

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the One who holds his hand. Psalm 37:24

My husband, John, and I certainly had a busy summer of 2014—five trips on the calendar: three out of the country, one to a fiftieth reunion in Hawaii, and one to Minnesota to close on our “Fortress of Solitude,” or otherwise known as “our cabin” in the far, far North, where we have spent many beautiful seasons of thirteen years. We don’t let the grass grow under our feet, so to speak, even as we reach retirement years that find John enjoying his work and me, Sue, still keeping the home fires burning; kind of a Grand Central Station for our children, grandchild, relatives far and near and very special friends whom we have picked up along the way during our 42 year marriage. What a blessed life together—John planning adventures to keep his business life fresh and exciting and I taking pure pleasure in raising our children while staying active in the school, church and community life with part time jobs here and there. Our main enjoyment in keeping our family connected, communicating and loving each other is a strong foothold in our Church and enjoying adventures together as a family—enjoying the adventures in nature locally,.. to reunions in Hawaii...to our most recent journey to Israel with First Presbyterian Church.

In August, the last of our summer’s trips was approaching. The volatility in Arab/Israeli relations was subsiding in time for our mid-September departure and through weekly contact with fellow travelers at Church events, and with word from our guide, Dr. Jim Martin in Israel, all systems were go and we could not have been more excited. At this point, I was asking God to hold my hand a little tighter! I was kind of chalking up this trip as another adventure vacation as a tourist (actually, a very nervous one about the war situation), but I returned with my field guide full of voluminous notes squeezed into every margin, a camera full of faces and places that make my heart warm and fuzzy and a living color 3D picture in my mind of what it must have been like truly walking beside Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land with their anticipation growing more intense over time for a Shepherd who would be born in a lowly cattle quarters in a tiny town of Bethlehem at the crossroads of the world at that time, and from there the Gospel would spread. God’s hand tightened on mine as Pastor Jim talked and walked with us, pulling the stories of the Old and New Testaments together while walking the highest mountains and wilderness areas of Moses to the beautiful and unforgettable Sea of Galilee, land of the Kings and prophets and Jerusalem’s Temple to Jacob’s well.

We were intense students during our days and friendships blossomed in the evenings over dinner as we shared stories, insights and perspectives of all the geology, history and archeology of the land where Jesus walked. We, the travelers, are sharing pictures and journal entries and so happy to have shared those peaceful inspiringly spiritual times together—holding His hand all the way! As we traveled, wherever something important was revealed to us, we were encouraged to follow it back to the Old Testament and to be assured that God sent His Son to show us the *way* to Our Father’s Heavenly Home. Even throughout times of turmoil and chaos, our rescue is part of His Promise to Abraham! God loves to stretch us in new and exciting ways, and the people he puts in our path may become part of the story, which becomes our walk through life. Take His hand and hold on tightly. The moments of a tender squeeze are awesome!

Dear God, Thank You for sending Your Son to rescue us and show us the way to our heavenly home. Amen.

Sue Thurston