



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

February, 1999



Dear friends,

We greet you once again in the wonderful name of Jesus!

On returning home from Ukraine, we found ourselves in touch with many people in serious trials. Perhaps you also are going through some difficulty. It is in those times that we learn to cease from our own efforts, lean back into the promises of God and draw from the well of salvation that is deep within us and in the Word of God. Over the years, we have come to know that difficult times are times to anchor our minds to the faithfulness of God as declared over and over through the Word. Through the trials we discover that our salvation rests on Him, and our part is simply to stay rooted in Him, believing and agreeing in our hearts and with our mouths with His covenant words, while casting down the imaginations in our minds that try to pull us away from the truth.

We decided to give you a representative collection of promises that have become to us the practical shelter of God, the truthful dwelling place or abiding place that is ours in Christ. These Scripture references are like "addresses" where we live -- especially in troubled times.

You could no doubt write your own collection of promises that are your "home", verses that are your source of strength and assurance through difficult times. In fact, it would be good for you to do just that. Let our list stimulate your thoughts to remember yours.

One little word, one stone can bring down a giant...

To us, these promises, these covenant words of God, are like the smooth stones David used to bring down Goliath. In reality, he needed only **one stone** to kill the giant. This truth is found in Martin Luther's great hymn, A Mighty Fortress is our God:

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us;

We will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us.

The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him.

His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure.

One little word shall fell him.

We can bring down our Goliath with one little word, one little stone. It is God's Word that will bring him down—the Word that we know, that we understand, that we rest on, and that we declare and act upon with faith in the face of a great trial.

David learned to encourage Himself in the Lord...

"David was in great danger; for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in spirit for their (missing) sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." 1 Samuel 30:6

Your right is to all of the promises, since you are in Christ...

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ." 2 Corinthians 1:20

In difficulty, relax in the Father's presence...

"Be still (let go, relax, stop striving, go limp), and know that I am God..." Ps. 46:10

In the same difficulty, stand at military attention (in your mind) against the presence of the enemy...

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm (stand at alert, stand at attention, stand strong) and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Exodus 14:13,14 (before the Red Sea parted)

God Himself is your shield, our protection...

"O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, 'God will not deliver him.' But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head." Psalms 3: 1-3

Hide in His presence through the trouble...

"Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed." Psalms 57:1

Nothing can separate you from God's love...

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:39

He is faithful, compassionate, powerful, and present...always.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever." Hebrews 13:8

Your hope is anchored at the mercy seat in heaven, where Jesus entered with His own blood...

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf." Hebrews 6:19,20

You can come near to God with boldness through the blood...

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God..." Hebrews 10:19-21

He is your shadow and shelter...

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Psalms 91:1,2

He is your hiding place...

"You are my hiding-place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance." Psalms 32:7

The Father already gave Jesus; all else comes from Him freely...

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Romans 8:32

God has good plans for you...

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

He is your justifier, not your condemner...

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." Romans 8:32-34

He bore our sicknesses...

"Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases... and by His wounds we were healed." Isaiah 53:4-6

He gives you power to prosper financially...

"But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today." Deuteronomy 8:18

"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they shall reign upon the earth."

Delight in Him, and He fulfills the desires of your heart...

"Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and he will do it." Psalms 37:3-5

He will give you a satisfying long life and salvation...

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I [will be] with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation." Psalms 91:15,16

You can trust God ALONE to help you...

"For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken." Psalms 62:1,2

Keep praising Him through everything...

"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalms 34:1

Stay in the simple place of protection and peace...

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:5-7

Live in His armor...

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." Ephesians 6:10,11

Of course, the list of promises can go on and on. There are thousands of them in the Word. Many have simple conditions — mainly faith and obedience to His voice. But they rest, not on our good works, but rest upon the faithfulness of God and the fact that His covenant has been sealed and in the blood of Christ.

Not everything that happens to us is from God. Not everything that happens to us is good. But here is the overriding promise concerning life as it is (instead of life as we wished it was):

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

This does not say that God causes everything. No, sin causes many things, Satan causes many things...don't blame God for evil. This also does not say that everything that happens is good! No, many things that happen are bad. Furthermore, it does not say that everything is AUTOMATICALLY working for good. No, only God can cause something bad to work for good; and it is a promise for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. If a person hates God, things are not working for good. Not until they repent and love God, **and** respond to His call and purpose. This means thanking Him for our lives (for and in all things), giving up all bitterness and doubt about God, putting our trust in Him as righteous and faithful, and in the faithfulness of His Word. Then we get our mouth and our actions in agreement with that Word.

Times of trouble are not times when we can think complicated thoughts or do complex things. God has made the way simple, and calls us to childlike simplicity. He frequently calls us back to this in Psalms 131:

"My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me."

May you find your dwelling place in God, in the covenant of His Word, in all His promises, each of which is made sure through Jesus Christ and His blood sacrifice. This finished work of redemption gives you a sure foundation, a solid rock of assurance.

He really is your Shelter in the time of storm.

Ukraine opportunities for prayer and giving:

We want to let you know about the needs in the children's ministry in Krivoy Rog. Many parents don't bring their children to church, because they cannot afford the public transport, and because there is no room in the church for children's ministries. So seven home groups for children have begun, with the plan to multiply them. There are NO resources available for the children's ministries.

Will you pray with us for resources for the children?

1. A copy machine for the church.

All teaching material for children is being copied by hand, since it is too expensive to use commercial copying services. Financial assistance for copying will help until a copy machine is provided.

2. Sports equipment.

Children's camps are being planned for the summer, for 300 children. NO equipment is available.

3. Craft supplies.

They have none. Crayons, markers, scissors, paper, paints, materials for puppets, etc.

4. Financial help to send children's workers to a camp leaders training institute in March being held in an adjacent country. (\$500)

Other ongoing needs in the churches

1. More new Bibles. None were available for the 200 new converts we helped baptize in January. \$4 buys a good Bible.

2. Money to feed the Bible School students (\$1000 per month)

3. Medicines are continually needed. Antibiotics, vitamins, and various surgical supplies (which anyone having surgery must supply themselves).

Outreach to Indonesia and Malaysia, April 6-24:

Jackie and I are planning to visit our missionary friends who work with the Chantik, for encouragement and support of the two dozen or more workers who are with them in this vision.

Please **pray** for our travel funds, safety and health, wisdom and anointing to be a blessing while we are there.

Following our time there, we hope to visit Charlie and Jane Curtis in Penang, Malaysia for a few days. Now missionaries to southeast Asia, Charlie and Jane were pastors of New Life Church in Anoka, near our home. **Pray** that we could be a blessing and encouragement to them as well.

And, of course, thank you for being our friends!

We can never stop thanking you for praying for us and supporting us personally and supporting the needs of our ministry. We feel the need for increased prayer support these days. We realize that you may have the same need! We will be praying for you and all who receive this letter as the Lord gives us grace. Thank you for doing the same for us.

As always, we trust God for our financial supply on a daily basis. His direction for us has been to look to Him for our financial support and stay in communication with our friends. You are a blessing, and we thank God for each one who has given financially. The many gifts of our friends -- varying in size, a few expected, so many unexpected -- these all add up to be the Lord's financial supply. We are always amazed at His provision and faithfulness. Many of you are part of that!

The financial needs of our life and ministry are on the increase. We are believing for the increase in His blessing! Thanks for believing with us!

May you find Him to be your refuge, and find His covenant Word to be your rock solid foundation in troubled times. Agree with David: *"I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."* Psalms 27:13

With love,

John and Jackie

Remember: for tax purposes, write checks to "Scarlet Thread Ministries"

63 105th Lane N.W., Coon Rapids, MN 55448 Tel: 612-755-6612 Fax: 612-755-2045 E-mail: ScarletThread@CompuServe.com