

Even There, Your Right Hand Shall Hold Me

—By Martha Vetter—



“If I should take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there ... your right hand shall hold me.” Psalm 139:9-10a

Many, many years ago, when I was in college, I took a semester abroad trip to England. This experience ended up being one of the most meaningful seasons of my life. It’s where I discovered the Anglican Church. It’s where I fell in love with liturgical worship, and it’s where I learned to lean into God, even when I felt alone.

One day, I was feeling homesick. If you’ve ever felt this way, you know that it’s a horrible feeling. Seeking solace, I rode my bicycle out to a rural chapel called Lapley and discovered an ancient graveyard, much like the one we have at St. Philip’s. I crumpled down against one of the weather-worn tombstones and gently leaned my head upon its tear-stained face. There, I cried out to God and asked him to give me peace and strength. I opened my Bible and meditated upon this scripture in Psalm 139, “even there ... your right hand shall hold me.”

Now, years later, I have just completed my lengthy journey to Central East Africa. I traveled from Charleston to New York, over an ocean to Qatar, over land and seas to Uganda, and finally over Lake Victoria to Rwanda! While I sat hour after hour, I could see the shining rays of dawn glancing down upon the plane. I didn’t feel homesick, but it reminded me of those lonely moments in my life when I was inspired to draw near to God.

On the leg of the trip to Qatar, I spoke to one of my seatmates, and I noticed a tear falling down her cheek as she began to

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cry. She shared a bit of her story and I saw that she was deeply depressed. I shared with her about a time in my life when I had felt the same way. Then she asked, "What helped you?" My heart leapt inside me, as I knew that this was God prompting me to speak his truth with her. I breathed a prayer, asking God for the right words, and suddenly a beautiful conversation opened up between us. It was like God's morning star had rested upon us.

At the airport in Qatar, we parted, but not before I encouraged her to get a Bible. She wrote down the names of good translations, and I also gave her specific verses to encourage her and to draw her into a deepening relationship with Jesus.

Many hours later, I landed in Rwanda. My old friends Godfrey and Marcel greeted me at the airport! We hugged and laughed and rejoiced that I had made it safely. Later that night, I noted, "Godfrey, I don't see so many mosquitoes." He replied, "You can be assured, mosquitoes are part of the family!" And yes, the mosquitoes have also joined with the family to welcome me! But most importantly, the LORD is with me. I know, as I lean into him, he has promised to lead me, to draw close to me, and to hold me gently in his right hand.

Thank you for praying for Martha's safe arrival! She asks for your continuing prayers for her interactions with old friends and former students, for her Bible lessons, and that the Lord's Spirit would order her steps and guide her conversations. Martha returns to Charleston on August 1.