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SAFE SPACE

Querencia. One definition of the word in noun form is a place where one feels safe, a place from which one's strength of character is drawn. But querencia is more than just a word; it carries with it a feeling of familiarity and a kind of solace. The term originates from a Spanish word that conveys "to want" or "to love." What is surprising is that in the bullfighting culture, querencia refers to a spot in the ring where the bull feels safe and can pull itself together before facing off with the matador. Hence, the concept of the word exceeds the arena, and has come to represent any space where an individual feels secure and empowered. It is a calming word.

Now comes the question, do you have your own personal "safe space"? If you were living in Southern California on January 17, 1994 you may have been hard pressed to answer that question after having been tossed out of bed by an earthquake; then throughout the day rocking and rolling with numerous aftershocks. Where to find safety, security and comfort amid a cacophony of destruction? A hospital, perhaps if one could be found that wasn't severely damaged. A sturdy roof, hardly, as many had collapsed in on themselves. No, the safe space was in the presence of loved ones.

In the fourth psalm, David writes, "*In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me to dwell in safety.*" (v. 8) In the Old Testament, the walls and watchtower of a city offered the citizens therein with warnings of danger and protection from it as well. Solomon, the son of David, in Proverbs 18:10 wrote, "*The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.*" The construct of the sentence looks back to God and all that He is, as providing the utmost of protection for His

children. A balm of comfort; a safe space.

"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)



"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!'" (Psalms 91:1-2)

So once again the question is posed, what is your safe space? Is it one and the same as seen in the afore noted passages? If not why not? Paul when he was in the direst of circumstances in Roman custody, knowing his death was imminent, wrote the following. *"But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."* (2Timothy 4:17-18)

The author of the book of Hebrews as well chimed in with respect to a safe space. *"The Lord is my Helper, I will not be afraid, what shall man do to me?"* (13:6) Which seems to be an echo of Psalms 118:6, *"The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"* Notice closely the resolute tone seen in both references, "I will not be..." Children of God are openly encouraged to place the utmost of faith in God and His unwavering presence.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction..." (2Corinthians 1:3-4) (wbe)

THE BULWARK