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“THE HANDS OF GOD”

#2 - HIS HAND SHEPHERDING US

“Your hand shall lead me.” (Psalm 139:10a)

The scriptural representations as to God's hand, eye, and ear, etc., were declared by Calvin to be but “adaptations to the slow spiritual progress of men--an infantile mode of talk, like that of nurses to children.” God uses such terms to communicate to us knowledge of Himself. The phrase, “Hand of God” is another of the human forms God uses to describe and communicate Himself to us. Jesus said to Thomas, “Behold my hands” (John 20:27). Let us take this invitation of Jesus personally and consider “The Hands of God.”

David’s second comment about the hand of God in his life is in Psalm 139:10 where he says, “*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me.*”

He is saying, “Wherever I go on land or sea, You are there and Your shepherding hand is there. David talks about flying long before modern-day flight became possible. He speaks of “*the wings of the morning*” or the swiftness of the sun’s early rays of light and imagines himself traveling across the universe on them, only to be unable to escape the presence of the Lord, for “*even there Your hand shall lead me.*” Not that David wanted to escape the Lord’s presence, which he was saying it is impossible to do.

“YOUR HAND SHALL LEAD ME” – HIS HAND SHEPHERDING US

The phrase, “*Your hand shall lead me*” is a welcomed picture of the hand of God, revealing yet another posture of His hand – the extended hand. There is much that we can learn from our Lord’s outstretched hand. Think of some of the practical considerations for us personally if God has our hand in His:

If God Has My Hand He Must Care!

Why would God want to hold hands with us? There are several contexts to consider:

- (1) He is our Creator and we are His creation, therefore He cares.
- (2) He is our Father and we are His children, therefore, He cares.
- (3) He is our Shepherd and we are His sheep, therefore, He cares.
- (4) He is our Savior and we are sinners, therefore, He cares.

Walking in company with God is life’s greatest adventure. How much more enjoyable the Christian walk is when we know that He cares enough to take us by the hand and lead us. What earthly parent has not reached out a hand toward their child to lead them? God is viewed by David as taking him by the hand to lead him.

*“He leadeth me, O blessèd thought!
O words with heav’nly comfort fraught!
What ‘ere I do, where ‘ere I be
Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me.”*

If God Has My Hand He Must Be Near!

The truth that God leads us is proof that He is near to us for it is not possible to hold hands at a distance.

A diver from Genoa, Italy, thought how wonderful it would be to place a statue of Christ beneath the sea so that divers and seamen would have Christ near to them. He presented the idea to some of his friends who were also deep-sea divers and the idea caught on. Funds were raised and a 9 foot bronze statue of Christ was cast. The 900 pound figure was lowered into place 56 feet below the surface of the sea and the diver who launched the idea said, “Now Christ is near to the sailors and divers.”

Although the man meant well, he failed to comprehend the truth that Jesus is not limited by time or space. He said, *“I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”* (Hebrews 13:5) He is so near to us that He leads us by His hand!

*“Lord, I would place my hand in Thine,
Nor ever murmur nor repine;
Content, whatever lot I see,
Since ‘tis my God that leadeth me.”*

If God Has My Hand I Need Not Fear!

David said that even when walking through the *“valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.”* (Psalm 23:4) This is he who said, *“Your hand shall lead me.”* This comes from one who knew the Shepherd and who experienced His shepherding protection.

*“Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,
Sometimes where Eden’s bowers bloom,
By waters still, over troubled sea,
Still ‘tis His hand that leadeth me.”*

If God Has My Hand He Has What I Hold Dear!

Now, think that statement through: if God holds my hand, He is also holding what is in my hand. I am convinced that there are those who are gripping their earthly possessions so tightly that they have not experienced the openness of hand necessary to know the Shepherdhood of the Savior. It is difficult to hold the hand of someone with a clinched fist.

Open-handedness marks the one who walks hand-in-hand with God. If I can trust my eternal soul into His hands for safe keeping, surely I can place my earthly possessions into those same loving hands. If we trust Him with the greater, we can trust Him with the lesser.

It is said that Alexander the Great, upon his death-bed, commanded that when he was carried forth to his grave, his hands should not be enclosed in wrappings, as was the custom, but that they should be left outside the grave clothes so that all might see them and see that they were empty.

He was conqueror of the known world and possessor of its treasures, yet when dead could retain none of them. The poorest beggar and he were now upon equal footing.

*“He leadeth me, He leadeth me,
By His own hand He leadeth me;
His faithful follower I would be,
For by His hand He leadeth me.”*

If God Has My Hand The Path Need Not Be Clear!

We have heard it said: “I would rather walk with God in the dark than walk in the light alone.” How true that is for the trusting saint. We cannot always see what is ahead but the Good Shepherd sees and it is of the greatest comfort to know, with David, that His *“hand shall lead me.”*

On one of my ministry trips to Bangladesh, I went on a wild boar hunting expedition at night with a missionary friend, accompanied by two Bengali guides. The wild boar like to feed on young rice roots and so they are usually found in or around the rice paddies.

A rice paddy is a checkerboard affair created by building up a dirt embankment around the area to be flooded with water. An area of several acres would have many separate pools separated by dirt berms. To walk from one side of the rice paddy to the other, one walks upon the dirt dividers, which are usually from two to three feet in height. In order to cross the paddy one must zigzag many time while being careful not to fall into the swamp-like water, which not only has rice growing in it, but various creatures moving around in the murky water, including snakes. Therefore, it is the better part of wisdom to keep atop the dirt berm!

At certain time of the year in Bangladesh, the moon is very bright and one can see without a flashlight. On this particular night we were making our way across a very large rice paddy, walking about ten feet apart. I was following my guide and could see quite well in the semi-darkness. I was rather enjoying the adventure of crossing a rice paddy surrounded by dense jungle at night. However, a cloud suddenly moved over the face of the moon and there was no moonlight at midnight!

There I was in total darkness. My missionary friend and his guide, along with my guide, kept walking for the missionary’s guide, who was in front of the procession, could dimly see to walk on the narrow dykes which were about twelve to fourteen inches wide. We had agreed to remain silent so as not to scare away any wild boar that might be in or around the paddies.

Bringing up the rear, I could see nothing! Therefore, like any city-living American not accustomed to walking across rice paddies in total darkness, I stopped and stood quite still lest I

make a false step and tumble into the infested waters. I stood there for several minutes before I realized that the three men ahead of me had kept walking and I was all alone in the middle of a vermin infested rice paddy. What do you do when you do not know what to do?

The men ahead of me reached the other side and discovered that they had lost me. My guide, who had sharp eyes even in the darkness, came back looking for me. I could not see him but he later said that he faintly saw me. As I stood there trying to decide whether to get down on my hands and knees and crawl the remaining distance, a hand touched me! I almost jumped into the water! Silently the hand moved about until it found one of my hands and taking my hand he put it on his shoulder and began to walk. I followed.

Here is the picture: my guide had found me, put my hand on his shoulder, tugged and began slowly walking. I just trusted him and enjoyed the walk that night, zigging and zagging, not seeing my feet, not knowing what lay ahead and finally we arrived safe, sound and dry, on the other side. After a few laughs we moved on.

As I continued walking the Lord seemed to say to me, "Son, that's the way is with you and Me. When you walk by faith you do not need to see every step of the way. I am The Way. I am your Shepherd and all you have to do is keep your hand in mine and I will get you safely to the other side! I learned much that night about faith walking.