

PSALM 27:1-3 OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID?

“The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

“When evildoers assail me
to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes,
it is they who stumble and fall.

“Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.”¹

“No Fear!” The slogan seems well-nigh ubiquitous today. This slogan is a declaration popularised by a clothing line favoured by many youths. You sometimes see it displayed on the rear window of cars, especially cars driven by younger drivers.

“No fear” sounds pretty good, until people actually meet something that can cause fear.

To be certain, in the Psalms are found many expressions denouncing fear. For instance, among the Psalms is one which declares,

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?”

[PSALM 118:6]

Another Psalm declares,

“The righteous will never be moved;
he will be remembered forever.
He is not afraid of bad news;
his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.
His heart is steady; he will not be afraid,
until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.”

[PSALM 112:6-8]

Among the Psalms, one in particular stands out. Some have referred to this Psalm as “The Soldier’s Psalm.” The psalm speaks of the confidence that is required and exhibited by those who stand for righteousness, opposing evil and serving the Lord God.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.

“For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

“A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.”

[PSALM 91:1-8]

Nevertheless, the Psalmist confesses that he did experience fear, as do all of the saints of the LORD. In this Psalm, David is seen pleading with the LORD,

“Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me;
all day long an attacker oppresses me;
my enemies trample on me all day long,
for many attack me proudly.
When I am afraid,
I put my trust in you.
In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
What can flesh do to me?”

[PSALM 56:1-4]

David had ample reason to be afraid. The Psalm was written at a time when David was fleeing from Saul who had sent his army to hunt down God’s anointed and kill him. The young general had nowhere to flee in his own land, so he fled to a city occupied by the enemies of Israel. There, his life hung by a thread, until he employed a ruse, pretending that he was mad. The ruse worked, allowing him to escape from the hands of the enemy.

Fear is inherent in all dangerous undertakings. No soldier, sailor, airman or Marine has ever gone into battle without feeling fear; the only warriors who have no fear are those who have never seen combat. No law enforcement professional has ever attended a reported break-in or a homicide without a measure of trepidation. No man of God enters into the pulpit without a sense of fear. No parent has ever released a child without fear for what the future holds.

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

Fear is very much a part of our life. I insist that if you don't experience a measure of fear, it is because you have yet to stand in the place of danger. A young man should be fearful of destroying his testimony should he allow his emotions to rule over his mind. A young woman should fear sully her reputation through one moment of buying into the lie that she must surrender to a man's insistent plea for her to "prove" her love. A mature man should fear that he will betray the Saviour through selling out his honour in order to advance himself in the world. A mature woman should be fearful that she will dishonour her marriage and her family in a mistaken belief that the excitement of a brief indiscretion will spice up her life. Fear should be a part of every Christian's life. Assuredly, each follower of Christ the Lord should fear the Living God—fear disobeying Him, fear dishonouring His cause, fear failing to rely on His grace.

The narrator of a Smithsonian documentary about the Second World War in the Pacific quoted a young Marine who had penned his recollections following the US invasion of Guam. The young Marine had written, "They fed us steak and eggs; they always fed us steak and eggs before a landing. I had been wounded at Tarawa. I had been wounded at Saipan. This would be my third landing. I urinated all over myself as I climbed into the landing craft. I was scared." The old salts were afraid because they knew what was coming. The new recruits were afraid because they didn't know what to expect.

Dangerous undertakings will always cause the knowledgeable individual to be fearful. Those who are ignorant of the risks may not have any sense of fear. Like some sort of ecclesiastical Alfred E. Neuman, the unwary Christian grins in the face of danger and chirps, "What, Me Worry?" Fear, however, does not mean that an individual cannot do hard task, and do those tasks well. As Christians, as followers of the Christ, we are called to seek great things for God's glory and to attempt great things in His Name. When we are obedient to His call, we will know fear. Yet, the fear we will experience will not overwhelm us so long as we remain focused on the Master.

It is appropriate to think of fear and of courage that overwhelms fear on this Remembrance Day. The freedom we now enjoy was purchased at great cost. The blood of courageous men was spilled to ensure that we could live in a free land. It has always been thus, and I suppose that it shall ever be so until the Son of God returns to put down all rebellion.

THE FOCUS OF OUR CONFIDENCE — The Psalm begins with the Psalmist focusing on the LORD. Each of us can learn from this focus, reviewing where we must look to during the times of stress. With the Psalmist, each of us can learn to say:

"The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?"

[PSALM 27:1]

This particular Psalm has puzzled biblical scholars for years. The opening verses of the Psalm appear to exude confidence in the face of trial. The latter portion of the Psalm becomes a moving prayer [see **VERSES 7-14**]. We will focus on the opening verses of the Psalm today, though the latter portion is equally important to the saints experiencing trial and testing. It appears that David was experiencing a personal trial at the time he wrote this particular Psalm. He had plenty of opportunities to understand what it was to be fearful and how to respond to fear.

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, gives a title to this Psalm indicating that David wrote it “before he was anointed.” If this is the case, and it may well be the case, it would be reasonable to believe that David wrote this Psalm during the period when he had been exiled and was being hunted by Saul’s armies. Reading the Psalm, it becomes apparent that David was in danger from men he identifies as “evildoers” [see **VERSE TWO**]. David indicates that these evildoers had been spreading lies about him [see **VERSE TWELVE**] and seeking to kill him [see **VERSES TWO and TWELVE**]. Certainly, when a king sends his army to kill you, that would qualify as a time of intense and very real danger. Nevertheless, David speaks of his confidence [see **VERSE THREE**], his courage [see **VERSE FOURTEEN**] and his lack of fear [see **VERSE ONE**].

It is essential to note that in these opening verses that David speaks of knowing the LORD and he acknowledges that trusting the LORD is the antidote to fear. In fact, trust in the LORD is the sole antidote for fear; it is effective beyond belief. His focus, according to his testimony, was the LORD. Clarify in your mind that it was not knowing about the LORD that was the antidote to fear—knowing the LORD was the antidote to fear.

David did fear, and he had good reason to be fearful. He knew what it was to be afraid. On one occasion he wrote:

“When I am afraid,
I put my trust in you.”

[**PSALM 56:3**]

He does not speak in the realm of the theoretical—he speaks from experience! David doesn’t say, “*If* I am afraid;” rather, he says, “*When* I am afraid!” He knows what it is to be fearful. He understands the danger that can drive people to surrender to their fear. However, he is adamant, as he is in the Psalm before us, that very real dangers lie in wait about him.

In the same way, we will encounter threats to our spiritual well-being, and we may face emotional and physical threats because of our faith in the Risen Son of God. Facing such threats, it is almost a certainty that we will experience fear in our service to the Lord. Know that as Christians, we may have very good reason to be fearful! Knowing that we are engaged in God’s work, knowing that we are doing what He has appointed us to do, does not necessarily mean that we won’t experience fear, but it does mean that we are empowered to overcome those fears that would otherwise paralyse our lives.

As I stated in the opening comments, fear is a natural part of life. The individual who claims he is unafraid is either ignorant of the dangers lurking nearby or that individual is certifiably insane. Fear is necessary for a balanced life. Of course, I’m not speaking of cringing, craven terror that paralyses and keeps us from fulfilling the responsibilities to which we were appointed. I’m speaking of an honest appraisal of the dangers that we face so that we can apply the skill we have obtained and carefully prepare a response to the challenges we will face.

I have often weighed the words that the Apostle Paul wrote the saints in Corinth. Many of the saints have memorised **1 CORINTHIANS 10:13**, which encourages us to realise, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” Many well-meaning saints have cited this verse, telling the oppressed soul that God will not give us more than we can bear. Really? Have these well-meaning souls never read the Apostle’s words that are written in his Second Letter to the Corinthian congregation? Listen to the Apostle’s assessment of what the missionaries had faced.

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

“We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again” [2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-10].

Focus on the situation the Apostle described. They were burdened beyond their strength. In fact, the pressure they experienced was so great that these men despaired of life—they thought for sure they would die! Everything within said that they were going to die. Whatever could the aged saint have meant when we spoke in this manner? A careful reading of this letter may reveal the Apostle’s justifiable concern. Later in this letter, Paul spoke of imprisonments and countless beatings that left him near death [see 2 CORINTHIANS 11:24]. I must wonder whether this is a brief description of what he faced in Ephesus, which he earlier compared to fighting with wild beasts [see 1 CORINTHIANS 15:32].

Clearly, Paul faced more than he could bear, and likely experienced such opposition on multiple occasions. Moreover, he notes that those with who journeyed with him were likewise stretched to the breaking point, pressed beyond human endurance! Their despair compelled them to look to God for deliverance. In the same way, the overwhelming pressures of life will drive any one of us into the arms of the Saviour! There, we will discover divine deliverance when no way of escape is possible. God becomes the hero of the situation, and we glorify His Name.

Ministering among the black churches of Dallas County in years past, I would hear the choir singing, “God will make a way outta’ no way.” Well, ain’t it true? Won’t He do it? Won’t He do it? Our God is in the business of delivering His child; He is the One who will lift me out of the miry clay and set my feet on the rock to stay. He is my Protector. Though Saul proved to be a weak king, he was nevertheless correct when he identified the Living God as “the LORD who delivers Israel” [1 SAMUEL 14:39 ISV].

He is your Deliverer; and when He has delivered you, you will sing to the LORD, as did the Psalmist,

“I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love,
because you have seen my affliction;
you have known the distress of my soul,
and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;
you have set my feet in a broad place.”

[PSALM 31:7-8]

When the LORD has delivered you, you will sing,

“[The LORD] drew me up from the pit of destruction,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD.”

[PSALM 40:2-3]

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

I must take a moment to speak to some who imagine that they have at some point disgraced the noble Name by which we are called. During some crisis, these dear people feel that they reached their breaking point and thus failed to stand firm as they should have stood. Perhaps I'm addressing you at this moment! You must remember that every person has a breaking point beyond which they can go no further. The Apostle reached that point, as did the other missionaries who were travelling with him. We don't know the particular challenges facing these missionaries; we do know that the troubles they faced were severe. When the spirit was thoroughly crushed and the body could endure no more pain, it was the Spirit of God Who supplied strength. Just so, those times when you knew you had no more strength and simply could go no farther, it was the Spirit of God Who lifted you and held you secure. You who have been through these trials can testify that this is so. And though it is not pleasant during the trial, in your heart you know that the Lord is lifting you up, holding you firm so that you will not fall.

The Psalmist has written:

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD,
And He delights in his way.
Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;
For the LORD upholds him with His hand.”

[PSALM 37:23-24 NKJV]

How true those words are proven over-and-over in the lives of God's people. When the good man falls, he shall not be utterly cast down. We each need this encouragement. We have stumbled, we have been tripped up. We have been pushed and we have been kicked. However, because we belong to the Lord Christ, we have never been utterly cast down. We may have felt like we were down, but in the eyes of our Master, we were being conformed to His image.

Paul encouraged Christians to view their situation properly. He wrote, “This priceless treasure we hold, so to speak, in a common earthenware jar—to show that the splendid power of it belongs to God and not to us. We are handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down, but we are never knocked out! Every day we experience something of the death of the Lord Jesus, so that we may also know the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours. Yes, we who are living are always being exposed to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be plainly seen in our mortal lives” [2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-11 PHILLIPS].

Paul writes as one who knows what trouble means to those who are in trouble. The word that is translated “affliction” is a word that speaks of physical pressure. R. C. Trench writes, “When, according to the ancient law of England, those who wilfully refused to plead had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and were so pressed and crushed to death, this was literally *thlipsis*.² In the same way, the word indicates that the pressure the missionaries experienced seemed to crush the life from them.

Those who seek to intimidate the child of God into silence, do so because they know that threats and pressure work. The flesh rebels at the thought of pain. Quite naturally, we recoil when we are attacked because we do not want to be injured or disgraced. None of us enjoy pain, whether physical pain or emotional pain.

² Richard Chenevix Trench, **Synonyms of the New Testament** (Macmillan and Co., London 1880) 203

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

However, we do well to recall the words of the old hymn,

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
Who unto the Saviour for refuge have fled?”

“Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed!
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“When through fiery trials thy path way shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

“E’en down to old age, all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”³

That’s it exactly! And what a biblical song this is!

We sing, “How firm a foundation!” Jesus promises, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” [LUKE 21:33].

We sing, “Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed!” This is the promise delivered through Isaiah:

“Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

[ISAIAH 41:10].

³ As recorded in Arthur T. Pierson and A. J. Gordon, **The Coronation Hymnal: A Selection of Hymns and Songs** (American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, PA 1894)

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

Again, we sing, “When through the deep waters I call thee to go.” The LORD, through Isaiah, says,

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.”

[ISAIAH 43:2a]

Then, yet again, we sing, “When through fiery trials thy path way shall lie, My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply; The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.” This is a reminder that the Lord has promised,

“I will put this third into the fire,
and refine them as one refines silver,
and test them as gold is tested.
They will call upon my name,
and I will answer them.
I will say, ‘They are my people;’
and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

[ZECHARIAH 13:9]

The verse calls to mind the words Peter has written as encouragement for all who follow the Master, speaking of the imperishable, undefiled and unfading inheritance that is kept in Heaven. Recall that the Apostle has written, “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” [1 PETER 1:6-7].

Likewise, when we sing, “The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose I will not, will not desert to his foes,” we are but echoing the promise written in Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” [1 CORINTHIANS 1:9]. What a marvellous compilation of biblical truths, promises meant to comfort the soul that has cast itself on the Saviour. Singing this delightful old hymn of the Faith is tantamount to singing Scripture! Hallelujah! That is something worth shouting about!

REASONS TO BE CONFIDENT — In quick succession, the Psalmist lists several reasons why a worshipper should have confidence in divine protection and guidance. The Psalmist testifies, “The LORD is my light.” He also identifies the LORD as his “salvation.” Then, he writes that the LORD is “the stronghold of [his] life.” Light, salvation and life are united in the relationship David enjoys with the LORD. And light, salvation and life are yet the heritage of all who follow the Christ to this day. Let’s focus on what the Psalmist has said in the order in which he wrote.

First, we see the Psalmist testify, “The LORD is my light.” Reading these words, our minds will undoubtedly turn to the Son of God as He testified, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life” [JOHN 8:12].

Throughout Scripture, the LORD God is spoken of as our sun and as our light. This is especially the case in a number of places in the Old Testament, both in the prophets and in the poetical sections. For instance, the Prophet Micah penned a warning to those who opposed the people of God. This servant of God has written:

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

“Rejoice not over me, O my enemy;
when I fall, I shall rise;
when I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be a light to me.”

[MICAH 7:8]

Encouraging God’s holy people, Isaiah has written:

“Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.”

[ISAIAH 60:1-2]

Continuing this theme, the Prophet wrote,

“The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give you light;
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.”

[ISAIAH 60:19-20]

Elsewhere, The Sons of Korah have written,

“The LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does he withhold
from those who walk uprightly.”

[PSALM 84:11]

Throughout the Old Testament, the Lord is repeatedly identified as “God of my salvation.”⁴ The LORD God is called “the Horn of my salvation” [2 SAMUEL 22:3] and He is known as “the Strength of my Salvation” [PSALM 140:7]. In the ninety-first Psalm is a wonderful promise for those who pursue the Living God. As I previously mentioned, this Psalm begins with an affirmation of praise as the Psalmist writes:

⁴ E.g. PSALM 18:2; 25:5; 42:5; ISAIAH 12:2; HABAKKUK 3:18

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.”

[PSALM 91:1]

Then, the Psalm concludes with this divine promise:

“Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.
When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.”

[PSALM 91:14-16]

The hour is late and I have spoken longer than I intended; nevertheless, it is important to remember that the Psalmist states that the LORD is his stronghold. We have a place to which we can retreat in times of trial. There, we will be secure until we can renew our strength and again do the things demanded of us. Nahum was correct when he wrote,

“The LORD is good,
a stronghold in the day of trouble;
he knows those who take refuge in him.”

[NAHUM 1:7]

THE FOOLISHNESS OF OUR ASSAILANTS — It is madness to attempt to battle against the Son of God. I can still hear the preachers of a bygone era who declared the Word of God within the black community warning sinners, “Little man, your arms are too short to box with God.” For a moment, it may appear that the wicked are winning the battle. Though Hitler may unleash hellish fury on the world for a brief period, he will end his days broken and fearful, living under the ruins of his destroyed capital until he takes his own life. Hitler will take his own life after several attempts against him are made by his own trusted officers. Mussolini will be captured by his own people and assassinated. His body will be hung upside down and ridiculed by the world. Ceaușescu will be executed by his own people. Idi Amin must flee for sanctuary in a foreign state so that he will not be killed in the nation he devastated. And though the wicked one, assisted by his minions, may appear to be winning in the great conflict between righteousness and evil, we have a reliable account of how matters will end. At the last, evil cannot prevail.

According to the Word of God, we are assured of the Lord’s victory. John wrote, “I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

PSALM 27:1-3
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, ‘Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh” [REVELATION 19:11-21].

Some of the professed saints of the Living God who continually boast of their bravery have obviously confused brashness with bravery. These boastful souls have never stood in the thick of battle, so they imagine that they are qualified to boast of what they have never witnessed. The Greek historian Thucydides wrote, “The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it.” In this assessment, the ancient writer was undoubtedly correct.

Some of the Apostles receive short shrift. For instance, we hear few sermons about Thomas, also known as Didymus, or The Twin. We don’t know the name of Thomas’ twin, but we do witness in Thomas a conscientious, courageous follower of the Master. When Jesus received word of Lazarus’ illness, He delayed going for two days. The disciples appear to have assumed that it was because He was concerned that the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill Him. After two days, Jesus stated that they would go to Judea. The disciples began to argue against going. They exclaimed, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again” [JOHN 11:8]? When they raised this objection, Jesus explained, “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him” [JOHN 11:14b-15].

It is at this point that Thomas is recorded as saying to the other disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” [JOHN 11:16b]. This is neither cynicism nor resignation, rather it is a statement of determination. If the Master would hazard His life, then Thomas was prepared to stand with Him in the difficult place, though doing so risked his life. Thomas knew the danger, and he went out to meet that threat. His speech was not mere bravado, it was real. Surely, this was a brave man overlooked in many of the studies of the Gospel accounts. He is a model for bravery, for courage, for boldness in the Christian life.

Today, we honour those brave souls who have hazarded their lives for our freedom, and we remember their sacrifice. On this sacred day, we remember their sacrifice. In similar fashion, we must never forget fellow saints throughout our world who are boldly standing with the Son of God to advance His cause. Let each Christian who hears the call today determine that we shall be bold in our service to the Master. Let each Christian aspire to be as the men of Issachar who allied themselves with David when he still reigned in Hebron. The divine text speaks of “Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” [1 CHRONICLES 12:32]. Stand bravely with those who stand for the cause of Christ. Amen.