

WHEN JESUS IS THERE

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To all those
with whom I've shared
the Savior's strength
in life's losses

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1

NO WALL TOO HIGH

With my God I can scale a wall.

Psalm 18:29 (NIV)

How high can you jump? If my memory is correct, the world's record is somewhere around 8 feet. Just think. That's 2 to 3 feet higher than most of us stand in our stocking feet. Such a feat must take a lot of training, conditioning, and practice.

Looking back over his life, David talked about high jumping. Many were the walls of troubles, problems, and dangers he had to leap over in the course of his days. But he always made it—with the help of a faithful God.

Losses in life are like walls to be overcome. It makes little difference what the loss is. Whether our health or home, spouse or child, job or livelihood, that loss is a wall that juts up before us. It makes no difference how the loss came about. Whether by injury or disease, divorce or relocation, retirement or dismissal, that loss looms before us. The list of life's losses is inexhaustible, and the circumstances, endless. And so often each loss, especially when it's my loss, seems more than 8 feet tall. It seems higher than I could ever think of jumping.

What should I do? Should I bury my head in the sand and ask, "Wall, what wall?" as if nothing had happened and

the hurt will just go away? There's not enough sand in the world to make that work.

Should I ball my hands into defiant fists and shake them at a God who doesn't seem to care? When my misdirected anger is spent, the loss will still be there.

Should I punish myself with the guilty thought that the loss would not have happened if only I had believed more? Such self-whipping only serves to increase my pain.

Or should I get busy and try jumping over the wall?

I could never do that by myself, of course. How could I train enough, practice enough, toughen myself enough to hurdle life's troubles? That would be like a little child trying to run the rigorous obstacle course used to train Uncle Sam's elite army rangers. By myself I could only tumble backward into the mud and lie there in despair. But when God takes my hand, when his strength lifts me up, when his love in Christ empowers me, we can negotiate trouble's wall together.

When Jesus is there, no wall is too high.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, take me again to your Word. Remind me that you have promised never to leave me and that your love, which paid for my sins, will empower me to hurdle the losses of life. Amen.

2

CLOSE TO HIS HEART

He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.

Isaiah 40:11 (NIV)

What are we supposed to do? My wife and I look at our hands—those same hands that held our little one as she gurgled her little sounds and grinned her little smiles. Those hands are supposed to take care of her. She clutched one of them when she took her tentative first step. She didn't want to let go of them when she walked through the school-house door that first time. In our arms, at our side, she always felt safe. But now we can't help her.

How little she looks in that hospital bed! How painful the needles and how threatening the machines! We don't want to leave her room, even to get a cup of coffee in the snack bar. We can hardly pry ourselves away at night, even after the medication has put her to sleep and she doesn't know we're there. But the worst part of this is the horrible feeling of helplessness, that numbing frustration that comes from not being able to protect her.

Like a sudden blow to the solar plexus, illness can knock the breath out of us. When it strikes our child, it's even worse. What can we do? Where can we turn? How thankful we can be that the Lord answers those questions. We can