

Week 1
What She Said!
Saturday

Promise, Peril, and Prayer
Sarah Ivill, Guest Writer

Today's Treasure

*Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.*
Psalm 125:1

It is hard to trust the Lord in the midst of suffering. When trials come in our lives we're often inclined to figure them out on our own; or run to the phone and tell a dear friend; or seek to understand why it's happened; or sleep the suffering away; or turn toward something that will comfort us, whether it's food, alcohol, entertainment, social media, or the like. But such responses cannot secure us in the midst of the storm. Psalm 125, one of the Songs of Ascents (120-134), heralds a call to trust in the midst of trouble.

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people, from this time forth and forevermore.

For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong.

Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts! But those who turn aside to their crooked ways the Lord will lead away with evildoers!

Peace be upon Israel!

Psalm 125

Promise (125:1-2). Mount Zion (Jerusalem) symbolized several things—God's power to help His people, God's presence among His people, God's protection over His people, and God's privileges for His people. Mount Zion was the smallest mountain upon which Jerusalem was built, surrounded by higher peaks around it. So Israel's geography was a beautiful picture of theology—the Lord God surrounds His people forever. What a beautiful reminder of God's covenant promises as the pilgrims marched toward Zion! Their hope was not in a place but in a Person, not in possibilities but in His promises.

Peril (125:3). There was peril in Israel's history. God's gift of the land had to be taken by force and Israel failed to appropriate God's instructions and drive out the enemy from her new place. The wicked grew up in the midst of Israel, ensnaring many Israelites to participate in grossly immoral sins. The psalmist provides a warning. Although the wicked can never defeat God's purposes, they can wreak havoc among God's people if they are not standing steadfast in the sure ways of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:17).

Prayer (125:4-5). The psalmist calls for the Lord to do good to His people. He is confident the crooked will be numbered with the evildoers, so his concern is for others to experience peace as they walk uprightly. The Lord commanded the priesthood to bless the people of Israel with such a prayer of peace, "the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" (Num. 6:26).

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

It is Christ who has already brought the church to the heavenly Jerusalem, but we won't see this fully consummated until He comes again to make all things new. In Christ our Rock we can't be moved, but we can be ensnared, so we are to continually watch and pray (Matt. 26:41). Christ has become our peace through the cross, making one new man out of two (Jews and Gentiles). Our prayer should be for God's peace to rest upon our families, churches, friends, and neighbors, as we seek to do them good while living among them.

EDIT - I showcased Sarah Ivill' H&H and added a prayer

Prayer: Lord, we do pray for your peace to be reflected through our lives, and to rest upon our families, churches, friends and neighbors. May we be intentional about doing good while living among them.

STORE UP MORE TREASURES

At some point in our lives, we or someone we know will go through great suffering. I encourage you to go the MARKINC website and listen to the interview "Breast Cancer: An Interview with Dr. Chuck and Sharon Betters" so that you can store up treasures of encouragement for the next rainy day in your life or someone else's. Here is a summary and teaser of this resource:

The first thing Sharon did when she heard that diagnosis was to find a woman who had already traveled through the foreign land of cancer. As Sharon says, "I needed a guide - someone to help me navigate the maze of unknown terrain." It is Sharon's hope that through this interview she and her husband, Chuck, can come alongside you as you walk this new pathway. It is Chuck and Sharon's prayer that this message will be one more tool that equips you for the days ahead.