

## God Always Loves Us

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The story goes that as an old man who lay dying he opened his eyes and saw his wife of 50 years seated beside his bed. *"There you are, Martha,"* he said, *"at my side once again."*

*"Yes, dear,"* she softly replied.

*"Looking back over my life, I remember all the times you were beside me,"* the old man said. *"You were there when I got my draft notice and then went off to war. You stood beside me at the grave of our first baby. You were there when our house burned down and we lost all we had."*

*"Yes, dear,"* she replied again.

*"You were with me when I wrecked the car and broke both legs,"* he continued. *"You stood with me when our little grocery store went under and we lost all the money we had set aside for retirement."*

*"Yes, honey, I was there with you,"* she reassured him.

The old man signed deeply. *"And now you are with me on my death bed. Do you know what you are, Martha? You're bad luck!"*

Many people see God in the same way. He is with them in times of hurts and pains. He stands beside them in times of disasters and heartaches. But instead of thanking him, they blame him for their problems.

Jesus did not come to this world to remove pain, suffering and death. He came to lead us to another world where none of these things exist. While God may sometimes deliver us from our troubles, he more often delivers us through our problems.

When bad things happen, we don't gain anything by getting mad at God. Bitterness makes pain sharper, not better.

The worst things in life cannot be reversed. The death of a loved one, the loss of a limb, the destruction of a family, the abuse of a child. The pain from such things may never go away. No court of law can ever settle the account. There is nothing on the face of this world that can make up the loss.

In such situations, people are faced with a choice. They can allow misfortune to become the theme of their lives, letting it dominate every conversation and every thought. They can live an inferior life, and blame it on their plight.

Or they can decide to go on with life, playing the best game possible with the hand they have been dealt. They can choose to be a blessing even though they have received curses from others. They can give more than they have received.

Regardless of what has happened in our lives, God loves us and stands beside us. He is a friend that never leaves or abandons us. He is not the source of problems, but the strength through our problems.

The Psalmist wrote, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."* Even in life's darkest moment, God reaches out his hand to lead us upward.

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