A Day of Hope is Coming

*"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. ... But for you who fear My Name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. ... And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act," says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 4:1a, 2a-3*

In Jerusalem there is a Holocaust Museum dedicated to the memory of the millions of Jews who were killed by the Nazis in World War II. It has been said that going through that museum is a very depressing experience because you see these horrible pictures and read the accounts of the ghettos and the concentration camps. But in the midst of all the dark tales of suffering, there is one amazing story of how God can transform horror into hope.

In one of those camps there was a young lady named Rachel. She endured great hardship from being made to work in the snow with inadequate clothing. She watched in horror as many of her friends and family members were killed.

Then one day, the guards left unexpectedly. She didn't know the war was over. Later that day some American soldiers arrived to set the prisoners free. One young American soldier spoke gently to her and convinced her that they indeed had come to rescue her. As she gathered her things, the young soldier stood by her, then held the door for her and said, "After you, ma'am."

Rachel started to cry. He asked, "What's wrong, ma'am?" She said, "I can't remember the last time someone held a door open for me. It's the nicest thing anyone has done for me in a long time." The soldier stayed in touch with Rachel after she was relocated, and they became friends. They later fell in love and were married.

When someone uses all their power not to demean you or to diminish you, but to set you free -- *that's* amazing! It can change things in mere moments. It can bring hope where there is hopelessness and joy right in the middle of sadness. Unfortunately, sinful human beings have a way of misusing power for their own ends, often to put people in their place for their own purposes. Malachi reminds us today that only God can ultimately free us from the bondage and the prison of our sin and guilt. Only God can judge and forgive. And only God can bring a new heavens and a new earth to a place that is under judgment -- *all the way to the root*.

So let me get more personal: if you are feeling overwhelmed by this world, whether it is the evil you see or feel, whether it is the inadequacy you struggle with in your life, or whether it's just the grind of this world that never seems to end, Malachi says that God will act on behalf of this world. God will judge the evil and the hopelessness that it engenders and bring a day of hope that will last, for all who trust in Him! In fact, in Jesus Christ, He already has!

I was just thinking about what that young girl felt when that liberating soldier held the door for her. I've been to Dachau and I've seen those barracks, and I can't imagine the feeling of seeing the door opened for certain escape, for *real rescue*. Then I thought about Jesus, who after His death and resurrection literally opened the door from the hopelessness of this world into the resurrection reality of life *in Him* forever. That's a day of hope you get to be part of, by faith in Him! Take His hand today, follow where He leads. You'll be glad you did.

**THE PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, let my hopefulness always be rooted in the promises You give because You can fulfill those promises to all who trust in You. And let that kind of hope be evident in my life for others. Amen!