

Fresh Fire Ministries
The Expository Teaching Ministry of Jay Duane Driver

“You Never Stand Alone”

“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.” II Timothy 4:17a (NKJV)

The episode surrounding our devotional passage comes at a time in the life of the Apostle Paul when he had been abandoned. The conclusion of his stellar apostolic ministry is drawing near. He is alone. He has been forsaken by those who had once stood with him, supported him, and prayed for him. “For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica, Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.” II Timothy 4:9 (NKJV) Alexander the coppersmith has caused Paul much harm. To what degree is not known but it could only add to the empty, dark, despairing loneliness that he now feels. There is nothing more spiritually, emotionally, or even physiologically debilitating than being alone in your loneliness. When the holidays are upon us, the loss of loved ones, you’ve received a pink slip effective for the end of the year, division and schism within family relationships, finances non-existent, and the list goes on. And even in the midst of a crowded room. No one else knows and perhaps many wouldn’t even care that you are all alone.

In Acts chapter 24 when Paul had to defend himself against charges of alleged heresy and sedition, he was as it would seem all alone. No one came to his aid. No one was willing to speak a word on his behalf. As he thought, absolutely no one was there for him. Have you ever been there? However the first word of the text gives Paul as well as us cause for great hope and consolation. It is the word “but.” A word that serves as the hinge that will open the door to a much needed breakthrough, “but the Lord stood with me.” In spite of the dismay, despair, desperation, and degradation of loneliness and abandonment, when no one else would, the Lord stood with Paul, and yes He will stand by us in circumstances that may be similar to or greater than those which Paul encountered. It is a confirmation of the promise of a Sovereign and loving God. “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God. He is the one who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:6 (NKJV)

God’s presence stands with us, right along-side of us not passively, but with power. Because when God stands with us, He does so to strengthen us or give us the power to endure. It is the idea of giving us strength, empowerment, and enablement. The picture of the word “strengthened” in the text is literally God taking us in His arms and embracing us. He comforts us, reassures us, and encourages us, consoling us, in the midst of our “aloneness”, perhaps even whispering in our ear that we are never alone. Then He rocks us in the cradle of His arms, ever so gently to remind us that He is still in charge and in control.

For Paul, God strengthened him so that the message of the gospel might be fully preached through him. Well you might say, “I’m not a preacher.” Well perhaps God is giving you power in your loneliness to fulfill your purpose. So that you can accomplish your vision, complete your dream, or simply to give him honor and glory by way of your testimony to others. Nonetheless, whatever the matter or situation let be it known today, and from this day forward that you never ever have to stand alone. “No never alone, no never alone. He promised never to leave me. Never to leave me alone.” Ludie D. Pickett, 1897