

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

How often have you heard that phrase, "I'm between a rock and a hard place," from someone in a difficult situation? I was meditating on that thought the other day, and suddenly it came to me through the words of an old hymn, "The Lord's my rock, in Him I hide, A shelter in the time of storm; No foes alarm no fears abide, A shelter in the time of storm."

What a safe place to be! We all experience those "hard places" of life--death of someone we love, physical pain, financial distress, a prodigal child, a broken heart, the death of a dream, the disillusionment or betrayal by someone we trusted. These are truly hard places. But not really unexpected, for Jesus said in John 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulations, but be of good cheer (take heart, or leap for joy); I have overcome the world." You see, the Scriptures over and over describe the Lord as our rock, our refuge, our safe haven! The Rock represents salvation, security, fresh water.

The scriptures contain several verses about our safe place in the rock: Psalm 27:1, 5; 28:1, 31:2-3, 32:7, Isaiah 2:10, 48:21. The word "Rock" refers to several different aspects of God's concern for us.

First, He is our refuge, our hiding place in the day of the trouble. Psalm 62:5-6 says "He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved." In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God." When facing a crisis our first thought is to go to Him, our safe Rock of refuge.

Second, the rock represents the place where our thirst is quenched--Isaiah 48:21 describes how God provided water for the children of Israel in their wanderings in the desert: "And they did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them, he cleft the rock also, and the waters gushed out." When our souls thirst, his sweet water satisfies our longings.

Third, Psalm 81:16 describes how God also provides "honey out of the rock." Some of life's sweetest moments of intimacy with God--that sweet honey--comes when we are in the middle of troubles.

The Rock is also a shelter from the beating sun. I love the description of the Lord in Isaiah 32:2: "And a man (Jesus) shall be like an hiding place from the wind, and a covering from the tempest, like rivers of water in a dry place, like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." I have stood on the top of Masada, near the Dead Sea and felt the sun blazing down on me. But then I stepped in the shadow of a large rock there, and suddenly found a place of coolness and quiet. Jesus is that Rock to go to when we feel the burning rays of disappointment or fear or pain.

To be "between a rock and a hard place" is actually a safe and satisfying place to be.

Stop and think about the hard places. What have you already experienced? Has God ever failed you yet? Has He been the rock of your salvation? Will you today "go to the rock" with whatever troubles you? He knows where you are and why. He has a plan. He wants to you give him your troubles; pray expectantly, give room for him to work, and then watch for His deliverance to come and His glory to shine.

Let the sweet grace of God roll over you as you remember that when you are between a rock and a hard place, you are going to be okay--Jesus is the rock of our salvation and He's never failed us yet!

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