

## God's Encouraging Word ... *when I am suffering*

Are you familiar with tunnel vision? Someone experiencing tunnel vision can see an object directly ahead, but they often fail to notice what's around it. Maybe age or injury has robbed them of their peripheral vision. Maybe they grow fatigued during a long drive. Do you know what that's like?

We're also prone to tunnel vision when we're suffering. Face it, we've all been there. No one is immune from problems and pain. Everyone experiences hurts or hang-ups. But when we're hurting, is the bad all we can see? Do we focus on the problem so much that we ignore everything else? We can see no help. No hope. No good. No God. Do you know what that's like? It's not a happy place to be.

It can be especially tough as we prepare to enter the holiday season. How can we put on a smile for Thanksgiving and pretend that we are just fine?

No need to pretend. Listen to the psalmist: **"My comfort in suffering is this: your promise preserves my life"** (Psalm 119:50). Remember how God worked so wonderfully to solve our greatest problem. The burden of sin we could never carry. The consequence of guilt we could never dodge. The sentence of death we could not avoid. So Jesus stepped in for us and shouldered them all. The cross and the tomb—both empty now—mark Jesus' great victory.

And his victory is your victory. So resist the urge to give in to those feelings of defeat. Don't shrink back in fear. Don't separate yourself from others. Don't become bitter. Don't give up. Otherwise you will miss the help God wants to give you.

All around the problem of suffering, God's help is ready and waiting. *Look up* and find confidence: **"My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth"** (Psalm 121). *Look in* to God's word where he promises, **"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you"** (Hebrews 13:5). *Look back* and recall how God has helped you through past challenges. *Look around* and find Christian friends eager to give you a hand and fold hands for you in prayer. *Look ahead* and see the open heaven God has in store for you through Jesus.

God promises to bring you safely through the tunnel of trouble. Trust his goodness!

### **Come worship with us this Christmas!**

- Christmas Party for Our Church and School  
Sunday, 12/16/18, after 10:00 A.M. church service
- Children's Christmas Program  
Wednesday, 12/19/18, 6:30 P.M.
- Christmas Eve Service  
Monday, 12/24/18, at 7:00 P.M.
- Christmas Day Service  
Tuesday, 12/25/18, at 10:00 A.M.