

Fear Not, I Have Redeemed You

By Linda Guteres



But now thus
says the LORD, he
who created you,
O Jacob, he who
formed you,
O Israel: "Fear not,
for I have redeemed
you; I have called
you by name,
you are mine.

Isaiah 43:1

I almost skipped over the Facebook post before I realized my son could have been one of the seven soldiers killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq.

Our youngest son, Thomas, deployed in January. I wasn't too nervous about this trip. He said he would be gone just three to four months. He wouldn't be fighting. He was staying in a large army base located in the middle of a desert. All he would be doing was working on the ground equipment maintaining airplanes. Ultimately, he would be doing the same thing he did at our local air base; he would just be doing it in Iraq.

He would be safe, right?

Thomas told me he had volunteered to be a "rescue dummy." He would pretend to be an injured party in a mock rescue operation. He was very excited about being rescued and then hauled up through the air into a hovering helicopter.

The more I read about the helicopter crash, the more I fell into a tail spin. I tried to call Thomas but there was no answer. I attempted to text him, but again, all communications had been shut down.

In an instant, the danger of Tom's deployment became all too real, and I did what I always do when I am faced with fear. I retreated into myself.

My heart-wrenching prayers began. There was nothing else I could do.

Normally I am the leader, I am the strong one, I am the person people

come to for prayer, for support, for a listening ear. I know all the Bible verses, and I know the Lord. But when life kicks me in the gut, I tend to withdraw into myself in a feeble attempt to stay safe.

For the next 36 hours, I prayed, I cried, I screamed, I called out to God begging Him not to take Thomas from our family. I pleaded with God to keep him safe from harm and allow him to come home in a few months unscathed.

I screamed at Satan, telling him that no matter what the outcome was, Tom was God's child and nothing could tear him out of His hand.

Boldly I reminded God that Thomas was more His child than mine, bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. I begged God to keep Tom safe and to allow him to return home as originally planned.

Obviously I was a mess.

Eventually the Word — His Word — written on my heart, broke through the barriers of solitude I had erected. I was reminded of the comforting verses I learned so many years ago:

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,

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