



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

March 4, 2021

**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

By Rev. Maria Szabo Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

My daily encouragement to you is the advice to trust in God's love and faithfulness, even when things don't turn out in the way you pray for, or when you come across with pain or loss.

In my experience, we don't always understand and appreciate the providence that the Almighty provides for us. Sometimes it becomes as striking as the deliverance from the venomous snake-bite recognized by James, the writer of this Our Daily Bread meditation. However, at other times, our prayers don't seem to be answered. We may encounter health concerns, grief or other losses despite of our petitions.

As I pondered on these, I recalled a story, which I read before. I found it again on the Internet, so let me share it with you:

Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room. Instead, the angels were given a small space in the cold basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it.

When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied, "Things aren't always what they seem."

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food, they had the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest.

When the sun came up the next morning the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel, "How could you have let this happen? The first man had everything, yet you helped him. The second family had little but was willing to share everything, and you let the cow die."

"Things aren't always what they seem," the older angel replied. "When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold stored in that hole in the wall. Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it."

"Then last night as we slept in the farmers bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave him the cow instead. Things aren't always what they seem."

Sometimes that is exactly what happens when things don't turn out the way they should. If you have faith, you need to trust that the outcome has a purpose. You just might not know it until sometime later... (https://boyscouttrail.com/content/story/two_traveling_angels-196.asp)

I pray for the faith that always has the strength to accept – on occasions despite of the circumstances – and rely on this promise of God: **“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; ... Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”** (Deuteronomy 31:8)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Preserved

The Lord himself goes before you.

Deuteronomy 31:8

READ DEUTERONOMY 31:1–8

While I was clearing out the garden in preparation for spring planting, I pulled up a large clump of winter weeds . . . and leapt into the air! A venomous copperhead snake lay hidden in the undergrowth just below my hand—an inch lower and I would have grabbed it by mistake. I saw its colorful markings as soon as I lifted the clump; the rest of it was coiled in the weeds between my feet.

When my feet hit the ground a few feet away, I thanked God I hadn't been bitten. And I wondered how many other times He had kept me from dangers I never knew were there.

God watches over His people. Moses told the Israelites as they prepared to enter the promised land, "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Deuteronomy 31:8). They couldn't see God, but He was with them nonetheless.

Sometimes difficult things happen that we may not understand, but we can also reflect on the number of times God has preserved us without our ever being aware!

Scripture reminds us that His perfect, providential care remains over His people every day. He's always with us (Matthew 28:20). – By **James Banks**

REFLECT & PRAY

Faithful Father, thank You for watching over me every day. Please give me grace to walk closely with You in everything I do today. Amen.

How does the biblical truth that God watches over His people comfort you? Who can you tell about His faithfulness today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

God's promise never to leave or forsake the Israelites as they enter the promised land (Deuteronomy 31:8) is in fulfillment of His promises to their ancestors (v. 7). God promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan after four hundred years in slavery in Egypt (Genesis 15:13; 17:8). And He brought Israel out of slavery so they could trust Him as they entered the promised land.

Centuries later, those who are believers in Jesus are also regarded as children of Abraham and share in His inheritance of the whole world (Romans 4:13). Just as God promised to be with Israel as they took hold of their inheritance (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5), so He'll be with us (Matthew 28:20). – By **Con Campbell**

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