

## In His Strength

By Natalie Madsen

*“In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; in Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation.”*

(Exodus 15:13)

As I sit before a blinking cursor, my fingers poised above the keyboard, my thoughts are whirling. I asked the Lord to help me choose an endurance topic for an article, and He immediately reminded me what is *really* on my heart right now. For quite some time, the Lord has continually given me a burden for the lost and a reminder of the fact that I cannot simply sit back and pine for unbelievers to approach *me*, to ask *me* how they can be saved. I cannot simply hope my life serves as a sufficient example by itself. While my actions *do* serve as a reflection of what I believe, words cannot be forfeited for the sake of comfort and ease. The feeling that rests in my heart right now is discouragement.

Yesterday, I watched a video about a ministry effort that is being started in California. The ministry director made up his own unbiblical approach to evangelism: stop people, say hello, quote a few rapid-fire verses, and wrap it up neatly with a “repeat after me” sinner’s prayer. False converts are being deceived right and left! The Last Days are here – time is ticking. We have only a short time left to bear testimony to the saving grace of Christ our King. Atheists, agnostics, free-thinkers – they are all gathering to proclaim their independence and blasphemy. The world is turning from the One who created it. The one true, living God is rejected in science, religious studies, history, and politics. Christians are being murdered, tortured, mocked, and hated.

Nonetheless, as born-again Christians, we are commanded to “prove [ourselves] to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom [we] appear as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). The Apostle Paul continues, proclaiming that he holds “fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain” (Philippians 2:16). Are we holding fast so that we will “have reason to glory”? I know I fail. It is incredibly discouraging when the world ignores the message of salvation in Christ through repentance and faith in Him alone. When we finally muster our courage to speak words of truth, we are often ignored or pointed out as lunatics.

Some verses of pure conviction that have stabbed my heart over the past couple of years are found in Romans 10:14-15, which say, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!’” *How will they hear the Gospel unless we preach it?*

The world is dying from the disease of sin. We are pharmacists, in a sense; we have the medicine to heal their sickness! We have to get the cure to them, but God is the One who must make it do the healing. This is a truth among others that the Lord has to consistently bring to my mind, because I so frequently feel like giving up spreading His fragrance (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).

We must keep in mind that *when we serve our Lord and King, our work is never in vain!* The Lord has complete control over the result of the workings of our weak hands. Paul, in 1

Corinthians 15:58, said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

*Whatever battles we appear to lose on earthly terms, our victory is in Jesus Christ, Who will ultimately win over all evil for eternity.* First John 5:4 says, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith,” and Christ announced, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

*When we spread the Gospel, we are merely planting seeds.* We do not save anyone ourselves – the Lord is the One who convicts the heart and opens the eyes of the unbeliever. “So then neither he who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:7).

*Our work does not return void.* Although we might struggle to survive in this world of darkness, our perseverance will be rewarded. Hebrews 6:10 says, “For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”

*He is FAITHFUL and His promises are SURE!* His is a strength that outlasts any other power, and His faithfulness is surer than any earthly assurance. “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (1 Thessalonians 5:24)!

*What affliction or turmoil we experience here on earth gives us a longing for eternity.* Whatever sort of hurt we have here – this “momentary, light affliction” – is, as 2 Corinthians 4:17 says, “producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison...”

*What we face here on earth is temporal.* What we face for eternity is forever. We need to fix our eyes on the things above, the things of Christ, the *eternal* things. When we focus on Him, all earthly things fade away, and we can bear any turmoil here on earth, as we are “persecuted, but not forsaken” (2 Corinthians 4:9).

“He Leadeth Me” is a hymn that illustrates the beautiful Savior we have, the gentle, just, and true Shepherd who leads us.

*He leadeth me! O blessed thought!  
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,  
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!*

*Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mind,  
Nor ever murmur nor repine,  
Content, whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me!*

*And when my task on earth is done,  
When, by Thy grace, the vict'ry's won,  
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee,  
Since God thru Jordan leadeth me!*

*He leadeth me, He leadeth me,  
By His own hand He leadeth me:*

*His faithful foll'wer I would be,  
For by His hand He leadeth me.*

Let our hope rest in Christ our Lord and King and let our endurance come from Him, in Whom we have strength and Who took all weight of punishment on Himself to Calvary. Persevere in serving our King!

*“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

(Hebrews 6:19-20)