

Read: Isaiah 63:7-9

God's kindness is better than a mocha

Isaiah 63:7-9

I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. He said, “Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me”; and so he became their Savior. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy, he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It was a rainy, gray Monday after a long weekend. The first graders were already a little squirrely because they missed morning recess due to a steady, cold drizzle of rain. Now, news reached their teacher that noon recess would also be spent inside, and since it was the upper graders turn to use the gym, their class would have to stay in their classroom for the noon hour recess.

The teacher was just as distressed as her students. Then, she glanced up from her desk. A parent of one of the students was standing in the classroom door, holding out a steamy cup of liquid gold. “I thought you might need a mocha coffee today,” she said.

“What an angel!” the teacher exclaimed as she teared up. She told everyone about the coffee kindness. She took a selfie of herself enjoying her first sip and texted in all caps “THANK YOU!” to the amazing parent. She even posted about it on her social media. Why? She wanted everyone to know about the mocha that made her day.

Today, Isaiah the prophet writes, “I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord.” He was experiencing an even more dreary situation than a miserable Monday. Isaiah and his people were trapped—not in a classroom, but in the darkest, gloomiest place imaginable. A place not just absent from sun but from the SON. And no weather forecast or amount of coffee could change the mess they had made—not because of their mistakes, but their sins. Imagine having to spend forever trapped in a place where you don’t want to be.

This Christmas, God steps through the door of our distressed world and lives and “in his love and mercy, he redeemed them” (verse 9). Jesus has come to pay in full the price needed to set us free. We get to enjoy an eternal recess in heaven, because of Jesus.

We are redeemed, and heaven is ours! Now say it with the pent-up energy of a first grader: “We are redeemed, and heaven is ours!” Coffee may carry a teacher through an afternoon, but

God's compassion lifts us up and carries us through not just one afternoon—but all the afternoons of our lives until we get to heaven.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- How many blessings can you name in 30 seconds? (*Ready, set, GO!*)
- What is the best blessing of them all?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Do you know someone who drinks coffee? Describe how coffee makes him/her feel. How do they feel when they haven't had their morning coffee? Now describe how you feel if didn't have Jesus to wake up to in the morning.
- Talk about a time when someone showed kindness to you. Can you think of a way to show kindness to others? How can our actions point someone to Jesus?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What is the heaviest thing you have ever lifted? How far did you carry it? Discuss how that relates to Jesus in verse 9: "In his love and mercy, He redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old."
- When Christmas break is over, think of at least one way you can encourage someone with an act of kindness. How does it reflect God's kindness to you?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Redeemer, forgive us for the times we are so "blah" to all the blessings you give us. Make us alert to and thankful for all the many ways you sustain us—from the whipped cream on top of a mocha to fun recesses and thoughtful children and parents. Make us bold to tell of your kindnesses everywhere we go! Amen.