



It was a beautiful Fall day at the beach. The waves were lapping gently against the shore, the sun's rays were warm on my body and the breeze cool. Facing the ocean, I rocked back and forth. On my shoulder and into my neck, nestled a little head, with curly red hair matted to a face soaked and stained with tears. Our granddaughter was exhausted and spent. It had been a particularly rough day at the beach for a little toddler. She wasn't feeling her best and her toddler emotions had taken their toll. As she was having a "moment" at the house, I started to escape for a walk on the beach but something made me turn around, pick her up, and take her with me.

My mother told me that I myself was a "trying" baby who cried a lot and refused to sleep. A neighbor would come to the house and watch me so my mother could escape to walk up and down the street. She needed a break. Walking soothed her and to this day, I find that when I am anxious, my first instinct is to walk. So with the little head on my shoulder, I walked. My back ached, my knees protested and my arms quivered from exhaustion, but I walked.

As I carried her little body in my arms using all the strength I could muster, I felt the fight and tension leave her body as she drifted off to sleep. I whispered in her ear how much she was loved and then I stopped and turned to the ocean. Standing there, I thought of the things I wrestle with. I thought of the emotional burdens that I carry, and the tension I hold onto. I thought about the battles of life I struggle with each day and time spent fretting and worrying. I thought about my rebellious nature; determined and fighting to have my way over God's will. All of it leaves me physically and mentally exhausted. Then I thought of the **ONE** who will carry it *all* for us. During his earthly ministry, **Jesus** walked. He walked from town to town, giving healing to the sick, the lame, and the blind. He comforted the brokenhearted and gave peace to the distressed.

With my feet in the warm sand and my eyes gazing far into the ocean, I heard God speaking to me. He reminded me that when I feel overwhelmed with the burdens, struggles, and trials of life, and when my emotions have wearied me and taken their toll, all I need to do is rest my head on his shoulder. I need to quit wrestling. I need to surrender, let go, quit fighting, and lean into him. He who is all-powerful and sovereign over creation is tender with His children as he gathers them near. He lovingly cares and gently guides. He holds us close to his heart; close to himself. On his shoulder and in his strong arms, we find protection, security, and rest. In the **Good Shepherd**, we find peace as we dwell in his everlasting love.

He tends his flock like a shepherd:



***He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.***

Isaiah 40:11

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