

Carried by Our Father

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” (Deuteronomy 5:6).

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:1-15

Song: “The One Is Blest”

I watched from my corner table in the ice-cream shop as a dad walked in carrying his young daughter. She looked around curiously, apparently not at all worried that her feet were off the ground. In fact she seemed to enjoy seeing everything from his height. As the dad pointed out the colorful display of frozen treats, she smiled. Her grin grew even wider when she tasted a sample of one of the flavors. Still on his hip, she listened as her dad ordered. After paying at the counter, he continued to hold the toddler in his arms as they left the store with their treat.

In a similar way, God lifted His children out of Egypt. He encouraged them to keep close to Him, knowing it would be the safest and most delightful way for them to live.

God’s law lovingly invites us—His children through Christ—to remember Him, to put Him first, and to trust that His ways are best. When we allow God to carry us, we can see life from His perspective and taste the goodness He wants to share with us. What unforeseen sweetness awaits us if we will trust Him!

Father, I choose to look to You and remember Your goodness. Please carry me through this day. In Jesus’ name, amen.

October 2–8. **Sara Schaffer** lives in Colorado with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys studying God’s Word, podcasting, building puzzles, and having fun with her family.

Covetous or Content?

Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, . . . or any thing that is thy neighbour's (Deuteronomy 5:21, *KJV*).

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:16-22

Song: “Near to the Heart of God”

Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) had a friend who was injured at age 15 and lived the rest of his life bedridden. Even at age 55, after 40 years of suffering, this friend did not seem depressed, and visits with him were always uplifting. Moody said that being at this man's bedside was like being close to Heaven. Impressed by his friend's cheerfulness, Moody once asked him whether he ever wished he had the life he saw others having. The man replied that he often felt tempted to want the wellbeing and welfare of those he could see from his window. However, he said that at those times, he pointed to the cross of Christ. He told Moody, “[The devil] . . . cannot stand it, and he leaves me.”

Not coveting the possessions and lifestyles of others can be difficult at times unless we too keep looking to the cross of Christ. In Him we have everything we need for a life of godliness, contentment, and joy. We can bring to our Lord all the enemy's whisperings that tempt us to become discontented. God's grace will refresh our souls, filling us with authentic contentment and a cheerfulness that will minister God's goodness to those around us.

Father, forgive me for wanting what others have, when You are my true source of life and joy. In Jesus' name, amen.

Rescued from Despair

Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:24-25).

Scripture: Romans 7:14-25

Song: “Morning Has Broken”

When Anne Sullivan began teaching the blind and deaf Helen Keller, the young student learned that things she could touch had names. However, intangible concepts, such as love and kindness, still eluded her. One day as she struggled to put a pattern of beads in the correct order, her teacher pressed a finger to Helen’s forehead and emphatically spelled *think* into her hand. Suddenly Helen realized that this was the name for the process going on inside her mind—her first abstract idea! Another time, Helen’s hands went still as she considered the idea of love. Her teacher had gently explained that love was like clouds, which can’t be touched, but they bring joy through rain to a dry creation. This metaphor pierced Helen’s soul, raining intangible love into her parched heart.

In today’s passage, Paul writes of the despair he had known in his constant struggle with sin. Then, as though gently touching himself and his readers on their foreheads, he presses home the reality of *Christ*, who has provided victory over sin and death. To prevail in his struggle, Paul had to rely on the intangible spiritual transaction that was finished on the cross.

Today, we can believe and receive this unseen reality. As we look to Christ, God will fill our hearts with His intangible grace, rescuing us from sin’s despair.

Father, thank You for the rescue You have provided for me through Your Son. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Call It What It Is

Look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless (Jeremiah 7:8).

Scripture: Jeremiah 7:1-15

Song: “O Thou, My Soul, Return in Peace”

A woman approached a minister and asked him to help her with a chronic problem she had. She admitted to him that she had a terrible habit of exaggerating. The tendency had become so routine that her friends had stopped believing what she told them. She begged the minister for his help. In his straightforward manner, he told her that next time she caught herself embellishing, she needed to go and confess right away that she had lied. He encouraged her to stomp out her habit completely by calling her speech what it really was. Taken aback, she replied that she wouldn't like to call it *lying*. After all, she explained, she merely elaborated a bit when describing things. Unconvinced, the woman left the discussion, still unhappy.

Living under the deception that our sin isn't too bad or that consequences of our wrong choices should simply be called misfortune, we find ourselves restless like the woman with her habit of lying. God will never ever forsake us, but by minimizing and continuing to do what we know is wrong, we distance ourselves from Him.

Today, let's honestly assess what we've been minimizing and confess it as sin. Let's choose to live with integrity so we can enjoy peace in our hearts and nearness to God.

Father, I'm sorry for making light of my sin and for not calling it by its true name. I want to confess and forsake what keeps me from fellowship with You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Held for Us in His Name

If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him (Romans 6:8).

Scripture: Romans 6:1-12

Song: “Saviour, Teach Me, Day by Day”

While paying for my oil change, I off-handedly mentioned that our oldest daughter had just gotten her driver’s permit. Another customer at the counter turned to me and asked whether my daughter was looking to buy a car. Though my daughter was still learning to drive, she’d saved up a sum of money. Within two weeks, she purchased the vehicle, affectionately naming her Maxene. Because my husband and I were licensed drivers, Maxene was titled in our names while our daughter continued her driving lessons. When the time came for her to be licensed, we would be able to transfer ownership to her directly.

Similarly, while we are yet in our mortal bodies, our final glorification is held safe in Jesus’ name. When the time comes for us to be with Him in Heaven, we will no longer have our short-lived mortal forms. Then, when we are clothed in our immortality, we will know all the fullness of life in Him. For now, however, with the Holy Spirit’s guidance, we move through this life, seeking to become more like Christ.

My daughter drove as often as possible with her driving permit. As we are learning to walk in God’s ways, let’s take every opportunity to receive His guidance and instruction that leads to sanctification as we journey toward our eternal home.

Father, thank You that You continue to sanctify me as You hold the promise of my glorified life in Christ. In Jesus’ name, amen.

The Gift Is Life

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

Scripture: Romans 6:13-23

Song: “More Love to Thee”

Kathy drove toward her childhood home with tears streaming down her face. She had been betrayed by the person she was dating, and now her life seemed pointless. Her immoral lifestyle felt like a trap she couldn't escape, and she resolved to make this day her last. Accelerating toward her parents' house, she arrived and announced she was going to bed. Alone in her old bedroom, she locked the door. Remembering a hobby knife blade stored in the dresser, she retrieved it and pressed it to her wrist. Suddenly someone was pounding on the door. Kathy's cousin, who had come to the house unexpectedly, was calling out from the hallway, asking Kathy to unlock the door. Kathy paused but didn't move. The next moment, the door was being broken, and her cousin rushed in. She embraced Kathy while praying and telling her of God's love. Kathy gave her a chilly reception, but the Lord heard her cousin's prayers.

Later that night, with a broken heart and spirit, still not wanting to live, Kathy gave the Lord her next breath and then her next one. Her new life in Christ began that dark night as she received His gift of salvation. Forty-four years later, Kathy continues to testify how sin almost brought death, but through the gift of God, she received eternal life.

Father, release me from the death grip of my sin. I long for Your gift of life in Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

River of Escape

We have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit (Romans 7:6).

Scripture: Romans 7:1-13

Song: “Nothing but the Blood”

A story from medieval times is told of Robert the Bruce of Scotland, who was being pursued by an English knight sent by King Edward I. Though Bruce ran swiftly, the English knight, along with Bruce’s other enemies, gained on him. Bruce turned into a nearby forest, and after miles of hard running, he thought perhaps he had outpaced them. But then he heard a noise that made his blood run cold: the howl of his own hunting dog.

Racing now with even more fervor, desperation filled Bruce. How could he outrun a hound that knew his scent so well? His mind searched for ways to confound the animal. Exhausted, he came upon a babbling mountain stream. Just what he needed! He leapt into the water and followed it for a mile before exiting to the other side of the forest. He waited there until he was certain the hunt for him was over.

The law’s righteous requirements are much like a relentless bloodhound, howling at our sin, calling out our sure condemnation. Our only hope is to plunge ourselves into the depths of Christ’s mercy. The stream of His redeeming blood and the life-giving water of His Spirit are our only escape, and only by them can we live in the Spirit’s freedom instead.

Father, thank You for fulfilling the requirements of the law for me so that I can serve in the new way of Your Spirit. In Jesus’ name, amen.