

Maxwell-

I don't know what I'm doing.

None of us do, that's in the hands of God- to have a preordained pathway planned for us.

Trust in His guidance.

God will never give you more than you are capable of handling.

It's only a matter of rising to the occasion.

That's right.

How can we be so sure, though?

That God never gives us more than we can handle?

It all seems to be too much. It always feels like it's too much.

And it might feel like it'll always be too much- but that isn't the case, Anthony.

God only gives us as much as we can handle because He loves us.

In a sense, it's not that dissimilar to the parenting techniques you employ towards your daughter.

A good parent encourages their child to discover who they are, and what they'll do in this world- even if we all are familiar with the growing pains of those clumsy years of adolescence.

Growth comes hand in hand with pain, and we reap the rewards we justly deserve.

It might seem impossible, but through His grace- all things are possible.

We are but children- toddling on unsteady steps into the light of the future.

But have faith that He will see you through these dark times.

There will never be only this.

It's just all so much. I feel like I am drowning in it. It's inescapable. It's relentless.

I don't understand how anyone can be expected to bear it on their own.

But you are not alone, Anthony.

I am here.

Your community, your fellow congregation- you don't have to bear the brunt of all of this pain and grief on your own. It takes a village to raise a child. You aren't an island.

Some things will never become easy to bear. Only easier, with the passage of time, and the remote distance that it grants us- a gauzy veil over that which hurts the most. You might always carry this wound within you, but it does not have to define your life, or who you are. It does not have to define your capacity to be a loving father to that little girl, Anthony. You are wounded, but you are not broken.

I vowed that should the unthinkable occur, that I would be there to take your daughter into my custody and raise her as you and Lara would have wanted. I haven't reneged on that. I'm a man of my word. And I am here, for as long as and as much as you need me to be here for you.

You are loved, Anthony. You are so loved.

It's just difficult to see that sometimes, and I understand. But that lack of vision does not mean that it isn't there. It is as constant as the revolutions of this good green earth, or the gentle arcs that the planets find themselves enacting out- celestial turnstiles and swooping paths.

Thank you, Maxwell.

I think that I needed to hear that.

I wish there was more I could say.

They're clumsy little building blocks of creation, aren't they, words? It's alright. I understand.

You don't need to apologize. There's nothing for you to apologize for.

If you need to take some time to compose yourself, or to decompress- please do so. Antoniette, Joshua and I can watch over Catherine. It's quite a full enough house. The girls might enjoy some play time together, as it stands. Amie's a little rascal. She's just learning how to share.

I don't know what I would do without you guys.

And you don't need to concern yourself over immaterial worries like that. We are here. That is all that matters. We're not going anywhere, Anthony. It's what you do for the people you love.