

Ascension Day Blessings  
from Pastor Ben Metz



Ascension Sunday, May 29, 2022

## Scripture Reading: Acts 1:1-11

***Thought for Memorial Day: “True heroism is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.”—Arthur Ashe***

*First Lt. Jimmy Cross carried letters from a girl named Martha, a junior at Mount Sebastian College in New Jersey. They were not love letters, but Lt. Cross was hoping, so he kept them folded in plastic at the bottom of his rucksack. In the late afternoon, after a day’s march, he would dig his foxhole, wash his hands under a canteen, unwrap the letters, hold them with the tips of his fingers, and spend the last hour of light pretending.*

Those are the first lines of a remarkable short story of the Vietnam War, *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O’Brien (Broadway, 1998). The author tells the stories of a platoon of soldiers — ordinary grunts — as they go about the hard work of fighting a war no one quite knew how to fight.

He tells the story using the things they chose to carry in their rucksacks. Some were obvious: *The things they carried were largely determined by necessity. Among the necessities or near-necessities were P-38 can openers, pocket knives, heat tabs, wrist watches, dog tags, mosquito repellent, chewing gum, candy, cigarettes, salt tablets, packets of Kool-Aid, lighters, matches, sewing kits, Military payment Certificates, C rations, and two or three canteens of water. Together, these items weighed between fifteen and twenty pounds, depending upon a man’s habits or rate of metabolism.*

Yet, once the necessities were accounted for, O’Brien tells of other, discretionary items like Lt. Cross’ letters and photographs from the college student Martha, back home in New Jersey. He wasn’t sure if she loved him, even though she signed her letters, “Love, Martha.” He hoped she did.

Ted Lavender was scared; he carried tranquilizers.

Norman Bowker carried a diary.

Ray Kiley, comic books, brandy and M&M’s.

“They carried all they could bear,” O’Brien tells us.

Jesus speaks of an item he expects all Christians to carry: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

His words are familiar, but what do they really mean?

What’s Jesus asking of us?

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, every day you give me what I need to carry for the day. And when I can’t, you carry it for me. Thank you for knowing when I am strong and when I am weak. Amen.*

## HERD, HORDE AND HUDDLE

Collective nouns are words that are given to groups of animals. That's why we refer to kittens as a "litter of kittens." The words in the title above are collective nouns: a **herd** of goats, a **horde** of gnats and a **huddle** of penguins. **Match the GROUP NAMES in Chart B to the ANIMALS in Chart A.** (We did "Flamingoes" for you as an example.) *Answers below.*

### CHART A : The Animals

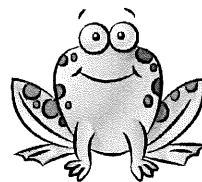
Clams	Flamingoes	A	Raccoons	Turkeys
Coyotes	Foxes		Prairie dogs	Vultures
Crows	Geese		Porcupines	Zebras
Dolphins	Grouse		Owls	Wolves
Eagles	Hawks (flying)		Hyenas	Whales



*"It is important to recognize and celebrate our heroes and our she-roes!"*  
—Maya Angelou, poet and writer

### CHART B: The Collective Nouns

A. Stand	I. Bed	Q. Gaze
B. Pack	J. Prickle	R. Murder
C. Rafter	K. Pod	S. Covey
D. Convocation	L. Zeal	T. Gaggle
E. Coterie	M. Skulk	
F. Venue	N. Parliament	
G. Cackle	O. School	
H. Kettle	P. Band	



**ANSWERS:**  
 A=Flamingoes  
 B=Wolves  
 C=Turkeys  
 D=Eagles  
 E=Prairie dogs  
 F=Vultures  
 G=Hyenas  
 H=Hawks  
 I=Clams  
 J=Porcupines  
 K=Dolphins  
 L=Zebras  
 M=Foxes  
 N=Owls  
 O=Whales  
 P=Coyotes  
 Q=Raccoons  
 R=Crows  
 S=Grouse  
 T=Geese  
**FROGS:** An army

What do you call a group of frogs?  
(an army, colony or knot of frogs?)

**Daily Bible Readings — Sunday:** John 4-6; **Monday:** 1 Kings 17-19; **Tuesday:** 1 Kings 20-22; **Wednesday:** 2 Kings 1-3; **Thursday:** 2 Kings 4-6; **Friday:** 2 Kings 7-10; **Saturday:** Psalms 55-57