

Psalm 27:7-14

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek." Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me. Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence. I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

A Friend for All Seasons

For many, looking back on the previous year is a matter of counting blessings and enjoying fond memories. However, there are others who look back on this past year as a single wave of destruction that passed as a blur, leaving only the sense of loss. These are people who understand by personal experience the depth of feeling behind Job's words "Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded cries out." (Job 24:12) The word "groan" comes from a term that means pierced or stabbed and here refers to a person who has been wounded of heart, as Job in the loss of his family and wealth all within a twenty-four hour period. Yet in his cry, his associates responded with calloused hearts and sharp tongues. Those he thought to be friends failed him in his day of need.

Today many hearts have been pierced with personal or economic loss, and like Job, cry out from their hearts only to find rebuke and accusation returned as answer to their hurt. And yet there is reason not to despair, for in the story of Job we are reminded that God never abandons those who put their trust in him: "the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than at the beginning" (Job 42:12). To all who will trust in God, he proves to be that special friend that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

For all those hearts that have been pierced this past year and now groan within, there is hope for healing! Jesus, through love that led Him to die for us and power that raised Him from death, secured the restoration of the whole man. He alone can truthfully say "The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). He, as a true friend that loves at all times, never turns a deaf ear nor cold shoulder to those who cry in pain for His help. And in turning to Him we are taught to lay our cares and hurts at his feet, because he cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Perhaps James Small penned this best when he wrote this hymn stanza: "I've found a friend, O such a Friend! He loved me ere I knew Him; He drew me with the cords of love and thus He bound me to Him. And round my heart still closely twine those ties which naught can sever, for I am His and He is mine, forever and forever." This friend that Job and James found (though time and distance apart) wants to be your friend to. Will you make him so?

What is my response:
