



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

April 7, 2021

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



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Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

In my experience it is much easier to think of, or to contemplate on the faithfulness of God on a beautiful day like today. And it is not only us, humans who enjoy the sun shining, promising the renewal of spring. In the morning news I saw a photo of a squirrel, sitting on a branch, almost smiling as his face was bathing in the warmth of the sunshine.

We are blessed living in a beautiful area, at the foot of the mighty Rocky Mountains, and still having fertile lands for farming, and wetlands for several species of birds and other creatures. As we have a chance to observe swans, geese, bald eagles, gophers, deer, and so on, we are reminded that it has been all brought into being by the Holy One, the Source of Life. As Ethan, the writer of Psalm 89 puts it: **“The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it.”** (verse 11)

And what is encouraging for all of us: this Almighty Creator of the universe has a comforting characteristic, recognised by the Ezrahite as well: **“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.”** (verse 14)

Jesus, who has been one with the Father and knew the Holy One as none of us, also witnessed to this attribute of God:

“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.” (Matthew 6:26)

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matthew 10:29-30)

We may be aware of the **“Father’s care”** even if we can’t see the sun shining for different reasons. And we are encouraged to keep this in mind when we tend to *“fret over”* challenges, losses or pain of life.

What I found a useful advice in times of ‘panic attacks’ is slowing down, and remembering God’s instruction: **“Be still, and know that I am God...”** (Psalm 46:10)

In this silence and stillness we may recognize that **“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”** (Psalm 46:1)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Riding the Waves

Who is like you, Lord God Almighty? You, Lord, are mighty and your faithfulness surrounds you.

Psalm 89:8

READ Psalm 89:5–17

As my husband strolled down the rocky beach taking photos of the Hawaiian horizon, I sat on a large rock fretting over another medical setback. Though my problems would be waiting for me when I returned home, I needed peace in that moment. I stared at the incoming waves crashing against the black, jagged rocks. A dark shadow in the curve of the wave caught my eye. Using the zoom option on my camera, I identified the shape as a sea turtle riding the waves peacefully. Its flippers spread wide and still. Turning my face into the salty breeze, I smiled.

The “heavens praise [God’s] wonders” (Psalm 89:5). Our incomparable God rules “over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, [God] stills them” (v. 9). He “founded the world and all that is in it” (v. 11). He made it all, owns it all, manages it all, and purposes it all for His glory and our enjoyment.

Standing on the foundation of our faith—the love of our unchanging Father—we can “walk in the light of [His] presence” (v. 15). God remains mighty in power and merciful in His dealings with us. We can rejoice in His name all day long (v. 16). No matter what obstacles we face or how many setbacks we have to endure, God holds us as the waves rise and fall. – By **Xochitl Dixon**

REFLECT & PRAY

Father, thank You for empowering me to ride the waves of life with courageous faith, anchored in Your proven faithfulness. Amen.

When facing rough waves in life, how can reflecting on God’s wonders fill you with peace, courage, and confidence in His ongoing presence and sufficient care? What situations do you need to release to God as you ride the waves of life?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Psalm 89 deals with God’s covenant with David (vv. 3–4), but it wasn’t written by David. The superscription attributes authorship to Ethan the Ezrahite. What do we know about him? First Kings 4:31 implies he was wise—his wisdom exceeded only by Solomon. Additionally, some scholars believe he’s the Ethan mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:16–18, the son of Kushaiah and one of the Levites appointed to lead Israel’s musical worship. While this gives us some basic information about the songwriter, we’ve nothing to indicate when or why Psalm 89 was written. In celebrating the Davidic covenant, however, it focuses on God’s greatness as Creator and His faithfulness as Israel’s God—even when that faithfulness can’t always be seen with human eyes.

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