

## FLEA VIDEO#17: "ALWAYS THERE"

(Deuteronomy 31:6; Psalm 19:1-5a, 23:4a, 139:8-12; Isaiah 41:10)

7.28.20

One of my daughters has a dog named Benny. He is a chocolate, teacup Chihuahua. He weighs just a bit over four pounds. A bruiser he is not. He is a rescue dog, keeping up our tradition; our family has always and only had rescue animals as pets. Benny was found abandoned in a park in Chicago with a severely injured right rear leg that had to be amputated. So yes, he has only three legs, but he makes it work. If there is a doggie treat with his name on it, you can't believe how fast those three legs can motor!

Now, there is one thing about Benny that annoys my daughter no end, and my wife and I have noticed it too when he has been at our house. If he is left alone, even for a moment, he starts to whine; if nothing changes, he starts to bark. Especially if it is my daughter who has left him, he kind of skips right past the whining and pretty much goes straight to the barking. He's pathetic, but behind it is a very simple truth: He feels lonely and helpless unless somebody is right there.

We might laugh but, when you get right down to it, us people aren't a whole lot different than Benny. And, if there's one thing that has become clear during this pandemic, it's the fact that we are social creatures. We need people to be with and, when that's not happening, especially for some people, that loss of human contact can be very difficult to deal with.

I think that's maybe why God goes to such great lengths to let us know that He is always with us. As the people of Israel were preparing to enter the Promised Land, He made sure that they knew that He would be accompanying them every step of the way; as He said through Moses: ***"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified ... for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you"*** - Moses, ***Deuteronomy 31:6.***

When David was celebrating the joy he had come to know in his relationship with God, one of the parts of that relationship was God's constantly being right with him - in the worst of times as well as the best of times: ***Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me*** - David, ***Psalm 23:4a.***

In fact, it was the fact of God's constant presence that brought David his greatest joy. As he wrote so wonderfully: ***If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to You; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as***

***light to You - David, Psalm 139:8-12.***

And even during times of national calamity, when Israel's rebellious sin against God brought them all kinds of hardships, even then God made sure that they knew the promise of His nearness, no matter any circumstances; as He said through the prophet Isaiah: ***"[D]o not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" - God speaking, Isaiah 41:10.***

You know one of the times I experience God's nearness the most? When I take the time at night to look up at the sky and see all the stars. I am reminded of David's words, doubtless inspired by similar moments that he experienced: ***The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech; they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world - David, Psalm 19:1-4a.***

When I look up and see God's handiwork, I sense His closeness, His awesome power, His great creativity, and the wonder of His being that I will never fully grasp or appreciate. But I can see it; it's there, and it reminds me that He's there, watching over me, powerfully present, and always completely, without end, loving me. Guys, He's always there - for each and every one of us. Praise His name!