

He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

A common metaphor used in the psalms to portray the experience of trust is that of finding refuge in a fortress—a metaphor close to the hearts of people who lived in constant vulnerability to military invasion and banditry...

The fear associated with vulnerability is the dread of being overpowered, of losing control. This for any person is the root of all fear. Yet, "God is my fortress," declares the psalmist, "therefore we will not fear." (Psalm 46)

The Psalmists did not feel invulnerable because they believed nothing bad would ever happen to them. Trusting God is much more than trusting God *for something*. It is the will to be overpowered by God, to entrust one's life to God and thereby renounce the right to set the agendas for one's own life.

By allowing themselves to be overpowered by God, the Psalmists put themselves into a bigger picture. Whatever happened, even if they suffered a loss for a time, they did not feel vulnerable or afraid because they recognized that they were in God's purpose and God was sovereign over their circumstances.

The safest place in the world is in the will of God.

The writers of the Psalms were not in charge, and therefore they weren't vulnerable.

Rest comes from letting ourselves be overpowered by God. He has an absolute claim on our lives, and as long as we deny that claim, we are in conflict, and conflict is unrest. There is only one way to resolve the conflict: surrender.

Imagine your life as a walled city whose ramparts, towers, and palaces represent your agendas and achievements. Defending this city is a daunting task because it is not as strong as it seems. In fact, it is very brittle. There is no rest in the city. Imagine then that God draws up to the city. He comes to stake his claim upon you—not as a tyrant coming to plunder but as a father coming to win back a son or daughter. What you must do is simply walk out of the city and surrender it to him. Give it all to him. Allow God to overpower you. This is worship. As you allow God to overpower you, God's authority overshadows you, and there is no fear in the shadow of God's authority. There is only peace and rest.

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust." (Psalm 91:1-2)*

(Matthew Jacoby, *Deeper Places*)

My soul finds rest in God alone, my salvation comes from Him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation He is my fortress, I will never be shaken. (Psalm 62:1-2)

The Shepherd laughed, "I love doing preposterous things. Why, I don't know anything more exhilarating and delightful than turning weakness into strength, and fear into faith, and that which has been marred into perfection... That is my special work."

(From Hannah Hurnard's allegory novel *Hinds Feet on High Places*)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

We are not the Author of our story. We are the characters.

(Kara Tippetts, *the hardest peace*)

Trusting God when the miracle does not come, when the urgent prayer gets no answer, when there is only darkness—this is the kind of faith God values perhaps most of all. This is the kind of faith that can be developed and displayed only in the midst of difficult circumstances. This is the *kind of faith that cannot be shaken* because it is the *result of having been shaken*. (Nancy Guthrie, *Holding Onto Hope*)

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, *{though the Lord does not rid my body of cancer}* yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength. (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

*And Abraham believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness.
(Genesis 15:6)*

To be alive is to be broken. And to be broken is to stand in need of grace. Honesty keeps us in touch with our neediness and the truth that we are saved sinners. There is a beautiful transparency to honest disciples who never wear a false face and do not pretend to be anything but who they are. (Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*)

The most-asked question in the whole Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—is: "*How long, O Lord, how long?*" And the most repeated command from God is: "*Do not fear*" or "*Do not be afraid.*" The people of God consistently cry out for relief, and the God of love bids us trust him. (Scotty Smith, *Objects of His Affection*)

On the last morning, Much-Afraid was walking near the tents and huts of the desert dwellers, when in a lonely corner behind a wall she came upon a little golden-yellow flower, growing all alone. An old pipe was connected with a water tank. In the pipe was one tiny hole through which came an occasional drop of water. Where the drops fell one by one, there grew the little golden flower, though where the seed had come from, Much-Afraid could not imagine, for

there were no birds anywhere and no other growing things.

She stopped over the lonely, lovely little golden face, lifted up so hopefully and so bravely to the feeble drip, and cried out softly, "What is your name, little flower? I never saw one like you before."

The tiny plant answered at once in a tone as golden as itself, "Behold me! My name is *Acceptance-with Joy!*"

The answer of the little golden flower which grew all alone in the waste of the desert stole into her heart and echoed there faintly but sweetly, filling her with comfort.

She said to herself, "**He has brought me here when I did not want to come—for His own purpose. I, too, will look up into His face and say, 'Behold me! I am thy little handmaiden *Acceptance-with-Joy!*'**"

(From Hannah Hurnard's allegory novel *Hinds Feet on High Places*)

I have learned that the weaker we are, the more we need to lean on God. And the more we lean on God, the stronger we discover him to be. (from *Decision*, by Joni Eareckson Tada, a paraplegic who also had stage III breast cancer.)

*I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me; hear my words...
Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings. (Psalm 17)*

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord...
The Lord will keep your going out
and your coming in from this time forth
and forevermore. (Psalm 121)

The Psalms are not an anesthetic. They are not a cup of hot chocolate on a cold night. They are the prayers of someone lost in a dark wood, shivering in bitter cold, unable to stand in fierce wind. They are the praise that flows from a person's heart when he abandons himself to God for deliverance, when he trusts that God's hand has grasped his and is leading him home, very slowly but very surely. Job learned that he must die to the hope that darkness and cold and wind were not part of God's plan.
(Larry Crabb, *66 Love Letters*)

Liftoff!

What does a rocket need to lift off
and go zooming into outer space?

It needs a Launchpad.

Do you know what God's launchpad is in our lives—
from which he can do ANYTHING?

Is it great faith? Our perfect record?

Incredible courage?

No.

It's our weakness.

God's power comes to us in our
littleness, in our brokenness, in our
not knowing, in our not being able.

And when God's power
meets our weakness?

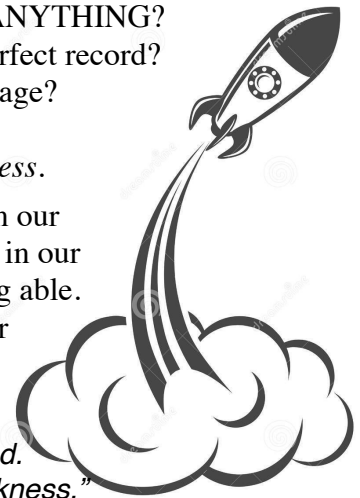
Liftoff!

"My grace is all you need.

My power works best in weakness."

(2 Corinthians 12:9)

(From *Thoughts to Make Your Heart Sing*, by Sally Lloyd-Jones)



Whoever listens to Me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster. (Proverbs 1:33)

We want suffering to be like
pregnancy—we have it for a season,
then it's over, and there is a tidy
moral to the story. I've come to sense
that isn't what faith is at all.
(Kara Tippett, *the hardest peace*)

*"Come to me, all
you who are
weary and
burdened, and I
will give you
rest."* (Jesus)

"I wish it need not have happened in my
time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf,
"and so do all who live to see such times.
But that is not for them to decide. All we have
to decide is what to do with the time that is
given us." (J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*)

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews
and folly to Gentiles. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,

Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and
the weakness of God is stronger than men...God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise;
God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong...And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who
became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:22-30)