

NEVER ALONE

gentle reminders of God's presence and love

Lynelle Watford

Rising Higher Gift Book Series

This is a collection of thoughts and selected Scriptures, not a compilation of pat answers. Read slowly, ponder, and apply as needed. Let the words, like a slow rain, soak deep into your soul.

You may not have chronic rheumatoid arthritis, serious eyesight challenges, or the grief of losing a son to suicide as I do, but these Scriptures can minister to your heart's needs as they do mine.

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Never Alone: gentle reminders of God's presence and love
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Contemporary English Version (CEV), American Bible Society, 1995

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Mully, directed by Scott Haze, Sterling Light Productions & Bardis Productions, 2015.

Adam Raccoon in Lost Woods, Chariot Family Pub, by Glen Keane, 1987.

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Real, Though Unseen

I breathed deeply of the refreshing Colorado air. Blue Spruce and white-trunked aspens adorned majestic mountains. White puffy clouds glided across deep blue skies. Surrounded by God's exquisite handiwork, He felt so near.

When I was back home days later, weighed down with a long list of tasks and a nasty cold, He felt miles away.

Whatever my feelings, truth doesn't change. God's Word declares God's omnipresence. I accept the unseen by faith.

It won't always be that way. In eternity, faith will become sight.

In the meantime, join me as we learn more about His presence—though unseen—with us.

Do I not fill heaven and earth?
declares the LORD. Jeremiah 23:24



Alone? Never!

It was late. The airport was nearly deserted.

I peered through doors that separated me from cold darkness. What was taking so long? Had something happened? What if my ride didn't come? The “what ifs” piled higher as the minutes ticked by. Darkness and cold deterred me from going out to find answers.

Alone. Weak and vulnerable. We've all been there.

But...I wasn't alone. In my fear, I whispered to the One who had been there all along.

The visible world is not our entire reality. Someone was with me. Someone good, powerful, and able to help.

Over and over, the Lord reminds us He is with us. Always. Even when it seems we are alone.

It's a promise we can count on.

Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Prayer

Lord, I don't understand Your presence. Why You want to be with me in messy, hard times is difficult to comprehend. Or how Your presence will make a difference today ... tangibly.

*Still, I need Your presence.
Open my heart to You.*



Here for You

Elohim, God above
Adonai, King of Kings
El-Shaddai, Almighty God.

Child of mine,
I'm here for you
when your life falls apart
when losses overwhelm your soul.

When you're weak
I offer strength
I provide a place of hope
I'm always there when you call.


I'm Elohim, God above
Adonai, King of Kings
El-Shaddai, Almighty God.

I am refuge and strength.

*God is our refuge and strength, a very
present help in trouble.*

Psalms 46:1



A close-up photograph of a stone wall made of dark, irregularly shaped stones. In the upper left portion of the image, there is a small, arched window with a dark, possibly wooden or metal, shutter. The arch is constructed from lighter-colored, rectangular stones. The overall texture is rough and aged.

Elohim. Adonai. El Shaddai.

Mysterious. Appealing. Awe-inspiring.
All Old Testament Hebrew names for
God.

Each name reveals something about
God's nature and character. And each
title nudges us to love Him more.

(Elohim: Old Testament Hebrew name for
God, Adonai: Lord, Master, El-Shaddai: God
Almighty)

Prayer

*Living, Almighty God,
I bow to You—
the One who is
above all.*

*Free from fear,
I drink
Your strength
and eat
Your hope.*

*Be content
with what you have,
for he has said,
“I will never leave you
nor forsake you.”*

Hebrews 13:5



Nighttime Conversation

Alone, in the dark, I confessed
my fears to God.

“Lord? ... I’m scared.”

*Don’t be. I’m here, He gently
reminded me.*

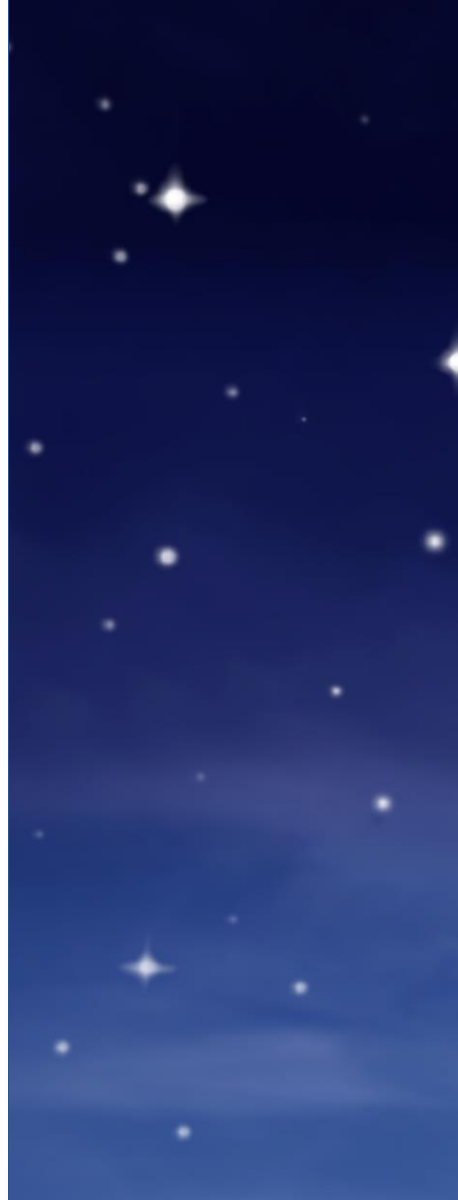
“But ... what if I disappoint You
and You send me away? Or You
tire of me? Or I wander away
and get lost?”

I felt His smile—kind, gentle,
understanding.

*Nothing can ever separate Me
from you. I will always be here.*

*When you reach out to Me
you’ll know I am there
right by your side
or holding you close
for you can be sure
that I care.*

Will you trust Me?



Always

Thirty-nine days—days of crushing heartache since the suicide death of our son. How is it possible I could still breathe? How could my body continue to function?

I cry to God and, by faith, know He hears me.

And the tears. So many tears. Yet God counts each one.

You have stored my tears in your bottle and counted each of them.

Psalm 56:8 CEV

I AM WITH YOU ... ALWAYS

Each breath you take, I'm there to give it.

Each word you say, I'm there to hear it.

Each tear you shed, I'm there to dry it.

Each and every moment

I am there for you.

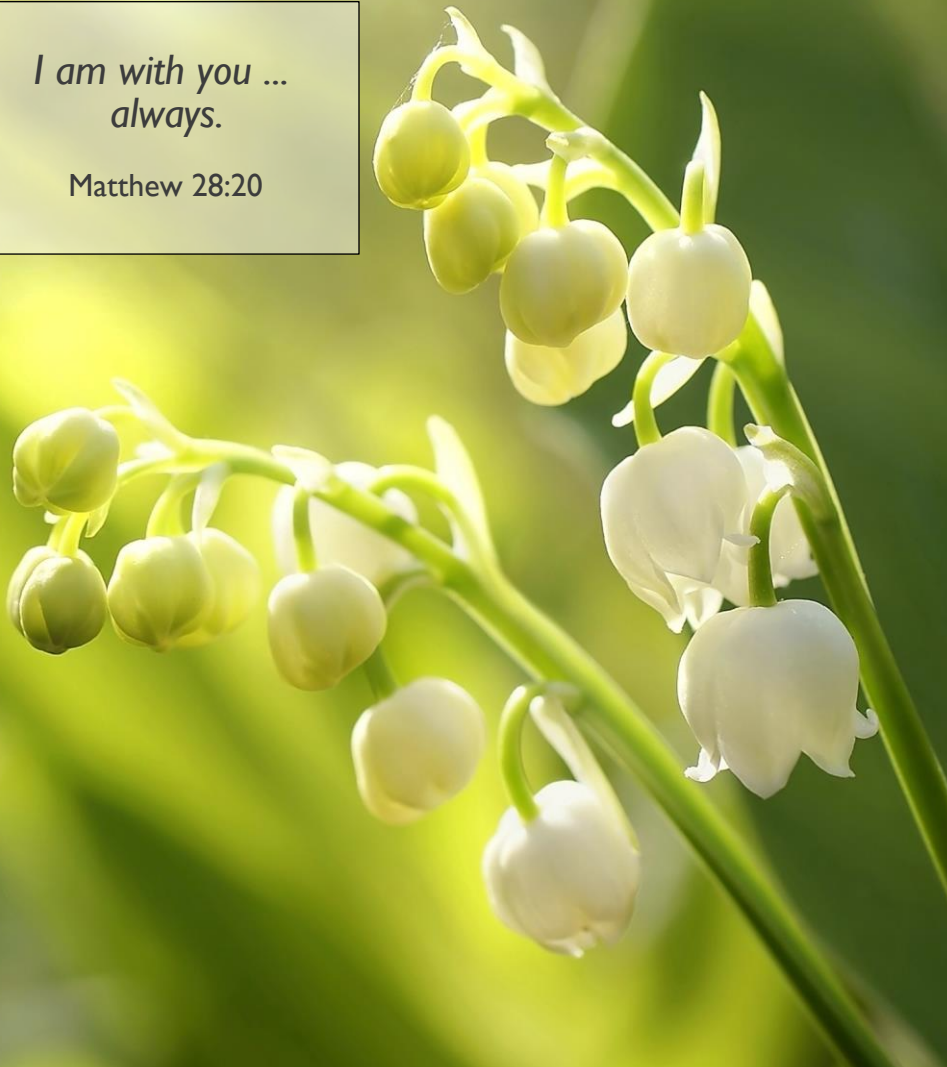
I am with you ... always. Matthew 28:20

Perhaps you have lost someone dear. In your distress, God is present to give you breath, to listen to each whispered word or anguished cry, to dry each tear.

Through it all, He shows you His steadfast love.

*I am with you ...
always.*

Matthew 28:20





Amazing Presence

Secretaries and staff scurried. They straightened offices. And applied smiles.

A famous religious leader was on his way to our small headquarters. What an honor.

Perhaps people in Jesus' day felt the same when He approached.

The Gospels portray Jesus differently than the religious leaders of His day. No standing aloof from brokenness, tragedies, desperate needs. Jesus drew near, touched the diseased, and bore their sorrow. He spoke truth and hope into their lives.

"The people were astonished ..." Matthew 7:29.

I, too, am amazed He shares His presence with me.

Your Presence

In my darkness and confusion
I needed a hand, a light, a hope
but help was not found
in things, or happenings, or people.

I was hopeless—
until You drew near
took my hand, walked by my side,
and carried me.

Your *presence*
makes all
the *difference*.



Reign of Peace

Seated on the floor, my arms hugged my knees. The room was stifling and restrictive—just closet-sized really. I wanted out.

We had learned of our son's death a few days earlier and a recurring sense of confinement distressed me. Yes, I wanted out.

But there was no way out.


Panic. Claustrophobia. Alarm. After a few moments, as suddenly as the feeling had come, it left. Only to return later.

Finally, I inserted my own mental image into the one thrust upon me. Instead of just me huddled like an over-sized Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*, I pictured Jesus. Sitting. Facing me.

When I imagined His calming presence, the confining walls and ceiling faded. Freedom and peace reigned.

I wanted peace without pain,
but it is through pain
that I crave Your presence
and therein lies peace.

May your peace, joy, contentment, and fulfillment be determined, not by the presence or absence of difficulties, but by the knowledge that the Lord is always with you.



*I am continually
with you;*

*you hold
my right hand.*

Psalm 73:23

*I will say to
the Lord,*

*“My
refuge
and my
fortress,
my God,
in whom
I trust.”*

Psalms 91:2



A Stunning Offer

Lillian, orphaned, starving, and near death received care at a Kenyan hospital. Dr. Charles Mulli—once a wealthy business owner—offered the 10-year-old a place to belong.

This heartwarming story in the movie *Mully* illustrates God's heart. The God of infinite power, intelligence, creativity, and wealth—One who spoke the universe into existence—offers us refuge along with all His resources.

His invitation to me—a weak, needy creature—to shelter under His care, amazes me.

God looks past our outward appearance, abilities, even past our selfish heart. He still invites.

And the only sensible response is trust.

To the weak, You bid a welcome.

To the faint, You offer a feast.

To the hurt, You bestow healing wings.

You are my refuge and strength.

See Lillian's story: youtube.com/watch?v=WDAAtVD5xHqA

*As one of God's weak,
needy creatures,
I am amazed
by His invitation.*



Your Strength with Me

By Your power
I am fastened
to the Rock
that stands secure.

Though the storms
blow round about me
I find safety in Your arms.

You stay ever right beside me
attentive to my needs
though I'm weak and deeply needy
You want to be with me.

Though I'm weak and deeply needy
You want to be with me.

God wants
to be present
with you.



*God is in the midst of her;
she shall not be moved;
God will help her
when morning dawns.*

Psalm 46:5





Irritation or Invitation?

Have you ever received an invitation to an important event?

I have.

But no appealing design drew me in. The event began immediately with no stated end date. Attendance? It was compulsory. And, it appeared the event held only pain, inconvenience, and loss.

My “invitations” were minor physical aches. Did I view them as irritations? Definitely!

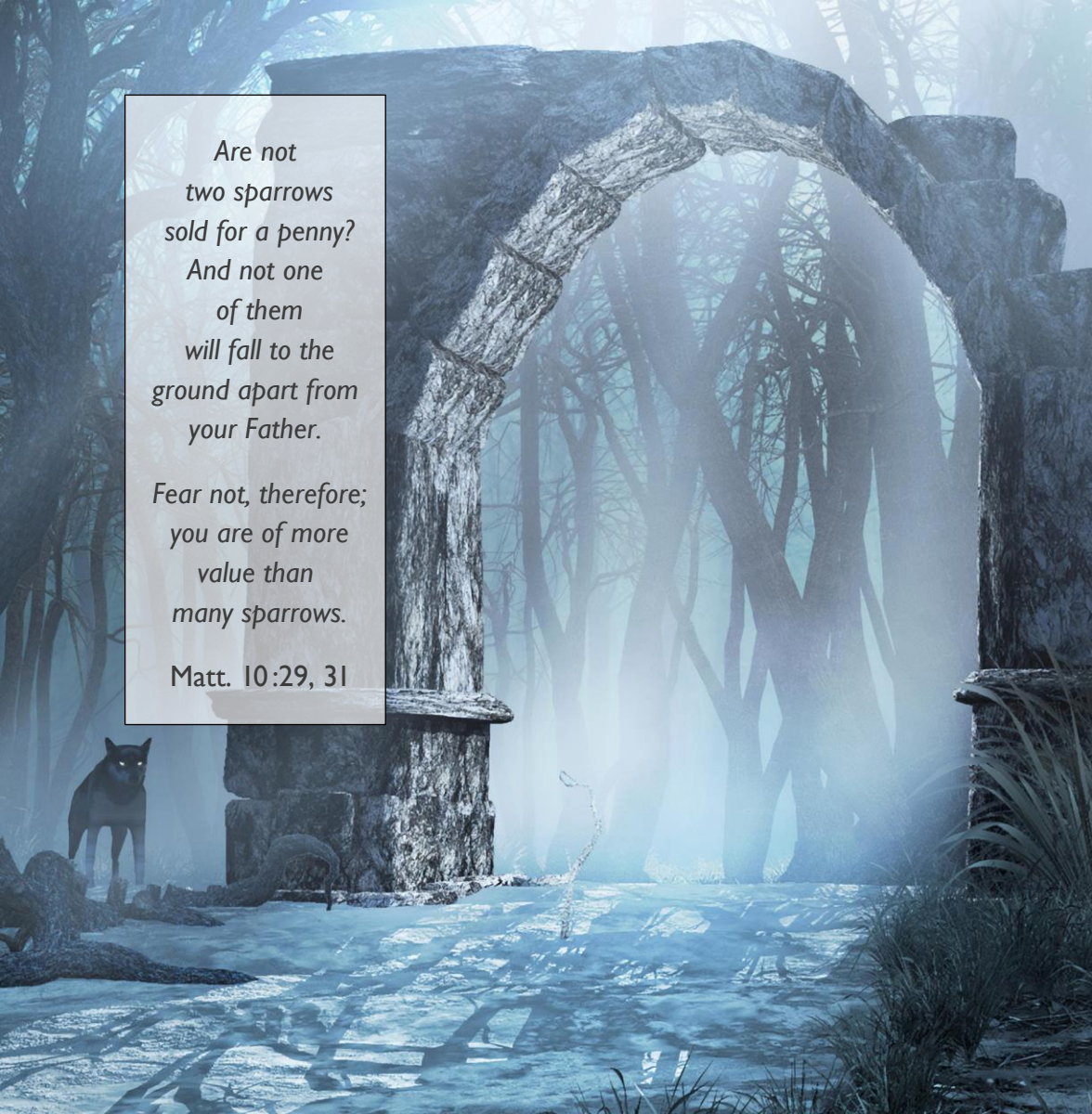
What if they were more than irritations—perhaps actually invitations? What if God was drawing me—not to a party—but to Himself? What if peace waited just inside the doorway?

Isaiah 26:3 speaks of trust and peace. To me, the verse says, “God preserves the one who leans on Him for stability with a peaceful peace, because that person is trusting in Him.”

What do these invitations that masquerade as irritations offer us? An opportunity to affirm faith in God and focus on His promises. An opportunity for peace.

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3*





*Are not
two sparrows
sold for a penny?
And not one
of them
will fall to the
ground apart from
your Father.*

*Fear not, therefore;
you are of more
value than
many sparrows.*

Matt. 10:29, 31