



Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.
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The LORD on the Side of His People

Dear Friend of Mary Craig Ministries,

Recently, I cannot get Psalm 124 out of my mind. People are going through so many different and difficult circumstances that this Psalm resonates. This Psalm begins:

*If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,
now may Israel say:
If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,
when men rose up against us:
Then they had swallowed us alive,
when their wrath was kindled against us:
Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:
Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Psalm 124:1-5*

I don't know what you are going through, but if you are like me, you are going through something. It seems to be part of the faith walk, part of learning to trust God, part of knowing who God is and the glory of His being.

It is Israel who is to say this. A true Israelite is not merely one in name only, but someone who understands that "God rules." God is sovereign. A true Israelite is a person of faith, a person who overcomes, a person who knows that God is in control, a person of The Promise.

WHAT IF...

What does it mean and what does it matter that the LORD is on the side of His people? We are called in this Psalm to consider not having Him on our side. Where

would we be without God's protection, without His power, without His ability to enter our circumstances? In crisis situations things can look bleak and solutions, impossible.

When have men risen up against God's people [and you]? Think about Moses leading the people out of Egypt and having the Egyptians pursue them into the Red Sea. What if God had not intervened to part the Sea? They would have been swallowed up, swallowed alive, overwhelmed.

That's just one event. Over and over the Scriptures tell of God's gracious intervention, of His faithfulness to His covenant.

*Unless the LORD had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death.
Psalm 94:17*

Psalm 86 is a Prayer of David, a cry for help.

But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give Your strength unto Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaid. Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because You, LORD, have helped me, and comforted me. Psalm 86:15-17

Praise God for the days His love supported you. Testify of God's consolation which brought joy to your soul. For you will yet praise Him who is the health of your countenance and your God. (Psalm 42:11)

God is for us and not against us. But here in Psalm 124 we are to consider some "what if's" in order to appreciate who God is and His love and compassion toward us.

We have a group that meets on Wednesday nights. We've been studying the atoning work of Jesus Christ for about nine months now. We also intercede for folks and for our nation, etc. Lately, we started seeing what we call "breakthrough Thursdays." God would move in ways only He can, on Thursday. As we bring our requests before God, with thanksgiving, He moves. He is The Breaker, the Master of Breakthroughs, the God who is on our side. Pray. Watch God move.

Acts 12 tells us this true story. Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. [Is somebody getting to you, because you are a Christian, because you have taken a stand for right?] Herod killed James the brother of John with the sword. [What!?] Then that action pleased the Jews so much that Herod went after Peter, got him, and put him in prison with guards. He intended to bring Peter out to the people right after Passover.

"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."
Acts 12:5

Things didn't look good, but the same night Herod was going to have Peter brought out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers bound with two chains and with locked doors.

The angel of the Lord showed up. This angel shined a light in the prison and smote Peter on the side. Peter got to his feet. Peter's chains fell off. Orders came; Peter obeyed. Peter thought he saw a vision, but soon he and the angel came to the iron gate that led to the city. That gate opened and out they went. Peter passed through. The angel departed.

Breakthrough. A breakout. Psalm 124 goes on to say:

Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth.



*Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
The snare is broken, and
We are escaped.
Psalm 124:6, 7*

We are helpless before our enemies; they are too great for us. It is God who can enter a prison and set us free. He can break open snares and traps so that we escape. The word of God is not chained. When help arrives and orders come, we need to obey God by doing what He says.

There's more to the story. Peter came to his senses; he knew for sure that the Lord had sent His angel and had delivered him out of the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. He thought about what just happened.

I had this experience of "what just happened?" in Manaus, Brazil some years ago. We were at the point of a strategy for nations where we were to "call families to Christ." It was Sunday, so we were looking for a church service to attend. We talked with a person in the hotel where we were staying. She pointed us to this one church and arranged for us to get there. It was an open-air church, a big arena. We were way up high in the back when a man came along and said to go down to the first row. Soon another person came along and said to go up and sit on the stage with other pastors. Thinking God might be up to something, I talked with a young fellow who interpreted and clued him in on what might happen if perchance we had an opportunity to speak. The service went on for some time. God had shown me that a cherub had been assigned to the mission, so I asked God about what He might do.

Suddenly the atmosphere changed. The interpreter began sobbing, apologizing to me that he didn't have the authority to get me before the people. The pastor of the church was saying how he heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, so I asked the Lord, if that was true, to speak to the pastor. God did. The pastor got very silent; he was listening. Suddenly he turned to our team and invited us to the podium. He didn't know us at all, folks. We had never met him; but he obeyed the voice of the Lord.

We called in Brazil, the first nation to be called to resurrection after a call to repentance. The pastor gave a rousing sermon, calling the families to Christ. People from all over South America were there in that service of around 2,000 to 3,000. They prayed for all the nations of South America that night and God moved mightily. That church turned out to be a 25,000 member church. We are a small but strategic ministry. God did it. When we got back to the hotel, we just sat there, wondering, "What just happened?"

So I can somewhat identify with Peter coming out of that prison. Peter headed toward the house of Mary the mother of John Mark. That's where the people had gathered to pray. Peter knocked at the door of the gate and Rhoda came to the door. She recognized Peter's voice but didn't open the gate. Instead she ran to tell the others and left Peter standing where he was. They thought she was insane or something and then thought it must have been Peter's angel, or messenger. Peter kept on knocking and finally, someone opened the door. Everybody was shocked. Peter told the story and then left.

This just tells me to expect something to happen when we pray. One time a pastor wanted me to stop praying for people; he didn't want anyone to fall down or anything. I told him I would have to stop praying all together, because I could not guarantee that if I prayed, nothing would happen. He laughed, and said, "Go for it."

Something happened when the church prayed for Peter. God was on Peter's side. God showed up, shined a light, "shot" down the enemy, and strengthened everyone's faith. Peter had to get to his feet and follow directions to get out of that prison. When he got to the place where others were praying, however, there was disbelief and shock at first.

God can enter your prison and set you free, but others need to give room for repentance, for the change to take place. This takes an atmosphere of grace.

There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8) If we find ourselves in a bind (because first Satan blinds; then he binds), we need to ask God to grant repentance that we might acknowledge the truth in order that we might recover ourselves from the snare of the devil who is holding us captive at his (the devil's) will. 2 Timothy 2:25, 26. Ask God to grant repentance. Acknowledge the truth. Trust Him for the recovery process. Walk believing the Gospel, that Jesus paid the penalty for sin in order to remove the sin and iniquity from the eyes of the Judge. Remember Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery [worthy of death], i.e. "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

When God answers prayer for someone else, do not sabotage the work of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He told others around to loose the bindings of death, to unwrap the grave clothes; that the person might live.

Life is the goal. Jesus came to give life to His. He came to give His life as surety of the covenant in His Blood, as sin-bearer and curse-bearer, that He might bring us to God, effecting reconciliation through His Blood. Believe in Jesus; believe Jesus.

The Word of God is powerful. Pray it and proclaim it. Be filled with it.

Psalms 124 ends:

Our help is in the Name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth. Psalm 124:8

Let's praise Him today. Let's testify of His love and consolation today. We will yet praise Him who is the health of our countenance and our God. God is on our side!

Living by His grace, for His glory,

Mary Craig, D.P.M.

Mary Craig

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*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. ,
2 Corinthians 4:7-9
If God be for us, who can be against us?
Romans 8:31*

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