

We had just moved to a new town. Our oldest child, Matthew was just three, our second child, Elizabeth, was ten months. A big concern in our life was who could we trust to care for them when we could not. We asked questions. People told us of Barb Luger.

She's really good with kids, they said.

We gave her a call. We trusted her to care for our children one afternoon. When the afternoon was over, we picked up our children from her house.

Matt was happy, he told us of all that had filled his afternoon. Beth was content, happy too as far as we could see. Seeing the sparkle in Barb's eyes, her obvious love for children we knew we had found the right place for them.

I remember feeling good about leaving our children with Barb from that time on. I remember all the happy greetings in her kitchen when he returned, papers our children wanted to show us, their excitement, their joy. When they were with her we gave them not another thought, they were safe. We were sure.

Though we never used the word, we had faith in Barb. Not because anyone told us to have faith, but because of what we had heard and seen.

Now my children have grown older. Our youngest, Katie, is already thirteen. So many hours of they day they are on their own. I am tempted to worry. Accidents, diseases, the cruelty of some people, how I long to protect them from all of these. If only there was a Barb Luger to turn them over to each day.

I am tempted to worry about my wife, Sue. Will she be safe as she drives to and from work? Will sickness strike her? *Will a mygale attach her?*

I am tempted to worry about me? Will I get cancer and die young as my mother did? Will I suffer great bouts of depression as my father did? Will there be trouble in the church, will I fail?

I am tempted to worry about the world. Are hard times coming, times of poverty and violence and hunger? Will pollution bring disaster, will Aids become a weight dragging all of society down?

Jesus speaks a simple word to me and to you, Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

A simple word, Do not be afraid, little flock. God will have his way with you after all.

Sometimes it seems God's simple word could never weigh as much as the realities we see.

Take Abraham.

God's word to him was leave behind your Father's house, go to a new land and I will make of you a great nation.

Abraham left his father's land, his father's people, went to the land that God showed him, and waited. And waited. No son was given to him and Sarah, his wife.

One day God spoke to him another word through a vision. Do not be afraid, Abraham, I am your shield; your reward will be very great. But Abraham said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless."

But the Lord said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendents be,"

And Abraham believed.

With nothing but God's word to go on Abraham believed. And he was not disappointed.

A son Isaac was born to the one hundred year old Abraham, and the ninety year old Sarah. <sup>ff</sup> To whom shall we entrust ourselves and the people we

love, the whole world we love? To the Lord who kept his promise to Abraham.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

We are like Abraham, you and I. Leave behind your worries and your fears, Jesus says to us. Entrust your life to God. Entrust the people you love to God.

Jesus said, Therefore I tell you do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?

God is faithful. From giving Abraham a child, to raising Jesus from the dead, all of scripture shouts that one truth. God is faithful. As he was Abraham's shield, and Jesus' shield, he will be your shield, in your life now, and forever.

Talk to the people among us who have suffered. You will hear them say "God is faithful." As Sue and I used to leave our children with Barb, so they have left themselves and their loved ones in the care of their Lord and have found God providing all they need day after day.

Do not be afraid, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Open the scriptures to read of the faithfulness of God. Talk with one  
another. <sup>tell of the goodness of God.</sup> And you will know into whose care you will want to entrust  
yourself, your loved ones, the whole world.

Do not be afraid, little flock.