

## Carried By Love

Scripture: Isaiah 46:1 – 10 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12 – 24

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Often in life we feel that we are carried by love. We sense the overwhelming feeling of love and we love someone. We are carried by love!

A grandfather had his four year old grandson sitting in his lap. The grandchild was patting pappy bald head. His grandson was intently studying Pappy's head! The grandson said – 'Pappy, what happened to your hair?' Grandpa laughed a little and replied – 'Oh, I lost my hair over the years!' The little boy looked very thoughtful at what Pappy had shared and he said – 'That's too bad. I will have to give you some of mine!' Pappy smiled with compassion for his grandson and he pulled him closer in for a big hug. Can I get an 'Ahhh'?

The grandfather reflected later on this loving moment and he began to think about God's selflessness and generous love for us.

G. K. Chesterton wrote these words – 'We have sinned and grown old, and our Father in Heaven is younger than we.' By this he means that in Ancient of Days, God, is untainted by sin's decay. God is ageless and he loves us exuberantly with a love that never falters or fades! God is fully willing and able to fulfill the promise He made to his people in our scripture reading from Isaiah.

Isaiah says – ‘Even to your old age and gray hairs, God is there. He will sustain you and he has made you and he will carry you.’ Our God is the great ‘I Am’! He loves us so deeply that He went to the extreme of dying on the cross to bear the full weight of our sins so that we might turn to God and be free of our burdens and be grateful to worship him forever!

Think about these things: In what ways does God carry you through each day? And how can you draw new strength from God in those moments of need?

And for us as a church, in what ways does God carry us through each day? And how can we draw new strength from God in our moments of need?

All good questions to ponder and reflect upon!

Harriet Tubman could not read or write. As an adolescent, Harriet suffered a head injury at the hands of a cruel slave master. This injury caused Harriet to have seizures and lapses of consciousness for the rest of her life. But once she escaped slavery, God used her to rescue as many as 300 others!

Harriet’s nickname was ‘Moses’. This nickname was given to her by those she freed. Harriet bravely made 19 trips back to the pre-Civil War south to rescue others. She continued even when there was a price on her head and her life was in constant danger.

Harriet Tubman was a devoted believer in Jesus. She carried a hymnal and a Bible with her on every trip. She would have others read the verses she had committed to memory. She was quoted often saying – ‘I prayed all the time. I prayed about my work. I prayed everywhere. I was always talking to the Lord.’

Harriet always gave God credit for her smallest successes. Her life was a powerful expression of the Apostle Paul's instruction to the early Christians in Thessalonica. Paul told them – 'Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'

When we lean into God in the moment and when we live dependently in prayer and when we praise God despite our difficulties; God gives us the strength to accomplish even the most challenging tasks. Our Savior is greater than anything we will face. Our God will lead us as we look to Him.

And for you, When you lean into God in the moment and when you live dependently in prayer and when you praise God despite your difficulties; God gives you the strength to accomplish even the most challenging tasks. Our Savior is greater than anything you will face. Our God will lead you as you look to Him.

Your first challenge of Lent was last week when I challenged you to think of someone you needed to reconcile with and work at reconciling with him or her during this season of Lent. My second challenge of Lent today is to challenge you to pray an additional time or two or three times more each day during this season of Lent. I challenge you to do this because we need to heed Paul's words to the church in Thessalonica – Rejoice always, pray continuously, and give thanks in all circumstances for this God's will for us in Christ Jesus.

So today, let us be carried by God's love for us. Let us be carried in good times and in those bad times. And let us always praise God for his divine guidance and promise. Let us lean into God to sustain through good times and bad.

Let us pray:

O Beautiful Savior, we are so thankful for your love for us. We know your love never grows old. Help us love you so that we may grow into a deeper relationship with you.

Loving and Almighty God, please help us to live every moment with you today and every day. Let us receive the strength that only you can give.           AMEN.

Now let us listen and enjoy the special music by Emily Swett and Josh Fisher. They will share 'Open the Eyes of My Heart'.