

29 October 2020

If you say, "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake 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. --Psalms 91:9-12 (NIV)

Dear Friends,

Man, what a year! I'm not even sure what "normal" is anymore but I sure hope this isn't it 😊 I know all of us can relate to this feeling somewhat because we have all been impacted by the events of 2020. In spite of how we may feel though, it is still a great idea to focus on the One who watches over us every minute of our lives.

For the past few months, I have been making a habit of riding my bike in the early mornings a few times a week and I start when it is dark. Elaine starts her riding about an hour later and we meet up on the way. This is one way we are taking positive steps to take care of ourselves during this challenging time. A few days ago, I had a bike accident where my tires slipped on wet pine needles. Fortunately, I was on a concrete bike trail so no cars were involved. However, laying there in considerable pain from twisted knees, I did get some time to reflect (one thought being, "I am not as young as I used to be.....").

Eventually, I got up and continued my ride and met up with Elaine. We began riding back home and while I was in the bike lane of a major road (in broad daylight) a car came up behind me and hit me on the elbow breaking the car mirror and my bike mirror. I wasn't hurt too bad and fortunately, the driver stopped. The poor lady was so shook up, I didn't have the heart to scold her for not paying attention. If she had been three or four inches further to the right though, Elaine would be the one writing this letter. Two accidents in one morning! My friend said "it looks like the devil has your address". Which made me think and appreciate the verses above concerning God's protection. We don't often think about what is really going on in the heavenly realms regarding God looking out for our well being but there are many biblical verses which talk about his angels looking out for us. (*Matthew 18:10, Psalm 34:7, Hebrews 1:14, Luke 4:10*)

Elaine and I were encouraged and reminded of the very real and special promises of a loving Father that takes care of His children in all situations. He desires so many more to become a part of His family and gives us all a mission to take His love to this very hurting world. In the light of the pandemic and global turmoil, have you thought about the people around you who don't belong to this family and the very real fear they must be experiencing right now? Or perhaps you know some of God's children who need to be reminded like Elaine and I were? We all need to lift our eyes and be reminded that God is in control, He still loves people deeply and desires them to know Him.

Thank you for praying for us. We still continue on in ministry using mostly virtual means. I am so proud of the people I coach and serve with. The church has risen to the challenge! One encouraging example comes from Tonga, a small island nation in the Pacific. Tongans tuned in online to hear the good news shared by a staff member during the lockdown. The message went viral though reaching 10,000 Tongans worldwide. At the end 200 people messaged they had accepted the gospel invitation and received Christ, and they are now being followed up online. Nothing in this world can stop the good news!

Mark & Elaine