

**7/6/18**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

We celebrated our independence this week. We gave special praise to God for his blessings upon this country. Yet, this is not God's special nation. This is not his special people. "For God so loved *the world* that he gave his one and only Son that *whoever* believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

God's nation is even more of a melting pot than this land of immigrants. God's nation is people who live on every corner of the globe, everywhere in between, and in heaven. They trust that God loves them although they don't deserve it. He loves them freely in Christ—without condition. He loves them faithfully in Christ—even when they are faithless. And so, they praise him, as did the author of this psalm.

They praise the Lord for his protection in times of peril. I confess, to my shame, that this is not my natural response. I will praise God after danger has past, but seldom during. I—we—should. The Lord is worthy of praise even in, especially in, times of trouble.

We walk in danger every day. Powers of evil relentlessly seek to ravage our souls. The siren song of life's comforts lures us toward spiritual shipwreck. We aren't even safe from ourselves! Because our sinful heart wants what it wants, it always attempts to veto our Spirit-filled mind.

Jesus is working relentlessly to protect us—God's special people who believe in Jesus sent by God so that we "not perish but have eternal life." Jesus is our fortress, shield

and weapon against Satan, sin, and death. Seated now gloriously in heaven, with authority over all things, he is preparing for us an eternal country that is better by far.

With that confidence, put your trust in the Lord. In times of peril, don't worry but wait. Be assured that he is shielding you from greater peril. And trust that he will deliver you.

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.  
Psalm 33:12*

***Prayer:*** *O Lord, you are my God. And I am blessed to belong to you. In times of peace and in times of peril, I will praise you. Amen.*

*(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)*

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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