

Thank you Gwynneth for reminding me of Helen Steiner Rice's book *Just for you*.

It was first published in this country in 1968 but when I looked through it, I found this poem that could have been written for our situation today.

*In times like these*

We read the headlines daily  
and listen to the news,  
we shake our heads despairingly  
and glumly sing the blues,  
we're restless and dissatisfied  
and we do not feel secure  
we are vaguely discontented  
with the things we must endure...  
this violent age we live in  
is filled with nameless fears  
as we listen to the newscast  
that come daily to our ears,  
and we view the threatening future  
with sad sobriety  
as we're surrounded daily  
by increased anxiety...  
How can we find security  
or stand on solid ground  
when there's violence and dissension  
and confusion all around;  
where can we go for refuge  
from the rising tides of hate,  
where can we find a haven  
to escape this shameful fate...  
Instead of reading headlines  
That disturb the heart and mind,  
Let's open up the Bible  
And in doing so we'll find

that this age is no different  
from the millions gone before  
but in every hour of crisis  
God has opened up a door  
for all who seek his guidance  
and trust his all wise plan,  
for God provides protection  
beyond that devised by man...  
And we learn that each tomorrow  
Is not ours to understand  
but lies safely in the keeping  
of the great Creator's hand,  
and to have the steadfast knowledge  
that we never walk alone  
and to rest in the assurance  
that our every need is known  
will help dispel our worries  
our anxieties and care  
for doubt and fear are vanquished  
in the peacefulness of prayer.

Nowhere in the Bible is this sense of personal anxiety and fear more obvious than in the psalms which include cries from the heart in times of anxiety and fear. King David wrote from the deepest misery  
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me. Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?  
O my God I cry by day, but you do not answer, by night, but find no rest..."  
(Psalm 22)

And yet David also wrote this hymn in praise of God's goodness  
"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul." (Psalm 23)  
Later in the Psalms there is the beautiful song – I lift my eyes to the hills

I lift my eyes to the quiet hills  
In the press of a busy day  
As green hills stand in a dusty land  
So God is my strength and stay

I lift my eyes to the quiet hills  
To a calm that is mine to share  
Secure and still in the Father's will  
And kept by the Father's care

I lift my eyes to the quiet hills  
With a prayer as I turn to sleep  
By day by night through the dark and light  
My shepherd will guard His sheep

I lift my eyes to the quiet hills  
And my heart to the Father's throne  
In all my ways to the end of days  
The Lord will preserve His own

<https://youtu.be/A9oRh4PBB-Y>

And for everyone who is confused and anxious, trying to make sense of all that is happening in the world there is that wonderful verse from Psalm 73

“I tried to think these things through – but they were too hard for me.”

Prayer

To put things into perspective – here is one of the shortest prayers I know

The prayer of a Breton fisherman;

Protect me, dear Lord, my boat is so small, and your sea is so big. Amen

And for all storm-tossed souls Basil the Great wrote;

O Lord our God teach us to ask aright for the right blessings.

Guide the vessel of our life towards yourself, the tranquil haven of all storm-tossed souls. Show us the course we should take. Renew a willing spirit within us. Let your Spirit curb our wayward senses and guide and enable us to what is our true good, to keep your laws and in all our deeds always to rejoice in your glorious and gladdening presence. For yours is the glory and praise of all your saints for ever and ever. Amen