

How is your hope in the crisis?

Is there hope when things should have gone one way in your life and they went the other? Is there hope when you look for God and it appears that He is silent or not present? Maybe you thought things would have been different by now but you are still going through a fiery furnace or long hot desert. There are several individuals in the Bible that could offer that same testimony.

Joseph was one of those people.

God gave him a dream and vision for his life and he thought everyone would be excited about it. As soon as he began telling everyone what God had put in his heart, people started turning against him. As his story progressed, we can see how God was with him and turned things around. There was hope even when everything looked like a crisis. There was hope even though he was mistreated by his brothers, falsely accused and put into prison. There was hope when people who promised to help him turned away and forgot him.

You have been in this too long already to think that everything is going to go down as you have planned.

There is hope if God is with you. The goal for every phase of your life should be finding the presence of God in your situation. Moses had been leading Israel through the wilderness some forty years and now at 120 years old he spoke to Joshua and all the people. First thing he said was, "The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you." Then he gave this word and promise of God's presence and care.

Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.

Deuteronomy 31:8 NKJV And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."

That is not only a promise from God, it is the goal for every phase of my life. Regardless of what life may bring, God will be the strength of my life. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold in times of trouble. He is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. He has promised that He will not leave or forsake me. When I walk through the fire, I am not alone. When I am in the storm, He is with me in the boat. When I am down in the bottom of the sea, He has not forsaken me.

When I am in the shipwreck, He has not left me. He is with me in the fiery furnace.

In the Old Testament there was a prophet of God named Jonah.

Jonah must have been both a mighty man of God and living in the presence of the LORD. When the word of the LORD came to him, he was not ready for what God assigned him to do.

Jonah 1:2 NKJV “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.”

When God said that, Jonah made a very foolish decision. Jonah did something that none of you should ever do, he fled from the presence of the LORD.

Jonah 1:3 NKJV But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

When Jonah fled from the presence of the LORD, he headed straight into trouble. Jonah did not understand that he could not escape the presence of the LORD. God had a plan for his life.

David knew something that Jonah had to learn.

Psalms 139:7-8 NKJV Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

Psalms 139:9-10 NKJV If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

While Jonah was trying to flee from the presence of God, the LORD did something dramatic.

Jonah may have been running from God, but he could not get away from the LORD.

Jonah 1:4 NKJV But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

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You know the rest of the story how Jonah was thrown into the sea by the men in the boat and the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow him. For three days and three nights Jonah was in the fish's belly.

It is hard to face your crisis when you are running from the presence

of the LORD.

There is good news for Jonah in the bottom of the sea in the belly of the great fish.

Jonah 2:1-2 NKJV Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. And he said: "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice."

Just a few verses later, Jonah said, *"You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD..."*

Psalms 138:1-2 NKJV 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!

At the bottom of the sea, when death seemed to grip his soul, Jonah found grace and mercy to help when he turned to God for help. The Psalmist says it correctly, *"I would have lost heart and can only imagine what would have happened to me had I not believed that I would see the LORD's goodness in the land of the living."*

Whatever your crisis may be, you can have hope in God's presence. Jesus and His disciples were in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee, (Mark 4:38).

At some point in their journey, the Lord laid down and went to sleep on a pillow. Shortly after that, a huge storm hit and great waves arose and beat so heavily on their boat that they thought they were going to die. You should know that regardless of the storm, when you are in the presence of the LORD, you are safe.

There is hope in the crisis.

The Apostle Paul was in a ship headed to Italy, (Acts 27).

They had been sailing slowly for many days in contrary winds. Although they reached Fair Havens, the harbor was unsuitable for wintering.

Despite the increased danger, they persisted in their voyage.

Acts 27:20 NIV84 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

Everyone else on the ship gave up all hope of being saved. When all hope was gone, the angel of God came to Paul with good news and said, *"Do not be afraid."* Paul was traveling under the covering of the presence of God. Even after the angel of God said, *"Do not be afraid,"*

the storm continued to rage and the ship was lost. There is still hope when you are under the covering of God's presence.

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- Daniel found hope in the lion's den.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were able to go through the fiery furnace without harm because the fourth Man was in the fire with them.
- Nothing was working the way Esther had planned for a young Jewish girl. She was in a foreign land and was taken against her will into the palace of the king. God had a plan for her life that she did not know until the moment Mordecia told her that she was raised up for that moment in time to save her people. In everything that she faced, you can see the hand of God working in the background.

You can face your crisis with hope and victory if you are in God's presence.

Isaiah 43:1 NKJV But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.

Isaiah 43:2-3 NKJV When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God... your Savior...

You do not have to fear the storm or the fiery trial, for the LORD your God is with you.

I am determined to stay close to the LORD.

In His presence there is safety. In His presence there is peace and joy. In His presence there is hope. Jesus said, "*Come unto Me all who are weary and I will give you rest.*" The Lord is present to minister hope and relief.

Whatever you have been going through, God is able to turn it around for good for you. Even if the plan that you had for your life has not worked the way you thought, God is bigger than your circumstances. When you are walking in His presence, God is working to turn things around for your good. You can have hope in your crisis if you are walking in God's presence. You can know that God has not lost sight of you or what you are going through. He will come to your aide. He will help you. You can have hope even in your crisis.