

Friday, April 24, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"Then I said to you, 'Do not be in dread or afraid of them. The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.'"

(Deuteronomy 1: 29-31)

This Bible passage reminds me of something that happened for me when I was a kid. One Halloween, my uncle had taken my sister and me to one of those "haunted houses," the kind you walk through and people who are made up like scary monsters and things jump out of the dark to scare you. Have you ever been to one of these? I don't recommend it. Even if you would not be afraid, things like this only serve to give glory to Satan and the idea of being afraid. But as a kid I didn't think along those lines. All I know is that it was scary.

We didn't get very far into the walk through this "haunted house" before I had had enough and wanted to get out. But we had to keep going in the right direction until we came to the exit, which meant we had to still go through all the rest of the scary things that were in there. So, since we could not backtrack, and since I was too afraid to keep going, my uncle did something very loving, which allowed us to continue to move through to the exit. He picked me up and carried me. And while he was carrying me, I kept my face buried in his shoulder. And I knew that he was carrying me to the exit. I felt safe even while we were still in the house, because I was in the arms of my uncle who I knew loved me and who I knew was strong and powerful – especially from my point of view as a little kid.

In the reading above, God reminds the Israelites that He didn't just lead them through the wilderness after they left Egypt, but He carried them! It says, "as a man carries his son," or even his nephew! What God meant was that He was with them in such a powerful way that it was as if He was physically carrying them until they got to the "exit" – until they got to their destination.

As those who are trusting in God, we can be assured that God is "carrying us" through this scary time of a pandemic. He would do the same in any scary situation. And we can keep our face buried in His shoulder. How do we do that? We bury our face in God's shoulder by burying our nose in His Word. If I had kept looking around while my uncle carried me through that "haunted house," I would not have felt nearly as safe as I did with my face buried in his shoulder.

God's Word is His shoulder for us. Some of us put our faith in God WITHOUT burying our noses in His Word. That's not as helpful as putting your faith in God while also burying your nose in His Word. He has a lot to say to us in His Word that gives us comfort. While my uncle was carrying me through that "haunted house," he also kept talking to me and telling me we were okay and that we were getting close to the end. I kind of remember him saying, when we got outside, "It's okay. We're out!" God will keep saying to us through His Word ... "Almost there ... You're okay ... I've got you ... And then the day will come when He will say, "It's okay. We're out!"

God's peace!
Pastor Jim