

# VINEYARD HARVEST

## H O U S E C H U R C H



*The Sword of the Spirit*

*The Word of God*



### The Protection of the Lord

*1Sa 22:23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.*

These words of King David echo the heart of Father God through Jesus His Son to us. Jesus said; "if they persecute me they will persecute you". Yet, you are with Him under the same protection Jesus enjoyed with the Father. *Psa 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

The Lord's protection is such an important aspect of our faith that it prompted the devil to use God's words to tempt Jesus in the wilderness about God's protection. *Mat 4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, Mat 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* What we must realise is, God's protection for all of us is His prerogative (sovereign right) and is not to be taken lightly. If He called you, He will protect you. Yet, many do not understand this aspect of our relationship with God and often lament the fact that many have lost out on God's protection even when prayers have gone up on their behalf. This has caused many to question God's goodness and as a result have tempted and provoked God. They have made Him out to be an uncaring God who allows His saints and people in general to get into trouble and even die as martyrs. This is what the Pharisees mocked Jesus about at Calvary when He hung on the cross. *Mat 27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, Mat 27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Mat 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, Mat 27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. Mat 27:43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.*

The devil was speaking through them tempting Jesus again to forego God's will for His life and destiny by coming down from the cross. When the devil tempted Jesus about this in the wilderness, I believe that he was using his best three temptations that would get Jesus to fall. Food, glory and protection are all human expectations that do not go away easily. People strive to obtain all three all their lives but do not realise that they do so on an earthly plain. What good is it to a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul? I think these are sober words to consider.

Maybe the devil is mocking you too. If God is your God why is He not providing for you or healing your or protecting you? This is the devil's way of destroying your faith and trust in God. When we submit to God's will, we will see the breakthrough come like never before. The supernatural begins to work and unexplainable things begin to happen. One lady describes coming back from a meeting only to face a life threatening accident at a crossroad when a horse trailer like vehicle came straight at her. She had no way of escaping or avoiding the oncoming vehicle. To her surprise and a police car parked at the crossroads, the oncoming vehicle passed **through** her vehicle like a shadow and nobody was harmed. Maybe such an incident never happened in your life but look back on all the incidents in your life when you could have been seriously injured or killed even and yet you were protected.

Many of us pray to God to protect us when we go out driving or walking or when we are in difficulty with relationships or when we go to bed at night. We also seek God's protection against invisible evil spirits knowing that they are around to harm us. Added to this, we seek legal protection and basically anything that may seem to come against us as a threat. Most of all, we seek protection from words that can harm us. All these prayers are valid and necessary. Do we believe what we pray or do we hope for what we pray? The Lord's protection extends beyond this realm of the natural and even into the spiritual realm to the extent that in order for us to enter God's presence we need the blood of Jesus.

I have heard of people escaping the most incredible accidents in life and of others who died in the most silliest of ways or have suffered needlessly without God's protection. People over the generations have always slept with one eye open so to speak. There has been fear of death, robbers and perils that have come upon men which have been spoken about and discussed often with a sense of awe concerning danger and death. Legal financial and insurance protection have also been areas that people have sought protection for.

Then on the opposite end of the scale, we see many dare devils in sport and in adventurous pursuits taking risks that go beyond human reasoning. In funds management, we see hedging and taking of risks in investments where huge losses are dished out often causing many to commit suicide. Sometimes it feels like people just do not seem to care what happens. I have seen people drive recklessly and endanger their own lives and the lives of others. The restraint in some quarters regarding protection is so far removed that it is not even a matter of consideration to those who attempt these things. To them, risk taking is what governs their excitement. As a result, many have lost their lives, limbs, become paraplegics, lost their home, money and marriages over risk taking.

The idea of the Lord's protection is not about avoiding risk but about walking in His will that often causes us to risk everything. To step up and do what God says is a risk in the natural but is actually a bold step of faith in the spiritual. It is this bold step of faith that sets up God's protection and confirmation of one's faith. Here are some verses that highlight this very vein of thinking.

- *Psa 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*
- *Isa 43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*
- *Psa 138:7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.*
- *1Sa 17:37 David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.*

Acts chapter 4 speaks of the boldness of the disciples when they spoke to the Pharisees and told them that they would listen to God and not man. Being bold requires faith. Without it, one fears the outcome of any venture and so is unsure that God is with them. I am deeply concerned about the state of the Church today because it seeks to compromise rather than be bold and speak God's heart. This I believe is because their own sin finds them out and so they cannot point the finger at the world. Secondly, in most cases of churches, they just do not have the conviction of God's protection and His calling upon them. Playing it safe is more the thinking these days in the Church than it is to take a risk and speak out the uncompromising gospel of Jesus. It is fear of man from within and without that has strangulated the Church in most parts of the world. They have deviated from the truth and the power of God. As a result, they have become passive or absolutely worldly that they are of no good to anybody. Yet, we have the greatest number of martyrs today than ever before. There is a huge divide.

***One can be so earthly minded that they become heavenly useless and conversely one can be so heavenly minded (super spiritual) that they become earthly useless.***

The Lord's protection is available for all who would seek it. In every area and walk of life there is no less a promise. What if God allows us to be cast in prison or even hurt and finally killed; does it make Him any less God or uncaring? The truth is, God's ways are not our ways and if we do not understand this, we will question God's motivations and intentions and not believe in His wisdom. From what I can see in the Bible, I see God allowing Jesus to die for us in shame on the cross after having been beaten badly. In the natural, this just does not make sense as any father or parent would almost give their lives to save their own children. Well, the truth is, God gave His life in His Son to save us, His children. This is the bottom line truth and it cannot be refuted. The reality of His protection was magnified in this very act of self sacrifice. ***He died to protect us.*** How much more will He not give us all things? *Rom 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Death to self in order to give life is the main theme of the Bible. Many of us do not want to die in order to receive what God has for us. We want what He has for us but without the cost. Well, that is not possible in God's wisdom. What we have to assure ourselves of is, no matter what, He will always be our protector and deliverer and above all our Saviour. The end is assured to all who would believe and do the will of the Father.

I am constantly reminded of God's protection as I go about my daily business and at night when I go to bed. I am reminded by His presence and love for me that no matter what happens I am protected. Maybe someone will be able to take our physical life and even harm us, but they cannot take our souls. When Heidi baker a great Missionary to Mozambique heard of the death of one of her Pastors she asked God what was going on. This man had gone to preach the message in a Muslim village only to have his tongue, lips and limbs cut out. He died a horrible death it would seem. However, his biological brother who was a family man decided he would go to the same village and preach the love of Jesus. Most of the village this time was saved. The life of one man who seemingly did not have the protection of God when preaching the gospel had prompted another to break out of the fear of suffering and death and save the village because he did not consider the lack of God's protection for his brother but rather saw the love of Jesus as He hung on the cross for this village. Hmmmmm! Makes me wonder where my theology has brought me to about my enemies. Do I fear them or do I love them?

The Lord's protection extended to the disciples when they went through much persecution only to die as martyrs in many cases. This kind of reasoning and theology does not make sense in a Christian world that preaches a blessing only gospel of prosperity, feel good messages, non-sacrificial giving of our lives to Jesus and earthly well being. God's protection is often removed because of sin. Our choices make a huge difference in this matter. If we choose to put ourselves in harm's way, we will be harmed because of sin. That is what happened to Israel and many today are in the same boat.

The Kingdom of God suffers violence and the violent take it by force. These are the words of Jesus to the people when He was on earth. When a person goes to war, they are protected with armour in most cases but many still get wounded and even die. When God decides to remove His protection over the righteous we die in the natural but rise up in the spiritual. Till then, no man can harm you. *Luk 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.* The truth is, we have power over the enemy and if we learn to use it, we will walk in that victory. However, we must be harmless as doves and wise as serpents.

Furthermore, we must know our God and assure ourselves that no matter what, God loves us. *Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Rom 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*Lots of love*

Pastor Noble

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