

## ***“I will not fail thee nor forsake thee”<sup>1</sup>***

**Heb. 13:5**

Very few statements or phrases are repeated three times in the Bible. Four times even less. So it is noteworthy that the phrase at the top of this page occurs *six* times in at least *five* different passages! That alone speaks volumes regarding its importance. Furthermore, the situations in which that phrase occurs are full of meaning. **In every case individuals were either going through, or preparing to face extreme trials, difficulties or challenges.**

In **Gen. 28:15** it says: ***“And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”***

This was spoken by God to Jacob, as he was fleeing for his life from his brother Esau, Jacob having lied to his father Isaac & having cheated Esau out of the blessing he had been promised. During that time of failure & darkness in his personal life, God still had not forsaken him and He told him so.

In **Deut. 31:6 & 8** we read: ***“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee... And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”***

That was spoken by Moses to all the Israelites (including Joshua) in verse six, then to Joshua alone in verse eight—to whom he was about to hand the oversight of the nation of Israel. Israel, with all their obstinacy & ungratefulness, which Joshua had viewed firsthand for forty years. Moses obviously felt the need to encourage Joshua in regard to that daunting task.

Shortly thereafter, Moses having passed away, Joshua was commanded to take charge and lead the people into the Promised Land. Understandably he felt too weak, too insufficient for the enormous challenge of leading two million people into battle against the enemies that lay ahead. *So God Himself*, in **Joshua 1:5** spoke directly to Joshua and declared: ***“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”***

Four centuries later Scripture records a similar situation in **1 Chron. 28:20**. Another young man was about to be handed a task that he too felt utterly insufficient to undertake. So his father David, the greatest king in Israel’s history, and the gold standard by which all other Jewish kings had been *or ever would be* measured, spoke to his son Solomon:

***“Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.”***

That brings us to the sixth and final time this comforting phrase is found. And it appears in the midst of a series of seemingly random & unrelated admonitions and exhortations:

***“Let your conversation (i.e. manner of life) be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ So that we may boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”*** – **Heb. 13:5**

***That’s His glorious promise!*** And as if that deeply comforting promise was not enough, Scripture says God will not just be *with* His children. It says He will *carry you* when you think you can’t go on! ***“...then the Lord will take me up.”*** (Ps. 27:11b cf. Isa. 41:9-10; 43:2 & 49:15)

**The Psalmist sums it up well in Psalm 42:** ***“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance... the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life... I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”*** (Ps. 42:5, 8 & 11b)

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<sup>1</sup> by Pastor Mike Edwards, Bible Baptist Church, Madison, Ohio, September 2014 (bolding & color added May 2021)