

**Read: Exodus 33:12-23**

## We Have Rest When God is with Us

### **Exodus 33:14**

The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

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

Little Lilly stumbled out of the grocery store. Her little legs were tired from shopping, and she was eager to hop up into the van to rest for a bit. She burst out of the doors toward the parking lot when she suddenly and instantly stopped. She waited at the edge of the parking lot for dad to catch up. Without saying a word or turning her head, she stretched her arm up toward the sky. Instantly she felt the strong yet loving embrace from daddy's hand, and the two marched on toward the van.

Are you familiar with this scene? It happens all over and all the time—at grocery stores, at stoplights, in the neighborhood. Often it happens automatically and without thinking. A child is trained so well that it becomes like a natural instinct. When you are by cars, you go with an adult and hold their hand. That's when you're safe. That's when you're protected. That's when you're OK to keep going.

Moses and the Israelites needed to do a little learning and training about this. Most of the Israelites thought that they could go through the desert and to the Promised Land *without* their heavenly Father. They often tried to go their own way alone, and every time, it turned out to be a bad choice.

But Moses prayed and pleaded with the Lord to be gracious and forgiving. He asked that God would go with them into the Promised Land. Sure enough, God forgave his people once again and promised to go with them. Moses and the people could be at rest—they could take comfort that they were safe, and it was OK to keep going forward because God would be with them.

We are often like the Israelites. We go astray and try to go our own way. Sometimes we get so busy that we forget about God. Sometimes we are very stubborn and think we don't need God, that we can go through life on our own. How foolish! It's like we are little kids who think we can run into the street without an adult! It's never safe to go anywhere or do anything without our God!

Thank God that even though we stray from him, he came to be with us. Jesus himself came to be with us. He came to bring us forgiveness for going our own way by living for us and dying on the cross. Even today, Jesus still comes to be with us. Jesus comes to us in his Word and in Baptism and Communion so that we can be assured that we are dearly loved by our heavenly Father.

You may feel afraid about many things in life. But take rest and comfort in this promise—because of Jesus' love and forgiveness, you have a Father in heaven who will be with you and hold your hand every step of the way!

*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 Younger Children**

- Why is it important to be with an adult when you face dangerous or scary things?
- Why is it important to turn to God when you face dangerous or scary things?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Can you recall sinful things the Israelites did in the desert that made God very upset?
- If they sinned so much, why did God continue to take the Israelites into the Promised Land?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Describe what someone may feel like who tries to go through life alone and without God.
- Evaluate this statement: I know God is with me when I can feel that God is with me.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, remind me that you are always with me. I know that when you are with me you will guide, guard, and protect me. Take my hand and lead me throughout life. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 385:1,3 – Chief of Sinners Though I Be**

Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed his blood for me,  
Died that I might live on high, Lives that I might never die.  
As the branch is to the vine, I am his and he is mine!

Only Jesus can impart Comfort to a wounded heart:  
Peace that flows from sin forgiv'n, Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,  
Faith and hope to walk with God In the way that Enoch trod.