

Our Security in Jesus

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As we all know, we live in a perilous and uncertain world, and if we are at all wise, one of the primary goals of our lives is to protect ourselves as much as we can from all of those perils. We require our government to support a police department and an army, so that we will be safe from criminals and foreign invaders. We purchase home insurance, car insurance, health insurance, and life insurance to mitigate the financial effects of various kinds of catastrophes. We keep an emergency fund in our bank accounts in case we lose our jobs or become unable to work.

Although all of these various efforts are wise and important, they are also incomplete. No matter how well we plan and how hard we work, we cannot eliminate danger from our lives. I'm sure that many of the victims of the recent tornado outbreak in Alabama were prudent people who faithfully followed all of those wise advice columns on the Internet, who hid in the basement when they heard the sirens, and yet, through no fault of their own, were destroyed.

What, then, are we supposed to do? If there is literally nothing in this world we can do to protect even that which is most precious to us, how do we go on? Do we just play ostrich, stick our heads in the sand, and pretend despite the evidence that everything's going to be fine? Or do we live out our lives in fear, waiting for the other shoe to drop?

Thankfully, we need not choose either of those options. Though nothing in this world can defend us, we can always seek help outside of this world. If we commit our lives to Christ, we can be certain of His protection. This doesn't mean that nothing bad will happen to us, any more than having health insurance means that we'll never get sick. However, it does mean that He will shield us from the worst effects of those evils. Let's look at our security in Jesus.

Physical Security.

Even though Jesus is a spiritual King, many of His protections extend even into the physical realm. For example, through Jesus, we can know security **FROM WANT**. Look with me at the promise made in Psalm 37:25. This does not mean that Christianity is a gravy train that will carry us all the way to heaven. However, it does mean that if we are righteous and hardworking, we will always have enough to get by on. Logically speaking, this promise operates in several different ways. First, if we follow God's commandments, it will protect us from the effects of sin, which are often extremely expensive. Evil practices from alcoholism to gambling carry a hefty price tag with them, and we won't face that financial burden if we avoid the wrong. Second, if we are honest and hardworking, we make ourselves far more attractive and useful to employers than the shiftless and lazy, which helps keep us employed. Third, if we find ourselves in financial trouble despite the best we can do, we can seek help from other brethren and the church. Finally, in conjunction with all of those other things, we know that God intervenes in our lives for good in countless unknowable ways. This doesn't add up to guaranteed riches, but we don't have to be anxious about providing for ourselves and our little ones.

In addition, through Christ we have security **FROM ENEMIES**. Jesus promises us this in Matthew 10:26-28. It is inevitable that as Christians, we will attract enemies. They won't like our determination to live righteously, they will resent us for it, and that will lead us into various sorts of persecution. Even at the highest levels, when these persecutors actively seek our lives, Jesus will still protect us from them. There are two ways in which this protection can emerge. Jesus can shield us from the physical consequences, as when He rescued Peter from prison when Herod seized him and planned to execute him. However, even when God allows us to face those physical consequences, we will still be protected spiritually. Even though Peter escaped Herod's clutches, the apostle James did not, and he was beheaded for his faith. Does that mean that Jesus failed James? Hardly. James is now in paradise with all of the other righteous who have died in faith, and I suspect that if we asked him, he would consider his martyrdom insignificant in comparison. Evil men can kill God's people, yes, but they cannot damage them in ways that have lasting significance.

Indeed, Jesus gives us security in this life **FROM SUFFERING** generally. Let's consider Peter's words in 1 Peter 5:8-10. We often cite v. 8 here to refer to the work of the devil generally, but this is actually talking about a very specific class of temptation. This is talking about the times when the devil uses suffering against us in an attempt to lead us to renounce Christ. He might send persecution, illness, financial trouble, anything that he thinks might beat us down. God promises us, though, that those sufferings will always be of limited duration. We don't have to fear misery that will last indefinitely. We just have to find the faith to resist the devil until God makes him give up the assault, and that assault can only last for a little while. Once again, this is not a guarantee that we will have decades of smooth sailing after the devil is finished. My mother suffered greatly with the progression of her ALS symptoms, and God in His mercy decreed that the only thing that would end her suffering was her death. However, the words of this promise were still fulfilled exactly in her life. She suffered for a little while, and now she is restored, confirmed, strengthened, and established by God. The devil pressed her as hard as he could, but his greatest efforts led only to her victory and his defeat.

Spiritual Security.

As important as this physical security is, it pales in comparison to the spiritual security He provides us. First, He offers us protection **FROM ANXIETY**. We see this just a couple of verses up from our last Scripture, in 1 Peter 5:6-7. The reasoning that Peter uses here is fascinating. The key to this freedom from anxiety is humility, which must mean that the cause of anxiety is pride. Doesn't that just make an amazing amount of sense once we think about it? After all, when we're proud, we think that we're the ones in control, that it's all up to us, that we can do it by ourselves. Of course, we can't actually do it by ourselves, and once we realize that, it starts making us anxious and fearful about the future.

However, once we humble ourselves before God, once we acknowledge that He's the One who's in control, we know that we've put our lives in the hands of someone who is powerful enough to control everything. No matter what problems may face us in the future, we can be certain that God is going to take care of them, and He's going to take care of us. This doesn't mean that everything's going to work out the way we wanted it to, but it does mean that everything is going to work out. We don't have to worry anymore. We just do our best and let Him handle the rest.

Second, Jesus protects us **FROM TEMPTATION**. We learn this from 1 Corinthians 10:13. All of us are limited people, with limited self-control and limited determination to be righteous. It's not hard to imagine Satan hammering us with some temptation that's beyond our ability to handle. I suspect that he does that with people in the world all the time. However, he doesn't do it to us, and he doesn't do it because God won't let him. I suppose that, just as we see in the book of Job, there's a constant invisible negotiation process going on about each one of us, and sooner or later, Satan wants to try something, and God says, "No, I won't allow you to do that." On one level this is heartening, because it means that through God, we will always be able to overcome the devil. On another level, though, this is somewhat dismaying, because it means that when we do sin, it's not because Satan overwhelmed us. It's because we could have chosen to do good, but we chose to do evil instead. Spiritually speaking, we are our own worst enemies, and God is never going to protect us from ourselves. However, He will keep us from temptation we could never resist.

In a more general way, Jesus gives us security **FROM WORTHLESSNESS**. This is evident from 1 Peter 1:18-19. This addresses a problem that many, perhaps most, people suffer from—the problem of personal insecurity. Maybe we grew up with parents who were always sniping at us and telling us that we weren't any good. Maybe there were bullies on the playground who did the same thing. Maybe we don't conform to society's ideal of beauty. Maybe we don't have as much money or career success as our friends and relatives. All of those things can add up to a low view of our self-worth.

Ultimately, though, the best measure of what something is worth is what somebody will pay for it. If I think my house is worth \$200,000, and I put it on the market at that price, and it lingers on for two years, and I eventually sell it to some highway robber for \$100,000, guess what? That house was never worth \$200,000 in the first place.

When it comes to us, though, our valuation is much more heartening. Gold is at an all-time high in value right now, but Jesus didn't ransom us from sin with any amount of gold. He didn't empty the silver mines of the world to pay the price for even one repentant sinner. Instead, He bought us with the most precious substance the world has ever seen—with His own blood. Staggering though it may seem, in the eyes of God, I am worth enough that before I even existed, He decided to send His Son to earth to bleed and die for me. Every single one of us can say the same thing. Who cares if somebody else looks down his nose at us, runs us down, insults us? God is a whole lot smarter than he is, and God thought we were worth more than the entire physical creation. We can find our sense of self-worth in Him.

Through Jesus, we also have security **FROM LONELINESS**. Let's look at what He tells us will happen in Mark 10:29-30. As we've said already, if we choose to follow Jesus, that's going to make us unpopular with a lot of people. Some of them may be our closest worldly friends. Others may be the members of our own family. However, even though the upward path may be a difficult one, it never needs to be a lonely one. If we are of a mind to do so, we can always find the friends among God's people to replace the ones we've left behind. Sometimes, we find that people we would never have associated with on a worldly basis become our closest friends as brothers and sisters in Christ. If OJ weren't a Christian, I doubt I would ever have said two words to him, and yet now, I talk to him more than I talk to my own flesh-and-blood brother. Even if we leave our families behind, we can find a new family in Christ.

Ultimately, in fact, it's fair to say that through Christ, we have protection **FROM EVERYTHING**. Paul tells us so, in one of the most spectacular statements in all of Scripture, Romans 8:35-39. In an earthly sense, Paul seemed to live a very uncertain life. He didn't have a home, he didn't have a steady income, he had mobs of people constantly trying to kill him, and yet, Paul knew that in the only sense that mattered, he was safe. Let Satan do his worst in the physical realm. Let him bring wars and famines and persecutions. Let him enlist angels in his service. Let him wield the power of life and death. Let him take as long as he wants to do anything he can think of. None of that could touch Paul, and none of it can touch us. Sure, if we are foolish enough, we can choose to leave Jesus, but there is nothing that can take us away from Him and from His love. Even if Satan pulls out all the stops, the result will only leave him looking foolish. We won't just defeat the devil and his minions. We will overcome them so utterly that it won't even be a contest. We are guaranteed to be victorious in this life and victorious in the life to come, through the security we have in Jesus Christ.