

Holy Overshadowing

As I look out of the window at the bird feeder, I am delighted to see the first of this year's new chicks eagerly cheeping away, waiting for mum or dad to come and fill their hungry beaks. Although we remain in lockdown, although the world seems to be almost at a standstill as we await permission to pick up our daily lives again, we can give thanks that God is still at work. The world is still turning, the seasons come and go, life goes on.

In 2013, Graham Kendrick wrote a beautiful worship song entitled, "Holy Overshadowing." Here is a link to it, in case you are unfamiliar with it (I'm afraid you will need to skip the ads at the beginning - a "Skip Ads" button appears at the bottom right of the screen after about 5 seconds):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_Spi6YzQ20&feature=youtu.be

This song inspired a personal prayer, which I have been praying daily ever since lockdown started. Every day, I pray for those who are suffering in any way because of the virus, but I also ask God to cover us, our family, our village and all our friends with his mighty wings, and protect us until this terrible plague has passed.

There are so many references in the Bible to God protecting His children with His wings; these are just a few of them:

Psalm 17:8 - Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings;

Psalm 36:7 - How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

Psalm 91:4 - He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge;

Luke 13:34 - How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings ...

What a wonderful place to be! Safely tucked under God's wings, a beautiful, warm, quiet place. All we can hear is God's heartbeat as we snuggle closer to Him, safe and secure from the world around us, trusting in our God to protect us.

I remember a story I once heard, which may or may not be true, but it perfectly portrays God's loving care for His children, and the sacrifice that Jesus made for us:

Following a forest fire, the rangers visited the scene to assess the damage, and one ranger was horrified when he came across the charred remains of a bird still sitting, just as she had died, at the base of a tree, petrified in ashes. He found this sight so disturbing that he struck out at the grotesque remains with a stick, and was amazed by the sight of three tiny chicks scurrying out from under their dead mother's wings. It seems she had been aware of what had been about to happen, and had gathered her chicks under her wings; she could have flown away and saved herself, but she chose to stay with her little ones and protect them.

Because she was willing to die, her children, lived.

As you listen to Graham Kendrick's words, "*You are my shield, and my glory, You are the lifter of my head! And though the storms may rage around me, I'll be safe within, beneath the Holy Overshadowing ...*" take comfort that whatever is happening, God is with us. He is sheltering us and protecting us as the virus rages around us.

So let's all stay safe within, beneath the Holy Overshadowing, and continue to thank God for His mercy and protection. Amen.