



1

Scripture

- *But now, this is what the LORD says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” (Isaiah 43:1 NIV)*
- *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. (Isaiah 43:2 NIV)*

2

Scripture

- *For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. (Isaiah 43:3 NIV)*
- *Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. (Isaiah 43:4 NIV)*
- *Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. (Isaiah 43:5 NIV)*

3

Introduction

- Question!
- Does the Bible explicitly say, “**God will not give you more than you can handle**”?
- Many Christians believe so, but you won't find it so stated in Holy Scriptures.
- In fact, this is one of many quotations inaccurately attributed to the Bible.

4

Introduction

Others include:

- “This too shall pass.”
- “Cleanliness is next to godliness.”
- “God works in mysterious ways.”
- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “Love the sinner. Hate the sin.”
- “God helps those who help themselves.”

5

Introduction

- We need to be careful, because the words of the prophet Isaiah in today’s Old Testament reading can be easily misunderstood and misapplied.
- When God says through the prophet,
 - *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you”* (Isaiah 43:2),
 - God is not saying, *“I will not give you more than you can handle.”* Nor is God promising, *“This too shall pass.”*
- No, the message is really something that is very different.

6

Introduction

- **Social media** throws quotations at us every day, and not all of them are reliable.
- The most famous of these might be the words, *“The problem with quotes on the internet is that no one can confirm their authenticity.”* —Abraham Lincoln.

7

Introduction



- Gregory Sullivan runs a website called “**Quote Investigator**” that offers examinations of the dubious origins of familiar quotations by Yogi Berra, Mark Twain, Marilyn Monroe and many others.

8

Introduction

- **Yogi Berra** is often credited as saying, *“Always go to other people’s funerals; otherwise they won’t go to yours.”* But guess what?
- The line appeared first in a novel in 1876, years before Berra was even born.
- **Mark Twain** is quoted as saying, *“The more I know about people, the better I like dogs.”*
- But credit goes to a French book published in 1822.



9

Introduction

- And **Marilyn Monroe**?
- She reportedly said, *“Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world.”*
- But there is no evidence for this quotation.
- However, credit should go to **Bette Midler**, who said in 1985, *“Give a girl the correct footwear and she can conquer the world.”*



10

Through the Waters

- So then, what does God mean by the words, *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you”* (v. 2)?
- This single quotation cannot stand alone.
- Rather, it needs to be understood in the context of the exile of the people of Israel.

11

Through the Waters

- For about 60 years, the people of Israel lived in captivity in **Babylon**, far from their homes in Palestine.
- They were feeling discouraged, dispirited and depressed, wondering if they would ever be able to return.
- But now, as their exile is about to end, Isaiah reminds them how **special** there are.
- He says, *“You are mine,”* says the Lord (v. 1). *“You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you”* (v. 4).

12

Through the Waters

- After decades of darkness, a light is beginning to dawn.
- The deep doubts of the people are being replaced by the assurance of God's care and protection.
- Isaiah is promising that God *"will be with and for Israel."*
- The prophet's words establish God
 - *"as powerful and compassionate toward Israel,"* and
 - they expose the foreign gods *"as impotent and irrelevant."*

13

Through the Waters

- Notice that Isaiah is not promising an easy path for the people of Israel, or for us.
- He doesn't say *"if you pass through the waters,"* but rather *"when you pass through the waters"* (v. 2).
- Swirling waters will come, right along with raging rivers and searing fires.
- But in the face of all of these challenges, *"I will be with you,"* promises God.
- When obstacles arise, God will be *"powerful and compassionate"* toward us.

14

Through the Waters

- Isaiah never says that *"God has promised us a trial free life."*
- Nor does the Apostle Paul, when he writes to the Corinthians and implies that trials for Christians are part of life. [See 1st Corinthians 10:13]
- But what God has said and promised is that He will be there with us and strengthen us in the midst of those trials and troubles.
- Why? Because He loves us and is for us!

15

God is For Us!

- *And we know that in all things (trials & trouble) God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* (Romans 8:28 NIV)
 - *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* (Romans 8:29 NIV)
 - *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.* (Romans 8:30 NIV)

16

God is For Us!

- *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31 NIV)*
- *He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32 NIV)*
- In other words, all trials are frustrating and some more than others. Nevertheless, God has committed himself to be there for us.

17

More Than Conquerors

- I imagine many have heard of the phrase, “*more than conquerors.*”
- But how many know the context?
- The context is right here in Romans 8.
- We are more than conquerors because we who are in Christ Jesus are special to God and he will do what ever he has to do to help us.

18

More Than Conquerors

- As the Apostle Paul says, *we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
- *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37–39 NIV)*
- However, it should be noted, that the phrase “love of God” is not just about feelings, but tangible forms of real help that can help make a difference in the midst of our trials.

19

More Than Conquerors

- However, even with the Apostle Paul, trusting God is difficult circumstances is not easy.
- *We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. (2 Corinthians 1:8 NIV)*

20

More Than Conquerors

- *Indeed, in our hearts we felt the **sentence of death**. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (2 Corinthians 1:9 NIV)*
- *He has delivered us from such a **deadly peril**, . . . On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. (2 Corinthians 1:10–11 NIV)*

21

A Redemptive God

- While some people say that “*God works in mysterious ways*,” the Bible says that especially for His people, God works in redemptive ways.
- This means that God is always working to redeem us – to buy us back, recover us, deliver us, ransom us, and save us.
- “*I give Egypt as your ransom,*” says God through the prophet Isaiah, “*Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life*” (Isaiah 43:3-4).

22

God’s Love in Christ

God’s power and compassion are seen most clearly in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the one whom God called “*my Son, the Beloved,*” and said, “*with you I am well pleased*” (Luke 3:22).

- When Jesus passed through a storm on the Sea of Galilee, **God was with him**;
- when he faced the opposition of scribes and Pharisees, **he was not overwhelmed**;
- when he walked through streets of Jerusalem on his way to the cross, **he was not destroyed**;
- and even his death on the cross; **death was not the final end**.

23

What God Has Said!

- God has not promised us a trial free life.
- In fact, he has promised us that in this world we will have **trouble**. [See John 16:33]
- However, He has overcome this world and now sits at the right hand of the Father **far above all authorities**.
- Therefore, **prayer** made in His name changes things.
- Then once, we have cast our cares on him, we have **peace** and are able to wait upon the Lord until His faithfulness appears.

24

Conclusion

- So then, when **trials and troubles** come our way, let us not give in to anxiety or fear, which often make matters worse not better.
- Instead, let us remember the words of **God's holy prophet Isaiah**, who said under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit . . . ,
- ***Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*** (Isaiah 41:10 NIV)