

It is so easy to forsake someone in need. But this is not the way that Christ acted. His cry on the cross showed that He understood how forlorn that we can be at times, even though God is always there. David felt it too, as he shows in Psalms 13:1-4:

*How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.*

David prays for the Lord to stand beside him; and he finds that the Lord is indeed with him. In verses 5-6 of the same Psalm we read:

*But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me.*

David found the answer: the unfailing love of God. We should try with all of our hearts to have that same kind of love in us. We must be steadfast in our concern for others. When Christ was going to go to Jerusalem for the Passover in spite of the Pharisee's known desire to kill him, the apostle Thomas gives one of the most beautiful statements ever uttered by man in John 11:16, "Let us go with him so that we may die with him." Here is true devotion. Here is the kind of caring friendship that we need to come to understand.

There is a native American saying that I am reminded of here. It goes something like this:

*Love your friend and never desert him. If you see him surrounded by the enemy do not run away; go to him, and if you cannot save him, be killed together and let your bones lie side by side.*

Christ was something like this, except he died knowing that it would save us. But he loved us like that. We all need someone to "Stand by Me;" Christ fills that place. But we must also stand by those who need us here on this earth. There is something about this that is so beautiful to me, and I want to be that way, too. Max Lucado in his book [A Gentle Thunder](#) writes that there are "two gardens... In the first, Adam took a fall. In the second, Jesus took a stand." Indeed he has stood up for all of us and will stand in the presence of God to claim us as His own.

God has always stood up for widows and orphans and anyone who were helpless and alone. Everyone is familiar with James 1:27, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

We have all felt alone at times. Even the great prophet Elijah felt alone even after a tremendous victory over Ahab & Jezebel; even after God gave him the strength to run for 40 days. Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. In the desert he sat down and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." After sleeping awhile, an angel fed him and strengthened by that food he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. Let's read now from 1 Kings 19:9-10:

*There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."*

After demonstrations from the Lord of a great and powerful wind which tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks, then an earthquake, then a fire, then a gentle whisper, this same conversation was held again. Then Elijah was told that he was not alone; not only was God with him but there were still 7000 in Israel who had not bowed down to the false god of Ahab. No one is truly alone who has God, but God also uses people as support for others.

David in the twenty-third Psalm talks about the valley of the shadow of death. I imagine this as a very lonely place, too. How comforting to know that there is someone with you in any kind of trouble. In the New Testament, Stephen was stoned to death for his beliefs. But he saw Christ as he died and took great comfort knowing that Christ was standing with him. We must take the same kind of opportunities to stand with those we love in their time of greatest trial.

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