

Reliable Protection

When you have to walk home down a dark road alone, are you afraid? Is it frightening to take a taxi ride to the city or to ride on a boat or a plane? Yes, many are afraid to lose their lives or their possessions. Some are so afraid they will hardly go out of their house at night because of this fear. We know that some have died because of accidents in water, or from poisonous snakes. Others have died because of robbers. Almost everyone is frightened of something.

How can we protect ourselves and get rid of some of our fears?

Many Uncertain Methods of Protection

There are many ways that people try to find courage and get rid of fear. Some buy amulets. Some wear cloth with Pali written on it or use charms, such as those made of elephant or wild pig teeth, in order to protect them. Some charms are worn around the neck or waist, and some are actually written in Pali on the body, in the form of a tattoo. Some people take their parents teeth and sculpt them into a god to wear. Some cut out a silhouette of their parents feet and hands and then put them around their bodies. Some take these charms and use them as a business and tell many stories to praise the charms that they sell. As for those who use them, they are not so sure in their hearts. But in order to get rid of fear they buy charms and use them.

No matter what protection device a person wears, they are still afraid of accidents. The traveler on the water, even if he has a floatation device, is still afraid. Owners of houses, even if they have good locks and guards, are still afraid. Soldiers, wearing helmets and bullet-proof vests, inside tanks or in bun-

kers, are still afraid.

Can we rely on such uncertain things for protection? We must think carefully about what will really help. If we spend our money on something unreliable, it may cause a great accident.

Angels have Power to Protect

Let's look at Jesus advice on how to find protection. Jesus experienced great danger in His life. Many religious leaders wanted to kill Him because they were envious of His powers and popularity. One time He was teaching in His home town. At first the people were very excited to listen to His powerful teaching. But people are very strange. When He said something they didn't like, their opinion turned and the crowd dragged Him out of the temple towards a cliff. They were about to throw Him over when suddenly an angel kept the people from seeing Him and Jesus slipped away.

Truly the promise in the ancient scriptures was true, "God shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways" Psalm 91:11. The scriptures teach that there are angels who God has sent to help protect us. Jesus even taught that angels are sent to guard little children. Many people have followed Jesus advice and asked God to send angels to protect them.

God Protected Mr. Wong from the Cold Weather

Years ago in China, the government forbid Christians to meet for worship. A man named Mr. Wong was arrested for believing in Jesus. He was sent to a prison

camp in a very cold part of China. Because he continued to believe in Jesus and would not stop telling the prisoners about God's salvation, the guards were very angry. One cold night they tied him outside to a post in the snow. They were sure he would be dead by the morning. As the night went on Mr. Wong got very cold. He prayed to God, "If you want me to die, it is okay. But if you want me to live and tell other prisoners about Jesus, please send an angel to untie the knots so I can walk around and keep warm." Then he quoted the verse in Psalms 91:9-12, "If you make the Most High your dwelling-even the Lord, who is my refuge--then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." Suddenly the rope fell off and Mr. Wong walked around the post to keep warm and alive. As it began to get light, he realized the warden would soon come and, seeing him free, would blame the guard. Even though he had nearly died, he did not want anyone to get in trouble because of him. Mr. Wong prayed again that God would send an angel to tie him up so the guard wouldn't be sent to prison. He knelt at the post, put his hands behind him and prayed. Immediately his hands were tied again. He knew it must have been an angel. When the guard came to take away his dead body he was shocked to see that Mr. Wong was still alive, calmly tied to the post. Mr. Wong told his story to the guard who was so impressed that he allowed the other prisoners to hear his testimony. They all knew it was true because Mr. Wong was their evidence. The guards stopped bothering him.

God Has Protected People in Myanmar

God has protected people many times because they trusted in Him. There are hundreds of books around the world that describe the many times God has sent angels to protect people.

This has also happened in Myanmar many times.

There was a sixty-three year old man traveling by bicycle to help someone. Before he left his house, he asked the Father of Life to protect him. 20 miles from home he was hit by a big vehicle and thrown from his bicycle. The bicycle was totally destroyed. And he was taken to the hospital.

Can it be that God was still protecting him? Yes, God was! In a short time he was up and ready to work again. Normally this kind of accident would kill someone, but God protected him and he was not seriously hurt. Beyond this he didn't do anything to take revenge on the driver when he went to the police station. He had learned much from Jesus' teaching both about God's protection and about turning from anger.

Would you like to have protection for your life? How can you receive it? In the stories above the people did not pay money to God or angels. They only asked God for protection with an honest heart.

The scriptures teach that God is like a parent who willingly protects His children and does not expect money from them.

Beware of Faulty Protection

In the lesson about reaping and sowing we saw that there are many angels who keep track of our bad and good deeds. These are angels who serve God and do His will. Their hearts are pure and they desire to help God's children. They also do not need anything from us because God provides them all their needs.

Those who believe in the God who created the world put their trust in Him for protection. They do not depend on anything that can be made or bought. They believe that God loves

them and will protect them if it is God's will.

Protection Comes from Following God's Commandments

Jesus knew that the greatest dangers in life come not from accidents but from greed and evil desire. Because of this, He gave some excellent teaching on how to find protection. One day Jesus was teaching a very large crowd on a mountain. The people were very interested in His teaching, but He knew some would quickly forget what He said. Others would remember His words but fail to practice them. Only a few would receive the great blessing of following what He said. He told them this parable:

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house: and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall” Matthew 7:24-27.

Jesus compared our lives to a house. If we follow His teaching of righteousness we will protect ourselves from future suffering. If we reject or neglect His commands we will strip away our protection.

God's word says, “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will walk safely in your way, and

your foot will not stumble. When you lie down you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet” Proverbs 3:1-3, 23-24.

Isn't that an excellent promise? It is much better to write wise commands on our heart than to put them on a paper around our neck and expect them to save us while we do something foolish!

Jesus Had Peace Because He Trusted God

Jesus taught clearly that we should call out to God the Father when we have trouble. In His life He demonstrated perfect peace. Here is the story just as it is written in the Bible.

“That day when evening came, Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Let us go over to the other side.’ Leaving the crowd behind, they took Him along, just as He was, in the boat. There were also other boats with Him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke Him and said to Him, Teacher, don't you care if we drown. He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, Quiet! Be still! Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith? They were terrified and asked each other, Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” Mark 4:35-41.

Some people are very afraid when a storm comes even if they are in their houses. How much more so if they are in a storm on the ocean! What great possibility for a terrible accident! Those disciples were fishermen, they had met storms before and they knew how to row and survive a storm. But this was

a terrible one, bigger than anything they had ever met and so they were very afraid for their lives. But Jesus was sleeping! How could He sleep in the midst of a storm? He must have had incredible peace in His heart (no fear) because He trusted His Father God to protect Him.

Jesus taught them that if they had faith in God as the all-powerful and truly compassionate God, they would not need to be afraid either. Would you like to experience that? Tell God about your fears and ask Him to send His angels to protect you.

Does God Always Protect Believers?

Does everyone who believes in God escape accidents? Are they always protected? If this was true, no believer would ever die and everyone would want to follow God just to be free from physical suffering. No, the Bible teaches that God protects people according to His will and plan. In fact accidents and trials can sometimes teach great lessons that protect us from the more serious mistakes of immorality and sin.

In fact the Bible says, “Consider it pure joy my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” James 1:2-4.

Why would anyone rejoice for having a problem? Many people have changed their lives to follow the good way after they have had a problem or an accident. Even a robbery has done some people good. One man was so caught up in obtaining riches that he neglected to spend any time with his family. When a robber stole everything, but didn't kill anyone, the man exclaimed, “I'm so lucky that my family was not killed by

the robber!” He determined to spend time with them, recognizing the greater values in life.

Sometimes when a person is lying in a hospital after falling off a motorcycle, he begins to think about death. He realizes that he is in great need of a God to help. Through this accident He comes to believe in God and find the One who can protect him even in the face of death.

So trials can be God's tool to teach us and challenge us. God is like a parent to us. Don't we as parents help our children learn through their own struggles? Because we want them to be strong we allow them to learn to walk even though they totter and fall. If we only carried them it would not be easy for them to learn to walk. We teach them to walk in order for them not to be weak or lazy. Teachers also, wanting their students to be wise and be prepared for a good future, give them challenging homework. When students have gone through this hardship, they will know much and can even teach others well. In the same way God, who we have said is a good parent, allows us challenges and difficulties to help us become strong.

The most important thing to remember is that when you are involved in an accident or encounter a problem, God is still with you to help you. He says, “He who created you, he who formed you says ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior” Isaiah 43:1-3a.

You may have experienced an accident, but you had God with you and He gave you strength. Maybe your family lost some-

one in death, but God gave you comfort to overcome your mourning. Or you may have lost possessions to a robber, but God encouraged you and gave you strength to work hard again.

We have seen clearly in this lesson that God has provided His power and His angels to protect us. We do not have to waste our money on unreliable protections. We can seek lasting protection by choosing to follow God's teaching. Even in trials we can learn the lessons that God wants for us.

Here is a plan to help you as you face worries and fears.

Read promises from the scriptures.

Repeat the promises out loud every time you have a thought of worry.

Ask God for His protection and His solution to the problem.

Jesus could sleep through a storm because He trusted the Father. You also can be at peace as you face any trouble. Ask God to come and protect you now.

Pray something like this: Dear Father of Life, You are everywhere and have all power. I know You can protect me like You have protected others. Please send Your angels to watch over me. Help me to know worry or be afraid. I choose to believe the promise in Your scriptures, "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" Psalm 4:8. May I learn the lessons You want to teach me through any trials I face. Thank You for Your help. Amen."

Points to Remember

- * All people have fear.
- * If you are afraid of the dead, don't wear their bones.
- * Christians depend on Jesus to help them.
- * Crossing over difficulties makes one courageous.
- * If holding a big stick at night helps make you less afraid, how much more peaceful would your sleep be if you were to hold on to faith in God.
- * Parents always have a good plan for their children.

Psalm 91:4-5 "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day."

Questions

1--Please put T in front of the sentences that are true

_____ All people have fear.

_____ In order to get rid of fear people always find something to protect themselves.

_____ They can find a way to protect themselves without spending money.

_____ Christians have no fear.

_____ Christians trust in the God who made the world.

_____ God has sent angels to protect people.

2--Please underline the correct sentences.

God could protect 100 people at Kampot.

Prayer can help us when we are in trouble.

God has power to protect us at all times.

No one has ever seen God help people in these days.

God was able to protect Mr. Wong in a cold place.

3--Please give your ideas about problems in your life.

4--Please check the answers that you think are correct:

What was Jesus doing when there was a big storm?

_____ Afraid

_____ Praying

_____ Sleeping

What did Jesus say to His disciples?

_____ Don't be afraid.

_____ Wait, I will help you.

_____ Why do you have such little faith?

5--Circle the number of the correct answers:

What do we do when we are afraid?

Read Psalm 91:9-12 in the Bible.

Wear a cross.

Ask God to protect you.

If this statement is true of your choice today, check it:

_____ I believe that the God of Life has full power to protect me and I will ask Him for

protection before I take a trip or do anything.

_____ I will face trials and problems with courage asking God to teach me lessons and help

me through the problems.