



Dear Friends,

One of the most vivid memories from my early school years was waiting for my eldest brother to pick me up after school, and him not arriving. When it finally dawned on me that he wasn't just late, but that he may not show, I was worried. Very worried. I panicked. I felt forgotten. Overlooked. Alone. Eventually, to my great relief, a teacher walked me home.

Children acutely feel separation anxiety. The fact that I can recall this event and the emotions I felt that day over fifty years after they occurred says something about the impact of that experience on me. It is not the only time I felt separation anxiety in my childhood. In fact, I carried a fear throughout my childhood that my parents might die. Even into my adult years, I had dreams in which either parent died.

Why am I sharing these memories and thoughts with you? It's because I was struck by one of the sentences in Psalm 73, the passage preached on last Sunday by Sandy McMillan. Verse 23 states:

Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.

The first thing that struck me about this statement is that Asaph, the author of the Psalm, declares, "I am always with you." If that statement had not been in the Bible, I would be wary of it. "Always with you?" Really? I know my own heart. I am fickle when it comes to God. I am aware of how easily I get distracted from loving him. How disloyal I can be to God when it suits my own interests. So, isn't it the other way round? That God is always with me?

One must read on. The second half of the sentence explains the confidence displayed by Asaph in his bold declaration: "... you hold me by my right hand."

It is only because God holds us by his right hand that Asaph can boldly declare, "I am ALWAYS with you."

I was struck by the image conjured by the statement that God holds me with his right hand. That is why I recalled that memory from my childhood. What I wanted was for someone to take me by the hand and lead me safely home.

The truth that I am always with God only because he holds me by his right hand is unpacked in detail in the New Testament. He sends Jesus, "God with us," so that we are always with God. When you placed your trust in Jesus, you were united to him by faith, and so brought you into relationship with the Triune God. You have an unbreakable relationship with Jesus, that not even death can dissolve (Romans 8:38-39). So, God the Father and God the Son are always present to us by God the Holy Spirit, as Jesus promised:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. (John 14:15)

Many of you are experiencing hard things. Some of you have lost precious loved ones and are feeling the ongoing grief of missing them. Some face uncertainty about the future because of health issues, employment, or finances. Some of you are feeling tension and strain in your close relationships. Some feel loneliness when they would really like to be married. Some of you are concerned for the future of your children, grandchildren, or nieces and nephews.

I encourage you to take a hold of Psalm 73:23, so that you will know, as well as deeply sense and experience God's fatherly hand taking yours into his, and feel the joy and peace that comes from knowing you are always with God.

God Bless,
Mark Adams.