

Message #1025  
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"ONE QUARTER CENTURY LATER"  
{Nahum 1:7}

Trinity Presbyterian Church  
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#### INTRODUCTION

It is ironic that on this our 25th Anniversary that I should preach my 1025th sermon.

...what difference have they made?

...only God knows!

...will there be more people in heaven because 1025 sermons have been preached?

...only God knows!

...have lives been strengthened, encouraged... have people grown spiritually because of 1025 sermons?

...only God knows!

In a recent interview, Billy Graham was asked whether he thought his preaching the last 60 years had made a difference in the world. He responded, "The world is probably worse off today than it was 60 years ago!"

Every minister that I know is constantly reflecting upon the impact their ministry has made on the lives of others.

...but only God knows the end result!

The song we sang earlier has special meaning to me, "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

...while candidating here in May, 1978, I was asked to play something on the church's new grand piano--I played that hymn.

...when I finished one of the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee said to me with tears in their eyes, "God must've led you to play that...that was the last hymn we sang when Aahmes Overton {my predecessor} left us."

...I think of that moment every time I hear that hymn.

Indeed, God HAS been faithful these past 25 years! The writer of the Book of Lamentations wrote...

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS!" {Lamentations 3:22-23}

#### NAHUM 1:7

When I was in junior high school my Sunday School teacher gave me a life verse from an obscure Old Testament Book--Nahum--"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knowest them that trust in Him." {1:7}

From that day until now I've treasured that verse. I have written it in many Bibles that I've been asked to sign and I've shared it with many people. I believe that verse...it has been a source of strength to me these many years. I've chosen it as my text of the morning.

#### "THE LORD IS GOOD"

God's very nature is good! This verse in the Hebrew is just two words: "Good...the Lord!" The word "good" defines the very nature of God...the foundation of goodness. I treasure those words...

That does not mean that things in my life will always be good...but that God is good!  
It does not mean that my life will be an easy one...but that God is good!  
It does not mean that my prayers will always be answered the way I would like...but that God is good.

It does not mean that tragedy may not visit me...but that God is good.

It does not mean that the human struggle is not difficult...but that God is good.

It does not mean that there will not always be suffering in the world...but that God is good.

It does not mean that there will not always be many questions for which we have no answers...but that God is good!

In short, the circumstances of life do not always seem to be good, but God Himself is always good.

This is the basis of my faith--and my ministry!

The Psalmist wrote continuously about the goodness of God...

"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him!"

{Psalm 37:8}

"The Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations." {Psalm 100:5}

"Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to His name, for that is pleasant!"

{Psalm 135:3}

"How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear You, which You bestow in the sight of those who take refuge in You." {Psalm 31:19}

I praise God for His goodness...God is good...and God HAS been good to me!

"GOD IS...A REFUGE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE!"

Dr. Robert Schuller is a master of short, catchy, phrases. His finest became the title of his best selling book: "Tough Times NEVER Last...Tough People Do!"

God has not promised life without trouble...pain...! God has promised to be with us in every situation we face.

A lady with a pain in her side went to see her physician. He told her she had appendicitis and must have an operation immediately. She decided to get a second opinion and went to see another doctor. He told her she had gall bladder trouble and must have an operation immediately. A friend asked her, "Where do you go from here?" She answered, "Back to the first doctor, I'd rather have appendicitis!"

Most of us would rather have neither...but troubles...ailments...problems...tough times come to us all. In those tough times...GOD IS OUR REFUGE...OUR STRENGTH!  
Annie Johnson Flint suffered from crippling arthritis, yet in the midst of her pain she wrote a poem that has encouraged so many others who were experiencing tough times...

"God has not promised skies always blue; Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;  
God has not promised sun without rain, Joy without sorrow, Peace without pain.  
God hath not promised smooth roads and wide, Swift easy travel Needing no guide.

He hath not promised we shall not bear  
Many a burden, many a care  
But God hath promised strength for the day,  
Rest for the labor, light for the way.  
Grace for the trials, help from above,  
Unfailing, sympathy, undying love!"

In the day of trouble, God is our refuge...

...He is our rock

...He is our strength!

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" {Psalm 27: 1}

I will never forget November 1, 1989. In the third month of a mandated Sabbatical my world suddenly stopped when told following a colonoscopy that I had colon cancer!

...people die from cancer!

...a friend had just died from this four months after being diagnosed

...during a CT Scan I considered what I must do if my fate was to be the same as hers

...physically, I was in trouble!

...but, God was my refuge...my strength!

When being rolled into the operating room the only thing that really mattered at that moment was knowing that God was with me...and I was at peace.

I survived...and now I'm a preacher with a semicolon!

On August 14, 2000, when I received the news that my dad was diagnosed with having pancreatic cancer with only months to live...God was my refuge and strength...as He was to my dad!

When confronted with numerous family crises...God was my refuge! I could not have made it through some of them without Him!

When facing difficult situations here the past 25 years...God was my stronghold.

...there were those times when I considered throwing in the towel!

...days when I felt that no one cared!

...and yet...

"Through it all I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God! Through it all, I've learned to depend upon His word!"

I could trust Him because...

"THE LORD...CARES FOR THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM!"

"No one ever cared for me like Jesus,

There's no other friend so kind as He;

No one else could take the sin and darkness from me--

O how much He cared for me!"

God knows in whom I've placed my trust!

...and I'm assured that He cares for me...

...and I know He cares for you!

"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knowest them that trust in Him." {1: 7}