

At My First Defense

Paul wrote, "At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" (2 Tim. 4:16-18).

Yes, even the apostle Paul was abandoned by his companions. They did not stand up with him when he was on trial. This took place despite Paul being an apostle, tireless worker for the Lord, and a great blessing to all around him (cf. 1 Cor. 15:10). He worked miracles which these had witnessed, but still they left him alone (Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 14:18). Is it any wonder that we, too, will be abandoned at times by our brothers and sisters?

We cannot escape the fact that men will fail us, even the best of them from time to time. We will fail others as well. Therefore, while we want to put a certain amount of trust and faith in our brethren, let us not put so much in them that when they do not meet our expectations or stand for truth we are overwhelmed to the point of losing our faith. Men are men, and they will not always do what is right (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 1:8).

In contrast to the failings of men, including the strongest, stands the ever abiding presence and support of the Lord. Paul was supported through the toughest of times by His Savior, Jesus Christ. Though all men had "set this one out," the Lord stood with him! Paul also had confidence that the Lord would continue to be with him until time is no more! Today, the faithful Christian can count on the Lord being with him too!

Jesus said, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (Jn 15:10). Also, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (Jn. 14:23). The Spirit revealed, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Heb. 13:5-6). Thanks be to God! He has promised His support and blessings to those who will simply humble themselves and follow His will. Men may forsake us, but

God will be there!

Let us have confidence in our Lord--a full and complete confidence, because He is faithful. Do you have this confidence? If not, why not? If it is due to weakness, build yourself up in the word and through prayer. If it is due to sin, then repent and do God's will! Then, you can trust in the Lord in any circumstance in life, even the worst.

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