



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

June, 1997



Dear friends,

We hope all is well with you today. Knowing how life really is, however, perhaps something or someone in your life *isn't* well. We find that it is a rare day when everything is going right. There always seems to be something to trust God for, some problem, some obstacle, something ominous on the horizon that could ruin our day if we let it do so.

I sometimes see life like the circus performer who does the plate spinning act. You know...the plates on top of the long swaying poles that must be kept spinning or they fall to the ground? If he is a good performer, he will try to get thirty or forty plates spinning on top of poles, and keep them spinning. If he gets them all spinning at once, with none falling for a few seconds, the crowd explodes in applause for his wonderful feat.

I seem to have rare moments when all the plates of my life are spinning smoothly at the top of their poles. Those are the moments when I can breathe easy, lean back and say, "Everything is in order, and life is peaceful." Before I get to the end of the sentence, a plate crashes to the floor. Somebody needs help. A problem shows up. The phone rings, and the unexpected has interrupted. And so it goes. The plates of my life refuse to keep spinning on their own, and I can't seem to move fast enough to prevent a few crashes. Or so it seems.

So, how do you react when one of your plates crash? Does it ruin your day? To have a sense of "all is well", does everything have to go right and be right?

I often think of the experience of the father who, during the last century, wrote the hymn "It is well with my soul." The first verse is as follows:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
'It is well, it is well with my soul.'*

Can it be "well" with our soul at all times? Perhaps this song writer was a little naive? A religious platitude?

H.G. Spafford was the father of four daughters, who with their mother were crossing the Atlantic to join their father in America. A storm resulted in all four daughters lost at sea; only the mother survived. Later, this father crossed the same ocean. As his ship passed over the location where his four daughters had died, he penned these words, which continue:

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,

*Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

*My sin -- oh, the bliss of this glorious thought --
My sin -- not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
It is well...with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.*

*And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as the scroll,
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
"Even so" -- it is well with my soul.
It is well...with my soul.
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

From a father's heart broken by incomprehensible loss came a declaration of well being. How could it be? He gives the answer in the hymn: because "Christ hath regarded my helpless estate...and had shed his own blood for my soul!"

The blood of Jesus cleanses, not only from sin to save us from hell, but from every form of darkness that creeps into the human soul. Through that blood every promise in the Book is sealed and secure. Through that blood, every hurt, every grief, every pain is overcome. In the presence of that blood, every fear, every torment, every despairing thought loses its power.

Through the blood of Jesus and His resurrection power, IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL.

Even if all the plates crash, and the crowd boos, and I fail, Jesus never fails. And for that reason, IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL.

May the power of His blood cleanse and cover you and your family. May you be less impressed with your circumstances, and more impressed with Jesus and His blood. May your heart be lifted up to begin to look in eager anticipation for that glorious day when faith will be made sight, the clouds part, the trumpet blows, and the One who has purchased us with His own blood makes His grand entrance, His glorious appearance.

What gratefulness continually fills us! ...to the Lord, and to you for your care, your love, and your support. Thanks for praying, and thanks to those of you who sacrificially give to our financial support. May His blessing return to you in abundance!

With Love,

John and Jackie

"Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession."

Remember: for tax purposes, write checks to Prayer International, with note attached "for the Matthews"

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