



God Raises Me Up

Read Psalm 40:1-5.

David wrote this Psalm as a response to a time when he felt God had pulled him out of a horrible pit. We don't know exactly what David had experienced that was so bad, but we see how much he felt the hand of God in his life. David responded with a new song of praise to God that God himself had placed in David. He also believed that others would see his delivery and cause them to praise God.

We lived in Ibadan, Nigeria for six years. During those years we rarely saw a clear sky. The high humidity kept a haze between the sun and us. One day as we were driving to the north to visit Bible translators, I suddenly became aware that my mood had changed to one of great joy. What had happened to me? As I thought about it, I realized that we had left the haziness of the coastal area and the sun was shining ever so brightly.

That is what it is like when God **raises me up** from the down times. There is a sudden burst of joy as I am released from a burden, when I finally can accept the fact that there is no strength in me to deliver myself. Taking the burden to my Lord Jesus Christ and leaving it there, remembering that He has already taken that burden to the cross, leaves me free to worship and praise Him. Why does it take me so long to let God **raise me up** when there is such freedom to enjoy? Why do I muddle in "the horrible pit" filled with mud and clay when I can sing a new song of praise and worship in the freedom Christ has gained for me?

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Philippians 4:4 reminds us that the real joy is in the Lord. Paul goes on to say in verses 6 and 7, *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* He goes on to remind us in verse 8, *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* It is God Himself who **raises us up** as we look to Him for help not only in the down times, but always.

My mother used to go about her work in the house singing hymns. I believe it made her work lighter and more joyful. She gave a sense of dependence on God for her strength and peace. It was evident to us as she lived through the time of my father's heart attack without once breaking down in our presence, that God Himself gave her that inner strength. She faced the task of running our farm with the help of my 15-year-old brother, who took up the tasks without complaining. Her strong husband was now incapacitated and could only give directions from his recovery bed for the months it took to heal in a time when heart surgery was not yet an option. I can still hear her singing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

Sing or read “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (LSB 770)

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield thee;
thou wilt find a solace there.

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Prayer: Lord, You are so wonderful! How can we ever thank You for Your love to us in taking our sins to the cross and leaving us free to worship and praise You? Let Your Holy Spirit so fill us that we ooze joy in a way that gives glory to You. Thank You for **raising us up** when we are down. We don't deserve such love. And You don't deserve to go unrecognized as we go about our business of living in this world. Place into our hearts a new song so that we can praise You with our whole life. We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Scripture references are from the ESV.

*Written by: Bernice Bunkowske
Published by: Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 2002*