

The Senior Scene



Love people. Know Jesus. Live Transformed.

Volume 14

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Upheld

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
(Isaiah 41:10)



Do you ever just feel weary? Weary of the turmoil and disunity and calamity all around us. Weary of our own personal struggles with illness or finances or uncertainty. Have you wondered where you will find the strength to keep moving forward? We cling to our faith, but sometimes the questions or doubts just creep up on us. Our enemy attacks where we are vulnerable and makes us feel weak or defeated or perplexed.

As Christians, we believe life has meaning and purpose, and it is disconcerting (to say the least) when stress or doubt cause us to wonder about that purpose. It's easy to quote Romans 8:28 – "All things work together for good..." but when we are truly hurting, quite honestly, we are not ready to hear that. We want concrete answers in our trials. But often the answers are not clear. And we are forced to accept the fact that they may not be clear for a long time... if ever. And that can be hard to swallow. And we often ask ourselves: does anything good come from these times when our faith is tested?

Hebrews 11 is a chapter in which we see much about the "heroes of the faith," many of whom suffered great hardship in their lives. Verse 39 tells us "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised." They truly lived by faith and not by sight. They staked their lives on God's promises when they saw little evidence of fulfillment of them in their lifetime. But they knew God was faithful. He guarantees His promises based on His faithfulness, but He doesn't tell us the timing of that fulfillment. He didn't promise all the answers in our lifetime, but He does promise to walk with us in strength and comfort. He promised the Hebrews 11 heroes that He would uphold them, and that in the hardship, He was preparing

something far better for them. He gives us the same promises. They could rest in His unlimited resources of strength and perseverance, and we can too.

So, what do we cling to during tough times? Will we choose to believe our own fluctuating feelings and doubts, or will we choose to believe God's infallible Word? Shouldn't we allow our trials to teach us to rely on Him and trust Him? To allow them to show us that He is utterly reliable and will care for us and will never leave us? It's easy to give "lip service" to God's promises, but can we in fact know that we believe them *fully* until we have had to depend on them... and nothing else? Our trials stretch our faith. They cause us to search our hearts and to ask ourselves, "Do we really believe what we say we believe?"

No matter how hopeless our situation appears to be, God has said: *I will uphold you.* We know that we need never despair because "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Is there anything or anyone that can overthrow the purposes of Mighty God? No! And he knows the end from the beginning and works to accomplish His perfect will in us even when we don't understand the path He takes us on. And on those paths, He will uphold us when our feet are dragging, and our soul feels weary. Under His care, we can do more than just plod along, we can shine like the sun (Mt. 13:43) confident that His right hand will lead us to victory at the finish line.



I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. No matter what is going on in our lives, God (Who always has the last word) has promised His unfailing support. Even when we struggle and stumble under heavy loads, underneath is His strong right hand that is holding onto us when we don't have the strength to hold on to Him! We're never out of His mind and never out of the reach of His righteous right hand.



God is Good!

I attended college at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana in the mid-seventies. During my time there I was introduced to a leader from Campus Crusade. He shared with me a simple gospel message which I had not heard in all of my years in the Catholic Church. I was fascinated about the story of Jesus and that He came to save men. I also heard that He loves me unconditionally. I was mesmerized and immediately I accepted Jesus. I was forgiven! I heard nothing like this before. I devoured the Bible and couldn't stop reading it.

Through the years my faith developed, and I had met someone that I intended to marry: Linda, my first wife. We married in the late eighties. I had earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from Indiana. I pursued a career in retailing. I worked at Gimbel's, Kaufmann's and other large stores. During my time at Gimbel's, I became an Apparel Buyer and was a buyer during my career in department stores. Because of my experience with apparel buying and department stores, NIKE asked me to join them in 1988. I spent almost ten years with NIKE.

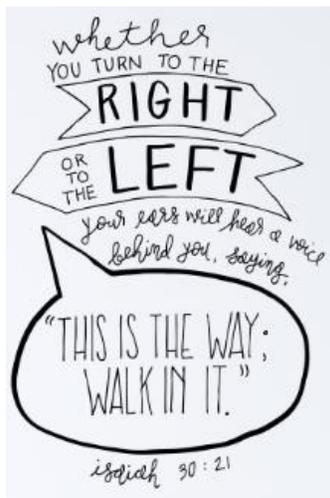
My wife, Linda, died of cancer on December 17th, 1997. At the time I had two little kids, Stephanie who was 6, and Tommy who was 8. I was working for NIKE as a key accounts guy – very high pressure – with many high-profile companies such as the retail divisions of the Steelers, Penn State, Syracuse and other high-profile companies. It was a great job and provided very well for my family.

When Linda died it became very clear that I could not work this job and take care of two little kids. But that meant a huge risk. How could I provide for these kids and give up NIKE?

At the same time a ministry position came up at the church we were attending. I didn't even consider it until several people told me that I should be interviewing. A ministry position, me? I'm not worthy! And ministry doesn't pay well! How could I support these kids? But I had decided at the time to be obedient to God in my new calling - single parenthood. I asked God to open and close doors.

At that time NIKE was restructuring and wanted me to take a position that would make me only be able to see the kids on weekends. I knew that I could no longer be with NIKE and be obedient to the call of being a single parent. I sat in the car scarcely able to believe that He had closed this door so tightly. I was in tears thanking God that He had made this so clear!

Also at that time, I found out that the church was offering me the ministry position, not because of my circumstances,



but because they thought I was the right person. So, I agreed. I was making a small fraction of my income at NIKE.

Along came a medical bill so large that it would have wiped out my family's entire cash savings. I was furious. I said to God "If I were you, I wouldn't be doing this to me right now". I was so angry that I almost refused to pray. But I kept getting a nudge from the Holy Spirit to keep praying. I did, but I was still angry. After some time, I had a sense of peace. I marveled because it didn't make any sense.

The medical bill was several pages of detailed charges for every procedure that Linda went through. But it was clear that God wanted me to trust Him to pay it. After some time, I got a call from the insurance company. I was shocked: the bill had been adjusted and that the balance was now zero!

I became Director of Pastoral Care and Business Manager for my church. My senior pastor had suggested seminary to me on several occasions – another seemingly impossible call. During this time, I met my wife, Suzanne. By God's grace he had provided for a wonderful and committed new wife and mother. I now had the provision to go to seminary. I graduated in May of 2000 from the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary with a concentration on Greek. All, of course, by His Grace alone.

I am now retired and a volunteer here at Memorial Park Church, serving in pastoral care as Pastor of Visitation with Kevin. My daughter is now a Nobel Prize Winner in photography and my son is a Lead Analyst at Federal Express. God is good!

--Tom Anderson



2nd Thursday



Our fall season of 2nd Thursday luncheons is underway! We would love for you to join us on Thursday, Oct 13 for a lunch of baked penne pasta, salad, and dessert. After lunch, entertainment will be provided by the Ambridge Steel Band. Prepaid registration of \$10 must be made by

Friday, October 7.

Then, 2nd Thursday on November 10 features a turkey dinner with all the fixin's. Then our own Roger Rumer will lead us on an African Safari adventure via stories and photos. Prepaid registration of \$10 for this luncheon is due by Friday, November 4.



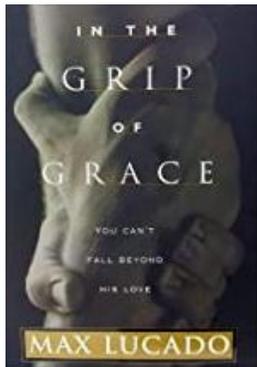
For all of the luncheons this season, our service project will be North Hills Community Outreach. If you are able, please bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to NHCO.

Fall Bible Study

Fall Bible study continues through November 3:

In the Grip of Grace
Thursdays at 10AM in
the Edinburgh Room.

We are studying what it truly means to be in the grip of His grace. Each lesson is a stand-alone study so come any week as you are able. No book required.



NHCO would love to promise every senior who signs up for the program that they will get the rides that they need, but that is not always the case. I know of some who have had to cancel appointments because they had no ride.

If any of this resonates with you and you feel God's nudging, then NHCO would love to have you on board. Please reach out to Cathy Pschirer at NHCO 412-487-6316 ext. 3313. You may also reach out to me at 412-303-7534 or lkbjfb@yahoo.com if you have any questions or would like to hear more about my experience with the program. It's one way that "everything I do and say point to You..."

-- Lois Bell

In Service of Seniors

"Sometimes I think, what will people say of me
when I'm only just a memory
when I'm home where my soul belongs
Was I love when no one else would show up
Was I Jesus to the least of those
Was my worship more than just a song
I want to live like that
And give it all I have
So that everything I do and say point to You..."

These are words to "Live Like That" by Sidewalk Prophets that I not only have on my phone's playlist but also have hanging on my refrigerator to see every day.

I retired a year ago from a 30-year career in healthcare. I knew that my retirement picture would include a balance between the things I love to do and things I wanted to do for others. I took the favorite parts of my job – working with seniors and driving – and matched that with a need that NHCO has for drivers. I volunteer in a program called "In Service of Seniors" through North Hills Community Outreach. As a volunteer in this program, I am free to choose how much or little I drive and where I drive. It could be one 2-hour time slot per week or per month or 2-3 rides per week, whatever works for you.



The need for volunteers to drive seniors to medical appointments and occasional shopping is great and the rewards are even greater. I think of how appreciative I am of the neighbor who will drop me off at the car mechanic after my car is fixed or take me and pick me up from my outpatient surgery appointment when I won't be able to drive home. I hope I can count on someone when the day comes that I can no longer drive.

The Sense God Gave a Goose

This fall if you see geese heading south for the winter, flying in a V formation, you might be interested in knowing why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following it. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front of it. Furthermore, when the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back in the formation and another goose flies the point. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to persevere. Finally, when a goose gets sick or is wounded and falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is either able to fly with the flock again or until end of life.

As Christians, we can learn much from the sense God gave a goose:

- We share a common direction and when we "fly" together in community, we are uplifted by one another.
- We also feel the "drag" when we try to go it alone.
- It's good to take a turn at the hard jobs when the person at the point is weary.
- What should be our attitude when we "honk" from behind?
- If people knew we would stand by them in their trials like our geese friends, they would be lining up to come in the door.



Great Hymns of the Church

For the Beauty of the Earth

Several Sundays ago, Jim Lueers led us in worship by combining words of a beautiful hymn of praise with words of a heartfelt prayer. May these words cause you to praise over and over.

This is my Father's World and to my listening ears all nature sings and round me rings the music of the spheres.

This little phrase "Music of the spheres" caught my ear this week and I remember discussing it in music history class. Pythagoras and his followers believed that a universal philosophy founded in numbers. could differentiate three types of music: the music of instruments which we hear as I play this piano, the music of the human body and soul which we can experience as the church gathered, and the music of the spheres, which was the music of the cosmos, which we can recognize as divine revelation of God's order.

The hymn, "For the Beauty of the Earth" helps us contemplate the music of the spheres so I am going to lead a guided prayer then we will sing each verse of our hymn.

Let's pray.

Dear Father Creator, from the microscopic to the heavens, your glory is evident for those with spiritual eyes to see. Open our eyes to the world around us that we can experience the amazing relationship you have given all of nature. Help us have faith to see your hand at work in all things. When we discover beauty, cause an alleluia to rise up in our hearts. When we look at the stars, remind us of how small, yet loved we are. So that in all situations we might sing:

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.
Lord of all to Thee we raise,
this our hymn of grateful praise.

Lord Jesus. In your perfect plan you give us people to love in harmony. We are mindful of the pain of losing those we love in death and struggle to see the music of a life lost. We pray for your comfort. We are disheartened with the discord that is around us.

We pray that your Spirit would work among us to restrain aggression, protect the innocent, and restore peace. We pray for your protection around marriages and families. Around friends and neighbors. Around nations and peoples. Help us love as you have loved for where love abounds, there is great joy.

So we sing:

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child
Friends on earth and friends above;
For all gentle thoughts and mild
Lord of all to Thee we raise,
this our hymn of grateful praise.

We pray for the family we call the church. As we seek to glorify you on earth, may you orchestrate us into a joyous witness to your gospel. Make us mindful that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ and it is only in knowing you more that we fulfill our vision. Lord call us deeper through the scriptures, through the Spirit and through each other. Purify our hearts and minds that we would lift our hands to serve you here and around the world.

As in one voice we sing:

For the church that evermore
Lifteth holy hands above
Offering up on every shore
Her pure sacrifice of love
Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise

We are aware of your greatness, O God! We remember the sacrifice that Jesus gave upon the cross to forgive us of our sins. When we sing a wrong note in life, your forgiveness restores, heals and transforms. Change us, Lord according to your will. Make each one of us become a living sacrifice of praise to you as we sing:

For Thyself, best Gift Divine!
To our race so freely giv'n
For that great, great love of Thine,
Peace on earth and joy in heav'n
Lord of all, to Thee we raise,
this our hymn of grateful praise.

