



## Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

February 11, 2021

**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT  
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**By Rev. Maria Szabo Berces**



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

As you could sense from yesterday's daily encouragement, time is coming closer and closer to start our Lenten journey of 2021. This next season of the church year gives us an opportunity to be prepared for the great celebrations of the Holy Week and Easter. Not just by thinking about the liturgy and the decorations, but by digging deep by contemplation and self-evaluation. To allow space for God to comfort our grieves, to heal our wounds or to correct our path if it doesn't lead closer to the Source of Life.

Today's Our Daily Bread meditation supports what we could already hear on Sunday: we need time with the Holy One through prayers and Scripture reading. We can experience God's guiding presence as we allow ourselves to be quiet and still; as we cease our hustle and bustle for at least for a short period of time, and open our ears and hearts to hear what the Almighty wants us to say.

Let us remember the illustration from Sunday: *"Hybels says if you'll first take time to pray, you'll actually have more time for everything else – that it's not a matter of time, but a matter of priorities and a matter of trust: When you put God first and rely upon the strength of God's grace to get things done, you become more effective and more efficient. Most importantly, you realize it's not all up to you – God is up ahead, clearing the path and guiding the way."* ([www.sermonwriter.com](http://www.sermonwriter.com))

I liked the story below about searching for the watch. Although I don't have a 'ticking watch' any longer because I use a digital one – as King David hadn't got a watch either – picturing the situation can still make the point! Without intentional listening it's much more difficult to notice the divine support that is there for us.

Is not it true that many voices compete for our attention? There are numerous programs, activities and chores that demand our time and efforts. When we decide to prioritize, and as Hybels suggests, to put God first, we may recognize that *"God is up ahead, clearing the path and guiding the way."*

I believe it's a heartwarming privilege to be able to talk with, and to listen to the One who brought everything into being; who as Isaiah put it **"everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth"** (Isaiah 40).

May we find time to be silent then – during our upcoming Lenten Season and beyond – that we might experience what David formulated this way: **"The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their stronghold in time of trouble."** (Psalm 37:39)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



## The Ticking Watch

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.*

Psalm 37:7

### READ PSALM 37:1-7

A group of workers were cutting ice out of a frozen lake and storing it in an icehouse when one of them realized he'd lost his watch in the windowless building. He and his friends searched for it in vain.

After they gave up, a young boy who'd seen them exit went into the building. Soon, he emerged with the watch. Asked how he'd found it, he replied: *"I just sat down and kept quiet, and soon I could hear it ticking."*

The Bible talks much about the value of being still. And no wonder, for God sometimes speaks in a whisper (1 Kings 19:12). In the busyness of life, it can be hard to hear Him. But if we stop rushing about and spend some quiet time with Him and the Scriptures, we may hear His gentle voice in our thoughts.

Psalm 37:1-7 assures us that we can trust God to rescue us from the "wicked schemes" of evil people, give us refuge, and help us stay faithful. But how can we do this when turmoil is all around us?

Verse 7 suggests: "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him." We could start by learning to keep silent for a few minutes after prayer. Or by quietly reading the Bible and letting the words soak into our hearts. And then, perhaps, we'll hear His wisdom speaking to us, quiet and steady as a ticking watch. – By **Leslie Koh**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Loving God, grant me the patience and discipline to stay still for a while each day, that I might hear Your gentle whisper in my life. Amen.**

How can you be still before God each day? What will help you stay silent and listen?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

After Psalm 37's opening exhortation not to be upset by the short-lived vitality and success of those who ignore God (vv. 1-2), a series of commands follow that call for faithful dependence on Him (vv. 3-8). The remainder of the psalm describes the conduct of two kinds of people (the righteous and the wicked), who follow two different paths and end up at two different places (vv. 9-11, 20). In various ways, the wicked harass and prey upon the righteous (vv. 12-15, 32). But the righteous aren't alone. God—in whom they trust and delight and upon whom they wait—protects them, making them safe and secure (vv. 16-17, 23-26, 32-33). The conclusion speaks powerfully to those who place their faith in God. "The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The Lord helps them and delivers them . . . because they take refuge in him" (vv. 39-40). – By **Arthur Jackson**

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