior who has time and again fought for me and delivered me. The secret place is a real place. Just the traumatic lives many believers live in: the fear, the shaking, the oppression, etc. make it is obvious that living in the secret place is not automatic. It is a place that must be entered. It has taken over ten years to have the revelation of this intimacy with God! It takes time.

God must remove everything else we trust in order for us to truly have Him as our only refuge. I wrote the following in 2010:

THE JEALOUS GOD

I am overwhelmed by the DESIRE OF GOD, His love, and His passion to be with us. Considering our unfaithfulness,

God's unfailing effort to win our hearts is astounding! I am not the first to be amazed and surely will not be the last. I have to admit that I am also amazed, ashamed would be more appropriate, at the utter contempt we display toward the Holy desire of our God!

Clearly, God reveals throughout scripture that He has emotion, passion, and desire. Because we are made in God's image, we share many of His characteristics, one of which is love. Nothing will bring more pain to God than for us to neglect and ignore that intimacy God has ardently proposed.

***"ALL IT TAKES IS YOUR PRAISE.
PRAISE IS YOUR PERMISSION."***

The heart-rending account of Love's pursuit, which originated all the way back at creation, is that man has thrown God's beloved intimacy back into His face and counted it as a thing not precious.

Recently, deep into the night, the Holy Spirit called me. I went into my office and sat before the Lord and He opened my eyes to His jealousy. I saw the passion, love, desire, and emotion in God; that it is an endless reservoir.

GOD IS THE MOST ABUSED LOVER

Most people never consider God's benevolent acts. They just live from one high to the next, one miracle to the next. The moment God does not perform, spiritual tantrums are thrown. Most people don't even thank God for His love much less see His generosity as an invitation to know Him. All of God's acts of kindness and hospitality are gestures of a God who desires our love.

God gives you the very best, but you give Him the worst: the worst of your day, the worst of your moods, the worst of your time. You spend your time with God when you are half asleep. Perhaps you give Him a moment of thanks just before you go to bed at night, or He gets those groggy moments in the morning when you can hardly stay awake. My lethargic attempts at walking with God have embarrassed me since the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to see how jealous God is for me.

You have to stir yourself up to take hold of God. You have to do it. I don't care how you were raised. I don't care what you are like or what your nature is. One person is expressive, and another is not – I don't care. It doesn't matter to me. I don't want you to be like me and I don't care to worship like you. There is only one desire in my heart – I want to see God! I don't want to simply say, *"I went to church."* I want to enter His presence! Take me past the praises and songs and let me see God. And I don't care who judges me. I don't care what they think. I get to see God and that doesn't happen automatically.

He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. You have to stir yourself. Any man is capable of seeking God because of the way he is created. You are a human; you are made for seeking God! Don't tell me you can't. The problem is – you won't! Instead of worshipping in spirit we worship with our church, and blend into how everyone else is acting. I have had people say, *"I just wanted to shout."* Well, why didn't you? I have had people say, *"I wanted to run."* Well, why didn't you? I have had people

say, "I wanted to dance." Well, why didn't you?

Oh, the traditional excuses, "As Baptist we did not do that," or, "As Methodist we didn't do that." Even the Pentecostals will say, "This is the way we Pentecostals do it." or "That is not the way I was raised! That is not my nature."

What does it matter? Do you want to see God? Then let the Holy Spirit lead you! All God wants is for you to believe that He is and to diligently seek Him! No diligence = no reward! You have to be diligent. You can be like those around you. However, most of them do not care to be diligent. Most of them don't care if they see God or not. They are content to simply go to church, but if you want more you have to do more – you have to be diligent!

DILIGENCE TAKES EFFORT

Like David, stir yourself up to take hold of God. He prayed over his heart. He commanded himself to bless the Lord. Well, how many desires do you have? Is your mind on dinner, work, a ball game, or touching God? David fought these distractions by wanting to see the glory of God. He stirred himself up for that reality of seeing God.

Look at David: he is a worshipper, a man after God's own heart. Read his psalms and see how often he commanded his soul to bless the Lord. He did not always feel like praising. He is the king of Israel, a military genius, a soldier, a father, and a husband. David knew what tired was. He fought the same temptations with fatigue and weariness that we have to fight. But he came into the house of the Lord and said, "Bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me bless his Holy Name." He refused to allow himself, or depression, or fatigue to rob him of loving God; he stirred himself up! He refused to remain downcast and emotional when the Lord would be the light of his countenance; therefore, David commanded himself to rise up and bless the Lord!

So, David stirred himself up. No wonder he is the worshipper of God. No wonder he took hold of the Lord. No wonder he said of God "your love is better than life". David touched something that most people never get close to, but all men can. He didn't care about what songs were being sung that day or how people were dressed. He wanted to know Christ!

There are many excuses: "Well I don't feel like rejoicing today." So, what! Do it anyway and then you will be lifted by the visitation of God. Rejoice that He has come to save you. Rejoice that He will heal you. Rejoice that He will deliver you. Rejoice that He will not forsake you.

Suddenly your lethargy will be replaced by spiritual passion! You can't praise God and exercise yourself to diligence when you feel like it. Most of the time you will not feel like it. You have to see and believe that the reward He will give you is worth every effort.

God transformed my life by this truth. I was walking out of my office depressed and God said, "when are you going to give it to me ... when are you going to let me fight for you?"

I get David! I do. I understand him. I am coming to know the Lord as he did. My heart is being ravished by simply one thing. That one thing is to be with the Lord. I can say that the Lord loves me. I can say that the Lord likes me! And you should see the looks on believers faces when I say that the Lord likes me. Amazing ... the unbelief in believers! Which is easier to say, "The Lord likes me!" or "The Lord loves me!"

All my desire is for Him. I write that today fully aware that I am but a baby when it comes to knowing God. This is a pursuit that only the Holy Spirit can help me with. But I know "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsts for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus, will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name ... I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth" (Psalms 63).

I lived this. I watched it happen to people who rose up against me. The Lord does fight. He does fight for His children. He does deliver. He does give peace. I know this by experience. I have faced strategies from hell that were designed to take me out. People within my inner circle were plotting my destruction. I am talking about people close to me, people that have the advantage of sneak attacks. People I trusted with my life. But God knew. And God defended me. God fought for me. Oh, what a Savior.

A FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS NOT ENOUGH

It is not enough to know the Father loves you. It is not enough to believe all His promises. It is not enough to declare faith. It is not enough to know you want the Lord with all that is in you. There must be more. There must be the nearness of the Lord, the still small voice and the joy of hearing that voice. The joy of Jesus must rush

through all the corridors of your mind. The heart must know He has come to comfort.

Night seasons ... while others sleep, there are those of us who walk the floor. While others enter into the bliss of calmness and lie in the warmth of peaceful beds, there are those who dwell in a secret place, taking refuge in another bed; there, sharing deep conversations with the loving God. I am not talking about people who can't sleep and lie awake telling God about all their problems. I am talking about people who have learned the peaceful refuge of His amazing love.

There are those who find no solace in ordinary things in the middle of the night; instead, they have an anticipation that something is about to happen. Thoughts are poured out into prayer. In the night, they stare intently out of their windows into the darkness of night, as though they are looking into another world altogether. They look at something beyond vision. Groans, not words are their prayers. It is the prayer closet that allows the eruptions of the heart to explode to the God of loving-kindness. The inner groans are for the throne of heaven. Believers who gather for public prayer would not understand these souls who groan at the throne.

Charles Spurgeon wrote a devotional on Psalm 35. He called the devotion, Say Unto My Soul I Am Thy Salvation. This is what he wrote:

When my Bridegroom is gone from me, my soul must and will fast. I learn also that David knew where to obtain full assurance. He went to his God in prayer, crying, "Say unto my soul I am thy salvation." I must be much alone with God if I would have a clear sense of Jesus' love. David would not be satisfied unless his assurance had a divine source. "Say unto my soul, Lord, do Thou say it! Nothing short of a divine testimony in the soul will ever content the true Christian.

David could not rest unless his assurance had a vivid personality about it. "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."

Lord, if Thou shouldst say this to all the saints, it were nothing, unless Thou shouldst say it to me. Lord, I have sinned; I deserve not Thy smile; I scarcely dare to ask it; but oh! say to my soul, even to my soul, "I am thy salvation." Let me have a present, personal, infallible, indisputable sense that I am Thine, and that Thou art mine. -- C. H. SPURGEON

So, will you let God fight for you? It honors Him for you to trust Him. When you take refuge in His name, He exults over you with loud singing! Seeking refuge and comfort in God is the epitome of honoring God. When a dog lays at his master's feet the master is honored. Being a gracious man, he will take the humbled animal into his care. Likewise, when we lay before God, when the weak fall before the strong, when the sick fall before the physician, when the scared fall before the Father, when the broken and hurting fall before the healer, when the fainting and weary fall to the yoke of Jesus – there is God ... HAPPY YOU HAVE TAKEN REFUGE IN HIM.

Let me conclude with David's testimony from 2 Samuel 22. Here you will learn how to let God fight for you. David confessed that his life was characterized as waves of death, floods of fear, and wicked people. He was acquainted with the sorrows of hell engulfing him. Calamity was about him as enemies set traps for his destruction.

In this tumult David declares: The Lord is my Rock, my Fortress, my Deliverer, my Shield, my Salvation, my High Tower, my Refuge, my Lamp, my Strength, my Power. Therefore, in my distress I will call upon the Lord. I will cry to my God. I am persuaded that God will hear my voice, bend His ear to my cry, and even shake the earth to help me.

David literally pictured God, rising up to help him against his enemies as furious. David considered himself so precious to the Lord that when enemies ensnared him, God would come snorting fire and smoke, bending the heavens, flying on the wind, thundering from heaven, sending out arrows, and confusing the host arrayed against him.

David said that when people gather to mock his suffering – God would come to support him. David said, God led me to a large place because I delight Him, and he likes me. David was assured of God's help because he had not turned to other gods; knowing there is no other God or Lord or Rock to help him. Therefore, He makes my way perfect. He teaches my hands to war. He makes me great. He enlarges my steps, and my feet slip not. He causes me to prevail over my enemies. He avenges me. Therefore, I will trust Him. In Him I will be saved from violence. By Him I will run through a troop and leap over a wall.

In the presence of his enemies David celebrated the Lord: my God is awesome; He shows mercy to those who show mercy. He saves the afflicted people and humbles the proud. Therefore, I will call on Him. I will be saved from my enemies. I will praise Him. I will bless my Rock. I will exalt my God. I will give thanks among the heathen. I will sing!

What about you? Do you feel it is time to let God fight for you? Will you delight in Him? Will you trust in Him? Will you let Him bring you into the secret place? He is waiting for you. He loves you. He is dressed for your battle...waiting! All it takes is your praise. Your praise is your permission.

Are you in trouble? Wondering, "Why God?" Do you wonder where God is in your time of trouble? He is waiting for your permission to help. Your praise is your permission. Your enemy is also there. If you are not praising God then you are praising the enemy and your enemy will take your praise as your permission as well.

You are not forsaken. God is there ... in your midst. He is mighty. He will help.