

Upheld

***“I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
Isaiah 41:10***

This is one of my favorite promises from Scripture. God says that He will uphold us in times of trouble; but notice that we are not just held by His hand, but by His *righteous, right hand*. What does that mean? The phrase “right hand” in Scripture is often used metaphorically to symbolize power and authority. The “righteousness” of God is the same as His faithfulness and truthfulness, everything that is consistent with His character and His promises. Therefore, God is telling us that we are upheld by the very power and authority of His immutable nature. I’m so thankful that I am not “upheld” based on how well I am doing or how spiritual I am—Isaiah 64:6 tells me that all my righteous acts are like “filthy rags”, anyway—but rather, I am upheld on the basis of *His* righteousness.

I am reminded of the conductor of an orchestra, who holds a baton high in his right hand for all to see. That baton signifies his leadership and authority. Wielding his baton, the conductor has the power to draw out beautiful harmonies and thundering crescendos from the musicians. The baton has no power of its own, but when used by the conductor, it plays a key role in influencing not only every member of the orchestra, but also everyone in the audience who is watching and listening, deeply moved by the sound.

It is one of the great paradoxes of Scripture that it is only when we admit to being weak and powerless that God can accomplish His purposes through us. We cannot hope to influence those around us through our own strength or self-induced righteousness. Our only hope is to be completely yielded and surrendered to the Master, upheld by His righteous right hand so that all can see His miraculous workings in our lives.

Questions to ponder:

1. Read aloud Isaiah 64:6. What are the implications of this verse for how you live your life? Does it mean you should no longer worry about doing good to others?
2. Think of a difficult time in your life when you were in desperate need of the Lord’s help and strength. In what way(s) did He uphold you?
3. In what ways were those around you influenced by watching you go through this trial?