

God's People Are Not Forsaken

(2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

Introduction:

1. We learn from these verses that God's people may face unpleasant circumstances, including being *"troubled on every side," "perplexed," "persecuted,"* and *"cast down."*
2. Even though God's people may face unpleasant circumstances such as these, we also learn from these verses that we are not *"distressed," "perplexed," "forsaken,"* and *"destroyed."*
3. In our lesson we are emphasizing the fact that "God's people are not forsaken."
4. This message receives a great amount of attention in the Bible.
 - a. Deuteronomy 31:6, 8
 - b. Hebrews 13:5-6
5. Let us first point out that . . .

Discussion:

I. SOME GREAT PEOPLE HAVE STRUGGLED WITH THIS ISSUE

A. Elijah

1. (1 Kings 18) Elijah won a great victory on behalf of the Lord.
2. (1 Kings 19:2) Jezebel threatened to take Elijah's life.
3. (1 Kings 19:3-4) Elijah fled into the wilderness and wanted to die.
4. From God's conversation with Elijah, it seems that Elijah thought that God had forsaken him (1 Kings 19:9-10).
5. Elijah was shown in 1 Kings 19:18 that God had not forsaken him or Israel.
6. Elijah survived this time of difficulty, he continued serving God faithfully, and he was eventually taken up into heaven by a whirlwind.

B. Job

1. (Job 1-2) Job is introduced as a righteous man, but he suffered greatly.
2. Immediately after Satan afflicted him, Job did not curse God.
3. However, he eventually began to express how he felt (Job 3:1-6, 25).
4. It seems from these words that Job thought God had forsaken him.
5. Job never found out why he suffered as he did, but he eventually realized that God had not forsaken him (Job. 42:1-3, 12).

C. David

1. See Psalm 22:1-2
2. This psalm was written by the same man who wrote:
 - a. Psalm 21 (see vs.1-2)

- b. Psalm 23 (see vs.1).
3. What caused David to wonder if God had forsaken him?
4. (1 Samuel) David spent a lot of time avoiding Saul because Saul wanted to take his life.
5. Did David have a change of mind? (see Psalm 22:3-5, 11, 19, 24)

D. Jesus

1. Psalm 22 is also a prophecy of the Lord's crucifixion.
 - a. Psalm 22:1 -- Matthew 27:46
 - b. Psalm 22:7-8 -- Matthew 27:39-43
 - c. Psalm 22:18 -- Matthew 27:35
2. These are not the last words that Jesus spoke (Matthew 27:50 -- Luke 23:46).
3. Does this sound like someone who still thought that God had forsaken him?

II. APPLICATION

- A. The Bible emphasizes the fact that God's people are not forsaken.
- B. However, circumstances may arise that can cause us to wonder if we are.
- C. At times like this, what can we do?
 1. We learn from Elijah that we must listen to God.
 - a. In His Word, God has some encouraging information for us.
 - b. He also has work that He needs us to do, and we cannot accomplish it if we are wondering if God has forsaken us.
 2. We learn from Job that sometimes we just have to hang on, even though we may not understand why a certain crisis has come upon us.
 - a. Job wanted to challenge God to a debate -- he wanted some answers from God.
 - b. (Job 38-41) God taught Job a lesson in humility when He asked a series of questions that Job could not answer.
 3. We learn from David to reflect upon God's goodness that He has demonstrated in the past (Psalm 37:25).
 4. We learn from Jesus to commit our care to God and trust that His will be done.

Conclusion:

1. God's people occasionally face difficult circumstances, but we are not forsaken.
2. A good prayer to offer during a time of crisis is found in Psalm 38:21-22.
3. Let us always remember and appreciate the message that Moses gave to Joshua and the Israelites (Deuteronomy 31:6, 8).