

God Gives Us Strength to Survive in Our Jungle (3-11-08) printable PDF  
Psalms 23:3 "He restores my soul"

Do you relate to the following words?

"When we feel lost, when we lose the sense of who we are and where we fit, when we feel isolated or lonely or bereaved: our life energy diminishes and our soul shrinks. When we become bogged down with worry and anxiety, when we feel inadequate and vulnerable: our creativity dries up, our imagination is stifled, and our soul fades. When the grime of an over-competitive, self-seeking culture clings to our consciousness, when we get trapped on the treadmill of mediocrity, when we mistake the trivial and inconsequential for the truly essential, when we are so engulfed in the here and now that we lose sight of the beyond: then our sense of wonder is lost, our soul shrivels." (Still Waters and Skyscrapers, by Dave Tomlinson p.52)

If the above words describe your condition—you need to let the Lord restore your soul.

The word "restore" can be applied in one or more of the following ways: To return something to its proper owner or place; to bring something back to an earlier and better condition; to give somebody new strength or vigor; to return somebody to a previously held rank, office, or position.

Max Lucado, in his book, *Traveling Light*, says, "For many people, life is—well life is a jungle. Not a jungle of trees and beasts.... Our jungles are comprised of the thicker thickets of failing health, broken hearts, and empty wallets. Our forests are framed with hospital walls and divorce courts. We don't hear the screeching of birds or the roaring of lions, but we do hear the complaints of neighbors, and the demands of bosses. Our predators are our creditors, and the brush that surrounds us is the rush that exhausts us."

The prayer requests at a men's breakfast indicate our "jungle environment." One man's wife was taking chemotherapy for breast cancer. Another shared that two grandchildren were in a car wreck. A funeral was announced. A man was recovering from cancer surgery. All these concerns describe typical jungle living. These men were fortifying themselves to survive the consequences of living in the jungle.

Our hope can be restored when we remember that Jesus is personally in the jungle with us. We are still in our confusing, frightening and dangerous jungle. The difference is that we know that Jesus fought his way through this jungle and can triumphantly proclaim: "I am the way. I have cut a path through the underbrush of sin and death—and I escaped alive." He is the only one who ever did. And he is the only one who can help you and me do the same.

He restores our hope by giving us himself. He has promised to stay with us, in our jungle, until the very end. "I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt. 28:20 NIV)

Thomas Dorsey's song, *Precious Lord Take My Hand*, voices our daily prayer to be restored.

Precious Lord, take my hand. Lead me on, let me stand.

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn. Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light. Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me on.

"When the way grows drear, precious Lord linger near. When my life is almost gone. Hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall. Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

"When the darkness appears and the night draws near, and the day is past and gone, at the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand. Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home