



Someday

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Rev. Pia Diggs

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I can imagine that I am in good company by saying, I'm looking forward to things to getting back to 'normal' – even a settled new normal will suffice. Whatever that is...for normal was and will forever be relative.

May I define my normal...usual, regular, common...Normal – or at least what I'd like to believe it will be for me.

Normal for me, would be to **comfortably** be able to take my 6-month-old baby and/or 2-year-old toddler to the inside of grocery store just to pick up a shopping cart full of groceries. They only know what it's like for someone else to bring them to the car, in parking space 1-5.

Normal for me, would be - without apprehension, hesitation, or reservation - to invite family and friends over, for a gathering JUST because, who doesn't enjoy good company, with good food and good conversation?

Normal for me, would be me visiting my 95-year-old grandmother because I haven't seen her since her husband, my grandfather died – to visit without considering germs or viruses I can see or even know I have

NORMAL – again, NORMAL is relative. There is no consistent response for what normal was, what normal is...or the normal that is sure to come.

The Good News is SOMEDAY there **will be** a consistent response of normal...a new normal...the normal that we will experience as the text references, when we reside in our new building...the one not made with human hands...Someday.

Normal – with so much looming in our culture, in our world, in our hearts and on our minds...Normal and Someday seem really far away. The text today reminds of us of a familiar Christian principle, we walk by faith and not by sight.

But what if what we see is heavy? What if what we see is hard? What if what we see is confusing? What if what we see is our world...struggling? People....struggling? And if we're honest...some of us, maybe even, most of us...are struggling. I'm sure I am in the right room, at the right time, with the right people to say, "God we need you...NOW!!!" We needed you yesterday...but today seems a bit more pressing...we need you speak...we need your help to silence the noise or at least soften it just a tad so we can hear from you...we need BEAMS of heaven to shine, to strengthen and to encourage us this morning.

Today I am continuing the sermon series on hymns by The Rev. Charles Albert Tindley. Beams of Heaven As I Go appears in many hymnals today but some have it entitled as Beams of Heaven and others list the song as Someday – which was the original title.

When considering this reflection today I started at the basics - what is a beam and how can that beam offer the things that the hymnologist speaks of in the hymn.

Beams of heaven as I go...through the wilderness below, guide my feet in peaceful ways, turn my midnights into days..

Beams of Heaven.

If you google the definition of beam – the first definition that shows up, reads, “a long, sturdy piece of squared timber or metal spanning an opening or part of a building, usually to support the roof or floor above.”

In essence a beam offers support...adds to the integrity of the building to ensure that it can ENDURE some things...it makes the building stronger...for the ceiling or the floor above...it helps to make sure it doesn't fall or sink...

When I think of Jesus...when I think of beams of heaven...I can't help but consider the ways that Jesus has continuously provided us with help, support and strength. Church there are many days that I can imagine Charles Albert Tindley needed the help, the support, the strength that only beams of heaven could offer. There are seasons in our lives that our friends, as lovely and amazingly beautiful as they are, they can't fill the shoes of our Savior. There are seasons in our lives that our family, as much as they may love us, and pray for us, and encourage us – they too, can't do, what our Lord can.

The scripture today reminds us that we are to make it our goal to please the Lord – that we are to live responsibly – that we are to do and be GOOD – beams of heaven, the beams that help us, support us and strengthen us – are necessary and present.

What I appreciate about Charles Albert Tindley is that he didn't ignore the problems or challenges of the day but instead clung to the ONE who understands, the ONE who knows, the ONE who sees, the ONE who shall lead us...the ONE who will ensure that we will get home someday.

The hymnologist says in verse 3, Harder yet may be the fight; right may often yield to might; wickedness a while may reign; Satan's cause may seem to gain...BUT...but there's a God that rules above, with hand of power and heart of love, and if I'm right, he'll fight my battle...I shall have peace someday.

Beams of Heaven provide us with SUPPORT, help, strength – not ours but His – remember it's in my weakness...HE is strong...

Beams of Heaven – couldn't we all use some beams...

- On the cloudy days – beams
- On the sunny days – beams
- In frigid temperatures – beams
- In extreme heat – beams

Beams of heaven – Beams of support – beams of strength - We shall have peace – SOMEDAY!

The second definition that shows in dictionary for the word beam is a ray or shaft of light. A ray of light. When I think of the beams of heaven being a ray of light from heaven, the visual that comes to mind...me driving on a cloudy day, it's a little gray outside because the clouds are hiding the sun...at the appointed time, the clouds make way for the sun by separating just a enough that a rays of light, beams of heaven, shine down on us, God's creation – beams of heaven...

Jesus is the light of the world. The light illuminates our paths, the light helps us see, the light is our guide, the light, the beams of heaven are purposed and reminds us that we are not alone. In Ellie Holcombe's Fighting Words devotional, she asked her boys, "If y'all are in a dark room, and you turn on a flashlight, what are you going to see?" They both piped in energetically, "The light!" That's right boys don't ever forget that the light is ALWAYS stronger than the darkness. She then had them go test out the theory. Go take this [flashlight] and turn it on in every dark place you can think of and let me know what you see! Of course, they did, the closets, under couches, and in the bathrooms with the lights off – you know what? EVERY time they would scream, The light IS stronger! We can see it! What if we considered this light to be our spiritual flashlight and just as we keep flashlights around the house in the event of a power outage – we did the same for our spiritual life. We know that there will be darkness, there is darkness, there has been darkness

Can you imagine all the darkness that Charles Albert Tindley endured...his mother died at an early age...that's enough – but there's more – he ended up working alongside those that were enslaved, as hired help, but wait, there's more - he wasn't able to learn the traditional way, like you and I, he was self-taught in a lot of ways because he wasn't allowed to 'freely' read but there's more – he endured, he persevered, he pushed, he was focused...he was guided...he used his spiritual flashlight and defied the odds...he reminded us today that we can do more than they Tell us we can (many times, even more than we ourselves believe), we can go longer than they think we can, we can show up in ways that gave up on us when we have beams of heaven shining bright, shining on us...shining for us...making and revealing the way.

The hymnologist speaks – often times my sky is clear, joy abounds without a tear, though a day so bright begun, clouds may hide tomorrow's sun. There'll be a day that's always bright, a day that never yields to night, and in its light the streets of glory – I shall behold Someday.

Suffering and sorrow are REAL! Joy and Celebrations are REAL! They are felt to our core...they are a part of our world. Charles Albert Tindley speaks on such things but also honors and celebrates or rather bask in the light...beams of heaven – he understood today's text and the role we play in contributing to the good on the earth while also understanding that's the charge...to DO good - to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God

Beams of heaven – couldn't we all use a few more beams

- In the dark places that we see – beams
- In the dark places – we never name – beams
- In the spaces we have yet to travel – beams

We give you thanks for the ones we've already overcome – thanks to your BEAMS of heaven – beams of light

We will rest in that place – SOMEDAY

Beams of heaven provide us with strength and or support. Beams of heaven provide us with light. and beams of heaven provide us with hope. The scripture today – reminds us that the Spirit lives within us, we have a guarantee of what's to come...one translation says it like this, "The Spirit of God whets our appetite by giving us a taste of what lies ahead. He puts a little of heaven in our hearts, so we never settle for less. That's why we live with good cheer. You won't see us drooping our heads or dragging our feet! Cramped conditions don't get us down. They only remind us of the spacious living conditions ahead. IT's what we trust in but don't yet see that keeps us going. Do you suppose a few ruts in the road or rocks on the path are going to stop us? When the time comes, we'll be plenty ready to exchange exile for homecoming.

The hymnologists said: Burdens now may crush me down, disappointments all around, troubles speak in mournful sigh, sorrow through a tear-stained eye. There is a world where pleasure reigns, no mourning soul shall roam its plains, and to that land of peace and glory. I shall want to go someday.

Beams of heaven – couldn't we all use a few more beams

How many journeyed alongside Charles Albert Tindley – with the attempt to disturb his spirit, his soul and possibly his life...I am not naïve to assume that everybody liked him or appreciated what he was doing for the kingdom of God – the people of God - the mighty ways that he did his best to make sure that heaven was reflected on earth, especially for black/brown people. He saw the injustices and he did what he could, to level out the playing field.

Tindley was known for being a captivating preacher, and for also taking an active role in the betterment of the people in his community. His songs were an outgrowth of his preaching ministry, often introduced during his sermons. Tindley was able to draw people of multiple races to his church ministry; likewise, his songs have been adopted and proliferated by white and black churches alike. (Hymnary.com)

Beams of heaven – we see how beams of heaven helped those in the scriptures

- Was reassurance to try again on a boat
- Was a calming presence in the middle of a storm
- Was ray of light on the top of the mountain
- Was a food supply for a crowd of hungry people
- Was new life in a funeral procession

Beams of heaven was reflected in Charles Albert Tindley's life

- Was freedom on slave plantations
- Was boldness at church when he confessed, he could read
- Was wisdom when he hired tutors to fill in gaps and learn new things
- Was humility when he was a janitor at the church that later he pastored
- Were creative juices, gifted hands as he wrote multiple hymns

Beams of heaven in our life

- Is hope for normal to return in the midst of a pandemic
- Comfort even with doubts, questions, and fears because we know God is with us
- Food for the hungry
- Living water for the thirsty
- Justice in the face of injustice
- Open eyes, and open ears to see and hear as God to take care of God's people...ALL God's people

It is our privilege and responsibility to be a part of God's mission here on earth. The beauty is we are not alone, we have beams of heaven as we go...

If I'm honest, there's not much that I know, that I know that I know...but I am sure of a few things, one of them being that someday will come...the day where we will meet Jesus, face to face...the time will come...when we will grace his face... I do not know how long 'twill be, nor what the future holds for me, but this I know: if Jesus leads me, I shall get home someday.