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## Holding My Hand

Breaking News! Breaking News! Breaking News!

Airstrikes! War! Shootings! Disease! Tornados! Hurricanes! Just a few short weeks ago, I would hear these news items on TV or read about them on websites, wanting to make sure I was aware of what was happening in the world. I would feel sad for a few minutes for the others that were experiencing these problems, but they were so far away from my home and not a part of my everyday life. I would make sure I was praying for those in those situations. But... I would go on with my life in my tidy, scheduled, safe and comfortable life.

Breaking NEWS! Breaking NEWS! Breaking NEWS! Pandemic!

“A virus in China has reached unprecedented levels! Many deaths have occurred and it is spreading rapidly!” Again, news from far away. So, I prayed for those affected... and went on with my tidy, scheduled, safe and comfortable life.

Then each day, the volume on the dial increased! NOW, more countries, more cases, more deaths. Now, my attention was grabbed. This is getting too close to home! NOW. It is HERE in the US... in every state and the numbers are growing ASTRONOMICALLY.

Now the soft tapping drumbeats heard in distance are now loud crashing cymbals and a cacophony of confusing blasts! There are piercing alarms sounding day and night calling our attention to the very scary reality that this Covid19 Pandemic is at our door, in our neighborhoods, and possibly in our families.

Social Distance, LOCKDOWN, don't go out!

Oh.... Lord hear our cries.... Hear our pain... answer our prayers.

I had to think about the fact that we are experiencing, today, what others have experienced almost every day of their lives. Many of our brothers and sisters in this world live with wars, starvation, lack of hospital care, lack of clean water, no jobs and little hope daily. On this planet there is great pain and suffering and war and disease. How can I cope with this growing anxiety... the levels of stress are rising in me and around me? It is forcing me into choosing to live in FEAR or TRUST. As I thought of others that have gone through uncertain days I thought of this powerful story told to us by our dear friend Lucien from Beirut, Lebanon.

Several years ago, my husband and I were walking around the bullet-ridden streets of Beirut, Lebanon with our friend, Lucien, who lived there and was showing us his city. He lived through the horrendous seventeen-year war that devastated their country. Lucien, took us through areas still piled with rubble and smashed marble blocks strewn all over the city. As we were walking, he abruptly stopped at a beautiful crimson red door. I put my finger inside bullet holes that still remained, scarring the beauty. He stopped there because he had a story to tell us of how God

provided protection, mercy and strength though those days. Not for just one week or two but for SEVENTEEN years of living under threat of bombing and the enemy crouching around daily.

With great emotion he began.... "It was on this very street, right by this red door where I was taking a walk one Spring day, with my five-year-old son, Eve. It was a quiet, almost eerily silent day. Out of nowhere, I heard horrifying sounds of bombing, explosions, and ear-piercing warning sirens! I grabbed my son's tiny hand and raced for shelter in a nearby doorway.... It was THIS DOOR, and this doorway. I threw my body over my little boy, held him tightly and spoke softly to him and sang some songs into his ear, hoping to drown out the sounds of hate filling the sky. After what seemed to be eternity, the bombing ceased and sirens were silent, but only for a moment. The silence was broken but was replaced with the wailing and screaming of the people in our terror-stricken city. Some, were trying to find loved ones, and others were screaming for help as they stood beside those that were bleeding and dying on the streets. I grabbed my little boy and ran past the rubble and unspeakable horror, to our home just blocks away. With my heart still racing and my knees still shaking, I held my son closely. Trying to hide my own fear, I calmly asked my son Eve this question. "Eve do you know what that was?" Even replied calmly, "Oh yes Papa, that was bombing!"

"Were you afraid?" I asked.

"Oh NO, Papa" he replied

"Really, what kept you from fear?"

Then Eve answered me saying "Oh Papa, I wasn't afraid because I was holding your hand!"

Our friend said it was those five words, "I was holding your hand!" that kept him from what could have been paralyzing fear in the horrific days and years of war that followed. He and his family lost possessions, his home was bombed out two times, he lost friends and he was even left for dead on the side of a road after being shot. Yet he lived with hope and strength as he went to His Father moment by moment "holding His Hand". These were some of the verses from Scripture that he held on to:

"My grace is all you need" My power works best in weakness." II Cor. 12:9 NLT) Lucien lived those words of Scripture. He also claimed Psalm 91:2. " You are my place of safety and protection. You are my God and I trust you."

During these days, I often think back to many that have endured through trials and fear, like our friend Lucien. I am trying to make a conscience effort to concentrate on turning over my fear and anxiety to God. These are the days when I have to believe and claim all that I know of my loving faithful Father. I believe in the power and HOPE given to me in the RISEN Lord Jesus Christ. I have to believe THIS DAY.... It is TRUE or NOT TRUE. There is No Middle Ground. I BELIEVE....it is TRUE. But please Lord help me in the times of my unbelief when it comes. He is sheltering us all under His wings.

Psalm 57:1 GNT. "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful because I come to you for safety. In the shadow of your wings I find protection until the raging storms are over."

Yes, the days ahead are unknown. But I know I will look back on these times, like other times in my life when I didn't know the way forward, but trusted God. I will listen to the drumbeats, the

music of His words as He sings to me through, listening in prayer, His Words from Bible, and His beauty proclaimed in nature.

**BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING NEWS!**

**JESUS IS ALIVE AND IS "HOLDING YOUR HAND"!**

Isaiah 41:13: "For I, the Lord your God will HOLD YOUR right HAND saying to you, Fear not, I will help you..."