



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

February 5, 2021

**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabo Berces**



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Did you know that February is dedicated as “Black History Month”? The story that Dave Branon shares in the meditation below is fitting to this tribute.

I acknowledge that the experience that Harriet and her people suffered is something I can’t fully relate to. I have never had to face similar discrimination that she lived through as a former slave. But as a Christian, my understanding is that the Almighty has always been against from exploiting people for any reasons.

The creation we live in is wonderfully diverse, and colorful. Even in the Old Testament, where God chose one people to have a special covenant and relationship with Him, the Creator of the world kept the benefit of all his creation in mind. As I quoted before, the Holy One said to Abraham: “... **and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**” (Genesis 12:3)

In Leviticus God gives a very clear direction to his covenant people: “**The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.**” (Leviticus 19:34) And we can come across with the same principle through the words of Prophet Isaiah: “**Let no foreigner who is bound to the Lord say, “The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.”**” (Isaiah 56:3)

Jesus’ mission was also unmistakable when He said: “**I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also.**” (John 10:16); and the writer of Revelation received this vision: “**After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.**” (Revelation 7:9)

As I can understand the Almighty’s communication to us, it doesn’t matter to which “**nation, tribe, people and language**” we belong. What really matters is whether we not only “fear God” but if we keep the greatest commandment as Jesus pointed out: “**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ... And ... ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” (Matthew 22:37-40)

When we take these seriously, we will find what Harriet did. She “*held tightly to God, and He saw her through*”. This is a promise and great encouragement to **all** of us! When we consider God **our** God, the Almighty will take hold of our right hand, wherever life leads.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Hold Steady

I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand.

Isaiah 41:13

READ ISAIAH 41:10-13

Harriet Tubman was one of the great American heroes of the nineteenth century. Showing remarkable courage, she guided more than three hundred fellow slaves to freedom after she first escaped slavery by crossing into free territory in the United States North. Not content to simply enjoy her own freedom, she ventured back into slave states nineteen times to lead friends, family, and strangers to freedom, sometimes guiding people on foot all the way to Canada.

What drove Tubman to such brave action? A woman of deep faith, she at one time said this: "I always told God, I'm going to hold steady on you, and you've got to see me through." Her dependence on God's guidance as she led people out of slavery was a hallmark of her success.

What does it mean to "hold steady" to God? A verse in the prophecy of Isaiah might help us see that in reality it's He who holds us as we grab His hand. Isaiah quotes God, who said, "I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you" (41:13).

Harriet held tightly to God, and He saw her through. What challenges are you facing? Hold steady to God as He "takes hold" of your hand and your life. "Do not fear." He will help you. – By **Dave Branon**

REFLECT & PRAY

Father in heaven, life is hard when I try to do it alone, so I need Your help. Please come alongside me in my greatest challenges and help me know I'm not alone. Amen.

What's your biggest challenge right now? What can you do or say to let God know you trust Him?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Isaiah 41:10-13 begins with a call to courage: "Do not fear." But this call isn't an exhortation to "dig deep" and find the grit and determination to keep going. God doesn't call anyone to forge ahead on their own. Instead, the summons is followed with these encouraging words: "I am with you" (v. 10). This phrase is repeated throughout Scripture, and is intended to give strength and courage. God said these words to Moses when he was sent back to Egypt to speak to Pharaoh (Exodus 3:12). And Jesus spoke these words to His disciples when He commissioned them to go into the world to spread the knowledge of the kingdom of God and to make disciples (Matthew 28:20). God's dwelling with humanity came in Jesus (Immanuel). He now indwells believers in Christ through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; Ephesians 2:22; 1 John 4:15-16). – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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