

“When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.”
Ps. 102:16-20

THE GOD WHO NEVER FORSAKES US

by Craig Marlatt

When I was a teenager in high school I developed a tremendous optimism for life. Before I learned how to play the guitar I had pretty much decided that life was routine and just a game of sorts, but after I understood that I was a unique person with special talents, I began to look at life with optimism and excitement for the future. *“If I could do something special like play guitar and sing, then maybe my life could be different and special too”*, I thought.

With that in mind I attacked life with the zeal and boldness of someone who knew all of the answers. Yet because I had no firm foundation in my life, eventually I was lured into drug abuse and a criminal lifestyle that brought much pain and sorrow to myself and those who loved me. Because my life was built upon my own ideas and not God’s plan for me, it eventually crumbled into near ruin. I’m thankful to God that in spite of these things He still had a plan for me. He rescued me from the eventual despair of a life without Jesus Christ. His plan was better than mine!

The Psalmist reveals to us a God who is not intimidated by our failures and rebellion. He writes, *“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer”*. In other words, when all of the plans of men come to nothing . . . He is there. For all who will cry out to God, *“[He] will not despise their prayer.”* His love is greater than our failures!

Today, across America, there are hundreds of thousands people in jails and prisons; people who have chosen the wrong path. People who have followed their own plans, and ended up in bondage. Many are victims of lifestyles that were given to them as a heritage. Many are people who, by their own bad choices, have brought themselves to prison. Some are evil men, some are good. God loves them all! *“For He hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary . . . To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death* (verses 19-20). Is the height of God’s sanctuary farther away from the criminal than it is from the righteous man? I think not for, *“there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no not one.”*

Since man in his best state is totally separated from God, it stands to reason that man in his lowest estate is not beyond God’s reach. In other words the distance between God and the good man is essentially the same as the distance between God and the murderer! The gap between both and their God can only be bridged by Jesus Christ. He is God’s remedy to man’s condition! God hears the groaning of the prisoner. He wants to loose those that are appointed unto death and bring them into life and peace. He will

forgive them and He will set them free.

Since coming to Christ myself I have spent much of my time and energy sharing this Good News with people who are desperate for answers: prisoners, addicts, alcoholics, street people: people on the down side of life. Most of them still have dreams. They want more out of life. Like me, many were optimistic that life would be good to them, but somehow they've lost their ground, and with it, their hope. I know that Jesus wants to set them free and give them a better life.

Maybe you feel like a prisoner in a world where no one understands. Consider this my friend: there is a God in heaven that loves you. He knows what you're going through and He will listen to your heart cry if you call upon his name. He will drive out the darkness from your life and give you light and peace and joy. Come to him today. He's waiting to talk with you. It will be well worth your time.