

*Be still, and know
that I am God.*

PSALM 46:10 (ESV)

THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

I'd failed again. With something big this time. Something that might have hurt someone I love. The realization cut to my heart and stirred up doubts about other areas of my life. No wonder I couldn't succeed at my career, relationships, or even my to-do list.

I tried to cope by flitting from one low-stakes task to another, hoping to boost my confidence so the taste of failure would disappear.

The Scripture printed on a wall hanging in my house confronted me. Be still. Stillness couldn't lift my burden, could it?

I stopped moving anyway. Took a breath. And gave more thought to the rest of the verse.

What does it mean to know God is God? The answer came to me on wings of peace. God is God; I am not. I'm going to fail sometimes, but ultimately nothing depends on me being perfect, because I'm not God. I need to stop trying to carry the weight of the world on my shoulders. That whole world I'm attempting to carry is already held safely in His hands.

JERUSAHA AGEN



Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

JOSHUA 1:9 (NIV)



HE IS WITH ME WHEREVER I GO

I'm not much of a traveler. Until I was married, I can barely recall any excursions outside of my great state of Minnesota, aside from occasional trips to North Dakota and Wisconsin.

While distance was not a factor, I knew that no matter where I went, God was with me. He was there when I walked six blocks to school as a little girl and when I rode my bike all around our neighborhood. He was with me when I got my driver's license

as a teenager. He was with me when, as a new bride, I crossed the river from St. Paul to live in Minneapolis. He was with my husband and me when we flew to Belgium for the trip of our lifetime.

No matter how short or long the distance from home, I have never had to be afraid that I was venturing out alone. My God has always gone before me and has always been with me wherever I went.

LIZ KIMMEL





He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

LUKE 19:40 (ESV)

THE PRAISE OF STONES

I've heard stones singing praise. No, not literally. But when I hike along the north shore of Lake Superior, the waves stir the shore into a gentle clatter. The smooth rocks glisten in deep shades of jade, rust, and dove gray, reflecting the beauty of the Creator. Wildflowers bow their heads in worship. Pines whisper of His strength and sheltering arms. Sunrise paints a story of rebirth across the sky. The beauty and variety all cry out that our God is creative and powerful and loving.

Since mountains and oceans, trees and stones, stars and galaxies all glorify the Creator, I want to join the chorus, just as the onlookers did when Jesus rode into Jerusalem. They proclaimed, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord." (Luke 19:38 NASB) That is a refrain we can join every day, uniting with all of creation in declaring the awesome glory and tender mercy of our King of kings.

SHARON HINCK



*He is close to all who
call on him sincerely.*

PSALM 145:18 (TLB)



IN JESUS'S POCKET

Recently, a friend and I walked the neighborhood, commenting on the beautiful lilies and lilacs we passed. But her expression turned somber as she remembered the tragic loss of her son in a car crash only months before. She added, "Why does God make us suffer?"

I stopped to give her a hug and said I didn't know. The best I could do was to pick a dandelion to stick in her pocket. I don't doubt God's love and mercy toward

me, but I wanted to know too. *Why do we suffer here on earth?*

Whenever something bad happens, I feel angry and I briefly wonder if God is mad at me. But then, I sense how close He is. An all-over warmth tells me that He is near. God's love is a fragrance, sweeter than the flowers in my neighborhood. I still don't know why we suffer, but I do know that when I am hurting, Jesus comes near—as if He's got me safe in His pocket.

LINDA S. CLARE





They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

ACTS 2:42 (NIV)

NOT WHAT WE EXPECTED

I felt sure I knew what my husband and I were looking for in a new church. Something traditional. An organ instead of a worship band. Familiar, old hymns. A place to worship, where we could also meet friends our age. We visited church after church. Some even met those qualifications. But nothing felt right.

Then one day, we learned about a newly formed home church. Out of options, we went. The church was definitely outside the box. Not an organ in sight—instead, worship music played on the television. The service was casual, conversational—

not at all traditional. And the dozen or so congregants? Everyone seemed at least twenty years our junior. It was as if God was saying, *Don't get too comfortable. Don't get too set in your ways.* We started worshiping there and considered the younger points of view (and shared our “experienced” ones). We learned new songs. We met new friends. I was looking for a traditional church, and found something totally opposite. And it feels right.

PEGGY FREZON





But Lord, be merciful to us, for we have waited for you. Be our strong arm each day and our salvation in times of trouble.

ISAIAH 33:2 (NLT)

A TIME TO THINK

Many are so preoccupied with work that they allow little time for prayer.

WATCHMAN NEE, CHURCH LEADER AND TEACHER

A TIME TO ACT

Pray and release your worries.

A TIME TO PRAY

Father, may my prayers for others be as constant and natural as breathing.



God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.

2 SAMUEL 22:33 (KJV)

A TIME TO THINK

I would rather walk with God in the dark than go alone in the light.

MARY GARDINER BRAINARD, POET

A TIME TO ACT

Fill your mind with Christ.

A TIME TO PRAY

Lord, hold on to me as I go forward with faith in You.



