

Why hast thou stood by me?

900606

Have you ever felt forsaken or deserted? I am sure that we have all felt that way at one time or another. It is a terrible feeling! David in his Psalms carries this thought many times:

Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

Psalms 10:1

I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?"

Psalms 42:9

Why, O LORD, do you reject me and hide your face from me?

Palms 88:14

His most important outpouring along this line is found in Psalms 22:1,

My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

This phrase was taken up by Christ as he hung on the cross, and as such is one of the most plaintive cries in the whole Bible. It is hard to think that the Son of God Himself uttered this phrase (Matthew 27:46).

How could God forsake Christ? He was His only begotten Son! He was a perfect, sinless person! Christ was much beloved by Him! How could He have left Christ so alone and without strength? We have to realize that God forsook Christ so He could stand by us. This is even more incredible! What a contrast! What are we in comparison to the Christ! We are so different from Him! We are hostile in our minds, for we read in Colossians 1:21, "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior." We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Yet such is the power of the love of God that He stands by us to give us strength and offer us salvation.

Christ came and lived among mankind for more than thirty years. He got to see first-hand the rottenness on this earth. I sometimes wonder why Christ did not just give up on us. Mankind abused him and hated him and finally crucified Him, but he offers forgiveness instead of revenge. To see why this is so, we should read Romans 5:5-11:

... God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

God's love for us is simply incomprehensible.

I know that sometimes we feel that God has forsaken us. Bad things happen in our lives that we would rather avoid. But God has stood beside us, and promises always to give us the strength that we need. Paul felt it, for he wrote in 2 Timothy 4:17, "But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength." Instead of crying about being abandoned, we should realize the big picture. In doing this we are left thinking, "My God, My God, why have you stood by me?" How can we not respond to God's love and take up our stand by Him? We must take up our cross and follow Christ and thus receive the immeasurable riches of God's grace.

© Copyright 1990, Heard Lowry