

*I will take you by the hand and keep you*

**Isaiah 42:6**

***I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you.***

A pleasant memory I have of my father and myself as a little boy is when I would accompany him on his rounds around the farm to check on possible broken fences. He would take me by my hand and make sure that I would not fall and hurt myself. It made me feel so safe knowing that he was big and strong and that he would let nothing hurt me. I knew that he loved me very much.

Holding hands by couples is also a sign of love and affection, care and concern. And then there is the recent story of a couple dying from COVID, holding hands as they entered eternity together.

My wife Donna and I chose for one of our wedding hymns “Lord Take Thou My Hand and Lead Me” (LSB 722). Some phrases from that hymn are “direct, protect and feed me,” “when the tempest rages, I need not fear, for you, the Rock Ages are always near,” “Lord when the shadows lengthen and night has come, I know that you will strengthen my steps toward home,” and “So take my hand and lead me unto the end.” This hymn continues to be of great comfort to us as we have just celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of walking together with God.

Our wedding verse speaks of the Father taking the hand of His Servant Son, Jesus, and helping Him through His life, sufferings, death and resurrection. He now envisions His Servant as standing before Him. God is grasping His right hand to uphold and strengthen Him for the seemingly impossible task which is His: taking on the sins of the world.

This promise is given to the children of Israel as they were in the depths of suffering for their own actions. It should have reminded them of how the Lord called and led Abraham, Moses, and David. Jesus, the Suffering Servant through his ministry, will fulfill the promise to be “a light for the Gentiles (That’s us!).”

When we read the phrase “I will keep you,” it is an indication of His mighty power to do whatever He has promised including holding our hand during these confusing and turbulent times. Some of our earthly supports will leave us but the Lord will never let go of our hand until He leads us to eternity

Dear Lord, thank you for your eternal promise to hold our hands even when others can’t be near us. Thank you for ensuring our eternal certainty by your life, suffering, death and resurrection. Be my strength and stay through all my life’s doings. Amen.