

HE CARRIES AND LEADS US

Isaiah 53:4. Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Isaiah 40:11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs on His arm, and carry them, in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young

Last week I flew to Asheville, NC to meet with our Butterfly group. As I took my seat on the plane, the lady next to me asked if I was a teacher, carrying so many books and folders. I replied, "not really, well sort of. I help women to know God loves them, wants to heal them and show them His purpose for their lives." "Oh" she said, "that's why you're sitting here." She was a tiny frail poor looking woman. She, Kathy, shared her story with me. She is from a very low income background, lives in a trailer park, and has struggled with smoking, drugs and alcohol. Several months ago she had a bad car accident and damaged her back and one leg. She is now in a wheelchair. She was flying to NC to take care of her mother who had cancer. Her sister who lived with and cared for her mother had just fallen and was injured and also needs help. She was on her way to care for both of them. Two years ago her third husband committed suicide, just one year after her son was murdered. Her eldest daughter doesn't talk to her because her step father, Kathy's second husband, violently abused her as a child and believes Kathy knew and didn't do anything.

After sharing all this sorrow including her three broken marriages, I asked " how is your heart doing Kathy?" "Well" she replied, "I think I had a heart attack during the car accident and I get terrible chest pain now, but it could be from my back pain." "Actually, I meant your emotional heart Kathy" I said. " Oh!" She looked at me, "I don't think I feel it any more." She was quiet and then said "I once read about Foot Steps in the sand, that Jesus carries us when we can't walk anymore. Then I went to church and the pastor from the pulpit mocked that poem and said it wasn't biblical. I never went back to church since. I searched the bible to find a verse that Jesus carries me but couldn't find one. "So how do you survive I asked?" She turned her hands over open to the sky and said with a shrug "surrender" surrender to God. My heart was breaking for this precious tiny broken woman. Her simple faith to cling. In spite of all her trials, disillusioned in church and tested to her physical limits, she surrenders. "How can you care for your mother and sister from a wheelchair?" I asked. Again she shrugged, lifting her open hands, "Surrender. I don't want to go to NC again. I just drove back last week. But my sister got sick so I have to."

As she was talking I was desperately asking the Holy Spirit to show me the verses where Jesus carries us. He took me to Isaiah 53:4 " *He has carried our sorrows*" I shared it with Kathy" I knew it!" she said. Her face lit up "I knew I was right.", As we continued reading other scripture, a card fell out from the pages of my bible with a verse I'd written on it years ago; Isaiah 40:11. " *He will feed His flock, He will gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in his bosom and gently lead those with young.*" I gave Kathy the cards and tears rolled down her cheeks, and mine. She was feeling her heart beat again. Jesus had come to tell her He has been carrying her, and He is still carrying her. We cried and prayed together and she openly and without prompting prayed for forgiveness, healing and restoration from her past of brokenness and pain. She thanked me for being an angel.

"No" I said.. "you were my angel. Jesus blessed and ministered to me through you. You see Kathy, this verse is for me too. I needed this promise today. I'm on my way to meet some sheep and lambs, women in North Carolina who are ministers to the broken, who themselves are carrying much sorrow. I need this promise to remind them that Jesus is carrying them too, and He will feed them, and He will gently lead and guide them as they lead others who are broken. He is the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd cares for His sheep. He is carrying us. We can rest in Him."

We had a precious week in North Carolina with our Butterfly leaders. Many of our group were hurting, or their families were hurting. Jesus our Good Shepherd ministered to us and filled us from His deep well and rivers of living water. Several of our leaders received His healing for deep hidden wounds and others experienced greater freedom to be all He is calling them to be. They left more equipped in His word, and empowered by His love and grace to minister to the broken hearted and the lost in North Carolina. Without the Holy Spirit we can do nothing. But with Him, He leads us to pastures new everyday.

May the Good Shepherd gently lead and carry you this week, no matter your trial or circumstance. He loves you and as Kathy can testify, His grace is sufficient for every trial.

In His precious love
Liz