

A personal testimony to what God has done, and what he will do again.

Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire
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Sitting alone in the enclosed veranda of my dorm house, my sixteen year old ears listen to the sounds of shelling in the distance.

Closer, the heated voices of neighbours drifting over our wall become louder and angrier, as they try to make sense of what is happening, the news trickling through the radio. "The French are bombing us!" "But we are a free country now; who do they think they are!?"

It will take days to sort out truth from rumour, but in the moment, my heart tells me what is coming. This is not my first rodeo: civil unrest is often followed by an uprooting... our school will not be safe for us, we will have to move, again.

In an untasted way, this missionary school has become home for me. I have been nurtured by teachers who see me, and by friends who intuitively know so much of my childhood journeys, they mirrors their own. It rips my heart to think of leaving. I cry out to God, wordless groans and scalding tears pushing from the inside. "God do you see me? God are you there?"

My Bible sits on my lap and in the dim light from the street I read these words, as if for the first time:

The Lord is my light and my salvation-
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life-
of whom shall I be afraid?

When evil men advance against me
to devour my flesh,
when my enemies and my foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.
Though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

One thing I ask of the Lord,
This is what I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.
For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
and set me high upon a rock.
Then my head will be exalted above my enemies who surround me;
at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice when I call O Lord;
Be merciful to me and answer me.
My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, Lord, I will seek."

Psalm 27:1-8

These words became a symphony, underscoring the film I was living out: turning pillowcases into Union Jacks to ward off accusations of being French, driving through a deserted city towards an airport now controlled by the French military, a British Hercules which held all our staff and students in its roasting hull and carried us to neighbouring Accra, Ghana. The goodbyes were bitter, but the Spirit was strong.

Our God is beautiful, I will seek his face!

Our God is strong, I will trust in his salvation!

Our God is peace, I will dwell in his house forever.

In these times, there are those who feel their whole world is shifting, as I felt mine shift to the sound of that artillery, and many times before and since.

These words are still true, His words are still life, He IS our light and our salvation. We have no reason to be afraid.