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The Main Thing Devotional

Chaplain's Office

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## You Belong

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### **The Main Thing Devotional: You Belong**

“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 the 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, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, peoples in exchange for your life.” Isaiah 43:1-4 ESV.

**Last week Wednesday as Hurricane Sally made landfall near the Gulf Shores, Alabama as a Category 2 hurricane** with sustained winds over 105 m.p.h and dumping nearly two feet of rain already by 5:00am, my mother and I prayed fervently on the phone. My sister and brother-in-law were smack dab in the middle of the storm, hunkered down in the bathtub of the hotel room they had retreated to. They had already been without power for several hours, and windows in other nearby rooms had already shattered. The wind howled eerily.

Have you ever been in a situation that seemed bleak or felt overwhelming? Perhaps as you started this semester you’ve been overwhelmed by all that life has thrown at us this year:

- The economic, emotional, mental and maybe physical impact of COVID-19 on you and your family
- The Chattanooga tornado
- Racial injustices across the nation
- Fires on the west coast
- Hurricanes in the south
- Political debates
- The loss of someone you loved, respected, or looked up to
- The struggle of quarantine, isolation, and or distance education
- The loss of in-person corporate worship experiences

The questions begin to surface from our hearts: When will this ever end? How will I ever make it through this? Anxiety, fear, and grief may have a grip on you that is hard to overcome. But the words of our Heavenly Father, Almighty God, Wonderful Counselor, and Prince of Peace pierce through the pain and declare:

"Fear not!"

“I have redeemed you.”

“I have called you by name.”

“You are mine.”

Notice here in Isaiah 43:2 God does not say “*if* you pass through waters” or “*if* you walk through fire.” God boldly proclaims His faithfulness when He predicts “**when** you pass through waters...**when** you walk through fire...I will be with you. You shall not be overwhelmed. You shall not be burned. The flame will not consume you.” In verse 11 He

announces, "I, I am the Lord, and beside me there is no savior." In verse 13 He shouts, "There is none who can deliver you from my hand!"

God may not remove the trial. But He may cause you to walk on water, or to part the sea, or to stand in the fiery furnace and witness His supernatural power at work on your behalf! We are not promised freedom from trouble or affliction. But we are promised comfort and eventual deliverance. Because of God's unending love for us God works miracles, daily, on our behalf, many of which we never see ourselves.

You may not be huddled in a bathtub seeking safety today, but you may be struggling academically or feeling lonely or worried about your family. Whatever is heavy on your heart today know that the God of the universe says this over and over again: "Fear not. I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine." By declaring this over your life God has emphatically stated to the universe that nothing else has claim over you and your life. No matter the trials that come, no matter the enemy's pursuit after you - nothing and no one has claim on you because our Heavenly Father claims you and loves you. Here, in the loving arms of Jesus, is where **you belong**.

### **Reflection**

- What does it mean to you that God calls you His own? How does it make you feel?
- What kind of trial have you been through recently and how have you seen God's deliverance?
- As you reflect on your life and the ways you've seen God work, what kind of hope does this give you for the trial you're facing now or the trials that are sure to come in the future?
- Are you wrestling with anxiety or grief? Join our [Grief Support Group](#) today.
- Do you have a place where you feel like you belong? Find belonging by doing life together and exploring the love of God more fully - [join a LifeGroup today](#) - over 50 options to choose from!

### **Prayer**

*Gracious Heavenly Father, I hear you calling me by name today. Calling me into your loving arms where comfort, peace, and security are found even in the midst of the trials I'm facing and the burdens I'm carrying. Today I pray for the baptism of your Holy Spirit in my life to give me faith in place of my fear and to be able to experience true belonging in you. God I thank you for the powerful ways I have seen you work in my life and I pray today that I would be able to see your mighty hand at work again. But even if you do not deliver me from this current trial God, I choose to trust in you - my Creator and my Redeemer. I pray this in your powerful name, amen.*

LIVE DIFFERENT.  
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#### NEWS AND RESOURCES

- **Vespers:** Don't miss Student Missions Vespers this Friday and hear how God is calling you to [live different](#). You must reserve your Vespers seat in advance. Unfortunately, if you do not reserve a seat in advance, we cannot guarantee you a seat and will invite you to plan to [livestream Vespers](#) at [southern.edu/events](https://southern.edu/events) from your residence. We have two Vespers services:
  - o First Service: 6:30pm-7:30pm to reserve: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/122057504281>
  - o Second Service: 8:00pm-9:00pm to reserve: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/122058386921>
- **United in Prayer:** Every morning at the flag pole in front of Wright Hall from 8:15-8:30 (M-F), students, join with faculty, staff and students to specifically pray for an end to any racial division within our campus, our church, and our nation. For more information, feel free to contact [Stephanie Guster](#).
- Share your prayer requests or praises with us via text message using your mobile phone. **Text-to-Pray: 423-281-8996.**
- **Need to talk to someone?** We encourage you to make an appointment to with Chaplains [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to talk to for support, prayer or have a desire to grow spiritually.