**When**

I desperately wanted someone to throw a life preserver because I very much felt I needed to be rescued in those moments. So many days were difficult. But, the most difficult days were when loneliness had layered itself over the troubles. There were many reasons it would happen; sometimes it was my own doing of isolating from others, periodically it was comparing my life to others, and sometimes it was simply the troubles of everyday life hitting the overload button. But whatever the reason, I would again find myself sitting in the oppressiveness of loneliness.

I had to find a way to cope productively. I have to admit, many of those days included ice cream...and for about 30 minutes, I felt better. But after the sugar, I was feeling even more alone than ever. Eventually, I began to take walks and talk to trusted friends and family. But, there was only one thing that would make those times less oppressive. When I recalled a series of promises from Isaiah 43, I realized that the Lord would walk through the deepest waters with me. I didn't have to run from the problems or figure it all out...He would be with me and lead me through.

“Do not fear (your name), for I have redeemed you;
    I have summoned you by name; you are mine (your name).
2When you pass through the waters,
    I will be with you (your name);
and when you pass through the rivers,
    They will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire (your name),
    you will not be burned;
    the flames will not set you ablaze (your name).
3For I am the Lord your God,
    the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (your name);...
4Since you are precious and honored in my sight (your name),
    and because I love you (your name),
I will give people in exchange for you,
    nations in exchange for your life.
5Do not be afraid, for I am with you (your name);
    I will bring your children from the east
    and gather you from the west.

These verses indicate that we will go through hard times. It's not a question of whether they come, but when they come. And when they come, guess what? The Lord promises He will be with us. He does not abandon us but instead goes with us. Today receive these life preserver verses as they are tossed out to you.

If we have not met, I want you to know that my name is Holly, and I walked into this church 22 years ago with a 5yo daughter and a two-month-old son in tow. This church embraced me but bigger than that, the gospel and what God did in my life changed this common girl forever! And I know He will do the same for you! He will! Enjoy the SPF ministry and the newsletter, and get excited about what God has in store for you and your children!

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