In his book *Cure for a Common Life*, Max Lucado tells a story that many of us who have parented college kids might identify with. He received an overdraft notice for his college-age daughter’s checking account.

He thought about what he should do. He could send her an angry letter but that wouldn’t satisfy the bank. He could phone her and tell her to make a deposit. But that would be like telling a fish to fly because she had no cash. Transferring money from his account to hers seemed like the best option. After all, he had $25.37 plus the overdraft fee. So, he did what dads do. He covered his daughter’s mistake.

When he told her she was overdrawn she was sorry, but still offered no deposit. She was broke. She had one option, “Dad, could you..” He interrupted, “I already have.” He met her need before she knew she had one.[[1]](#endnote-1)

God meets our needs before we know we have them too, gathering us to Him as a hen gathers her chicks to keep them safe from predators. God in God’s loving mercy makes the deposits for us, sending His Son to stretch out his arms on the cross offering Himself to protect those under His arms.

Our job is to accept this protection, to be willing to be held under God’s wing. Sometimes we have a hard time accepting something that’s offered to us for free. We are used to living in a world of quid pro quo – you do something for me and then I’ll do something for you. We can’t get our heads around the idea that someone would love us so much that they would be willing to die to protect us. We tend to mistrust that this isn’t for real. Sometimes our pride prevents us from being as vulnerable as a little chick, from depending upon God for everything we need. We want to feel strong – that we can do everything we need to do on our own power. We struggle with the knowledge that we need this protection. Yet, of course, we do. We need God. We need God’s loving protection that gather us to Him. We need that loving protection that covers our mistakes with his own deposit. We need that loving protection that gives us strength to continue to be faithful in difficult circumstances.

Frans Floris, a 16th-century Belgian artist, painted an “Allegory of the Trinity,” a copy of which is on your bulletin. This is a very strong visual illustration of Jesus gathering us to himself under his wings as he spreads his arms on the cross. Some of the people look prayerful, others are just simply looking on. Yet Jesus stretches out his wings to cover all those who are willing to be covered. This is grace. This is the concept that God makes us holy through stretching out his arms over us. It is the concept that God protects us just because He loves us, not because we’ve done anything to earn God’s protection. It is the concept that God stretches out his arms over us even when we do wrong. Even as bad things happen, we know that Jesus holds us close so that the power of those bad things over us is limited. Jesus holds us close even if we have caused the bad things ourselves. Because Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to go to the cross for us, we may feel pain but we are not defeated.

Francine Rivers wrote in Earth Psalms[[2]](#endnote-2)of a personal experience in how nature mirrors God’s care for us:

“Some years ago, while working at our warehouse, Rick called me on the intercom and said a mother quail was out

back with her chicks. I came running, and we watched from the delivery doorway as the quail pecked for seeds and bugs among the grass behind our building.

The chicks scurried around their mother like little puffs of tan cotton, unaware of us—or of danger lurking close by.

“We spotted a cat crouched and sneaking toward them. Rick was about to grab an airplane gear to heave at the

predator when we both heard a high pitched chirrup from somewhere above us. The mother quail immediately spread her wings, the chicks fled beneath, and

she flattened to the ground—motionless,protecting her babies with her body, and perfectly camouflaged in the grass. … Then, out of nowhere, the father quail appeared. He had been perched on the edge of the roof next

door, watching and ready to signal any danger. Down he came, right at that cat. Bam! Startled, the cat jumped back. Again the parents defended the family and the

frightened cat took off.

God knows what will happen in our lives. He knows the dangers and sickness that will fall upon us through no fault of our own. He knows when we lack strength to face these difficulties and his wings cover us, giving that strength. God knows those times when we will miss the mark and make mistakes. He knows that we will do wrong even before we do. Yet his wings cover us then, too. All that’s required of us is that we are willing to remain under those wings. All that’s required is that we accept that grace.

1. Max Lucado*, A Cure for a Common Life*, *(Thomas Nelson, 2008), pp. 69-70,* found on PreachingToday.com [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Francine Rivers wrote in Earth Psalms (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publ., 2016), found in Synthesis, A Weekly Resource for Preaching and Worship Following the Revised Common Lectionary, Year C, March [↑](#endnote-ref-2)