

Bundled Up
By Patsy Kuipers, Guest Writer

Today's Treasure

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

It was an overcast mid-January day here in Georgia. A few shafts of sunlight split the steely sky, only to be engulfed once again by clouds that looked like they might produce snow flurries at any moment. Alas, there was no sprinkling of white to add enchantment to the wintry day, just increasing wind gusts and decreasing temperature.

Despite the less-than-ideal conditions, I decided to bundle up and go for a walk. I was feeling out of sorts and hoped the brisk air and some time with the Lord would lift my spirits, even if it chilled my face, fingers, and toes in the process.

I retrieved my Delaware coat – the one I wore a lot in the land of longer winters but turn to only occasionally in the South – along with my mittens and earmuffs. Given this information, some of you hardier folks, including my relatives in South Dakota, are probably thinking the temperature must have been in the single digits to merit such gear. At the risk of being labeled a winter-weather wimp, I'll admit the windchill was 32 degrees when I exited the house, balmy by January Midwestern standards. Inevitably, this level of bundling up reminds me of a Peanuts cartoon from my childhood. In the first few frames, Charlie Brown is donning his coat, scarf, hat, and boots. In the last frame, he laments, "Can someone please open the door? I can't move!"

Fortunately, my long, puffy coat doesn't hinder the movement of my legs, even though I look like I'm walking around in a sleeping bag. Thus prepared for the elements, I ventured out. It wasn't long before striding through my neighborhood had the hoped-for effect. My torso was warm, and my mind, relieved of its previous concerns, turned to a Bible study lesson from earlier in the week.

My small group had been working our way through the 25th chapter of 1 Samuel, which recounts the story of foolish Nabal, his beautiful, discerning wife, Abigail, and their encounter with anointed-but-not-yet-king, David. Though a mere 44 verses long, the chapter is packed with high drama and reminders that "A soft answer turns away

wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly” (Proverbs 15:1-2).

Though the whole chapter and its attendant lessons are beneficial, the phrase I pondered as I walked along came from Abigail’s impassioned plea to David. She respectfully implored him not to behave foolishly as her husband had and repay evil with evil. She reminded him, his life was bound in the bundle of the living, in the care of the Lord his God, and that the Lord would take care of David’s enemies in His time (1 Samuel 25:29).

Isn’t it wonderful to know the same can be said about every one of God’s children? Regardless of the form our enemies take, each of us is eternally bound in the bundle of the living, safe in the Lord’s care, where no one can snatch us away. We will face trials and tribulations of varying kinds, but nothing can separate us from the love of God.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Although my winter garb allows me more freedom of movement than Charlie Brown’s, once I pull my hood up and fasten the top snap of my coat, it’s difficult for me to turn my head. There too, my musings led to a spiritual parallel. Multiple references in the Old Testament document God’s warnings to His people regarding the consequences of straying from His commandments. He admonished them not to turn to the left or right but to stay on course.

Likewise, in his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul described such single-minded focus as he wrote about pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Though perfection will elude us until God calls us Home, we’re to keep our eyes steadfastly fixed on the finish line (Philippians 3:12-15). And then there’s the precious promise of Isaiah 30:21: When we’re tempted to wander off, we’ll hear a word behind us, constraining us from turning to the left or right as the Spirit shows us the proper path.

Whichever climate you’re in, my friend, I pray you will feel the warmth of being securely bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord our God.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, how I thank You for quiet moments with You on that winter afternoon, full of reminders that Your children are eternally secure. Nothing can snatch us out of Your hand or separate us from Your love as Your Spirit guides us along our Homeward path.