“I Am with You” BY Malusi Skunyana

Read Isaiah 43:1, 2

ISA 43:1. But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine.

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.

God is our present help in time of trouble; He is our rock and our hiding place. We have no cause for feeling that we are all alone when we go through trying times, for He says, “I am with you.” Even in our darkest moments and in our most foreboding circumstances, we are never alone; the One who knows us by name is always with us.

When people go through difficulties, they have a tendency of thinking that God may have forsaken them and that they are all alone. The question “Where was God?” is the most asked question when something bad happens to people. While it is understandable that human nature is weak and cannot cope well with loss and disaster, but the question “Where was God?” is a bad question. It seems to imply that God is not with us when something bad happens to us. But in fact, God is with us in all our experiences good or bad. If God were only present in our lives when things are going well, and became absent when we are suffering, then He would not be a good God. This is exactly what Israel battled with when faced with calamity or danger; they always thought God had totally forsaken them. But He could never do that. Yes, the Lord would discipline His people from time to time when they were unfaithful to Him, but the discipline, no matter how severe, did not mean the Lord had totally forsaken His people.

In today’s passage, the Lord speaks to His people Israel through the prophet Isaiah, and He assures them that they need not fear, for God their Redeemer calls them by name and claims them as His no matter what they are going through. He uses the metaphors of passing through “waters” and “rivers” and walking through “fire” to represent every difficulty that His people may go through, and He declares that He is with them through it all. The statement “they shall not overflow you” is an assurance that their troubles will never totally overwhelm them, for God is with them all the way. They may walk through fire but they shall not be burned. Paul’s words to the Corinthian believers give a sense of what God’s message was to Israel, when he says, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9.

Dear friend, our assurance is that God knows us by name, and is acquainted with all our sorrows. He can read our life experiences like an open book; nothing is hidden from Him. We have shed no tear that He does not know of, we have borne no burden that He has not measured, and we have had no sorrow that He did not foresee. God assures us that He is always with us in all our experiences. He is always present to help us, to comfort us, and to carry us through every difficulty. You may place your trust in God; you may depend on Him to care for you in your time of need. May the Almighty God ever bless you! Amen!