

January 1, 2021

As you wake to the dawn of another new year, let me encourage you with the assurances of our Lord and Savior. We have weathered a terrible storm that has ravaged the world with pain, sickness, suffering, death, division and blame. In fact, we are still in the middle of the storm. I encourage you not to fall victim to hopelessness or anger or despair, that even as the feelings roll in like a tide, reach for something bigger, better and higher than yourself.

Jesus promised to always be with us

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:20

“Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.” Psalms 73:23

There are no conditions that you must meet before crying out to the Lord. In Psalms 107, we meet the *redeemed of the Lord*. Psalm 107:2 reads: *“Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story.”* As we continue reading their story in Psalm 107, the author reveals that the redeemed of the Lord fell into four different groups.

He describes the first group as wanderers in a desert wasteland, without a home, hungry and thirsty with their lives ebbing away. *“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.”* (Psalms 107:6)

The second group he describes as prisoners sitting in the dark, suffering because they had rebelled against God’s way and despised the tasks God had called them to do *“Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them from their distress.”* (Psalm 107:13)

The third group was a bunch of fools, doing whatever they wanted and flouting sound guidance until suddenly they found themselves on the cusp of death. *“Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.”* (Psalm 107:19)

The fourth group was just regular, working folks who found themselves in a tidal wave of trouble that melted away the courage they thought they possessed. *“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress.”* (Psalm 107:28)

The author of Psalms reminds us that they are **all** the *redeemed of the Lord*. No matter which of the four groups you fall into – or perhaps a group not mentioned -- the Lord is mighty to save. He was with you in the storm of last year, and will be with you in the storms ahead. Fall on your knees before the throne of the One who will never turn you away.

“Whoever comes to me, I will never drive away.” John 6:37 NIV